

# THE COMPLETE NYINGMA TRADITION

FROM SUTRA TO TANTRA

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BOOKS 1 TO 10

Foundations of the Buddhist Path



CHOYING  
TOBDEN DORJE

*Translated by*  
Ngawang Zangpo

“This monumental treatise, covering both common and esoteric Buddhist lore, was composed by Choying Tobden Dorje, a most illustrious scholar and accomplished sage. Fortunately, among his voluminous books, this, his masterwork, has survived and has been carefully translated true to the original. It will open the eyes of serious readers to the vast spectrum of Buddhist wisdom.”

—Tulku Thondup

“The translation of this text is a major milestone in bringing Tibetan Buddhist wisdom to the West. One of the legacies of ancient Tibet is the preservation of vast numbers of the Buddhist scriptures in their most complete and authentic forms. This text is a remarkable example of that. It has the power to reveal the rich traditions of Tibetan Buddhism from its surface to its depth, and it will illuminate the minds of those who have the great good fortune to meet with it.”

—Anam Thubten

“*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* represents a rare opportunity for readers to obtain a complete map of the Buddha’s teachings. It contains very detailed descriptions of the profound and vast teachings of the ground, path, and fruition of both the sutra and tantra traditions. It provides particular emphasis on detailed instructions of the inner tantras of mahayoga, anuyoga, and the precious dzokchen tradition. I highly recommend this book for students who wish to gain a deeper understanding of the complete path to enlightenment.”

—Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche

## **ABOUT THE BOOK**

In 1838, Choying Tobden Dorje, a Buddhist yogi-scholar of eastern Tibet, completed a multivolume masterwork that traces the entire path of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism from beginning to end. Written by a lay practitioner for laypeople, it was intended to be accessible, informative, inspirational, and above all, practical. Its twenty-five books, or topical divisions, offer a comprehensive and detailed view of the Buddhist

path according to the early translation school of Tibetan Buddhism, spanning the vast range of Buddhist teachings from the initial steps to the highest esoteric teachings of great perfection. Choying Tobden Dorje's magnum opus appears in English here for the first time.

In *Foundations of the Buddhist Path*, which covers the first ten of the treatise's twenty-five books, the author surveys the scope of the entire work and then begins with the topics that set the cornerstones for all subsequent Buddhist practice: what constitutes proper spiritual apprenticeship, how to receive the teachings, how to make the best use of this life, and how to motivate ourselves to generate effort on the spiritual path. He then describes refuge and the vows that define the path of individual liberation before turning to the bodhisattva's way—buddha nature, how to uplift the mind to supreme awakening, the bodhisattva's training, and the attainments of the paths leading to supreme awakening.

CHOYING TOBDEN DORJE (1787–1848) was a brilliant Vajrayana master of eastern Tibet. His masterwork, *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*, remains the main text studied by Tibet's Ngakpa lineages of lay Buddhist yogi-practitioners.

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# The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra, Books 1 to 10

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*Foundations of the Buddhist Path*

Choying Tobden Dorje

TRANSLATED BY  
*Ngawang Zangpo*

SNOW LION  
BOSTON & LONDON  
2014

Snow Lion  
An imprint of Shambhala Publications, Inc.  
Horticultural Hall

## 300 Massachusetts Avenue

Boston, Massachusetts 02115  
[www.shambhala.com](http://www.shambhala.com)

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Frontispiece: Painting of Choying Tobden Dorje. Artist unknown. Photo courtesy of Hungchen Chenagtsang.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA Chos-dbyiñs-stobs-ldan-rdo-rje, Rdzogs-chen, 1785–1848, author.

[Mdo rgyud rin po che'i mdzod. English]

The complete Nyingma tradition from sutra to tantra / Choying Tobden Dorje; translated by Ngawang Zangpo.—First edition.

pages cm—(The Tsadra Foundation series) Includes index.

eISBN 978-0-83482991-6

ISBN 978-1-55939-435-2 (Books 1 to 10) 1. Rñiñ-ma-pa (Sect)—Doctrines. 2. Spiritual life—Rñiñ-ma-pa (Sect). I. Title.

BQ7662.4.C468813 2014

294.3'923—dc23

2014007269

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THE AUTHOR, CHOYING TOBDEN DORJE

PREFACE TO THE 1986 TIBETAN PUBLICATION OF THE ROOT  
TEXT AND OUTLINE OF  
*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*

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THIS TREATISE ENTITLED *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development, does not only present the field of Buddhist studies: it also contains a complete and error-free exposition of secular fields of knowledge, including Sanskrit, logic, the arts, and medicine. In clear and concise language, this text synthesizes the very vast and extremely profound essence of the five major subjects of Tibetan culture. Like a magical tree that answers your prayers, this book provides whatever information you might wish to know among those fields of knowledge.

On this occasion of the publication of the root text and outline of this work, I will introduce it using the widely accepted five-point model of initiating a discussion of any treatise. As is said,

- What is the title of this text?
- For whom was it written?
- Who is the author?
- How long is this work?
- What is its purpose?

In keeping with this general custom, I will answer these questions to introduce this treatise, the subject of this preface.

First, this text's title, *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, refers to the central, or "root," text. A compilation of the headings found within the text, its outline, is entitled *The Wish-Fulfilling Vine*.

Second, for which disciples or for what readers was this treatise written? For those individuals interested in fields of knowledge outside the secular realm, this excellent text elucidates the nondual inspiration of enlightened beings; the pith instructions taught by Buddhist scholars, accomplished masters, adepts immersed in nondual awareness, and holy spiritual masters; and the major subjects of Buddhist culture. It provides an outline of the basis, paths, and results

of the ways of spiritual development presented in Buddhist discourses and tantras. It traces the successive vows and bonds accepted in the discipline of individual liberation, the training of bodhisattvas, and the path of secret mantra. It offers edifying conclusions based on the author's own reasoning drawn from his hearing the Buddhist doctrine and having reflected and meditated upon it.

The composition of the words and the meanings of this treatise is superb: its illumination and illustration of the entire range of Buddhist ways of spiritual development lack nothing and are error-free. It resembles a treasure of invaluable wealth. It holds the complete three-part classical literary format of an introduction, main text, and conclusion. The subjects of this text are elucidated by a brief presentation and an extensive explanation. Relevant general and specific headings supply clear demarcations among its subjects. The root text is concise: it is written in verse to facilitate memorization. The extensive commentary in prose enables understanding of the subjects' deeper meanings. The authority provided by supportive quotations from scripture elicits the reader's confidence beyond any doubt. In turn, the presentations provided in the concise commentary and the illustrations make the subjects of this treatise increasingly perceivable.

In the Earth Dog year of the fourteenth 60-year cycle (1838 in the general calendar), Longchen Chöying Tobden Dorje wrote this root text and its commentaries.

Third, who is this author? The author of the root text *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras* and its commentaries is Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje Mapam Choklé Nampar Gyalwa. He was born in the Wood Snake year of the thirteenth 60-year cycle (1785 in the common calendar) in the region of Repkong, lower Amdo. He began his composition of this treatise at the age of fifty-one, in the Fire Monkey year of the fourteenth 60-year cycle (1836 in the common calendar), and completed it at the age of fifty-three, in the Earth Dog year (1838). Apart from this information, which is explicitly stated in the colophon of this text, no other account of his life has come into our hands. That being the case, we have been unable to conduct any detailed research into his birthplace, his life work, his responsibilities, his residence in lower Amdo, or the time of this work's original publication. We are therefore unable to trace the present legacy of his major or minor acts and we ask those who publish further portions of this treatise in the future to strive to fill these gaps in our knowledge.

Fourth, how long is the root text of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*? The content spans definitive versions of subjects beginning with discipleship and ending with the stages of the result of the Buddhist path, consummate accomplishment. The body of the treatise divides

the stages of Buddhist ways of spiritual development into twenty-five books, which contain one hundred general chapters and two thousand, one hundred and seventy-nine specific headings. Concerning the length of the words used to express that content, within the root text the initial virtue of the treatise (its introduction) and its concluding virtue (the conclusion) are composed of verses of thirteen syllables each, whereas the continuing virtue of the main text is composed of verses of nine syllables each. In all, the text contains nine hundred and eighty four verses, definitely divided into three sections. Apart from this root text, the contents of the outline, concise commentary, extensive commentary, and illustrations are fashioned in prose. The measure of the root text and its commentaries is definitely equal to the number of mountains.

Fifth, for what purpose was this work composed? It will prove useful for everyone, be they of sublime or ordinary acumen: it will accomplish what they desire, both for the short and long term. Study of this text leads to the resolution of outer misconceptions and the attainment of the rank of a learned person. Meditation on this text resolves inner misconceptions and the manifest attainment of the spiritual goals that each of us wishes for. Such is the purpose for which this work was composed.

We will gradually publish the root text *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras* along with its commentaries and illustrated version for the purpose of providing a single text that will satisfy a hundred avenues of research for those who, in general, strive for knowledge of the nature of things as well as knowledge of their infinite diversity and more specifically engage in detailed investigations of Tibetan culture. That said, this is not our only motivating concern: the entirety of the root text and commentaries of this treatise was previously printed from wood blocks in the region of Amdo, yet that publication did not have a significant lasting impact since in the midst of later various turbulent events in the Lake Kokonor (Qinghai) area, the wood blocks themselves disappeared without a trace. Therefore, in the present time only one or two copies of the original texts of the root text and its commentaries have survived: the continued existence of these texts is endangered. Thus it seems surely necessary to act swiftly to preserve these texts by publishing books that replicate exactly the content of their original edition. In the present case, we now publish the root text and the outline with the plan to gradually publish the entire series of texts of this collection. The sublime individual Tübten Nyima, Zenkar Rinpoche, in his inspired vision to preserve Tibetan culture, has gladly lent us the original copies of the texts. Further, he has graciously given his guidance to assure the success of our publications. On this occasion of the first in the series, we must offer him our deepest gratitude.

Nor-drang Orgyan, editor  
August 15, 1986

*Nor-drang Orgyan is a renowned scholar who now lives in retirement. His magnum opus is the three-volume Compendium of Buddhist Numeric Terms, published in 2008. Formerly he served as director of the Academy of Social Sciences of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Rare Texts Publishing House.*

## A BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR, CHOYING TOBDEN DORJE

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THE SOVEREIGN TRIUMPHANT Buddha Lake-Born Vajra (Guru Rinpoche) demonstrated the display of human rebirth as the leader of learned and accomplished masters, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje Mapam Choklé Nampar Gyalwa Pal-zangpo. This sublime individual was born in the Wood Snake year of the thirteenth 60-year cycle (1785 in the common calendar) in Zho Pong, a place located in the golden province of Repkong, itself situated in the Himalayan region of lower Amdo. He was born to a father named Rinchen and a mother who was the dance of an emanation of Yeshé Tsogyal, named Lady Yeshé Drolma. She was also known by the name of Gyal-yum Ngödrup Drolma. Their child was first known by the name Gongpo Yönten.

From the time of his infancy, he naturally presented himself as having the character of a holy person. Many lamas, reincarnate masters, and spiritual guides of his homeland taught him to read and write, and then to apply himself diligently to Buddhist practice and to training in the subjects of Buddhist culture. As a result, the vault of his talents overflowed.

As the sovereign bodhisattva All-Seeing Eyes in human form, Kalden Gyatso, states: The illustrious master from Oddiyana, Lotus Born,

Journeyed to the Himalayan region of Tibet.

Here, in general, he inaugurated countless sites sacred to the dakinis  
And specifically sent forth hundreds of emanations of himself  
simultaneously.

They opened the gateways to hundreds of palaces of the dakinis,  
Including the major sacred place of Nya-gong White Cliff in the  
east And the crystal hermitage of Né Chuchik,

Where they bound worldly gods and demons under oath.

In past times, during the original spread of Buddhism in Amdo, The  
fine names of Repkong's eight sacred sites of spiritual  
accomplishment Were as well-known as are the sun and moon.

He again states,

Moreover, one by the name of Kawa Dorjé Wang,



A sublime mantra adept from Katok Monastery in the east,  
Arrived in this sacred place of the crystal hermitage and attained a  
body made of rainbow light.

As these praises of this place mention, among Repkong's eight sacred sites of spiritual accomplishment appears one by the name of the crystal hermitage of the Palace of Supreme Bliss, commonly known as the crystal hermitage of Né Chuchik.

Choying Tobden Dorje joined the spiritual community living there and accepted the three successive levels of vows—individual liberation, bodhisattva, and secret mantra. He listened to, reflected upon, and cultivated his experience in the profound and vast spiritual instructions of the original Nyingma traditions based upon the canon, treasure texts, and visionary revelation. Following this, he went to the sublime site of the Buddha's Word as Profound Instruction (Kadampa) doctrine, the Ragya Monastery named Ganden Tashi Jung-né Shédруп Dargyé Ling. There, he sat at the feet of many spiritual guides, such as Shing-za Pandit Lozang Dargyé Gyatso. For a period of five years he assumed the lifestyle of an ordinary monk without family ties as he heard and reflected upon the three collections of Buddhist scripture and cultivated his experience on the spiritual path of the three aspects of Buddhist training. At the end of this period of his life, he left to practice meditation in mountain hermitages without settling down in a fixed residence.

At some point, predictions made by wisdom deities and spiritual masters inspired him to search for his personal lord of enlightenment's wisdom clans, just as the triumphant buddhas' spiritual heir, a bodhisattva named Always Weeping, sought out his master named Noble Qualities. Choying Tobden Dorje's heart gave birth to a consuming desire to receive the profound instructions that would propel him in a single lifetime, in that very rebirth, to the level of the original lord protector Buddha Ever Excellent. He traveled southward and arrived at such places as Dzokchen Monastery, where from the fourth Dzokchen Tulku Mingyur Namkha Dorjé and from Jé-ön Péma Kundrol he received the empowerments that spiritually ripen the recipient and guidance in meditation that leads to liberation, based on an ocean of instructions from the discourses and tantras.

Most notably, Choying Tobden Dorje traveled to and stayed for a long time in the Buddhist encampment led by Dodrupchen Rinpoche, Jigmé Trinlé Özer. Choying Tobden Dorje relied on Drupchen Rinpoche as his personal lord of enlightenment's wisdom clans and delighted him in the three ways of pleasing one's spiritual master. As if pouring the contents of one vase into another, this

lama bestowed such instructions as the general profound teachings from Buddhist discourses and tantras, and especially, the empowerments that bring spiritual maturity within the inner three yoga tantras, guidance in meditation that leads to liberation, and supportive reading transmissions of scripture. As a result, Choying Tobden Dorje gained mastery within the outlook that sees the nature of reality: within him, the wisdom that arises on the path of no further training became perfectly evident.

The sublime lama, lord of enlightenment's wisdom clans, knew that Choying Tobden Dorje would in the future become an illustrious guide for disciples and that he had a karmic connection with specific deities. Thus Dodrupchen Rinpoche granted him many profound wrathful mantra practices from the original translation tradition, including the deep crucial instructions for the four penetrations of the glorious supreme wisdom deity Vajra Youth; the cycle of the wisdom deity Slayer of the Lord of Death, including the four wheels of Gentle Splendor; the overturning of ominous signs using the wisdom deity Mamo Who Casts Spells; and many profound instructions in the mantra practice of fire rituals, which include suppression, incineration, and sending projectiles—activity that leads to enlightenment. Choying Tobden Dorje meditated on these: the mass of all his dualistic thoughts emptied into the infinite expanse of the display of wisdom deities, mantras, and nondual wisdom. He gained supreme, uninhibited confidence in the performance of overt wrathful activity.

Then the noble spiritual master Dodrupchen Rinpoche made the following declaration, “This northern black mantra adept, like a meteorite dagger, is the designated inheritor of an ocean of wrathful mantras. I name him Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje Mapam Choklé Nampar Gyalwa.” To the transmission of this uplifting praise and many predictions of the future, he added, “Your realization has freed your own stream of being: now is the time for you to employ nondual compassion to liberate others' stream of being. Return to your homeland and care for a community of disciples. You will have a healing effect on the Buddhist doctrine and for sentient beings, and your service to beings will continually flourish.”

As advised, Choying Tobden Dorje journeyed to Repkong, where he engaged in the spiritual practice of the protector Lord of Power, which caused his wealth and circle of disciples to significantly swell. In his homeland, he founded Kohudé Monastery, known as Dzokchen Namgyal Ling, which has since been sustained by his series of reincarnations. In the present day, the details of the monastery's life, such as ritual traditions, appear to follow the customs of Mindrol Ling Monastery.

Further on the subject of Dodrupchen Rinpoche and Choying Tobden Dorje, a

treasure text predicts, In the east, a white conch shell will appear with the resounding voice of Brahma.

In the south will appear a white fruit, a circular fort like a mound.  
In the west will appear one like a blossoming orange lotus.  
In the north will appear one with force and might like a planted dagger.

As this passage reveals, Dodrup Rinpoche's heart spiritual children were the "four major roof beams." Among these, in the north, the fine name of Choying Tobden Dorje resounds beautifully in all directions like summer drums of thunder. With the activity of a learned scholar, he taught, debated, and composed texts, and with the enlightened activity of a mantra adept that pacifies, enhances, magnetizes, and overpowers, he took countless numbers of disciples under his care, subduing them in a manner suitable to each and placing them on the tantric path of spiritual maturity and liberation. In general, his prodigious acts sustained the triumphant buddhas' doctrine impartially; in particular, he ensured that the precious teachings of the original translations' Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse continue without deterioration to the bounds of time and space. The line of disciples from this master and from Palchen Namkha Jigmé are known as the "nineteen hundred black mantra adepts of Repkong who wield daggers." The continuity of their doctrine forms an incomparable enclosure of iron mountains that protects the teachings, a fact that is evident to the present day.

In the Iron Ox year of the fourteenth 60-year cycle (1841 in the common calendar), Shabkar Tsok-druk Rangdrol sent a letter of request to Choying Tobden Dorje on the occasion of the lunar new year celebration. Choying Tobden Dorje sent a letter in reply and during that year he offered Shabkar Rinpoche an extensive reading transmission and instruction in the root text, *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, and its commentaries. This information is recorded in Shabkar's autobiography. At that time, Choying Tobden Dorje was fifty-six years old, whereas Shabkar Rinpoche had reached sixty.

The above clear account amounts to a mere indication of his life story, transcribed from relevant portions of *A History of Buddhism in Lower Amdo*, *The Story of the Monastic Seat of the Major Hermitage of Rongpo*, *The Autobiography of Shabkar Tsok-druk Rangdrol*, and *A History of the Vital Essence of Luminosity*. To add to these sources, I traveled to Kohudé Monastery to compile whatever I could see or hear, or find in research documents, to fill out

the details of this account. Nevertheless, I was unable to discover even how long Choying Tobden Dorje appeared to live in the perception of his disciples in this worldly realm, or even the seed of a full, detailed account of how he sustained his enlightened activities in teaching, meditation practice, and altruistic acts.

Although that consists of my report, Shabkar Tsok-druk Rangdrol's letter sent to Choying Tobden Dorje in the Iron Ox year of the Finest Mind (the name of the fourteenth 60-year cycle) supplies a condensed version of the heart of this sublime master's biography from which we are able to infer some of the information we seek. Therefore, I include the entire letter here; *The Autobiography of Shabkar Tsok-druk Rangdrol* states: Further, I examined the excellent explanations composed on general subjects by the venerable precious master of great perfection [that is, Choying Tobden Dorje], in whom both scholastic and meditative accomplishments are gathered, and in particular, I read the major treatise *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*. I was moved to stable, inviolable faith in him. At the New Year, I wrote him this letter: May the wisdom deities of longevity— Lord Protector Boundless Life, White Tara, and the rest—

Who grant sublime longevity  
Bestow upon you the spiritual accomplishment of life without end, I  
pray.

The emanation of the wisdom mind  
Of buddhas of all times and directions is the Lord of Oddiyana, Guru  
Rinpoche, Who has once again appeared in your form in which both  
learning and spiritual accomplishment have gathered: Sublime  
individual who sustains this appearance, please consider me.  
Lord protector, in times past you attained enlightenment, Yet in later  
generations for the disciples you accept,  
You demonstrate a life of spiritual liberation  
Only in order to show them how enlightenment can be won.

In your early life, you cast from your mind any thought of this life And  
dwelled at the lotus feet of many learned and accomplished masters.  
You received pith instructions and profound advice in the Buddhist  
discourses and tantras, And resolved outer misconceptions through  
the process of listening to and reflecting upon them.  
Later, in seclusion in mountain hermitages  
You meditated to resolve inner misconceptions:  
The vault of the qualities of spiritual experience and realization  
overflowed within you.  
You followed the predictive advice of spiritual masters and wisdom  
deities And responded to the entreaties of your fortunate disciples:  
You granted empowerments, reading transmissions, guidance in  
meditation, and so on, Teaching, debating, and writing day and  
night

To spread sublime helpful acts and happiness in the Buddhist doctrine  
and among beings.

The word of the leader of the teachings, the mighty Buddha  
Shakyamuni, And others among the triumphant buddhas in infinite  
numbers dwelling in the ten directions Spans the vast discourses  
And oceans of profound tantras.

Their innermost essence; the crucial points found in treatises written  
by various scholars In commentary upon the Victor's word;  
Guidance based on spiritual experience of the customs of lineages

Founded by supreme individuals who preserve the doctrine;  
Traditional styles of teaching based upon learned persons' systems  
of thought; The basis, paths, and results of the ways of the  
discourses and tantras; The trio of the view, meditation, and  
conduct; the three levels of vows; The five major and five minor  
subjects of Buddhist culture: The clear meanings found within this  
entire range of ways of spiritual development— Complete and  
error-free—are all found in this vault of excellent explanations, Like  
a storehouse of jewels,

*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra.*

You have written this for the doctrine and beings in general to provide  
them with easy skillful spiritual techniques And especially to help  
fortunate individuals

Of the present and of times yet to come:

How very kind you are!

Spiritual master infused with such supreme kindness,

To you I bow in utmost humility.

With masses of offerings, both real and imagined, I present gifts to  
you.

I divulge any wrongdoing of having regarded you with wrong views or  
lack of faith.

I rejoice in your sublime life lived in spiritual liberation.

Continue to turn the wheel of the teachings, I pray.

I beseech you to live for a hundred years

And I dedicate my stores of ennobling acts to ensure your lotus feet  
remain firmly upon this earth.

Spiritual master, may your health be excellent, splendidly bright.

May you live long in supreme well-being.

Spiritual master, may the renown of your goodness spread; And  
especially, may your intended goals meet with success.

May the wealth of your teachings' sponsors flourish

And may your doctrine long remain in this world.

When I meet you and all those around you, the event I wish for, May  
the auspicious circumstances arise for our repeated meeting.

In the enjoyment of jubilant happiness

in the enjoyment of joyous happiness

May we all delight in the auspicious circumstances conducive to the practice of Buddhism.

I offered this letter accompanied by a physical representation of my intentions—pills made at the conclusion of my practice of longevity—and a gift of divine silk embroidered with the wisdom deities of longevity.

So Shabkar Rinpoche wrote.

It is said that the collection of treatises written by this noble spiritual master Choying Tobden Dorje includes such texts as *The Final Act of Suppression, the Black Supreme Mountain*, part of his cycle on the practical application of wrathful mantras. The chief treatise among his books is entitled *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. Thirteen large volumes comprise this treatise. He began its composition in the Fire Monkey year of the Finest Mind, the fourteenth 60-year cycle (1836 in the common calendar), and successfully completed it at the age of fifty-three, in the Earth Dog year (1838).

This treatise is composed of five parts: a root text, an outline, a concise commentary, an extensive commentary, and an illustrated version. The root text is written in verse whereas the other texts are rendered in prose or in drawings. In the first of the thirteen volumes, indicated by the Tibetan letter *Ka*, we find the root text and the outline. In the second volume, indicated by the Tibetan letter *Kha*, we find the concise commentary. In the next nine volumes, from the third (*Ga*) to the eleventh (*Da*), we find the extensive commentary. Of these nine, the discourses are contained within two volumes, a former and a latter. The subjects of study are also contained within two volumes, a former and a latter. The tantras are also contained within two volumes, a former and a latter. Great perfection is contained within three volumes, a former, a middle, and a latter one. In the twelfth volume (*Na*) and the thirteenth (*Pa*), we find the entire range of subjects of the main text represented by illustrations.

Woodblocks of this treatise existed but in 1937 bandits of the Ma warlord clan intentionally destroyed them. Nevertheless, later, the sublime reincarnate master Tübten Nyima, who deeply values the traditional texts of Tibetan culture, and others of like mind, searched for, collected, and prepared this edition, which we are now able to publish.

Respectfully written by the one called Nor-de, an invalid and an ignorant fool

from the land of Golok. May excellent fortune flourish!

*This biography is included in the 2000 edition of The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra printed by the Sichuan Nationalities' Publishing House. Its author, Nor-de, is a well-known writer and editor who has served as head of the National People's Congress Bureau of Golok Prefecture, Qinghai Province.*



## FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*

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AMONG THE FOUR heart spiritual children of Dodrupchen Jigmé Trinlé Özer, the “four major vajra roof beams,” the one to the north, like a meteorite dagger planted in the ground, is known as Dzokchen Choying Tobden Dorje. This supreme lord of splendid renown was born in the Pön-ru clan, child of a father Rinchen and a mother Ngödrup Drolma, in the Wood Snake year of the thirteenth 60-year cycle (1785 in the common calendar), in Zho Pong, a place in Repkong, lower Amdo. From an early age, he joined a spiritual community close to his birthplace, that of the crystal hermitage of the Palace of Supreme Bliss. There, he learned without difficulty the forms of the letters, as well as to read and write, and such subjects as composition. From Waka Tsering, secretary to the Buddhist King Ngak-gi Wangpo, he learned other Tibetan scripts, history, and other topics among the common subjects of secular culture which he mastered. After meeting Shing-za Pandit Lozang Dargyé Gyatso at Ragya Monastery, Ganden Tashi Jung-né, he applied himself to training in the entire ten fields of Buddhist culture.

Then Choying Tobden Dorje mentally deserted any splendor appearing in this life and met the lord of spiritual accomplishment Péma Rangdrol, who had journeyed to Repkong to spiritually aid sentient beings. Choying Tobden Dorje served as attendant while that lama devoted himself for a number of years to the essence of spiritual practice in retreat at the uppermost peak of the White Cliff at Tsang-gö Dzong. Choying Tobden Dorje and the lord of spiritual accomplishment Kalden Rangdrol made a pair of whom the sublime master Nyang-kyé Nang-dzé Dorjé said fulfilled a prediction made centuries before by the great master immersed in nondual awareness Rigdzin Palden Tashi:

At the retreat place at the uppermost peak of White Cliff,  
The three birds, a mother [that is, Péma Rangdrol] and two children, will  
gather.

It was in those circumstances that Choying Tobden Dorje received from the lord of spiritual accomplishment Péma Rangdrol treasure teachings revealed by

Kunzang Déchen Gyalpo: the general collection of doctrines named *The Innermost Secret Wish-fulfilling Horse and Pig*. Specifically, he perfected the practice of meditation in stages from the initial mental training in the outer and inner preliminary practices to the main practice—profound guidance in great perfection. The nondual inspiration of the nature of reality, the union of awareness and emptiness, was born in Choying Tobden Dorje’s wisdom mind. This period coincided with the lifetime of the third incarnation of Rigdzin Palden Tashi, king of secret mantra in Repkong; in his next lifetime, that master was reborn as the mantra adept Dorjé Namgyal, who became the father of the lord of scholars Gendun Chöpel.

Choying Tobden Dorje then traveled to Kham, to Dzokchen Monastery Orgyen Samten Chöling, where he arrived in the presence of many learned and accomplished masters, including Dzokchen Tulku Mingyur Namkha Dorjé and Jé-ön Péma Kundrol Namgyal. He listened to and trained in the general teachings of Buddhist discourses and secret mantra, and voraciously drank from the canon’s and treasures’ rivers of nectar of ripening empowerments and liberating instructions. In particular at that time, Dodrup Kunzang Shenpen lived in the Rudam Shinjé meditation cave; from him, Choying Tobden Dorje received the earlier and later Heart Essence cycles and many other tantras, reading transmissions, and pith instructions from the vajra way. Later, when Dodrupchen Rinpoche lived in the Do-kok, Choying Tobden Dorje went to see him repeatedly and received such transmissions as *The Magical Illusion Secret Essence Tantra*, *The Trilogy of Rest in the True Nature*, and *The Highest Wisdom of Great Perfection*.

In the Earth Tiger year of the fourteenth 60-year cycle (1828 in the common calendar), in Repkong’s Kohudé Valley, Choying Tobden Dorje founded the monastery of Dzokchen Namgyal Ling and cared for infinite numbers of disciples, such as those known as the twenty-one great perfection lamas, including Shar-dakpa Rabjampa, Bong-tak Marik Munsel, and Rigdzin Hungnak Mébar. Further, Dodrup Rinpoche once remarked that the auspicious conditions existed for the abbot, master, and Buddhist king to gather in the same household. As that lama predicted, Choying Tobden Dorje accepted the dakini Kunga Chödrön as his consort who embodied nondual awareness. To them were born two sons: the omniscient master Tenpé Nyima, an emanation of the great abbot Shantirakshita; and the realized master Tenpé Gyaltzen, an emanation of King Trisong Déu-tsen. Choying Tobden Dorje himself was without mistake an emanation of Guru Rinpoche. Thus was the prophecy fulfilled. Likewise, based on the timely ripening of the superb aspirations of three masters—Choying Tobden Dorje, Dola Jigmé Kalzang Choying Dorje, and Khamla Namkha

Gyatso—a large community appeared called Repkong Longchen Ngak-mang, where masters immersed in nondual awareness gathered.

*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* is the main work among Choying Tobden Dorje's compositions that were said to fill close to twenty volumes. His writings included an autobiography, a collection of his songs of spiritual realization, and a cycle on practical instructions in the practice of wrathful mantras. Nevertheless, some of those very important books vanished, with only their titles remaining, in the midst of turbulent times. Apart from *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*, the remaining books among his written work have been published by the Qinghai Ngak-mang Research Institute in two volumes: *The Guide to Great Perfection of the Cycle of The Innermost Secret Wish-fulfilling Horse and Pig* and *A Collection of Assorted Works by Dzokchen Choying Tobden Dorje*. These two were printed separately, in 2006 and 2010, through the auspices of the People's Press in Beijing.

On the subject of *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*, it contains the essence of the realization expressed in oceans of discourses and tantras delivered by infinite numbers of triumphant buddhas who dwell in the ten directions; the commentaries to the canon written by many Indian and Tibetan learned and accomplished masters who illuminate the doctrine; guidance in practical procedures based in meditative experience from the lineages of accomplished masters, supreme individuals who preserve the doctrine; traditional styles of teaching based upon various learned persons' systems of thought; an outline of the basis, paths, and results of the ways of the discourses and secret mantra; classifications of the trio of the view, meditation, and conduct; the stages of the vows and bonds within the three successive levels of vows—individual liberation, bodhisattva, and secret mantra; and explanations of the major subjects of Buddhist culture. In this work, nothing is lacking; such a holy text of excellent explanations is unprecedented.

Concerning this work, the sublime, venerable master Dodrup Rinpoche made this timely prediction:

At first, you cast from your mind any thought concerned with this life and in seclusion applied yourself with intense diligence to three activities: hearing, reflecting, and meditating on the teachings. You thereby trained well your own stream of being. Then you brought others to spiritual maturity and liberation through three activities: teaching, debate, and composition. Finally, your three activities of understanding, meditative experience, and realization cause wide-ranging altruistic acts and

happiness to flourish for the Buddhist doctrine and sentient beings. Now, for the sake of fortunate persons of the present and the time yet to come, you must write an auspicious text that gathers words that articulate meditative experience; is accessible throughout its length; uses the view to define the abiding nature of all phenomena of the round of rebirth, transcendent states, and the spiritual path; can be used in meditation to cultivate spiritual experience; enriches that experience through conduct; and is infused with powerful blessings.

At the time this prediction came true, Tsering Döndrup Pal-zangpo, a Buddhist king who preserved the doctrine and ruled the region of Lake Kokonor (Qinghai), encouraged Choying Tobden Dorje to compose the work, and promised to sponsor its printing and to aid the precious Buddhist doctrine. Due to this and other auspicious related events, he began his writing in the Fire Monkey year of the fourteenth 60-year cycle (1836 in the common calendar), and completed it within continued excellent fortunate circumstances in the Earth Dog year.

The root text, *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, is composed in verse; a separate outline presents the framework of the treatise; the concise commentary is written in prose; the extensive commentary is accompanied by supportive quotations from scripture; and the illustrated version supplies a very vivid presentation of the material. Thus, the whole work contains five major divisions. These cover thirteen precious volumes, which have three parts: an introduction, a main text, and a conclusion. These in turn contain twenty-five books; one thousand, one hundred and seventy-nine specific headings; and eighty separate texts, a number equal to the Buddha's signs of physical perfection.

Among the heart spiritual children of Dodrupchen Rinpoche, the four vajra roof beams, Jigmé Kalzang Chöying Dorjé was the eastern white conch shell who appeared with a resounding voice like Brahma's. His reincarnation, who lived in the Repkong area, was Dzung-ngön Péma Tükchok Dorjé. He praised *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* in these words:

Its root text in verse facilitates memorization.

Its quotes from authoritative holy scriptures foster trust beyond any doubt.

The clarity of its extensive commentary makes it easy for the reader to comprehend the intended meaning.

The vast ground of the work can be distinguished by the general and

specific readings.

This excellent text imbued with these four special qualities Gathers the entirety of the essential crucial points  
Of commentaries to oceans of Buddhist discourses and tantras in general.  
Most notably, it is infused with the unchanging meaning of the six million tantras  
Of the spiritual path at the summit of Buddhist ways, atiyoga, the utmost welcome of the genuine state.

The profound and multifaceted essential contents of this invaluable treasury,  
An unprecedented treatise sealed with the seven possessions of a universal monarch,  
Are resplendent—it lacks nothing and is error-free, accessible, and systematic.

He thereby clearly elucidated the unusual, special qualities of this treatise.

Upon the completed composition of this treatise, Tsering Döndrup, ruler of the Lake Kokonor region, Qinghai; Choying Tobden Dorje's mother, Ngödrup Drolma; his son, the omniscient master Tenpé Nyima; his disciples Kunpang Gendün Palden, A-tsok Lektsok Gyatso, Lama Marik Munsel, and Lama Dorjé Sherab; and, likewise, his sponsors with their circle collected the funds necessary to sponsor the original carving of the woodblocks of the treatise. From that point on, these individuals fostered the continuity of its reading transmission, teaching, and study. As for the sections concerning *The Secret Essence Tantra* and the cycle of great perfection within the extensive commentary (itself entitled *The Elegant Ornament of the Age of Great Brahma*), the woodblocks for their printing were carved much later. The words of aspiration contained in the dedication of the first edition made from them clearly indicate that it dates from the Water Rabbit year of the fifteenth 60-year cycle (1903 in the common calendar). Thus, the complete set of woodblocks for the thirteen volumes of *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* were invited to reside at the monastic seat of Dzokchen Namgyal Ling. Then, thirty-five years later, in March, 1938, the misguided policy of the then-ruler of Qinghai made those original woodblocks disappear as they were fed to the outer element of fire. Further, during the Cultural Revolution, even the continuity of the teaching of this treatise in the Repkong area was stopped. These are tragedies.

In the 1980s, the hopes of a few masterful scholars of two branches of the Committee of the Sichuan Province People's Agency—the Office of Rare Texts and the People's Research Center—spurred the search for, collection of, and preparation for printing of *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*. The National Committee of the Chinese People's Agency in turn initiated a nationwide project to restore rare texts and they provided the seed money to sponsor this undertaking. Thus, as a result of sixteen years of painstaking labor, the original texts have been found, collected, and minutely collated and proofread. Thus, in the year 2000, we were able to publish and distribute through the Sichuan People's Press a modern edition of this treatise. That said, an original copy of the latter volume of the illustrated version, itself entitled *A Garland of Suns*, still eludes our search.

The sublime being, a supreme adept of secret mantra, Tsédruk Tharchin, considered Repkong as his homeland but lived in the United States. For him, *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* was a jewel of sovereign power, sufficient in itself in collecting and illuminating all Buddhist discourses, tantras, and treatises. He saw it as the beautifying adornment of the Repkong tantric community and he single-mindedly applied himself to finding and restoring the continuity of its textual, teaching, and meditative transmissions. He kept two projects in mind: the translation of the entire *Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* into English so it could spread throughout the world, and the founding of a college based on *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* at the Repkong tantric community. He felt that this would ensure that the resplendent wealth of his ancestors' heritage would be passed down to future generations. With this pure, insightful intention firmly in mind, his enlightened activity has been significant.

Now, the first of Lama Tharchin Rinpoche's aspirations has come true: *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* in translation into English has been published. Its distribution will spread the precious teachings of the Buddha throughout this wide world. I consider this to be a wholly positive, meaningful event that will prove to be healing and beneficial in every way. To all those gathered under the guidance of Lama Tharchin Rinpoche in this project—translators, editors, benefactors, and others—I offer my humble esteem again and again in great measure, and I send my aspirations for the auspicious success of all your projects.

Offered respectfully by Hungchen  
March 2014

*Hungchen Chenagtsang is a yogi with a long family connection to the Repkong Ngak-mang community, where he has been actively engaged in publishing their texts and preserving their traditions.*

## IN MEMORIAM

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THE SUBLIME MASTER Lama Tharchin Rinpoche has departed for the realm of perfect peace.

Previously, he was responsible for a thorough proofreading of the edition of *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* published by the Sichuan People's Press and he provided a detailed list of corrections of its typographical errors. Further, he intended to establish both a college and a retreat center based on *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* in the homeland of its author, Choying Tobden Dorje. To facilitate studies and experiential cultivation in meditation at those institutions, he oversaw the making of a new electronic version of this text from which a new edition was to be printed. Likewise, in order that *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* spread throughout the world, he planned for this work to be translated into both English and Chinese. For example, in the latter case, many years ago, he sponsored the great translator Lodrö Gyatso, a lord among scholars, to translate the outline and other sections of this work into Chinese. The impact of Lama Tharchin Rinpoche's acts such as these, both completed and ongoing, concerning *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*, is of the highest order.

In the midst of his activity in 2013, our merit was insufficient to restrain him and we suffered the loss of his departure to other realms. Nevertheless, his wife Péma Déchen, and Eric Colombel and his other disciples, are now fulfilling his inspired vision by having the entirety of *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* printed and distributed. I rejoice in this and offer my heartfelt thanks.

The humble Tübten Nyima  
[Zenkar Rinpoche]  
July 8, 2014

*Zenkar Rinpoche Tübten Nyima is a lineage holder of the Nyingma and Sakya traditions. A preeminent lexicographer, library archivist, writer, editor, and publisher, he has been instrumental in preserving and disseminating the works*



*of Tibetan literature in China and throughout the world. Since 1992 he has held research fellowships at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and at Columbia University. Presently, Zenkar Rinpoche is director of the Paltseg Tibetan Rare Texts Research Center, a standing member of the China Buddhist Association, and board member of the China Association for Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture.*

## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

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NOW THAT THIS BOOK has left my hands and reached yours, I hope it will take the same place in your life as it has in mine—as Buddhist comfort food.

These pages describe merely the foundations of the towering mountain of Buddhist practice featured in *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*. And yet, and yet . . . The high points of our spiritual lives can be exhilarating, but they can also prove risky and disorienting. Even as the end of our path approaches, we will still need this book. It reminds us, soothes us, comforts and feeds us. Every time I've come back to this text over the last twenty years of my familiarity with it, I've thanked myself for having done so. There is something deeply good, helpful, and useful here. You may find some new information in these pages, but by and large, even something novel here comes to us with a sense of "Oh, I knew that," without that being an empty boast. This is home ground, this is where we all started. If we haven't previously taken the time to explore every nook and cranny of these foundations of our path, the discoveries we make will still feel as familiar as a cherished childhood hideout.

I make no claim for this book's uniqueness. In fact, the greatest compliment you could pay this volume is to place it next to your copies of *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* by Patrul Rinpoche and *A Torch Lighting the Way to Freedom* by Dudjom Rinpoche, Jigdrel Yeshe Dorje—both translated by the Padmakara Translation Group—and the crown jewel of such books, *A Cascading Waterfall of Nectar* by Thinley Norbu. Each of those books is complete in itself and lacks nothing, and despite the fact that they cover much the same territory, each is unique. In the case of *Foundations of the Buddhist Path*, this book contains no directions for the uncommon preliminary practices of the tantras, yet it does describe in detail all the reader needs to know and retain concerning the underpinnings of tantric practice. This book describes the firm, necessary foundation upon which our spiritual lives as Buddhists can be built. I aspire to have produced a translation worthy of the company of those other three works (themselves translations) because this book in its original Tibetan belongs with them. These are books to live and die by.

That's a tall claim. How can I make it?

It was Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava—who is both our earliest ancestor and our present-day and future living source of inspiration—who remarked,

My view is higher than the heavens,  
Yet my careful attention to karma  
Is finer than flour.

This sums up the challenge facing us all: how to keep our balance at all times, even at the heights of realization. As we approach our path's destination, the horizon that opens before us has been reported time and again, by male and female adepts of different eras and backgrounds, in the same trio of enigmatic words: “indescribable, inconceivable, inexpressible.” Nevertheless, each individual who reached the peak has also echoed a gentle warning: one false step at that altitude and the drop can be long and painful.

*The Foundations of the Buddhist Path* is the first in a series of books—*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*—which will lead you along the entire range of theory and practice of Buddhism to its highest point, great perfection. This first book, modest in its scope, offers lessons that accompany us from now on until the end of our path. No matter how high we soar, this is our grounding, our refuge, our sanctuary, our comfort food.

There is some information readers should be equipped with before reading this book, a translation of an early nineteenth-century treatise written in far-eastern Tibet, drawing mainly from fourteenth-century Central Tibetan sources. You would be correct in suspecting that the author's style does not conform to modern literary models: this introduction will first provide some orientation in the content of this book and in its classic Tibetan Buddhist style. Second, I will pass on what information I have concerning the identity of the author, Choying Tobden Dorje. Lastly, to return to the present day, I will recount how it is that this translation project began and how it has managed to continue.

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BUDDHIST PATH WITHIN  
*THE COMPLETE NYINGMA TRADITION***

*The Complete Nyingma Tradition* contains a series of books on twenty-five subjects that lead the reader through some of the most important features of the founding tantric Buddhist tradition in the Tibetan-speaking Himalayas, the Nyingma, the “ancients.”

The books that comprise this collection are of varying lengths: some are quite short and to the point; others sprawl. Yet despite their disparate sizes, each of the subjects is accorded equal status. The author's lengthy introduction lavishes us with details of the entire work—book names, chapters, number of headings in each, and even the number of punctuation marks in the condensed version.

That last word—version—is important in this work, for we find here five different parallel versions of *The Complete Nyingma Tradition*. Five texts walk us through the same twenty-five topics from beginning to end. Portions of these appear here in translation: in order of their appearance within these covers, they are the following:

(1) The extensive commentary, the longest version, entitled *The Elegant Ornament of the Age of Great Brahma* (“Great Brahma” is the name of our cosmic era) and written in prose, serves for us as the basic treatise; the remaining four versions, its supportive texts. (Traditional Tibetan order would have us move from the shortest, most abbreviated version through to the most complete.)

(2) The root verses, *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*—a concise version of the text entirely in verse. In this case, each line holds nine syllables. This condensed version serves two purposes: it functions within the text as an executive summary: a few of its lines appear under each heading to announce the coming subject in brief. The second purpose is for memorization. As unlikely as it might seem, these nine-syllable lines in Tibetan are ideal to be put to tune, and persons educated in the Tibetan system often have a prodigious capacity for memorizing just this kind of material.

(3) The outline, entitled *The Wish-Fulfilling Vine*, presents the subject headings for all twenty-five books. That is to say, it lists the two thousand, one hundred and seventy-nine headings (yes, 2,179) contained in the books' total of one hundred and one chapters.

(4) In the concise commentary, or word-by-word commentary, each syllable of the root text appears in the order it was first written, interspersed with words to expand on its significance. This text is entitled *The Exquisite Treasure Vase*.

(5) Thus, four texts take us through the material found in these twenty-five books, their one hundred and one chapters, and 2,179 subject headings. We might not have thought to ask for anything more. Yet there is a fifth version: an illustrated version! *A Garland of the Sun, Moon, and Gems* features drawings that recap each major subject. The author claims to have drawn 2,179 illustrations in all; I believe that number corresponds to the panels of his drawings. He counts within the panels that recapitulate the material found in *The Foundations of the Buddhist Path* a total of 4,973 designs. (The author seems to count as a “design” any separate figure that appears within a panel.)

An illustrated version: what a splendid idea! It was, but close to two hundred years before its time. At the time of this book's writing (it was completed in late 1838), and in fact until fairly recently, the only method used for printing indigenous Tibetan books was to have them written out on long, thin planks of wood, with each character or image written in reverse. The wood surrounding the words or images was then carved away, ink was applied to the plank, and a sheet of paper placed on the inked plank. The paper was pressed down to transfer the ink, then gingerly lifted and hung out to dry. This process is still used for printing old texts that have not been digitally inputted; that is to say, very many Tibetan written works.

In the case of illustrations, the process of carving them backward on wood blocks tends to erase evidence of the original artist's craftsmanship. The figures are recognizable but are rendered naïve; as charming as the designs can be, modern Tibetan masters concerned with the preservation of Choying Tobden Dorje's work concur that the drawings must be redone using the tools now available to us.

In the absence of an illustrated version in this volume, the reader will find a similar artifact of old Tibet: the literary apparatus that frames the main text. The author did not only write a condensed version and an outline, he incorporated them in his main work. Thus, much like a newspaper, we find each subject introduced with a headline in large type (the heading), followed by a synopsis in bold (lines from the root text), completed by the actual content of the section. This format inevitably leads to repetition, and a somewhat choppy reading experience: we are deprived of the sweet pleasure of losing ourselves for long in the landscape—yet another “helpful” traffic sign pops up. We will not wander aimlessly.

The positive effect of reading this material with so many signposts is that we end up retaining a sense of the map—if there is any truth to the assertion that our brains have (just) two sides, both are well exercised by our reading. This is all to the good. The Buddha's doctrine has two main facets, which we must balance within our spiritual lives: our ingestion of information and our digestion of it in meditation practice. Traditionally these are referred to as the doctrine of scriptural transmission and the doctrine of realization. Our author announces at the outset that he intends his mammoth work to serve both facets of the Buddhist doctrine. He writes not just for information's sake: he hopes his words are worthy to be first read and understood, then made the subject of reflection, and finally integrated in meditation. As thrilling as any new understanding of Buddhism can be, we are meant to cultivate spiritual experience based on our understanding, then realization based on that experience. Our author presents the

complete path of the Nyingma tradition with the express wish that his readership not be armchair travelers: we are meant to tread the path he describes. At this point, we set out on our journey with just the first ten steps entirely clear before us: *The Foundations of the Buddhist Path* contains the first ten of the twenty-five books he promises. Later volumes are in preparation.

Our author begins, pointedly, with the subject of discipleship: we need to find not just a good teacher but a qualified spiritual master. We need to graduate from our habit of studenthood to thinking of ourselves as disciples. This is a significant step on the path—significantly Book 1 of this volume and series.

Book 2 describes Buddhism and its transmission, both that of the discourses (sutras) that comprise the Buddha's teaching of the lesser and great ways, and the tantras of secret mantra, esoteric Buddhism. Our author again returns to Buddhism as a lived experience by devoting the final chapter of this book to the subject of faith—the foundation of Buddhism, so he says.

Books 3 to 6 cover familiar territory: our precious human life, reflection on death and impermanence, the workings of karma, and the flaws of the round of rebirth. These subjects, ever so slight in the numbers of pages they occupy, have been accorded the label “books,” the better to underline their importance.

Book 7, taking refuge and the lesser way, walks us through the ground rules of Buddhist practice. This is how we enter the path, this is the original Buddhist legal system and code of conduct. The author never encourages us to take monk or nun vows—something he did not do—but the spirit and the integrity of this founding stage of Buddhist practice accompany us all throughout our life as Buddhists.

Books 8, 9, and 10 describe the foundation, the path, and the result of the middle way. All Buddhists of northern Asian countries, including China, Japan, Mongolia, Korea, north India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet, bow at the feet and worship the ideal of male and female spiritual heroes, the bodhisattvas. Every person who claims loyalty to the Nyingma tradition embraces unconditionally the material in these three books; there is no such thing as a Nyingma tradition without it. Every book in this volume contains some, even many, important moments for alert readers. Among them all, Books 8 and 9 are both the longest and the richest.

As mentioned above, *Foundations of the Buddhist Path* begins with the long version of the text, and is followed by three other versions: the root text, the outline, and the word-by-word commentary to the root text. I have added an appendix to these, an afterword by both the author and translator. Choying Tobden Dorje's contribution to this appendix consists of his final words on the subject of each book, summations found at the end of his illustrations. I found

his short closing statements revealing of his primary concerns for each book, the things he wanted to reiterate when he looked back, thousands of pages later. I would recommend readers to consult these essays before or after you read each main subject. To his words I have added some of my own observations.

To answer questions concerning the scope of the rest of *The Complete Nyingma Tradition*, the lengthy introduction that precedes Book 1 in this volume presents in full detail the map of the whole.

In brief, Book 11 presents Buddhist cosmology; Book 12, a massive work in itself, the major and minor subjects of Buddhist culture; Book 13, philosophy. With Book 14, we return to Buddhist practice with the three levels of outer, or exoteric, tantras and an overview of inner, or highest esoteric, tantras. Books 15 to 18 cover the first two levels of inner, or esoteric, tantra, still referred to in the Tibetan Nyingma tradition by their Sanskrit names, mahayoga and anuyoga. With the last books, from 19 to 25, we reach the summit—atiyoga, or as it is often called, great perfection.

Many, if not most, of these subjects used to be veiled in mystery, or so some of the first brave explorers into Tibetan territory believed. Tibetan Buddhist wisdom was surely unknown, but it was also rumored to be unknowable, and not just in the sense that the depth experience at the end of the path of all religions eludes the grasp of human concepts and language. Claims of tantra's monopoly on mystery (not made by the Tibetans themselves) have looked flimsy for many years and are no longer a symptom of lack of available authoritative information but of wishful thinking that such a nebulous zone can exist, a charged chalice into which current fantasies of mysticism, and more, can still sometimes be poured.

*The Complete Nyingma Tradition* lays out before us the full path of Tibet's founding tantric tradition, the "ancient" one. This much—and it is so, so much—can be understood. Our thirsty intellects can drink their fill and feel deeply satisfied. Then we can take our next guided steps, into spiritual experience and realization. And, however inspiring the view from the summit can be, we inevitably return to this book, the foundations of the Buddhist path. The repeated injunction of lamas over the centuries has become a common saying in Tibetan: "The main part of your spiritual practice will only be as good as its foundations." A past leader of the Nyingma tradition, Dudjom Rinpoche (1904–1987) was more specific: "The birth of the experience of great perfection in your stream of being depends on the foundational practices." *Foundations of the Buddhist Path* is just the start, but what starts here ends in enlightenment.

## THE AUTHOR, CHOYING TOBDEN DORJE (1785–1848)

The best information currently available on the subject of Choying Tobden Dorje's life has already been translated and printed, in Nyoshul Khenpo's *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, translated by Richard Barron. There, we read in full,

Chöying Tobden Dorjé received permission to promulgate the vast ocean of wrathful Vajrayana practices, which employ powerful mantras like daggers of meteoric iron. He taught these in the northern reaches. He was born in Repkong in the northeastern region of Amdo. He began his studies by learning to read and write with some of the gurus, tulkus, and mentors of his home area; as his training progressed, he became quite learned. Entering the doorway of the dharma, he took the vows of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vow, and the tantric commitments and put these into practice.

He subsequently felt an intense desire to request the spiritual instructions that could bring freedom in a single lifetime. Setting forth to find a particularly exalted mentor, he arrived at the encampment of Dodrupchen Rinpoché Jigmé Trinlé Özer and stayed for a long time with that guru. From him he received and practiced an enormous range of general teachings on the development and completion stages of the secret mantra approach, as well as the tantra *The Heart Essence of Secrets*, *The Three Cycles of Being at Ease*, *Timeless Awareness as the Guiding Principle*, and other pith instructions of the Dzogchen approach. The enlightened intent of the true nature of phenomena thus arose in his heart.

As a result of this, the precious guru saw that Chöying Tobden Dorjé would become a glorious master of students in the future and that he had a karmic connection with certain deities. He conferred on him the profound key points of the “four penetrations” of the great and glorious Vajrakila, the cycles of Yamantaka (such as *The Four Wheels of Manjushri*), *The Wrathful Imprecations of the Mamo Goddesses* to overturn negative omens, and so forth—that is, the profound wrathful mantra practices of the Early Translation school. Dodrupchen Rinpoché also bestowed on Chöying Tobden Dorjé much



profound advice on fire rituals involving the three activities of suppression, incineration, and projection, which enable a tantric practitioner to awaken to buddhahood. Chöying Tobden Dorjé practiced these, freeing himself through the realization that all dualistic thought patterns are the cosmic array of the mandalas of deity, mantra, and timeless awareness.

Then his guru said to him, “The time has come for you to free others through compassion, so return to your home region and care for groups of students. This will help the teachings and beings, bringing about ever-growing benefit.” Accordingly, Chöying Tobden Dorjé returned to Repkong and cared for his students in that region, particularly with a vast array of activities involving wrathful mantras, and founded a settlement of lay tantric practitioners. The lineages of students of Chöying Tobden Dorjé and Palchen Namkha Jigmé founded Repkong Ngak-nakpa, a major center for the practice of the mantra path, renowned in every corner of Tibet as a site of unparalleled force and might in annihilating negative forces and hindrances. The residents of this practice center were renowned in oral accounts as the “1,900 bearers of ritual daggers in Repkong,” and their lineage has continued to the present day. They had enormous power, the force to overthrow negative and demonic forces. There were many of them, and their amazing life stories illustrate their mastery of the activities of wrathful force—the ability to free others through compassion—and resemble the biographies of mahasiddhas of the past, such as Tumbu Gyazhangtrom and Nup Yönten Gyatso. The expressions of power of wrathful mantras created a great wall shielding the teachings.

Among the many treatises the lord Chöying Tobden Dorjé is said to have written based on his oral teachings were treatments of the cycles for the practical application of wrathful mantras such as *Black Mount Meru: The Final Activity of Suppression*. His principal work was the major treatise *The Treasury of the Ocean of Sutras and Tantras*, which has survived to the present day. His collected works were disseminated widely, and the lineage of his students spread throughout Repkong, Rongpo, and other northern regions for the sake of beings to be guided, so that he came to have students beyond number. Today, there are still many students of his lineage in those regions.<sup>1</sup>

To begin, let us first locate Choying Tobden Dorje in a modern sense of space and time. Nyoshul Khenpo Rinpoche refers to Repkong as “the northern reaches,” a designation that fits with a Buddhist and a Tibetan geographical orientation. On reading “northern reach” written by a Tibetan, we might imagine that if Repkong were located in Europe, it must lie well to the north of Stockholm, whereas in fact its latitude places it slightly south of Algiers. In North American terms, Repkong would not be close to Alaska or in Alberta: it would be situated south of Las Vegas.

We think of Tibet as high, dry, cold, and remote. The altitude in Repkong is 2,500 meters (8,202 feet), slightly higher than Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (a city of over three million), but lower than Bogotá, Colombia (a city of over seven million). Repkong is dry: it gets the same amount of rainfall yearly as Madrid (roughly 42 centimeters; 17 inches), which is more than, for example, Los Angeles. As to temperature, the average low of the coldest month (January) in a city 125 miles away, and less than 800 feet lower than Repkong, is  $-14^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $6^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), standard fare for parts of Scandinavia or the Canadian city where I live.

Finally, Repkong might be located at the “reaches” of the Tibetan world: seen from Lhasa, it is indeed remote: 2,087 kilometers (close to 1,300 miles) away by the shortest route. But Repkong lies just 167 kilometers (104 miles) from Xining, a city that holds an urban population roughly equivalent to that of Dallas, Texas (1,198,304 for Xining; 1,197,816 for Dallas). In modern times (and perhaps in days of yore), Tibetans from Repkong visiting the big city find more of their fellow Tibetans resident in Xining (over 65,000) than they left at home (60,000 in the whole county—Tongren—that contains Repkong). Further, if pilgrims from Repkong want to visit Kumbum Monastery, birthplace of the great Tsongkapa, their route will take them 120 kilometers (74 miles) further eastward, toward China. If they then continue another 240 kilometers (149 miles), they arrive in Lanzhou, a city with an urban population of 2,177,130 (comparable to Houston, 2,100,263, the fourth largest city in the United States). If they wish to visit Taktser, birthplace of the present Dalai Lama, their route takes them even closer to Lanzhou.

I have digressed here to make two points. First, concerning the place where Choying Tobden Dorje lived much of his life and wrote this masterwork, it is worth locating it on the globe to make it become a place we can realistically imagine. Many human beings throughout the world live in similar climactic conditions and at comparable altitudes. As human beings, they’re one of us, we’re one of them.

Second, more than many Tibetans, the Nyingma residents of Repkong have always been conscious of belonging to a minority. The numbers may have

changed over the centuries, but the proportions likely have not: Tibetans in Repkong lived in the close orbit of two enormous Han Chinese cities with no natural boundaries (high mountain passes, for example) between them. Further, the Repkong area was and is predominantly loyal to the Gélugpa order, not the Nyingma. It is my impression that the Nyingma community to which Choying Tobden Dorje belonged, and which he later served as leader, developed its own ecumenical blend and this flavors his writing.

To begin, the Repkong community of Nyingma tantric yogis was founded by Rigdzin Palden Tashi (1688–1743), who traveled from Repkong to enroll in Lhasa’s Drépung Monastery, where he completed his géshé (doctorate in religious philosophy) training.<sup>2</sup> This thorough Gélugpa education did not prevent him from embracing the Nyingma tradition as well, and he returned to Repkong to found a lay community of tantric practitioners. Its members stood out: they wore (and still wear) their hair in long tresses, often dreadlocks wrapped on their heads. They did not organize their community lives around familiar patterns of the monastic code. Rigdzin Palden Tashi’s mission was to gather around himself those committed to embracing the ideals of tantric practice. One of his benefactors wondered aloud if he had set too high a standard for acceptance into his community: Rigdzin Palden Tashi answered that he preferred to have a few good members than hundreds of poor ones. On another occasion, he made this remark, which remains a saying repeated among those trained in Repkong:

You don’t need to practice the wisdom deities;  
You need to keep your tantric bonds.  
All wisdom deities accompany those who keep their tantric bonds;  
They don’t accept offerings from those who violate them.  
Therefore, always keep your tantric bonds.

It stands to reason: if monks or nuns do not keep their main vows, they can hardly expect to reap the spiritual benefits of their chosen path. Likewise, the bodhisattva path only works for those who consciously and conscientiously sustain the training of a bodhisattva. Rigdzin Palden Tashi simply makes the same observation here in the context of the tantric path—the vows (or “bonds,” in tantric language) outweigh any other consideration, including offerings to wisdom deities, or practice of mantras and meditation upon them.

Tantric discipline is the most rigorous of Buddhist paths. Everyone can imagine the sacrifice of monastic life, the noble and demanding path of simplicity, nonviolence, honesty, celibacy, and community harmony. Yet monastic vows only involve physical and verbal behavior; what goes on in one’s

mind is one's own business. Indulgence in mental afflictions, while pointless and against the spirit of the Buddhist path, do not by themselves break any monastic vows as long as they are not expressed physically or verbally. The bodhisattva vows are many times more difficult in that they mainly require training of the mind and the heart. Tantric vows are said to number in the hundreds of thousands, an exaggeration to underline that they are substantially more stringent and invasive than monastic or bodhisattva vows: we are asked to embrace and sustain at every moment until enlightenment a radical, awakened sense of embodiment and enworldment in which our once-dominant rational dualistic mind plays only a supporting role, at best. As compared, monastic vows and bodhisattva training seem like child's play since they are situated in our conventional sense of ourselves, others, and the world.

Rigdzin Palden Tashi first trained in a Gélugpa monastic center. The strength of the Gélugpa order at its best is scrupulous mind training and impeccable honoring of vows. My impression is that Rigdzin Palden Tashi's genius was to apply the spirit of his Gélugpa training to creating a community as devoted to and as irreproachable in tantric discipline as the mainstream Gélugpa institutions were in pre-tantric vows and training.

When Choying Tobden Dorje and Palchen Namkha Jigmé (1757–1821, mentioned above as a fellow disciple of the first Dodrupchen) returned to Repkong, each founded his own community of tantric yogis with much the same mission as that of Rigdzin Palden Tashi. Palchen Namkha Jigmé had trained with some Gélugpa masters, and he set the tone for his followers by forbidding the consumption of meat or alcohol in the course of any religious ceremony. Choying Tobden Dorje was a vegetarian who encouraged his readers to eat as he did and to not wear leather clothing; the great Shabkar (1781–1851), another Repkong yogi, followed the same pattern: early Gélugpa training, vegetarianism, and full monastic ordination, but he chose for his appearance that of a tantric practitioner—long hair and nonmonastic robes. The outer “look” is wild but the inner vows to remain immersed in tantric pure perception are unimaginably strict, deep, and demanding.

Choying Tobden Dorje was one of the “four great roof beams”—close disciples of the first Dodrupchen, Jigmé Trinlé Özer, who was in turn the main disciple of Jigmé Lingpa (1730–1798), revered by all Nyingma practitioners. One of his disciples was Shabkar, in whose life story we read,

[Choying Tobden Dorje] was a Nyingmapa master renowned for his tantric powers and realization of the Great Perfection. He was a disciple of the first Do Drupchen, Jigme Trinley Öser, Kunzang

Shenpen, and founded the monastery of Kohudeh Dzogchen Namgyal Ling, where he taught Jigme Lingpa's *Longchen Nyingthig* cycle.

Around 1833, Shabkar read some of Tobden Dorje's writings, including the *Treasury of Sutra and Tantra*, and was moved to faith. He sent a song of praise to the master, whom he calls Kushog Dzogchen Rinpoche, the Precious Master of the Great Perfection. Shabkar went to meet Tobden Dorje at Gartse. He was received with great pomp and ceremony, and Tobden Dorje compelled him to take his own seat. Shabkar then requested from Tobden Dorje a longevity blessing and the transmission of the *Treasury of Sutra and Tantra*.

When Tobden Dorje died in 1848, Shabkar performed all the funeral rituals and comforted the master's consort and two sons.<sup>3</sup>

What is referred to here as "Kohudeh Dzogchen Namgyal Ling" is now called "Dzokchen Namgyal Ling Ngakpa House," probably a more accurate name than "monastery." The book that so inspired Shabkar, *Treasury of Sutra and Tantra*, is this one, *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*. Nyoshul Khenpo's book includes a note on the subject of the same book, there referred to as *The Treasury of the Ocean of Sutras and Tantras*. The note reads, "An English translation of this monumental collection is in preparation; the project is overseen by Tarchin Rinpoche of the Repkong lineage, who resides in California at the center Pema Ösel Ling."

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To understand how this translation project came to be, we must delve into the meaning of a Tibetan term, *gong dzok* (*dgongs rdzogs*). *Gong* is the honorific term for whatever moves in the mind of enlightened beings; when it is used as a noun, as in this case, it is often translated as "intention." *Dzok* means to complete or to finish. In Tibetan dictionaries, this term's definitions include "to die, honorific"; that is to say, the individual has signaled by death the completion of the projects, the intention, that motivated the rebirth now ended. When the word *drup* (*sgrub*) is added to *gong dzok*, the dictionary informs us that this means to perform a funeral ceremony, literally, to signal the completion of the enlightened individual's intentions for that life.

So dictionaries say. What disciples of Tibetan Buddhist spiritual masters mean

by these terms goes well beyond death and funerals, or even memorial or commemorative ceremonies.



LAMA SHERAB DORJE RINPOCHE.

PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN.

COURTESY OF THE LAMA THARCHIN RINPOCHE HERITAGE FOUNDATION.

The original impetus behind the translation of *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* was first articulated to me using just those two words—*gong dzok*. Here is what was meant in this context: In the course of a life, the buddhas and bodhisattvas who take intentional rebirth among us communicate by words or gestures what they find meaningful in this world. To their disciples, the things they love become imbued with significance. This flower, this garden, this area, this region touched the living buddha more than another: they become his or her emblem, they carry special import, they are worthy to be preserved. The activity of keeping such aspects of an enlightened individual's presence alive on the earth can be referred to as *gong dzok*. Although the word itself is rooted in an individual's death, the accent here is on keeping the individual's intention alive and present.

If this seems foreign, we only have to consider how nations view the lives and writings of their founders, or for whom statues are built, or for whom roads, bridges, parks, schools, airports, cities, and whole regions are named. This could be considered some form of secular *gong dzok*. In the Tibetan Buddhist community, the continuation of spiritual masters' projects after their demise is often managed within ongoing institutional structures.

For individual Buddhists, the place of *gong dzok* in our lives is more complicated. Let us take the case in point: during his lifetime, a Tibetan master often mentioned in his disciple's hearing *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* as an excellent text that had greatly influenced him. The disciple had never seen the text and tried to procure a copy over many years, asking many high lamas and scholars where he could find it. Eventually, many decades after his master had passed away, he was given the condensed version of the work, and set out to have it translated. All this in the name of *gong dzok*—keeping alive the blessed sight and wisdom mind of a living buddha. The deceased master in question had never asked for this book to be translated; he merely praised the book on occasion. Those few words, perhaps delivered casually, remained: this book was something that gave pleasure to this master during his lifetime; that recollection on the part of his attentive disciple was enough to launch this project.

The master was Lama Sherab Dorjé Rinpoche, a native of Repkong and the same Nyingma communities of lay tantric practitioners that produced Choying Tobden Dorje. He was an authentic master who took a young relative under his wing as his disciple or apprentice—the master we now know as Lama Tharchin Rinpoche.

Lama Tharchin began his spiritual journey as a perfect disciple of two masters he held in the utmost regard: His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche and Lama Sherab. It is possible to object, “Well, he had two excellent masters to follow. It would have been difficult for him to become something other than a good disciple!” But discipleship is no easy matter. As rare as it is for us to find and to meet a perfect spiritual master, those incredible masters have just as challenging a task before them: finding persons who are worthy disciples at every level. Some excellent masters live and die never having met the right vessels for their instruction. This is a recurring tragedy: strong lineages do not depend simply on the appearance of a single living buddha but on a series of such buddhas, male or female, each of whom while alive pours the essence of timeless realization into a living golden vessel, who must then live long enough to find another.

Lama Tharchin was just such a golden vessel.

He was also the guiding light behind this project. I wish I could end that sentence with “from start to finish,” but he passed away too soon to see his tireless work come to fruition in this and the other books of this series. This would be the right place to write of him, but it is not the right time. It has been just a matter of months since he left. I am not yet sufficiently sober, emotionally, to reflect upon all he has given me and this project, and to put those thoughts into words. Another time, I hope.

What is possible to express now under the heading of acknowledgments is my deep gratitude to the members of the spiritual community that gathered around him. I traveled and translated for Rinpoche in North America, Hawaii, Asia, and Europe for twenty years, and I lived at his home center in California's Santa Cruz Mountains for fifteen of them. From the start, what impressed me about his disciples, my new spiritual companions, was that their teacher had introduced each of them to buddha nature, and each was trying to accommodate that fresh sight into Buddhist practice and daily life.

I can vividly recall my first experience of meditating with them. Yes, I was rich in years of retreat experience and in language skills, and I was alone in that group in understanding what Tibetan lamas said in their own language and in having some familiarity with the Buddhist systems of thought from which they drew. Nevertheless, from that first occasion, my pride was shattered. I recall being aghast at myself, at my small-minded assumptions concerning the relation between meditation practice and realization, or between mastery of Buddhist knowledge and realization. These new companions of mine had little or no retreat experience and little or no familiarity with Buddhist scholarship. And yet each had a palpable depth of being that I found undeniable, and challenging to my hard-won preconceptions. I felt ashamed of myself. How had I become so stuck, so judgmental, so pettily . . . Buddhist?

The key of course was Lama Tharchin himself. As a teacher, his strategy was explicitly modeled on advice he received from Thinley Norbu Rinpoche: start at the summit of Buddhist instruction, with an introduction to nondual awareness; whatever Buddhist practice an individual does subsequently will further their experience. So I found myself faced with what were in fact highly developed and advanced practitioners whom I was to serve as translator although they had already received and integrated the highest teaching possible. Basically, my job was to not make a mess of what was already as close to ideal as one gets in this world. They knew directly the deepest truth of their own being: why should lesser truths, the rest of Buddhist teaching, be rendered foreign or inaccessible by clumsy translation?

During the next years, before I moved to California, I had the opportunity to translate for Lama Tharchin Rinpoche in France, where he spoke not a word of the language. Time and again, he was able to put his finger on each person's basic makeup and to guide him or her to a recognition of their buddha nature, and to make it seem as if it were the most natural and reasonable thing in the world to continue nurturing that recognition. Therefore, his success in producing a whole community of such individuals in California was not due to his ability to speak English; it wasn't linguistic or cultural magic. Lama Tharchin's realization



of his own enlightened nature was highly contagious and I watched as he infected practically everyone who crossed his path.

Meeting Rinpoche's California community changed my life as a translator. My first teacher Kalu Rinpoche advised us, his translators, to write with a specific audience in mind: persons with at least a college degree who weren't ever going to become Buddhist scholars. Write so they can understand, he'd tell us, even when we were translating books written for professional Buddhists in technical language. He wanted us to decode a text into what could be appreciated by readers who had a decent education outside the rarified realm of Buddhist studies. In short, he knew we knew Tibetan; he wanted to know if we knew English, that is, if we were willing and able to translate Tibetan into standard, non-Buddhist English.

I tried to keep Kalu Rinpoche's directives in mind, but my work for him took place in France and in Asia. The audience he'd had me imagine as I wrote was entirely virtual: I hadn't lived in an English-speaking country since 1976. This is where Lama Tharchin's community comes in—it turned out to be the flesh-and-blood audience Kalu Rinpoche had always asked us to imagine. Men and women of all walks of life, most of whom had college degrees; masters or doctorate degrees plentiful among them. They listened to Lama Tharchin's instruction not to merely study Buddhism—opportunities to do just that are plentiful in the San Francisco Bay area—but to understand, experience, and realize it. My job was to render Lama Tharchin's Tibetan speech into accessible English. He often repeated the advice he'd given another translator: "Imagine you're writing a letter to your father and he has to understand without you standing beside him, explaining each word." This is what he expected of me in public, oral translation, and what he hoped for such texts as this.

I eventually moved from France to California and lived at Lama Tharchin's center for fifteen years during which time I sat next to him, facing his wonderful disciples, hundreds, likely many thousands of them. The surfaces of their lives resemble those of any other human beings: modern life is terribly busy and unreasonably complicated, and in the midst of it all, sickness, aging, and death make unwelcome, inconvenient visits and decide to stay. So yes, these people I grew to know so well are regular male and female "dudes"—good-natured Californians of all ages and races. But not far below the surface, they are persons as rare as stars in the daytime, the most incredibly fortunate persons who were wise enough to take the opportunity to approach an enlightened teacher, gaze into the mirror of his teaching, and immerse themselves in the nondual awareness he showed them to be already present, their true nature—enlightenment. In my mind's eye, I see their faces as they listen to Lama

Tharchin's words that emerge from a dimension of nondual wisdom and nondual compassion outside space and time, words that are then somehow funneled through my voice. I have been thoroughly humbled and inspired by the members of this community, one and all. My translation work on this series is done with them in mind, a mental slide show of modern male and female adepts whose lives are devoted to the care and feeding of nondual awareness. Members of Vajrayana Foundation and the Péma Ösel Ling community, this book and all the next in this series are for you, with loving thanks.

Acknowledgments usually name names. The first of these is Lama Yeshe Wangmo, the person who steered me toward Lama Tharchin and this translation project. She grew up close to me in both Nova Scotia and Montréal, attended McGill University in 1970 as I did, and completed a three-year, three-month retreat under the guidance of the same teacher, Kalu Rinpoche, all without our ever having met. We finally met as fellow translators at Kalu Rinpoche's feet in Bodhgaya, India, site of the Buddha's enlightenment, and she later introduced me to Lama Tharchin in Hawaii. I speak from experience in saying that should you need any good advice, you would do well to approach Lama Yeshe Wangmo, then follow through taking to heart whatever she has told you.

The incredible wisdom being known as Anam Thubten oversaw this project for many years and answered thousands upon thousands of my questions without complaint. His kindness is the sole reason this project ever had a hope of bearing fruit. Minling Khenpo, a hidden Tibetan yogi-scholar of the highest order who now wanders in Californian jungles, ably answered what questions remained.

One sure sign that this project has attracted the blessings of the buddhas is that one of the foremost Western translators, Gyurme Dorje, has agreed to translate a couple of major parts of this work. There is nothing in Tibetan Buddhism that falls outside the scope of his expertise, as readers of some future volumes in this series will see. His translation style and my own are very different, but Lama Tharchin Rinpoche, the project sponsors, and I will be thrilled to welcome Gyurme Dorje's contributions: his many published translations are uniformly impeccable.

Between the completion of a manuscript and its rebirth as a book, we depend on a team of bodhisattvas who work together as Shambhala Publications. Susan Kyser and Nikko Odiseos are the two deeply trustworthy persons, editor and publisher, who have earned our esteem again and again. Among Lama Tharchin's disciples, the stellar Gary Burstein led the community by his example in always finding the time, energy, and patience for the needs of this translation.

Two patrons supported this project. We might imagine benefactors to be wealthy persons aloof from Buddhist practice who take a little time to give to

this worthy cause. That is not the case with either of these patrons—Stephen Farrow and Eric Colombel. If either of them might sometime seem preoccupied, it is not that he wants to slip away to further their business. Both first and foremost devote themselves to putting the teachings they receive into practice and are exemplary models of Western Buddhists. When the history of this period of Buddhism coming to the modern world is written, it will be clear that their significant contributions to establishing Buddhism in different domains (outside of this project) have been very wise and hugely significant. In Eric’s case, he and I have been helped by his able right hand man and woman, Lama Drubgyu Tenzin (Anthony Chapman) and Christiane Buchet of Tsadra Foundation. In my case, when my personal stores of humor and insight, lightness and love, dip precariously low, I am inevitably recharged in full by my young-minded elderly mother, Elizabeth Curry, my wise-beyond-her-years madcap young daughter, Nina Thompson, and my perfect partner, Chönyi Drolma.

Lastly, while I served as Lama Tharchin’s voice for many years, he and I have always been accompanied by the embodiment of his heart and mind—Libby Luning (also known by her Buddhist name, Péma Déchen), his mate, his match. That’s saying something, likely more than you think and surely more than I can fathom.

All of us have worked long and hard to produce this series of books to bring to completion the inspiration of Lama Sherab Dorjé Rinpoche’s life, never for a moment expecting that this gift that Lama Tharchin Rinpoche intended to give his community of disciples and the world would arrive too late to have come directly from his hands to yours. Nevertheless, in his name we offer you this part of his legacy. He wanted you to have it. As he said so many times to one and all: “Don’t worry! Be happy!”



LAMA THARCHIN RINPOCHE (1936–2013).

PHOTO BY CARLOS GONZALEZ.

USED WITH THE KIND PERMISSION OF MARGIE POTEGIAN.

# THE EXTENSIVE COMMENTARY: BOOKS 1 TO 10

*The Elegant Ornament of the Age of Great Brahma*

## THE INTRODUCTION

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- I. The Meaning of the Title of the Root Text
  - A. A Brief Presentation of the Reason for Titles
  - B. The Extensive Explanation of the Title of the Root Text
    - 1. Translation of the Title

## 2. Explanation of the Title

- 3. The Text to Which This Title Is Given
- II. An Expression of Homage
  - A. A Brief Homage
  - B. The Extensive Homage
    - 1. Homage to the Teachers Who Epitomize the Three Wisdom Bodies
    - 2. Homage to the Three Jewels

## 3. Homage to the Three Roots

- III. The Resolve to Compose the Text
- 

### PROLOGUE

Enlightenment's glorious three bodies, three jewels, and three roots, with a host of guardians, to you I bow!

Wondrous Maheshvara, source of bliss, exalted in wondrous glory; wondrous, four-faced Brahma; victorious Indra; and other gods; Wondrous Lord of the Nagas, wealthy with wondrous riches; wondrous Fire God Born from Gifts, and powerful seers— The wondrous crowns of this multitude of wondrous greats among great beings hold supreme, wondrous jewels—Wondrous ornaments that decorate the toenails of the wondrous Victor, the Buddha: may he bestow wondrous auspicious blessings!

to bestow wonderful auspicious blessings.

The essence of our being, primordial purity, in which embellishments are entirely still, transcends realms of thought and expression.

Our nature, radiant ever presence, holds the complete perfection of every quality of what is noncomposite.

All-encompassing nondual compassion produces an endless ocean of effortless enlightened activity.

These three are inseparable in a single sphere—awakened mind, awareness, natural great perfection: to it I bow.

The dawn of the enlightened heritage, beings' innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature, shines with a garland of rays, wisdom's bodies and realms.

Moist clouds—dualistic, deluded thoughts born from ignorance—cover it and rain a constant deluge of karma and mental afflictions.

This dark, dense suffering—transitory stains to be cleansed—can be swept away by cleansing, fragrance-bearing forceful winds, The Buddhist ways of spiritual development based on the discourses and tantras: therefore, I now set forth this extensive commentary.

THE SUBJECT REFERRED TO here, the sublime ambrosia of the Buddhist sacred doctrine, is found in this treatise entitled *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*. This excellent text contains the essence of the realization of infinite numbers of buddhas of all times and directions, validated in the transmission of their canon; pith instructions validated by a sea of scholars, accomplished meditators, and awareness holders, and by my holy spiritual master; the key instructions found in every treatise on the major subjects of Buddhist culture; and information I have validated with my own reasoning, based on hearing the doctrine, reflecting, and meditating upon it.

On an outer level, this text provides subjects to be attentively heard: its words of the scripture's teachings form towering waves on a wide ocean. On an inner level, this text provides subjects for reflection: its meanings, potent jewels of knowledge, are arrayed in superb designs. On a secret level, this text provides subjects for meditation: this work thoroughly explains the key instructions for experiential cultivation according to the tantras, and illuminates them with the radiant brilliance of the sun and moon.

The extensive commentary to this garland of wish-fulfilling gems, sufficient in itself for all purposes, has three major parts: an introduction, the main text, and the conclusion. The inaugural engagement in the treatise, its preliminary, creates the text's initial virtue, the introduction. The domain of that engagement, the body of the treatise, the text's substance, creates the work's continuing virtue

—the main text. Completion of the treatise creates the work’s culminating virtue, the conclusion.

## **THE MEANING OF THE TITLE OF THE ROOT TEXT [I]**

This section has two parts: (1) a brief presentation of the reason for titles, and (2) the extensive explanation of the meaning of the title of the root text.

### ***The Reason for Titles [A]***

Persons of the very highest degree of acumen understand the import of a text by merely having heard a presentation of its title. The great master Vimalamitra affirms this in *The Clear Lamp, an Overview*: Those of the highest degree of acumen comprehend by a presentation of the title; those of a medium degree of acumen, by the table of contents; And the average, by a careful elucidation of each syllable.

*The Short Commentary* states:

Since it epitomizes a preliminary,  
The initial expression of the title is crucial.

*Self-Liberated Awareness* states:

An explanation of the title is like this:  
It consists of the title, homage, and the resolve.

Thus, to begin, I will explain the meaning of the title the book bears.

### ***The Meaning of the Title of the Root Text [B]***

This section has three parts: (1) translation of the title, (2) an explanation of the title, and (3) the text to which this title is given.

#### ***Translation of the Title [1]***

The title of this root text in the well-constructed language of India (Sanskrit) is translated to Tibetan (and English) as follows: *sutra* can be rendered as *mdo*, discourse(s); *tantra* can be rendered as *rgyud*, tantra(s); *ratna* can be rendered as *rin po che’i*, invaluable; *kosha* can be rendered as *mdzod*, treasury; *nama* can be



rendered as *zhes bya ba'i*, known as; *shastra* can be rendered as *bstan bcos*, treatise; *viharatisma* can be rendered as *bzhugs*, is here.

In Tibetan, the title of the root text is pronounced “do gyü rinpoché-i dzö” and is translated into English as *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*.

## ***Explanation of the Title [2]***

In the title, the word *discourse* is defined as follows. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Because they describe circumstances, characteristics,

Phenomena, and meaning, they are discourses.

As stated here, a discourse describes the circumstances of its delivery—the place and time of a teaching, the identity of its teacher, and for whom the teaching was spoken. It describes characteristics—the characteristics of relative truth and of ultimate truth. It describes phenomena, such as the psychophysical aggregations, sense elements, sense bases, and interdependent arising. It describes meaning—the meaning of the Buddha’s intention concerning these subjects. Because such teachings are expressed in the form of dialogues, they are called discourses. *The Compendium of All Discourses* states: Having seen its ten advantages, the Transcendent Buddha revealed his teachings in the form of dialogues, which facilitates (1) an outline, (2) a presentation, and (3) retention; and induces (4) respect, through which stores of goodness and wisdom quickly become complete. The listener (5) quickly realizes the nature of reality, (6) gains faith based on knowledge of the Buddha, and gains faith based on knowledge of (7) the doctrine and (8) the spiritual community. It leads to (9) reaching the sublime state of abiding in happiness during this lifetime; and it (10) can be discussed informally.

Thus, discourses delight the minds of the holy individuals who teach, and listeners enter the ranks of those known as learned among the wise.

What is it that is called *tantra* in the title? *The Later Tantra* states: Tantra is explained as that which is continuous— Techniques and causes produce the result.

Thus, in general, the meaning of what is continuous gives us the term *tantra* (literally, “continuum”). If classified, tantra spans the following: what must be

realized—the continuity of the ground of our being or cause (that is, buddha nature); what produces realization and progress on the path—the continuity of techniques or the spiritual path; the ultimate goal—the continuity of the result; and the volumes that contain the verbal tantras which clearly reveal these subjects. These verbal tantras consist of three categories of exoteric tantras: action, conduct, and yoga; and three categories of esoteric tantras: creation, completion, and great perfection.

All discourses and tantras comprise the Buddhist canon. The canon includes the spoken word, such as instruction spoken by the teachers manifest as the three wisdom bodies—the modes of teaching found in Buddhism’s nine progressive spiritual systems. These nine are based upon the following sets of texts: the monastic code, discourses, the study of observed phenomena, action tantra, conduct tantra, yoga tantra, the phase of creation, the phase of completion, and great perfection.

The canon also includes words the Buddha inspired; that is, instruction spoken by any person in his circle of disciples or any object the Buddha blessed; as well as words he authorized. For example, *The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states: Ananda, when you compile the doctrine after my complete transcendence of sorrow, introduce discourses with, “At one time, I heard these words.” Then relate the discourse with connecting words and finish with, “The Transcendent Conqueror’s speech was manifestly praised.” Compile the discourses in this manner.

If the canon is classified according to antidotes, the twenty-one thousand instructions in the collection on the monastic code provide antidotes to twenty-one thousand varieties of the mental affliction of desire. The twenty-one thousand instructions in the collection of discourses provide antidotes to anger. The twenty-one thousand instructions in the collection on observed phenomena provide antidotes to stupidity. The twenty-one thousand instructions in the great collection on observed phenomena, secret mantra, provide antidotes to those three poisons in equal measure. Thus the Buddha taught a total of eighty-four thousand instructions. *Presentation of an Inexhaustible Treasure* states: The Buddha taught sets of instructions

In numbers equal to the antidotes  
For twenty-one thousand varieties of desire, anger, stupidity,  
And those three poisons in equal measure.

Thus, the measure of a single set of instructions is its functioning as a thorough

antidote to its corresponding mental affliction.

The collection on the monastic code, including such compilations as the four main texts on the transmission of the monastic code, emphasizes training in ethical conduct. The collection of discourses, including such works as *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas*, emphasizes training in mind. The collection on observed phenomena, including such compilations as the seven texts on observed phenomena, emphasizes training in sublime insight.

If the canon is classified according to modes of expression, the Buddha's excellent speech has twelve categories: discourses, aphorisms in prose and verse, prophetic declarations, verses, purposeful declarations, accounts to provide frameworks, narrative stories, legends, tales of the buddha's past lives, extensive teachings, marvelous events, and definitions.

Classified according to its content, the canon has two categories, provisional meaning and definitive meaning. Instruction that emphasizes relative truth expresses provisional meaning; instruction that emphasizes ultimate truth expresses definitive meaning. *The Discourse Requested by Inexhaustible Intellect* states: Instruction that affirms relative truth expresses provisional meaning; Instruction that affirms ultimate truth expresses definitive meaning.

*Invaluable treasury* in the title refers to a precious gem of sovereign power that, according to your wishes, effortlessly showers a rain of everything you need and desire, providing perfect health, longevity, and abundant happiness. To find a limitless number of such gems, colorful and replete with many-faceted qualities, to fill an inexhaustible, massive treasure house spanning many miles, would prove extremely valuable. Likewise, the innermost essential vital instructions of the words, meanings, depth, and vastness of all the canon's discourses, tantras, and pith instructions are concentrated in these volumes, which provide magnificent, inexhaustible, unsurpassable help and happiness, both temporary and ultimate. Whoever uses these texts for hearing the doctrine, or for reflection or meditation on it, will surely procure such effects without hardship. At the very least, whatever connection you make with them, by means of such activity as copying, reciting them aloud, or memorizing them, will plant the seed of liberation and definitely result in your attainment of manifest, complete enlightenment. Therefore, this work corresponds to the metaphor of an invaluable treasury. *Known as* in the title refers to the name given the work whose contents correspond to this special metaphor and meaning.

*Treatise* in the title refers to a treatise distinct from the six flawed genres of non-Buddhist texts, and which is written in the three styles characteristic of

Buddhist treatises. *The Bodhisattvas' Stages of Awakening* states: We believe three kinds of valid treatises are free from these six flawed genres: Meaningless or of invalid meaning; versus meaningful;

Stressing study or debate; versus emphasizing accomplishment;  
Misleading or cruel; versus effective in relieving suffering.

The six flawed genres of treatises refer to the following: treatises that lack correct meaning, such as the four Vedas; invalid treatises, such as those that assert that liberation can be attained based on such views as eternalism and nihilism; treatises that stress study, such as texts on the composition of poetry; treatises that stress debate, such as texts on intellectual systems; misleading treatises, such as those concerned with victory in battle; and cruel treatises, harmful to yourself and others, such as those that assert that the sacrifice of cattle or other animals constitutes valid religious practice.

Distinctly separate from these six are three kinds of treatises that present Buddhists' inner spirituality: treatises that have as their high objective the achievement of temporal happiness and ultimate freedom, treatises that emphasize meditation practices that lead to awakening, and treatises that explain how to entirely relinquish the round of rebirth's suffering.

Supreme treatises are those written by such masters referred to as the six ornaments and the two exemplary masters. Treatises such as Gunaprabha's *The Root Discourse on the Monastic Code of Conduct* provide a condensation of the vast canon. Treatises such as Maitreya's *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* and Nagarjuna's *The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* discern the profundity of the canon. Treatises such as Shantideva's *Compendium of Training*, Maitreya's *The Ornament of the Discourses*, or Ashvaghosha's *The Past Lives of the Buddha* bring order to unsystematic material. Worldly treatises, such as Nagarjuna's *One Hundred Prescriptions*, Nagarjuna's *A Drop of Nourishment for Individuals*, and Suryagupta's *A Treasury of Verse*, present the nature of knowledge. Treatises such as the definitive truth (that is, Asanga's *Compendium of Observed Phenomena*) and Shantarakshita's *Ornament of the Middle Way* present the breadth of knowledge. Treatises such as Asanga's *The Hearers' Stages of Awakening*, Asanga's *The Bodhisattvas' Stages of Awakening*, and Shantideva's *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* present the path to liberation and omniscience.

Further, there exist infinite numbers of enumerations, such as instruction in the form of extensive lists, presentation of difficult points, clarification of the order of terms, succinct presentations of terms' meanings, and distinctions

between former and subsequent subjects. These enumerations have been organized into sections, portions, articles, and chapters; in prose, verse, or a mixture of prose and verse. Their separate sections elucidate short, middle, multiple, or long texts and thus bring vivid clarity to the Buddha's canon. They facilitate discernment among four topics—provisional meaning, definitive meaning, direct intention, and indirect intention. Accordingly, this treatise is written in a style consistent with such treatises that preserve the Buddha's doctrine for a long time.

### ***The Text to Which This Title Is Given [3]***

In the title, *Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*—the canonical source of this text's words, meaning, and philosophy—indicates the text's import. In the title, *The Invaluable Treasury*, where this information is placed, is a metaphor. *The Treatise Known as* refers to this profound and wide-ranging text that unites both the subject and the metaphor.

### **AN EXPRESSION OF HOMAGE [II]**

This section has two parts: (1) a brief homage and (2) the extensive homage.

#### ***A Brief Homage [A]***

**Lord Ever Excellent, to you I bow.**

To translate this sentence from Sanskrit, *Shri* means *Lord*; *Samantabhadra-ya* means *to Ever Excellent*; *Namo* means *I bow*.

In the context of the ground of our being, *Lord* refers to self-arisen wisdom; *Ever*, to never having moved from the *Excellent* wisdom mind, never joined to nor separate from enlightenment's bodies and wisdoms, unmoving and immutable throughout past, present, and future; *I bow* means "May I realize that meaning."

In the context of the spiritual path, *Lord* refers to stable settling in awareness, the awakened mind, the body of ultimate enlightenment's enlightened perspective; *Ever*, eternal resting within that ongoing state, never leaving it; *Excellent*, when the body of ultimate enlightenment's ongoing state has not been overstepped, all appearances and mind arise as primordially liberated, great perfection's display; *I bow*, to "May I be diligent in having my meditation reach the expanse of the nature of reality."

In the context of the result of the Buddhist spiritual path (that is, enlightenment), *Lord* refers to the original lord protector, who appears as the spiritual master of both the round of rebirth and transcendent states, yet dwells in the ever-present, precious secret enclosure, never joined to nor separate from indwelling luminosity, enlightenment's bodies and wisdoms. *Ever* refers to the array, within that ongoing state, of the five certain features of the wisdom body of rapture in the pure land of Dense Design; *Excellent*, within that ongoing state, to the supreme nondual compassion which produces the six sages' displays that guide the six kinds of beings within each of their realms; *I bow*, to the offering of respect.

### ***The Extensive Homage [B]***

This section has three parts: (1) homage to the teachers who epitomize the three wisdom bodies, (2) homage to the three jewels, and (3) homage to the three roots.

### ***Homage to the Teachers Who Epitomize the Three Wisdom Bodies [1]***

**The body of ultimate enlightenment, Ever Excellent, attained enlightenment before all other victors.**

**The wisdom bodies of perfect rapture are the victors, peaceful and wrathful deities—male and female chiefs of the five wisdom clans.**

**The manifest wisdom bodies are victors who manifest in such forms as are called natural, realm-guiding, supreme, or according to beings' needs.**

**These victors are inseparable within the essential wisdom body. To all who epitomize these, I pay homage.**

Our teacher Ever Excellent abides as the body of perfect rapture and the body of ultimate enlightenment in the highest pure land of all buddhas' realms, while he sends out emanations in every place to guide disciples of every kind. A *Commentary to Valid Cognition* states: Freed from the web of discursive thought,

Master of profound and vast wisdom bodies—  
Ever Excellent, whose radiant light  
Shines everywhere, to you I bow.

Ever Excellent as the ground of our being consists of all phenomena's true nature as it is, called "Ever Excellent as our indwelling nature." Ever Excellent as adornments consists of all phenomena's appearances, arising of themselves as the display of phenomenal entities; any and all are pure within the nature of magical illusion. Ever Excellent as a teacher consists of the original lord protector, Eternal Light, chief of all wisdom clans. Ever Excellent as awareness consists of self-arisen wisdom, buddha nature. Ever Excellent as realization consists of the abiding nature of the basic character of our being; to accurately realize it is to gain the eyes of freedom. *The Mirror of Ever Excellent's Wisdom Mind* states: Know all phenomena as the nature of five forms of Ever Excellent. What are these five forms? They are Ever Excellent as the indwelling nature, Ever Excellent as adornment, Ever Excellent as teacher, Ever Excellent as awareness, and Ever Excellent as realization.

Further, before any victor in the three times, Ever Excellent purified every stain of dualistic ignorance, and his stores of wisdom and qualities fully blossomed. He is ever excellent in three circumstances—the round of rebirth, transcendent states, and the spiritual path—the sublime body of ultimate enlightenment, the wisdom of purity and evenness. *The Magnificent King Tantra* states: In the beginning, before all others,

He reached fulfillment in the self-manifest ground of being.  
Purified first and blossomed first,  
He is the original Ever Excellent  
Called the teacher of all the round of rebirth and transcendent states.

Within the ongoing body of ultimate enlightenment, wisdom bodies endowed with form appear in the ultimate, supreme Highest Pure Land. The five male and female victors, chiefs of the wisdom clans—the five are transcendent buddha, vajra, jewel, lotus, and action—appear as hosts of peaceful and wrathful deities, the main figures and their encircling entourage inseparable. The sacred circles of this, their wisdom body of perfect rapture, show many dances of colors, ornaments, attributes, and postures; and they abide continually, forever within the pure basic space of phenomena, adorning it without any gap. *The Secret Essence Tantra* states: Masterful in the basic space of suchness itself, the sacred circles of wisdom, nondual compassion's ongoing state, Are self-manifest—magical forms of meditative states' clear and pure reflections.

These are wish-fulfilling jewels—unaltered qualities of wisdom body, speech,  
mind qualities and activity

mind, qualities, and activity.

Their circle of ornaments, inexhaustible, is the sublime vajra place.

Within the ongoing state of the body of perfect rapture, manifest bodies appear in various forms: For example, these semi-manifest wisdom bodies of perfect rapture, the five victors—the buddhas Immutable, Source of Jewels, Infinite Light, Accomplisher of Goals, and Illuminator—appear in the five pure lands of the victors' natural manifest body—Truly Joyful, Glorious, Blissful, Acts' Fulfillment, and Highest Pure Land of Dense Design.

Realm-guiding manifest wisdom bodies include the six sages: Shakra, sage among gods; Vimachitra, sage among demigods; Sage of the Shakyas, sage among humanity; Steadfast Lion, sage among animals; Blazing Mouth, sage among starving spirits; and King of the Teachings, sage among hell beings.

Sublime manifest bodies demonstrate the twelve deeds of the Buddha. Emanations that appear in relation to beings' needs take different forms—rulers, leaders, scientists, jewels, residences, roads, medicines; or as created emanations—representations of wisdom body, speech, or mind—and in infinite other manifestations.

The inseparability of these, the victors' three wisdom bodies in a single sphere, is the essential wisdom body. To all those who epitomize these forms, I bow with the deepest faith and respect. This constitutes homage. *Self-Manifest Awareness Tantra* states: To think that various forms appear in diversity

From the three bodies' single nature is a mistake.

The body of ultimate enlightenment surpasses the domain of thought;

The body of perfect rapture surpasses the demons of concepts;

And the manifest body surpasses material phenomena.

*The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

The Sage's essential body

Is any attainment of uncontaminated phenomena,

Pure in every circumstance.

Those are its natural characteristics.

*The Tantra of the Magical Display's Manifest Awakening* states:

Because they master awakening's pure stages,

The five teachers, the five highest teachings,

And the five complete and perfect wisdoms

Go to the heart of perfect awakening



GO TO THE HEART OF PERFECT AWAKENING.

*The All-Creating Sovereign* states:

The manifest body guides this realm:  
In one hundred million or more of our worlds, called Land of Jambu,  
Self-arisen wisdom's nondual compassion subdues the six streams of  
beings.

*The Flower Ornament Discourse* states:

O child of enlightened heritage! A transcendent buddha's  
manifestations are measureless: they act to help in any way that their  
form, color, and name can guide any being.

The same text further states:

If beings can be guided by the form of a mendicant, a brahmin, a  
starving spirit, or a hell being, the buddhas manifest that form and  
work for others' benefit.

*The Discourse of Entering Wisdom's Domain* states:

If appearances as a pleasure garden, a jewel, medicine, a wisdom  
mantra, or various useful articles can guide beings, the buddhas will  
appear with such forms and colors.

*Highest Illusion* states:

Myriad manifestations are ceaseless:  
They become such beings as hunters or prostitutes  
And work for the benefit of beings.

## ***Homage to the Three Jewels [2]***

**Victor Lord of the Shakyas, highest teacher of gods and humanity;  
Precious master from Oddiyana, who unites in his single form all victors'  
wisdom, love, capability, and blessing; Refuge of the sacred doctrine—  
discourses and tantras, scriptural transmission and realization—  
teaching the Victor perfectly enunciated; The spiritual community's  
guides who uphold, preserve, and spread the Victor's doctrine: to you**

**all, I pay homage.**

The fourth guiding Victor, Lord of the Shakyas, our sublime spiritual leader, son of King Shuddhodana, is the teacher of gods and humanity, chief of the doctrine, the most kind transcendent conqueror. *The Highest Continuity* states: Noncomposite; spontaneous;

Not realized through extraneous conditions;  
Replete with wisdom, love, and capability;  
And endowed with accomplishment of the two goals: this is the Buddha.

*The Reunion of Father and Child Discourse* states:

To lead beings to complete maturity,  
You, the great, skillful spiritual hero,  
Have appeared as the Buddha  
In one hundred million forms;  
Yet you will appear as many buddhas  
Once again, to guide others.

Our holy, enduring refuge, the sublime deathless vajra body, the precious master from Oddiyana, Guru Rinpoche, unites in his single form every victor without exception throughout the four times (past, present, future, and timelessness) and ten directions—their minds' wisdom that knows precisely reality's abiding nature and the full range of what can be known; their loving nondual compassion toward every being, like that a mother feels toward her only child; their unhindered force and capability; and the inexhaustible blessings of their wisdom body, speech, and mind. *A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor* states: Perfect buddha in vajra posture,

You assume the qualities of enlightenment's form bodies.  
Illustrious buddha born from a lotus,  
You bear a treasury of omniscient wisdom.

Sovereign, you bear myriad magical manifestations.  
Great Buddha, you bear the mantras of knowledge.

In the modes of instruction contained in the canon's discourses and tantras, the victors perfectly enunciated the sublime epitome of scripture and realization—the highest refuge, jewel of the sacred doctrine. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states: The Teacher's sacred doctrine is twofold,

Epitomized by scriptural transmission and realization.  
These are to be only upheld, expressed,  
And put into practice.

*The Highest Continuity* states:

Beyond imagining, duality, or concept,  
Pure, clear, and an effective antidote,  
It is free from, and frees from, attachment  
And has the characteristics of the two truths: this is the doctrine.

Freedom from attachment can be synthesized  
As the truths of cessation and of the path.

Spiritual guides on the correct path who belong to the communities of the great and lesser ways uphold the precious doctrine of the Victor, who is endowed with the ten powers, through hearing, reflecting, and meditating upon it. They preserve the doctrine by removing contradictions [to logic and the Buddha's word] and by affirming what is consistent with them; and they spread the doctrine through teaching, debate, and composition.

To these three jewels, I bow. *The Highest Continuity* states: Because their wisdom's pure vision

Of the inner meaning of the wisdom that knows reality's nature and sees its  
multiplicity, The assembly of wise nonreturners  
Possesses the highest qualities.

The same text further states:

Because they rarely appear, because they are flawless,  
Because they are powerful, because they are ornaments to this world,  
Because they are sublime,  
And because they do not change, they are jewels.

*The Design of the Basket Discourse* states:

When he came to the city of Varanasi, many hundreds and thousands of insects were living in a large area of mud consisting of feces and urine. Exalted Bodhisattva Powerful All-Seeing Eyes came before them, manifested in the form of an insect, and made the sound of the

six syllables from *The Design of the Basket Discourse*: To the Buddha,  
I bow.

To the doctrine, I bow.  
To the spiritual community, I bow.

When the beings heard those sounds and brought the three jewels to mind, the vajra of wisdom crushed their karma and mental afflictions. They became bodhisattvas known as “Sandalwood Breath” and took rebirth in the western pure land Blissful.

### ***Homage to the Three Roots [3]***

**The victors’ holy regents, present-day spiritual masters and those of the lineage, are repositories of sublime blessings; Sacred circles of victors, hosts of deities, are treasures of ordinary feats and sublime accomplishment; The victors’ mothers—mother and sister dakinis of the three regions—befriend those who honor their tantric bonds; Guardians of the victors’ doctrine are authorized to perform the four activities: May all of you be victorious!**

In the perceptions of disciples, those who surpass all buddhas are the spiritual masters authorized as the victors’ regents: present-day, incomparably kind bearers of the scepter of wisdom, masters replete with the three Buddhist codes of conduct, and the lineages’ series of spiritual masters, who are sublime repositories of compassion and blessings. *The Heart Tantra of the Vast Expanse of Space* states: A qualified spiritual master is precious

Even compared to every buddha of the three times.  
Humble homage to a qualified master  
Results in perfect enlightenment.

The infinite sacred circles of peaceful and wrathful victors who appear in the four categories of tantras’ hosts of deities resemble massive treasure vases of both supreme accomplishment—ultimate enlightenment—and ordinary feats, which provide temporal fulfillment of wishes. *The Secret Essence Tantra* states: I see the face of every epitome of full and complete enlightenment— Body, speech, qualities, activity, and mind—

In the ten directions and four times.  
Its dominion is sacred and sublime.

Dwelling in the sacred circle,  
The sacred circle spontaneously arises as the complete sacred circle, Which  
bears, as adornments, every sacred circle.  
Equal union with the complete sacred circle  
Produces the full sacred circle of nondual compassion.  
This lord protector who subdues the sacred circles of time and space  
Liberates the sacred circle of magical illusion,  
And enjoys the sacred circle with neither doer nor acts.

The mothers who give birth to all victors, the hosts of dakinis of wisdom and activity, and powerful celestial travelers of the three regions—below, on, and above the ground—befriend with a mother’s love, a sister’s affection, and a servant’s respect those who honor their tantric bonds. *The Dakinis’ Secret Tantra, Key to the Instructions* states: From the vast sacred space of the vagina

Of Transcendent Conqueror Great Queen Goddess of Bliss,  
Female forms diffuse in a display of manifestation—  
Infinite numbers of emanations and secondary emanations—  
To move earth and space.  
They are various dakinis with their entourage,  
Self-arisen from wisdom body, speech, and mind.

Those who swore oaths to guard and protect the victors’ precious doctrine of discourses and tantras, guardians who bear their promises as personal insignia—the seventy glorious protectors, and hosts of proud spirits of the eight tribes of gods and demons—wield the authority to perform the four major activities—pacifying, enhancing, magnetizing, and annihilating.

May all spiritual masters, deities, dakinis, and guardians crown our heads and be supremely victorious! *The Secret Essence Tantra* states: Poison can be changed into medicinal nectar and transformed

To cure the four hundred and four sicknesses.  
Wealth will arise, the miserable realms will be purified,  
And anything can be transformed to something else.

Space will become solid as a vajra;  
Even fire will ignite and burn,  
Then change into water, and flow down.  
Likewise, the worldly realm will be scattered;  
All will be empty: the sun and moon will fall.

Drawing in, expulsion, binding, release,  
Nourishment, killing, defeat and victory:  
This meditative state does all of these.

The purpose of this offering of homage is that it is very meaningful—for myself, for others, and for us both. Specifically, what I attain is this: If I sometimes praise my supreme ideals with the excellent fortune of words and meaning, I will consider myself to be a high-minded person and undertake the conduct of high-minded individuals, and will thereby complete this work. *The Major Commentary to “The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas”* states: Loving persons who aid others

Will not relax their effort, even if it costs them their life.  
Holy persons who carry a heavy burden  
Will never cast it off, even in terrifying circumstances.

What others attain through such homage is respect, through understanding that the teacher and the treatise are outstanding. Nagarjuna states: Offerings of homage to the Teacher by authors of treatises

Do not remain without effect.  
Therefore, faith and aspiration should be engendered  
Toward the Teacher and the treatise.

What both attain is the completion of the cultivation of goodness and wisdom, which achieves the goals we aspire to. *The Vast Enjoyment Discourse* states: The full maturation of goodness bestows happiness and dispels suffering; Good persons accomplish their wishes,

Vanquish demons, rapidly attain awakening,  
And reach the essence of the cooling peace of transcendence.

*The Discourse That Creates Many Buddhas* states:

Those who keep the guiding victors in mind  
As they perform even a minor act  
Will travel to various higher realms  
And attain awakening.

### THE RESOLVE TO COMPOSE THE TEXT [III]

**May I collect from all sources the meaning of the key instructions of an ocean of the Victor's doctrine—discourses, tantras, treatises, and pith instructions; And all the intent of excellent authoritative texts of profound meaning, and magnificent words and composition, And synthesize them within a single work, *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, And present it in twenty-five books, one hundred and one chapters, and twenty-one hundred headings.**

The following resolve motivates the writing of this text:

May I energetically gather together from all sources the Victor's precious doctrine—the entire inconceivable canon, the cause-based way of the transcendent perfections' discourses and the result-based vajra way's tantras; the series of treatises that provide commentary to them; every essential key instruction found within the deep seas of oral lineages' pith instructions; and the essential intent of excellent authoritative texts of profound meaning and magnificent composition, such as the seven treasuries by Longchenpa. May I place this within a single work, *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, and elucidate it within its twenty-five books; those books' one hundred and one major chapters; and the chapters' two thousand, one hundred and seventy-nine headings. May I present it for the benefit of fortunate persons of present and future generations.

Bodhisattva Loving Kindness (Maitreya) explains the purpose of composing treatises: All teachings are twofold—the canon and the treatises— The excellent speech of the Buddha and its commentaries.

These collections ensure in this world  
That Shakyamuni's doctrine will long endure.

Composition can be done to familiarize the writer's own mind with a subject. Shantideva states: Nothing original is expressed here

And I possess no skill in the art of prosody.  
Therefore, I have no thought to help others—  
I compose this work to familiarize my own mind with these subjects.

This book should be accepted with respect, as stated in *Letter from a Spiritual Friend*: Wise persons honor images of the Joyful Buddha,

Even those made from wood, regardless of their style.  
Likewise, since even this poor book of poetry  
Expresses the sacred doctrine, don't revile it.

The benefits of writing treatises are measureless. *The Flower Ornament Discourse* states: O child of enlightened heritage! Whoever considers sentient beings' innate constituent enlightenment (buddha nature), and whose physical, verbal, and mental compositions are written to correctly guide those who circle within the round of rebirth has supreme, immeasurable compassion. In their sincere diligence applied to worldly sciences or to sublime insight, and their encouragement to ennobling acts, they perform the acts of previous victors; they make offerings to the transcendent buddhas; they raise the doctrine's victory banner; they establish the wide road to freedom; they are holy persons; they are crown jewels.

I formulate my resolve to compose this text in order that I might complete it. *The Major Commentary to "The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas"* states: Noble persons do not make even minor promises.

But if they do,  
Like a drawing etched in stone,  
Even death will not change them.

Thus, I formulate my resolve to protect myself thoroughly from any wish to abandon this work before its completion, due to its difficulty, to my indolence when faced with the scope of its words and meanings, to other's harm, or to discouragement or weariness.

This concludes the first major part, the inaugural engagement in the text, the introduction.

## CONCLUDING VERSES

Persons of the very highest degree of acumen  
Understand what is to be learned, the discourses and tantras' vital points, By  
merely the title of a work  
That collects the vast subjects of the discourses and tantras' texts.



The initial virtue, the inaugural engagement, the introduction,  
Makes supreme offerings of supreme, humble homage  
To supremely demonstrate supreme veneration toward the spiritual master and  
the jewels.

By the power of such homage, may the splendor of fortunate omens nourish me  
in every lifetime.

With heartfelt yearning, yearning, my attention turns to the doctrine.  
With continual energetic effort, effort, I undertake what is very meaningful.  
Even faced with hardship, I again and again develop intense diligence In writing  
this collection of very deep, deep vital instructions.  
These verses mark an interval in this text.

## THE MAIN TEXT—A BRIEF PRESENTATION

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- I. The Content of the Books in This Work
  - II. The Chapters and Headings
  - III. An Outline of the Content
- 

THE DOMAIN OF MY ENGAGEMENT to bring this work to fruition, the body of the treatise, the text's substance, creates the work's continuing virtue—the main text. This has three parts: a brief presentation, the extensive explanation, and a summary. The brief presentation has three parts: (1) the content of the books in this work, (2) the books' chapters and headings, and (3) an outline of the content.

### THE CONTENT OF THE BOOKS IN THIS WORK [I]

**In brief, this work's twenty-five books are as follows: reliance upon spiritual guides; how to teach and listen to Buddhist instruction; Four books—the difficulty of attaining a human life, death, acts and their consequences, and the flaws of the round of rebirth; Taking refuge; three books—the great way's basis, path, and result; Cosmology, Buddhist culture, and an extensive explanation of ways of spiritual development; Secret mantra in general; three books to explain the mahayoga tantra *Secret Essence*;**

**One book on anuyoga; seven on atiyoga—**

**One on the ground, five on the path, and one on the result.**

Persons of a middle degree of acumen understand a text's content just from reading or hearing a recitation of its table of contents. For their benefit, and principally for those of average acumen who must begin their study with brief presentations, I include the following synopsis.

The extensive treatise known as *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* encompasses three major cycles of instruction contained in the work's

twenty-five books: (1) ten books based on the discourses of the ordinary, cause-based way of the transcendent perfections; (2) three books on wide-ranging subjects of knowledge; and (3) twelve books on the result-based vajra way of secret mantra.

The first of these has ten books: (1) the root of all cultivation of what is positive—discipleship and forsaking misleading companions; and (2) the general Buddhist process of transmission through teaching and listening, and how to stabilize the foundation of the sacred Buddhist doctrine, faith. These two are crucial at the outset of any Buddhist spiritual path. The following four books present the four thoughts that turn our minds to spiritual life, the preliminary contemplations that improve our outlook: (3) the difficulty of attaining a free and fully endowed human life; (4) death and impermanence, (5) ennobling and corrupting acts, and their consequences; and (6) the flaws of the round of rebirth. This is followed by one book: (7) taking refuge, the underlying support of all vows, and the basis, path, and result of the lesser and intermediate ways of Buddhist practice based upon ethical conduct. This is followed by three books: (8) the great way's foundation, (9) the great way's path, and (10) the great way's result.<sup>4</sup>

The middle cycle of instruction has three books, on the subject of wide-ranging subjects of knowledge: (11) eons of the formation, abiding, destruction, and vacuity of the cosmos; Buddha Great Brimming Lake of the five wisdom clans; and a description of the worldly realms that appear on a hair-tip; (12) the five major subjects of Buddhist culture—grammar, logic, art, medicine, and Buddhist studies—and the five minor subjects; and (13) general philosophic systems based upon non-Buddhist paths and upon Buddhist paths of the discourses and tantras.

The final cycle of instruction has twelve books: (14) a general explanation of secret mantra's four tantras, (15–17) a specific explanation of mahayoga's *Magical Illusion Tantra*, *The Secret Essence Tantra*, and *The Root Tantra of Gentle Splendor*; (18) an explanation of the supreme transmission, anuyoga; (19) the ground of great perfection, atiyoga; (20–24) five books on atiyoga's path; and (25) the result of atiyoga. Each of these books can be presented separately as follows: Book 1: Discipleship and forsaking misleading companions

Book 2: How the sacred Buddhist doctrine is transmitted through teaching and listening, and how its foundation, faith, is developed  
Book 3: The difficulty of attaining a free and fully endowed human life  
Book 4: The impermanence of composite phenomena

Book 5: Ennobling and corrupting actions, karma, and consequences

Book 6: The round of rebirth's nature as suffering  
Book 7: Taking refuge; the legal code of the spiritual path of individual liberation; and the basis, path, and result of the hearers' and solitary sages' ways of Buddhist practice  
Book 8: The middle way's foundation—the two truths, and the initial uplifting of the mind to awakening  
Book 9: The middle way's path—the twofold cultivation of goodness and wisdom during three intervening incalculable eons  
Book 10: The middle way's result—the two wisdom bodies of final, manifest complete enlightenment  
Book 11: The array of the realms that fill the bounds of space  
Book 12: The ten major and minor subjects of Buddhist culture  
Book 13: An extensive explanation of every philosophical system  
Book 14: The three exoteric tantras and the highest tantras' general foundation—empowerment; their vital force—tantric bonds; their path—view, meditation, and conduct; and their result  
Book 15: A presentation of the title, classification of subjects, prologue, main discussion, and closing statement of *The Secret Essence Tantra*  
Book 16: The peaceful deities' basis, path, and result  
Book 17: The wrathful deities' basis, path, and result; the entrusting of the tantra; and a word-by-word commentary to *A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor*  
Book 18: In the commentary to anuyoga tantras, their foundation—empowerment; their vital force—tantric bonds; their path—view, meditation, and conduct; and their result  
Book 19: In the commentary to the natural great perfection tantras, their origin and an enumeration of their texts; their foundation—empowerment; and their vital force—the tantric bonds' four principles  
Book 20: For those of the highest degree of acumen, who can attain freedom in this lifetime—coming to conclusive certainty in the view of atiyoga  
Book 21: Experiential cultivation in meditation—meditation on cutting through the solidity of dualistic experience  
Book 22: Meditation on the four visions within direct vision  
Book 23: Enrichment of spiritual experience through conduct, introduction to the nature of mind, and signs indicative of degrees of success  
Book 24: For those of a middle degree of acumen, instruction for liberation during the period between lifetimes; and for those of an average degree of acumen, liberation in the realms of the manifest wisdom body  
Book 25: The final result—enlightenment's five bodies and five wisdoms, and acts of spontaneous enlightened activity  
To give examples of past models of this approach, *The Clear Lamp, a Commentary to Matrix of Mystery's Root Tantra* states: The first chapter describes the bestowal of empowerment to those fortunate listeners within the emanated sacred circle of supreme

Buddha Vajra Bearer, epitome of the speaker and the subject of this tantra. Then two subjects are taught: an examination based on distinctions between provisional and definitive meanings, and the techniques to practice meditation on the phase of completion.

The subjects of the subsequent sixteen chapters can be found in this chapter; it provides an entry to and an abode within the two phases of the deity's contemplative practice.

The same text further states:

Chapter 2 presents thoroughly only the phase of completion.

Chapter 3 elucidates the completely pure deity's contemplative practice.

Chapter 4 presents the empowerment's sacred circle.

Chapter 5 teaches the conduct of contemplative practice.

Chapter 6 teaches the blessings of wisdom body, speech, and mind.

Chapter 7 presents an elaboration of the conduct explained in chapter 5.

Chapter 8 teaches the secret empowerment.

Chapter 9 teaches the superb prophecy.

Chapter 10 teaches the invocation of the outer and inner embodiment of the deity's heart mantra, in order to actualize the well-desired accomplishment.

Chapter 11 presents the visualized creation of the knowledge mantras' body and the visualized creation of the wisdom body.

Chapter 12 teaches supplications for the blessing of wisdom mind—complete dissolution into great seal.

Chapter 13 teaches recitations of Vajra Bearer and offerings presented in the course of tantric meditation's two phases.

Chapter 14 teaches the collection of practices to effect enlightened activity.

Chapter 15 teaches the magic-like meditative states, since it is said that realization of suchness itself produces all forms of accomplishment.

Chapter 16 teaches an elaboration of the sacred circle taught in chapter 4—a sacred circle designed in sand.

Chapter 17 thoroughly presents the tantric bonds and vows.

*The Root Heart Medical Tantra* states:

O Great Seers! Learn the pith instruction tantra of the science of medicine! Learn its auxiliary instructions! Learn its parts! Learn its sections! Learn its discourses! Learn its chapters!

The same text further states:

Learn the one hundred and fifty-six chapters. What are they? They are the following: The introduction, the preamble, the basis, the diagnosis,

The methods of treatment, and enumeration of metaphors—six chapters. This collection of principles is known as the root tantra.

*The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

Eight points fully elucidate  
The perfection of sublime insight:  
Knowledge of all aspects of phenomena, knowledge of paths,  
Knowledge of everything,  
Manifest perfect realization of all aspects of phenomena,  
Reaching the peak, culmination,  
Instantaneous manifest perfect awakening,  
And the body of ultimate enlightenment. These are the eight points.

I have composed this text following these examples.

## **THE BOOKS' CHAPTERS AND HEADINGS [II]**

**The hundred chapters are divided as follows: the ten books on the subject of the discourses contain four, three, four, five, four, six, four, three, three, and three chapters; Those on knowledge, four, four, and six; Those on meditation's creation and completion phases, eight, four, three, five, and four; And those on great perfection, four, four, three, four, three, two, and three.**

**The 2,179 headings are divided as follows:**

**Book 1 contains thirty-seven headings; Book 2, twenty-six;  
Book 3, nineteen; Book 4, nine; Book 5, twelve;  
Book 6, twenty-eight; Book 7, thirty-six;  
Book 8, forty-eight; Book 9, eighty-six;  
Book 10, nineteen; Book 11, forty-nine;  
Book 12, one hundred and nineteen; Book 13, eighty-three;  
Book 14, one hundred and fifteen;  
Book 15, eighty-nine; Book 16, three hundred and forty-five;  
Book 17, two hundred and one;**

**Book 18, thirty-five; Book 19, fifty-nine;  
Book 20, one hundred and seventy-one; Book 21, one hundred and  
twelve; Book 22, one hundred and forty-four;  
Book 23, one hundred and thirty-six; Book 24, seventy-eight;  
Book 25, eighty-one; and the Introduction and Conclusion, forty-two.**

**The root text contains 984 verses,  
Divided into three fascicles, with 84 four-line verses remaining.  
Within the root text, there are 31,672 dots between syllables, Divided by  
7,868 punctuation marks that begin and end lines.**

This text's hundred chapters are divided as follows:

- Book 1, "Discipleship," has four chapters:
1. The Characteristics of Qualified Spiritual Masters
  2. The Characteristics of Worthy Disciples
  3. The Stages of Spiritual Apprenticeship

## **4. Forsaking Misleading Companions**

- Book 2, "The Transmission of Buddhism," has three chapters:
1. How Buddhism Is Taught

## **2. How to Listen to Buddhist Teaching**

3. An Exposition of Faith, the Foundation of the Sacred Buddhist Doctrine
- Book 3, "Our Precious Human Life," has four chapters:
1. The Difficulty of Attaining a Free and Fully Endowed Human Life (A General Explanation)
  2. The Difficulty of Finding Such a Life (A Detailed Explanation Based on Examples and Numbers)
  3. The Nature of the Leisure and Endowments of Human Life
  4. The Need to Fully Grasp the Essence of Human Life Now That You Have It
- Book 4, "Reflection on Death and Impermanence," has five chapters:
1. Impermanence (A Brief Presentation)
  2. Impermanence (An Extensive Explanation)
  3. Examples of Impermanence

## **4. Advice to Be Diligent Because of Impermanence**

5. Signs of Success in Meditation on Impermanence, and Its Benefits Book 5, “The Workings of Karma,” has four chapters:

1. The Nature of Acts, Karma, and Consequences (A Brief Presentation)
2. Corrupting Acts and Their Consequences (An Extensive Explanation)
3. Ennobling Acts Consistent with Goodness and Their Consequences

## **4. Acts Consistent with Freedom and Their Consequences**

Book 6, “The Flaws of the Round of Rebirth,” has six chapters:

1. Suffering from Heat and Cold among Hell Beings
2. Suffering from Hunger and Thirst among Starving Spirits
3. Suffering among Beasts of Burden
4. Suffering from Birth, Aging, Sickness, and Death among Humans
5. Suffering from Conflict among Demigods

## **6. Suffering from Death and Falling among Gods**

Book 7, “Taking Refuge and the Lesser Way,” has four chapters:

1. How to Take Refuge, the Basic Support for All Vows
2. How to Keep the Seven Kinds of Individual Liberation Vows
3. The Foundation, Path, and Result of the Hearers’ Way
4. The Foundation, Path, and Result of the Solitary Sages’ Way

Book 8, “The Foundation of the Middle Way,” has three chapters:

1. How the Buddha Taught the Doctrine’s Final Cycle, and an Explanation of Ultimate Truth and Relative Truth
2. The Doctrine’s Middle Cycle, the Buddha’s Past Lives, and Mental Training by Means of the Four Immeasurable Aspirations
3. The Actual Uplift of the Mind to Sublime Awakening

Book 9, “The Path of the Middle Way,” has three chapters:

1. The Bodhisattvas’ Training—Three Forms of Ethical Conduct (A General Explanation)
2. The Six Transcendent Perfections (A Detailed Explanation)
3. Awakening’s Thirty-Seven Facets and Ten Stages on the Four Paths of Training (A Specific Explanation)

Book 10, “The Result of the Middle Way,” has three chapters:

1. The Support and Nature of the Path of No Further Training (A Brief Presentation)
2. Classification of the Path of No Further Training (An



Extensive Explanation) 3. The Special Characteristics of the Path of No Further Training (A Detailed Explanation) Book 11, “The Design of the Realms of Existence,” has four chapters: 1. The Nature of the Four Cosmic Ages—Creation, Abiding, Destruction, and Vacuity 2. The Array of Brimming Lake Buddhas of the Five Wisdom Clans

3. Various Perspectives on Matter and Time, Since They Are Not Ultimately Real
4. What Is Known of the Various Conditions of Life in the World

Book 12, “The Ten Major and Minor Subjects of Buddhist Culture,” has four chapters: 1. Logic and Grammar, Which Stem Others’ Wrong Arguments 2. The Creative Arts and Medicine, Which Aid Fortunate Persons 3. Buddhist Studies—the Meaning of the Discourses and Tantras 4. Minor Subjects—Astrology, Poetics, Synonymics, Prosody, and Drama

Book 13, “Ways of Spiritual Development,” has six chapters:

1. Worldly Spiritual Traditions: Nonphilosophical Theistic and Humanist Traditions Without Realization, and Traditions of Faulty Realization That Preach Doctrines of Eternalism or Nihilism
  2. Transcendent Spiritual Traditions: The Hearers’ Lesser Way and the Solitary Sages’ Intermediate Way
  3. The Great Way of the Bodhisattvas: Mind Only and Middle Way
  4. The Vajra Way: The Exoteric Tantras—Action, Conduct, and Yoga—and the Esoteric Tantras—Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga
  5. How Various Philosophical Systems Spread in the Tibetan Himalayas
  6. The Order of Reasoning in Debate according to *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena*
- Book 14, “The Four Tantras,” has eight chapters:
1. How the Tantras Were Enunciated, Compiled, and Transmitted
  2. Action Tantra
  3. Conduct Tantra

## 4. Yoga Tantra

5. The Highest Yoga Tantras’ Enumeration and For Whom They Were Intended
6. The Highest Yoga Tantras’ Foundation, Empowerment, and Their Vital Force, Tantric Bonds
7. The Path’s View, Meditation, and Conduct

## 8. The Ultimate Result

- Book 15, “The Title, Classification, and Origin of *The Secret Essence Tantra*,” has four chapters: 1. The Tantra’s Origin 2. Explanation of the Title Only, for Those of the Highest Acumen 3. Explanation of the Table of Contents, for Those of Middle Acumen 4. For Those of Average Acumen, Explanation, Based on the Tantra’s Words, of the Introduction, Prologue, Main Discussion, and Closing Statement
- Book 16, “The Basis, Path, and Result of the Peaceful Deities,” has three chapters: 1. The Basis: Creation of and Empowerment into the Deities’ Sacred Circle 2. The Path: The Two Phases of Tantric Meditation, Creation and Completion 3. The Result: Praise to the Nature of Enlightenment’s Bodies and Wisdoms.
- Book 17, “The Wrathful Deities, the Conclusion of the Tantra, and *A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor*,” has five chapters: 1. How the Wrathful Deities’ Sacred Circle Appeared from the Intrinsic, Spontaneously Present Ground of Being 2. Aspects of the Techniques to Practice the Path (An Extensive Explanation) 3. Praises of Enlightenment’s Resultant Bodies and Wisdoms 4. Full Entrusting of the Tantra, and Its Conclusion 5. An Interlinear Commentary to *A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor*
- Book 18, “The Transmission of Anuyoga,” has four chapters: 1. The History and Enumeration of the Anuyoga Tantras (A General Explanation) 2. The Foundation of Anuyoga—Empowerments and Tantric Bonds (A Brief Explanation) 3. The Path of Anuyoga—View, Meditation, and Conduct (An Extensive Explanation)

## 4. The Final Result

- Book 19, “The Ground of Being,” has four chapters: 1. The History and Enumeration of the Atiyoga Tantras (A General Explanation) 2. Empowerments and Tantric Bonds (A Detailed Explanation) 3. The Ground of Being and Appearances of the Ground (A Specific Explanation) 4. Distinguishing between the Storehouse of All Dualistic Experience and the Body of Ultimate Enlightenment, and between Dualistic Mind and Awareness
- Book 20, “The View of Atiyoga,” has four chapters: 1. Place, Time, Companions, and Necessities (A General Explanation) 2. The Special Preliminaries (A Brief Explanation) 3. Techniques to Reach Realization (An Extensive Explanation)

3. Techniques to Reach Realization (An Extensive Explanation)
4. Development of Stable Confidence by Means of Various Profound Instructions Book 21, “Meditation on Cutting Through the Solidity of Dualistic Experience,” has three chapters: 1. The Stages of Meditation for Those of Average Acumen (A General Explanation) 2. The Stages of Meditation for Those of Middle Acumen (A Detailed Explanation) 3. The Stages of Meditation for Those of the Highest Acumen (An Extensive Presentation) Book 22, “Meditation on Direct Vision,” has four chapters:
1. The Supreme Abode of the Wisdom of Awareness (A General Explanation) 2. Preliminaries to Meditation on Luminosity (A Detailed Explanation) 3. The Main Practice, Visions of Supreme Wisdom (A Specific Explanation) 4. The Final, Vital Pith Instructions (A Summary)
- Book 23, “The Conduct of Atiyoga,” has three chapters:
1. Enrichment through Various Forms of Conduct (An Extensive Explanation) 2. The Central Nails and the Nails of the Vital Points of Pointing-Out Instructions (A Summary) 3. Clear Identification of Signs, Degrees of Success, and Duration Book 24, “The Period between Lifetimes and the Realms of the Manifest Wisdom Body,” has two chapters: 1. For Those of Middle Acumen, Stages of Manifest Complete Enlightenment in the Period between Lifetimes 2. For Those of Average Acumen, Stages of Release within the Natural Manifest Wisdom Body
- Book 25, “The Place of Supreme Liberation,” has three chapters:
1. How Manifest Awakening Is Reached on the Ground of the Primordially Pure Inner Basic Space (A General Explanation) 2. How Enlightenment’s Bodies and Wisdoms Appear from the Ground for the Emergence of the Spontaneous Presence of Luminosity (A Detailed Explanation) 3. A Summary of the Subjects of Wisdom Body, Speech, Mind, Qualities, and Activity This literary style emulates *The Ornament of Manifest Realization*, which presents seventy headings, as the text states: Uplift of the mind, profound instructions,  
Four aspects of ascertainment,  
Support of practice,  
The nature of the basic space of phenomena,  
Comprehension, reasons,  
Armor of application,  
Accumulation of disengagement,  
The omniscience of Shakyamuni . . .

and so forth.

Within these books' chapters, 2,179 headings are divided as follows: The four chapters of Book 1, "Discipleship," contain, respectively, eight, two, twenty, and seven—a total of thirty-seven headings. The three chapters of Book 2, "The Transmission of Buddhism," contain, respectively, thirteen, five, and eight—a total of twenty-six headings. The four chapters of Book 3, "Our Precious Human Life," contain, respectively, seven, two, three, and seven—a total of nineteen headings. The five chapters of Book 4, "Reflection on Death and Impermanence," contain five, two, and two—a total of nine headings. The four chapters of Book 5, "The Workings of Karma," contain five, five, and two—a total of twelve headings. The six chapters of Book 6, "The Flaws of the Round of Rebirth," contain thirteen, two, ten, and three—a total of twenty-eight headings. The four chapters of Book 7, "Taking Refuge and the Lesser Way," contain eight, twenty-six, and two—a total of thirty-six headings.

The three chapters of Book 8, "The Foundation of the Middle Way," contain, respectively, thirteen, nineteen, and sixteen—a total of forty-eight headings. The three chapters of Book 9, "The Path of the Middle Way," contain, respectively, twenty, fifty-one, and fifteen—a total of eighty-six headings. The three chapters of Book 10, "The Result of the Middle Way," contain sixteen and three—a total of nineteen headings.

The four chapters of Book 11, "The Design of the Realms of Existence," contain forty-one, five, and three—a total of forty-nine headings. The four chapters of Book 12, "The Ten Major and Minor Subjects of Buddhist Culture," contain, respectively, forty-one, fifteen, eleven, and fifty-two—a total of one hundred and nineteen headings. The six chapters of Book 13, "Ways of Spiritual Development," contain eight, six, thirty-seven, twenty-nine, and three—a total of eighty-three headings.

The eight chapters of Book 14, "The Four Tantras," contain, respectively, two, seven, four, seven, thirteen, thirty-two, thirty-six, and fourteen—a total of one hundred and fifteen headings. The four chapters of Book 15, "The Title, Classification, and Origin of *The Secret Essence Tantra*," contain nine and eighty—a total of eighty-nine headings. The three chapters of Book 16, "The Basis, Path, and Result of the Peaceful Deities," contain, respectively, two hundred and forty-five, ninety, and ten—a total of three hundred and forty-five headings. The five chapters of Book 17, "The Wrathful Deities, the Conclusion of the Tantra, and *A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor*," contain, respectively, forty-six, one hundred and twelve, nine, seventeen, and seventeen—a total of two hundred and one headings. The four chapters of Book 18, "The Transmission of Anuyoga," contain three, eight, and twenty-four—a total of

thirty-five headings.

The four chapters of Book 19, “The Ground of Being,” contain, respectively, twenty-six, two, twenty-one, and ten—a total of fifty-nine headings. The four chapters of Book 20, “The View of Atiyoga,” contain, respectively, four, thirteen, forty-five, and one hundred and nine—a total of one hundred and seventy-one headings. The three chapters of Book 21, “Meditation on Cutting Through the Solidity of Dualistic Experience,” contain, respectively, thirty, twenty-four, and fifty-eight—a total of one hundred and twelve headings. The four chapters of Book 22, “Meditation on Direct Vision,” contain, respectively, forty-six, twenty-one, sixty-two, and fifteen—a total of one hundred and forty-four headings. The three chapters of Book 23, “The Conduct of Atiyoga,” contain, respectively, sixty-six, thirty, and forty—a total of one hundred and thirty-six headings. The two chapters of Book 24, “The Period between Lifetimes and the Realms of the Manifest Wisdom Body,” contain, respectively, seventy-six and two—a total of seventy-eight headings. The three chapters of Book 25, “The Place of Supreme Liberation,” contain, respectively, twenty-one, fifty-three, and seven—a total of eighty-one headings.

The introduction contains twenty-eight headings; and the conclusion, fourteen, a total of forty-two.

In the root text, nine syllables form each line; four lines, each verse; that text contains a total of 984 verses. Calculating three hundred verses per fascicle, there are three fascicles, with 84 four-line verses remaining. Within the entire root text, there are 31,672 dots between syllables, divided by 7,868 punctuation marks that begin and end lines.

I have thus elucidated this text by presenting its books, chapters, headings, verses, fascicles, and so on, since the number of verses and fascicles in every text belonging to discourses and tantras contained in the collections of the canon and treatises (such as the lengthy, middle-length, and short versions of the Mother; that is, *The Perfection of Sublime Insight*) must be known in a similar fashion.

### **AN OUTLINE OF THE CONTENT [III]**

**This single work has two divisions, three parts, and three main subjects. There are thirteen volumes, including a word-by-word commentary, an extensive commentary, and an illustrated version.**

**Four outstanding characteristics distinguish the work. It presents the place, teacher, teaching, and persons who received it.**

**It elucidates the distinct subjects of the bases, paths, and results of the three Buddhist codes of conduct.**

**Its general content describes the path's view, meditation, and conduct.**

**Exertion in hearing this text, and reflection and meditation upon it, leads to skill in teaching, debate, and composition, and to success; Your understanding, experience, and realization will increase, and you will swiftly accomplish the two goals.**

*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* unites in a single work every excellent text that facilitates experiential cultivation based on the canon's discourses and tantras, the treatises, and the pith instructions.

This work has two divisions, that of the vast discourses and that of the profound tantras. Its three parts—the introduction, main text, and conclusion, or the brief presentation, extensive explanation, and summary—cover three main subjects: a common subject, the discourses; a special subject, the tantras; and a wide-ranging subject, knowledge.

In its original Tibetan edition, this work is arranged into thirteen volumes in the following manner: Volume 1, which resembles a universal monarch's precious jewel, contains the root text, a treatise entitled *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, and the outline, *The Wish-Fulfilling Vine*.

Volume 2, which resembles a universal monarch's precious wheel, contains the concise commentary, *The Exquisite Treasure Vase*.

Volume 3, which resembles a universal monarch's precious supreme horse, constitutes the first volume on the discourses from the extensive commentary, *The Elegant Ornament of the Age of Great Brahma*—the introduction, a brief presentation of the main text, and seven books of the extensive explanation: “Discipleship,” “The Transmission of Buddhism,” “Our Precious Human Life,” “Reflection on Death and Impermanence,” “The Workings of Karma,” “The Flaws of the Round of Rebirth,” and “Taking Refuge and the Lesser Way.”

Volume 4, which resembles a universal monarch's precious elephant, constitutes the latter volume on the discourses—three books: “The Foundation of the Middle Way,” “The Path of the Middle Way,” and “The Result of the Middle Way.”

Volume 5, which resembles a universal monarch's precious official, constitutes the first volume on wide-ranging knowledge—one and a half books: the design of the realms of existence; the five major subjects of Buddhist culture; and astrology, from among the minor subjects of Buddhist culture.

Volume 6, which resembles a universal monarch's precious general, constitutes the latter volume on wide-ranging knowledge—one and a half books: the other four minor subjects of Buddhist culture, including poetry; and ways of

spiritual development.

Volume 7, which resembles a universal monarch's precious queen, constitutes the first volume on the tantras—two and a half books: the four tantras; how the tantras arose, from explanations given in the four tantras and a mahayoga tantra, *The Secret Essence Tantra*; and the basis of the peaceful deities.

Volume 8, which resembles the great configuration of wind that underlies our world, constitutes the latter volume on the tantras—two and a half books: the path and result of the peaceful deities; the wrathful deities, the conclusion of the tantra, and *A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor*; and the meaning of the major transmission, anuyoga tantra.

Volume 9, which resembles the great golden foundation of our world, constitutes the first volume on the tantras of great perfection, atiyoga—two books: on the ground of being, and determining the view of atiyoga.

Volume 10, which resembles the great outer and inner oceans, constitutes the second volume on the tantras of great perfection, atiyoga—two books: meditation on cutting through the solidity of dualistic experience and meditation on direct vision's four visions.

Volume 11, which resembles the massive king of mountains, constitutes the third volume on the tantras of great perfection, atiyoga—three books: on conduct; the period between lifetimes; and the result, the place of supreme liberation.

Volume 12, which resembles the circles of the sun and moon, constitutes the first volume of graphics covering two subjects—the common discourses and wide-ranging knowledge; and the index, entitled *The Golden Key*.

Volume 13, which resembles the great sky, constitutes the latter volume of graphics covering one major subject, the special tantras.

These volumes contain eighty separate texts.<sup>5</sup>

Four especially outstanding qualities distinguish this work: the general headings provide a faultless delineation of the work's ground, and thus facilitate identification of the context of any subject. In the root text, the words and meanings are rendered in succinct verse, to facilitate memorization. In the commentaries, the words and meanings are elucidated in prose; their extensive explanations lead to rapid understanding of the intended meaning. The supporting quotations from the scriptures of the Victor's canon allay the reader's doubts and instill confidence.

Each part presents clear details of the magnificent place where a teaching occurred; the magnificent teacher who taught it; the magnificent time the teaching was given; the magnificent entourage of disciples addressed; and the

length of each magnificent teaching of the great or lesser ways' discourse, or exoteric or esoteric tantra. The text also presents an enumeration of the texts translated into Tibetan, and the era and kind of individual for which specific instruction was intended.

This treatise delineates the formulated boundaries contained in the three codes of conduct in Buddhism—the vows of individual liberation, the training of bodhisattvas, and the bonds of secret mantra. It provides a brief presentation of the nature of the foundation of each way of spiritual development of the discourses and tantras, an extensive explanation of the spiritual paths to be traversed—their view, meditation, and conduct; and a summary of their results, an ocean of qualities. These subjects are presented attractively in this complete and flawless three-part format. The treatises that spread from this basic one, like limbs from a body, can be exceedingly numerous.

To summarize the general structure of the subjects found in the main text, it describes three aspects of the path: certainty in the view, experiential cultivation in meditation, and enrichment in conduct.

Those who foster forceful exertion in hearing this excellent text and in reflecting and meditating upon it will be able, in the short term, to spiritually nurture fortunate persons by teaching them the words and meanings of the canon's discourses and tantras, and those of the treatises; to defeat in debate those who voice wrong opinions; and to compose texts to uphold, preserve, and spread the doctrine. They will thus arrive at unhindered supreme erudition and success in every domain.

Further, it is said that those on the path of cultivation understand; those on the path of application experience; and those on the path of seeing realize. Or, it is said that we first understand the meaning of the text, then experience it, and finally realize it. This progressive improvement culminates in the swift accomplishment of our personal goal, attainment of the body of ultimate enlightenment, and of our goal of serving others, attainment of the two wisdom bodies that have form, resulting in uninterrupted aid for boundless numbers of beings.

This text's outline resembles the illustrious Chandrakirti's initial declaration of his five-stage *Summary of the Root Tantra of Matrix of Mystery*: Secret mantra fully accomplishes the wisdom body— The phase of creation is the first stage.

The mere providing a focus for the mind  
Is called the second stage.

The phase of realization is the



Meaning of relative truth  
Is the appealing third stage.

Pure relative truth  
Is what is called the fourth stage.

What pertains to union of the two truths,  
Called integration, is the fifth.

These, the sublime branches of spiritual practice,  
Summarize the meaning of the entire tantra.

This concludes the first part of the main text, “A Brief Presentation.”

## **CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS**

I have briefly presented in succinct form the difficult points of the profound and wide-ranging texts Of the discourses and tantras. For those of a middle degree of acumen, I have elucidated the crucial points, books, chapters, headings, And a summary of the work’s principles and structure.

When you wish to begin to study any text that interests you,  
Train first in this trove of deep, deep instructions.

Rays of many, many insights and realizations will dawn in your heart And you will quickly, quickly become a holy friend to Buddhism and beings.

In order that the supremely meaningful precious doctrine of the victors spread,  
That the significant goal, beings’ lasting happiness, be accomplished, And that the essential goal, freedom’s foundation (a human life), be attained, I fully develop enthusiasm toward these goals and begin this composition.

I, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje, wrote this text for those of the highest degree of acumen, who understand the subjects of a book just by having seen its introduction, including the title; and for those of a middle degree of acumen, who understand the meaning of a text by having read the work’s entire root text and commentary—the thirteen volumes’ titles, five principal sections, twenty-five books, one hundred and one chapters, and two thousand, one hundred and seventy-nine headings—subsumed into three points: an introduction, main text, and summary. Fortune!

This text has been printed by the friend of the doctrine, a secondary emanation of the great scholar Bodhisatto, Buddha Shakyamuni’s monk, upholder of the monastic code of conduct, the omniscient Tenpé Nyima Pal-zangpo. The scribe

was my own disciple, Tsultrim Drimé.

# BOOK 1

## DISCIPLESHIP

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- I. The Characteristics of Qualified Spiritual Masters
  - A. The General Characteristics of Spiritual Guides
  - B. Supreme Wish-Fulfilling Spiritual Masters
  - C. Spiritual Masters Whose Qualities Are Naturally Complete
  - D. Spiritual Masters Liberated from Existence
  - E. Spiritual Masters of Vast Sublime Insight
  - F. Spiritual Masters Who Hold the Blessing of the Successive Lineage
  - G. Spiritual Masters Who Compassionately Lead on the Path
  - H. Spiritual Masters Who Reveal the Ultimate Essential Meaning
- II. The Characteristics of Worthy Disciples
  - A. The Characteristics of Disciples to Be Rejected
  - B. The Characteristics of Disciples to Be Accepted
- III. The Stages of Spiritual Apprenticeship
  - A. The Reasons to Rely upon Spiritual Masters
    - 1. Spiritual Masters Provide Lastingly Useful Advice
    - 2. Spiritual Masters Teach Correct Conduct
    - 3. Cultivation of Goodness and Wisdom Accelerates
    - 4. Protection from Suffering
    - 5. Qualities Flourish
    - 6. Gain of the Rare Opportunity to Receive Profound Teachings
  - B. How to Rely upon Spiritual Masters
    - 1. Search for Qualified Spiritual Masters Wherever They Live
    - 2. Realize That Whatever Spiritual Masters Do Is Guided by Their Wisdom Mind's Realization
    - 3. Rely upon Spiritual Masters Considering Various Examples
    - 4. Please Masters with Material Offerings
    - 5. Pleasing Masters Physically
      - a. Pleasing Masters Physically
      - b. Displeasing Acts to Renounce
    - 6. Pleasing Masters Verbally
      - a. Pleasing Masters Verbally

- b. Displeasing Acts to Renounce
  - 7. Pleasing Masters Mentally
    - a. Pleasing Masters Mentally
    - b. Displeasing Acts to Renounce
  - 8. Please Masters by Obeying Their Commands
  - 9. The Benefits of Discipleship
- IV. Forsaking Misleading Companions
- A. The Harm in Befriending Fools
  - B. The Harm in Befriending the Faithless and Apathetic
  - C. The Harm in Befriending Those of the Lesser Way
  - D. The Harm in Befriending Those without View, Meditation, and Meditative States
  - E. The Harm in Befriending Those Whose Five Poisonous Mental Afflictions Are Intense
  - F. The Harm in Befriending Those Who Feel No Disengagement from the Round of Rebirth
  - G. Why You Must Forsake Misleading Companions and the Benefits of Doing So
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Nagarjuna and Asanga

Illuminate the doctrine like the sun and moon

And can be lauded with other such similes.

To those who resemble two supreme chariots of the doctrine, I bow.

THE MAIN TEXT contains twenty-five parts; Book 1, “Discipleship,” has four chapters: 1. The Characteristics of Qualified Spiritual Masters

2. The Characteristics of Worthy Disciples

3. The Stages of Spiritual Apprenticeship

4. Forsaking Misleading Companions.

These four chapters contain a total of thirty-seven headings.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALIFIED SPIRITUAL MASTERS [I]

This chapter has eight parts: (1) the general characteristics of spiritual guides, (2) supreme wish-fulfilling spiritual masters, (3) spiritual masters whose qualities are naturally complete, (4) spiritual masters liberated from existence, (5) spiritual masters of vast sublime insight, (6) spiritual masters who hold the blessing of the successive lineage, (7) spiritual masters who compassionately lead on the path, and (8) spiritual masters who reveal the ultimate essential meaning.

### *The General Characteristics of Spiritual Guides [A]*

**The extensive explanation of this text begins with “Discipleship.”**

**The general characteristics of spiritual guides are the following:**

**Because holy persons lead the worldly, they resemble everyone.**

**Because they transcend the mundane, they are unlike anyone; they are outstanding.**

**Their acts and conduct are pure. They guide beings skillfully.**

I have written this main text, the extensive explanation, in the manner described in the tantra *Self-Liberated Awareness*: Texts are elucidated as follows:

In concise, extensive,

And very extensive presentations  
Which elucidate the text's words.

Thus, Book 1, "Discipleship," begins with a description of the general characteristics of qualified spiritual masters.

The distinctive mark of holy persons is that, since they lead all worldly individuals, their acts and conduct seem to conform to everyone they guide. Yet, since they ultimately transcend this world, they are unlike anyone else: compared to all their disciples, they are outstanding. Their acts and conduct are pure, unblemished by any fault. They employ a variety of skillful means to guide all beings on the correct path. *The Pattern of the Stem* states: Who can be called spiritual guides? Since they lead all beings, you can see nothing discordant in them. Since they transcend this world, they have nothing in common with anyone. Because the acts they undertake are meaningful in every circumstance, they accomplish infinite beneficial acts for others.

*The Discourse Requested by Maitreya* states:

Know that any liberation gained by hearers, solitary sages, or unsurpassable buddhas, as well as any aggregation of the sight of wisdom, arises from reliance upon spiritual guides. Moreover, Maitreya, any measure of help or happiness experienced by sentient beings arises from their own root of ennobling acts: know that this too arises due to spiritual guides.

*The General Discourse That Gathers Wisdom's Realization* states:

Spiritual masters can be grouped as follows: outer, skillful spiritual masters who cut through false embellishments in their disciples' philosophical view; inner, kind spiritual masters who impart the profound instructions of secret mantra; secret, root spiritual masters who reveal the mind's nature as unborn; spiritual masters of the ground of being's nature; spiritual masters of the pure mind; spiritual masters of symbolic appearances; and the human spiritual masters of a lineage.

### ***Supreme Wish-Fulfilling Spiritual Masters [B]***

**Supreme wish-fulfilling spiritual masters are skillful,  
Are imbued with supreme compassion, and have mastered great**

**treasuries of discourses and tantras.  
They are vessels that cross the wide sea of existence,  
Guides for those who have entered the path, fine gems that dispel  
destitution, Rivers that extinguish the fires of karma and mental  
afflictions, clouds that rain the teachings, Mighty divine drums that  
bring joy to all beings,  
Healers who cure the sicknesses of the three poisons,  
Bright lamps that dispel the darkness of ignorance, wish-fulfilling trees  
that bestow happiness, Exquisite vases that yield everything desired,  
new dawns of universal love, Moons that ease heartache, and mines of  
the riches of every quality, like the wealth god Son of Renown.  
Respectfully rely upon such masters.**

Spiritual masters exhibit expertise in accomplishing significant deeds with a minimum of difficulty. With compassion for others and without sorrow or fatigue, they are infinitely helpful. In these and other ways, they exhibit mastery of the vast treasury of the discourses and tantras. Aspects of their qualities can be related using many examples. *The Pattern of the Stem Discourse* states: O child of enlightened heritage! Moreover, since they free us from the seas of existence, they are like great vessels. For those who have entered the path to freedom, they are like guides. Since they rid existence of decline, they are like sovereign wish-fulfilling jewels. Since they extinguish the fires of karma and the mental afflictions, they are like rivers. Since they cause a torrential rain of the teachings, they are like excellent clouds. Since they bring joy to all beings, they are like mighty divine drums. Since they cure the mental afflictions' sicknesses, they are like sovereign healers. Since they dispel all darkness of abject ignorance, they are like lamps. Since they fulfill every hope and desire, they are like wish-fulfilling trees. Since they yield everything desired, they are like exquisite vases. Since they are imbued with boundless love, they are like the circle of the sun. Since they ease the heartache of the mental afflictions, they are like the circle of the moon. Since they bestow a wealth of positive qualities, they are like the wealth god Son of Renown.

Further in the same text,

I could praise the spiritual guides' qualities in full but could not finish even after an eon. For this reason, always rely upon spiritual guides.

***Spiritual Masters Whose Qualities Are Naturally Complete [C]***

**Spiritual masters whose qualities are naturally complete are from good families, Have all senses intact, are considerate and modest, Are loving and compassionate, have vast sublime insight, And are restrained, erudite, patient, and not deceitful.**

These spiritual masters are born to good families, such as those of royalty, and are very modest, considerate, and conscientious. Their senses are intact and pure due to their previous cultivation of stores of goodness and wisdom. They feel naturally inclined toward the great way; they are imbued with great love and compassion. Their awakened karmic connection due to previous lifetimes' training endows them with wide-ranging innate sublime insight. Because their dualistic mental afflictions are faint, they are restrained and patient. Their search for numerous teachings has made them widely learned. Their deportment in body, speech, and mind is naturally disciplined; thus, they are straightforward and not deceitful. They have rejected base conduct and feel faith in correct ideals. *The Discourse That Gathers Wisdom's Realization* states: Born to good families, endowed with an unhurried mind, inwardly restrained,

Bright and charismatic, they do not condone negative acts.  
Full of the inexhaustible qualities of knowledge,  
They are endowed with a boundless, open intellect.  
They are able to face difficulties, patient, and always straightforward.  
They are sincere, not deceitful in their conduct,  
And have rejected paths of frivolous preoccupations.  
Free from agitation and distraction, they live in seclusion:  
Those endowed with such qualities are worthy to be considered holy.

### ***Spiritual Masters Liberated from Existence [D]***

**Spiritual masters liberated from existence have turned their backs on common human life, Feel faint attachment to homeland, long-guarded wealth, and possessions, Believe in karma and its consequences, are circumspect in relation to ennobling acts to adopt and corrupting acts to reject, And have abandoned hopes for this life. They accomplish what is very meaningful for the long term.**

These spiritual masters live far from their homeland, have turned their backs on worldly life, feel faint attachment to food and wealth, distinguish between ennobling acts to adopt and corrupting acts to reject, and accomplish what is very meaningful for the long term (that is, future lives). *The Discourse That*



*Gathers Wisdom's Realization* states: Powerful heroes forsake their homeland,

Speak truthfully, and live according to what the Buddha has said.  
They are like a lion, sovereign among beasts.  
Circumspect, their qualities magnify.  
They skillfully protect others from any suffering.

### ***Spiritual Masters of Vast Sublime Insight [E]***

**Spiritual masters who know every subject of Buddhist culture are learned in philosophical tenets' words and meaning, Maintain exemplary view and conduct, and are never reprehensible in any way.**

**They do not invent their own teachings but adhere to scripture and logic, Examine the capacities of students, and teach accordingly.**

In general, these spiritual masters have uninhibited understanding of all subjects of knowledge, gained through training in the five major subjects of Buddhist culture. Specifically, after thorough hearing of the gateways to the doctrine and reflection upon them, they understand both the words and meaning of all ways of spiritual development. In particular, their exemplary view and conduct have freed them from inferior, mistaken philosophies. Since their understanding has emerged from the treasure chest of scripture and reasoning, they neither trivialize nor invent teachings. They thoughtfully examine students' intellectual propensities before leading them to enter the doctrine's traditional paths. They distinguish between the spiritual and the mundane, thus skillfully put an end to negative forces and mistaken paths. *The Pattern of the Stem Discourse* states: Those known as spiritual guides are they who have renounced corrupting acts and who act nobly. They flawlessly present the doctrine as it is and act accordingly. They possess the seven treasures of exalted beings,<sup>6</sup> seek awakening, and lead others to that attainment.

### ***Spiritual Masters Who Hold the Blessing of the Successive Lineage [F]***

**Spiritual masters who preserve the lineage of accomplished masters have received the aural lineage's profound instructions.**

**They hold the tradition; thus, they are skillful in accomplishing the two goals.**

**They exert themselves in spiritual practice, have attained**

**accomplishments, and are even able to transform others' perceptions. They have inherited the discourses' and tantras' transmissions, and guard the tantric bonds purely.**

These spiritual masters pleased their own spiritual masters and guides, and now preserve the lineage of accomplished masters. They mined the treasury of their masters' wisdom mind and now wield the aural lineage's profound instructions. They witnessed the customs of their predecessors and are now skillful in ways to accomplish goals for others' good as well as their own. Their constant exertion in spiritual practice has led to their attainment of various kinds of accomplishment. The blessing of their predecessors has entered their being; they are thus able to transform others' perceptions. By the victors' blessing, they inherited the transmissions of the discourses and tantras. Their great fortune in secret mantra leads them to guard purely the designated tantric bonds. *Vajra Magical Illusion* states: The characteristics of spiritual masters of secret mantra are these:

Well-educated, endowed with vast sublime insight,  
Of sure realization of the transmissions' intent,  
Not striving to acquire material objects,  
Accepting of hardship with little sorrow or fatigue,  
Endowed with many pith instructions, liberated from the path,  
Skillful in logic, knowledgeable in the signs of meditative heat,  
Imbued with the awakened mind and pervasive compassion,  
Inheritor of the tantras, skillful in spiritual practice,  
Endowed with a repository of instruction, the streams of transmission are  
complete within them— Their own minds are liberated and they strive  
diligently for others' welfare.

### ***Spiritual Masters Who Compassionately Lead on the Path [G]***

**Spiritual masters have trained in the awakened mind and continually help others.**

**The signs of having received blessing are that they are able to bless others' experience; They have experience of the view, meditation, and conduct and their results; and they are proficient in the signs that indicate attainment of meditative heat.**

**They are powerful, can eliminate all hindrances, and guide others skillfully.**

These spiritual masters have trained in the great way; thus, whatever they do serves others. Their own spiritual masters' blessings have entered them; thus, they are able to bless others' experience. Their training in the meaning of the abiding nature allows them to exhibit signs of meditative heat in the experience of the view, meditation, conduct, and result. Their awareness has reached the vital point; thus, their power and force can eliminate demons and hindering spirits. Skillful in miracles, they overpower mistaken views. Skillful in helping others, they guide beings on the path. *The Highest Certain Expression* states: They are endowed with a stable awakened mind, are skillful,

And possess a full measure of meditative heat in the experience of suchness.

Forceful, and undeterred by hindering spirits,  
They pleased their blessed spiritual masters  
And thereby became vajra masters.

### ***Spiritual Masters Who Reveal the Ultimate Essential Meaning [H]***

**Connection to spiritual masters who reveal the ultimate meaning brings you to the profound path.**

**They introduce the essential meaning, the body of ultimate enlightenment, and reveal pith instructions to enrich that experience. Consummately realized, they accompany disciples to the abiding nature, the ground of being.**

**They skillfully transform any circumstance into the path and are masterful in liberating others' streams of being.**

**The expanse of their wisdom minds spans the sky; their meditative states shine brilliantly like the sun; Their wisdom is deep as an ocean; and their nondual compassion flows like a mighty river.**

**Unmoved by distraction, like snow-covered mountains, they are as steadfast as mountains.**

**Unsullied by existence, like lotuses, they dwell in equanimity like a parent.**

**Replete with qualities like treasures, they lead beings like monarchs. For difficult beings, they surpass any buddha.**

These spiritual masters have unlimited nondual compassion: any connection you can make with them will prove meaningful. Skilled in the stages of spiritual development, they set you on your preferred path to liberation. Their skill in

teaching the path from the beginning according to disciples' interests allows them to lead those of an average degree of acumen to the practice of ennobling acts. On the path of freedom, they use personal guidance to introduce you to direct sight of the innate body of ultimate enlightenment as your own nature. They greatly increase disciples' qualities by means of profound enrichment through training in the energy of meditation. Their consummate mastery of ultimate realization allows them to foster disciples' realization of the true state of buddha nature. Proficient in the profound path of skillful techniques, they transform any circumstance into the spiritual path. Their mastery of various profound instructions makes them skillful in liberating others' streams of being. Because they have wide-ranging sight, learning, and experience, they are adept at eliminating demons and mistaken paths. Their mastery of the highest summits of wisdom mind's realization gives them skill in liberating any being's stream of being. Other metaphors of their qualities are stated in *The Flower Ornament Discourse*: O children of the victors! This kind of spiritual guide's qualities are unlimited. The breadth of their nondual compassion is wide, like the sky. Their collections of retention mantras and meditative states are plentiful, like the planets and stars. Their compassion is boundless, like a great brimming lake. Their kindness is measureless, like a river. They are unmoved by distraction, like snow-covered mountains. They never stray from the nature of suchness, like Supreme Mountain. Although they live in mundane existence, its faults do not touch them, like large lotuses. Their love is unhindered and unbiased, like that of parents. Their qualities are unlimited, like mines of jewels. Their liberation of all who circle within the round of rebirth is like a transcendent buddha's. Their collection of qualities is boundless, infinite.

*The Pristine Sky Discourse* states:

Ananda! Transcendent buddhas do not appear to all sentient beings. Spiritual guides appear to all, present the doctrine, and plant the seeds of liberation. Therefore, consider spiritual guides as superior to the transcendent buddhas.

*The Songs of Realization* states:

Vajra masters are the root of all accomplishment.

**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WORTHY DISCIPLES [II]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) the characteristics of disciples to be rejected and (2) the characteristics of disciples to be accepted.

## ***The Characteristics of Disciples to Be Rejected [A]***

### **Unworthy candidates to be rejected**

**Have poor faith, consideration, modesty, compassion, character, Nature, behavior, and fortune. Their acts and mental afflictions are coarse.**

**They disregard ennobling acts and corrupting acts, vows and tantric bonds. Their positive influences are faint.**

**They are very foolish, small-minded, difficult to please, bad tempered, and argumentative.**

**They harbor the intent to sell to others the teachings they receive.**

**The enormity of bad effects of not examining a prospective disciple harms Buddhism.**

Unfortunate disciples are candidates that are faulty in many respects. Their faith and modesty are faint, as are their consideration and compassion. Their character and nature are negative. Their behavior and fortune are poor. Their minds and mental afflictions are coarse. They violate their training and suitable choices between ennobling acts and wrongdoing; they do not honor their vows and tantric bonds. They do not seal the mental afflictions' doors and are deluded in how to counteract the mental afflictions. Their knowledge is limited, yet they are difficult to please. Only their bad temper and argumentative speech increase. They are naturally diligent in mundane activity. They sell the Buddha's spirit, undermine the doctrine, and betray the spiritual community.

If such persons seek a spiritual master's instruction, their lack of peacefulness harms everyone and they despise everyone: they are like hunters. Even if they decide to listen to a certain teaching from a specific instructor, they see him or her as having many specific faults: they see masters as musk deer. They see teachings given others as valuable musk, which they wish to acquire, boast about, and sell to others. All these acts cause their present life to be illfated and lead to future rebirth in hell. *A Commentary to "The Array of the Three Tantric Bonds Tantra"* states: Contempt for secret mantra's vajra masters,

Exchanging for wealth the instruction received,  
Not honoring the tantric bonds of the wisdom clans—

These acts cause this life to be short,  
Glory and good fortune to decline,  
Suffering from dakinis' punishment,  
And a later fall to the miserable realms.

### ***The Characteristics of Disciples to Be Accepted [B]***

**Fortunate disciples are endowed with strong faith, energy, and sublime insight.**

**They exercise care, mindfulness, and thoughtfulness. They honor their vows and tantric bonds.**

**They do not disobey commands; they are peaceful, disciplined, and loving.**

**They are open-minded, mentally stable, and have strong devotion and pure perception.**

Fortunate disciples are endowed with faith, energy, and vast sublime insight. They exercise caution and mindfulness. They honor tantric bonds and vows. They never disobey the spiritual master's commands; they are peaceful, disciplined, and loving. They are open-minded, mentally stable, and have strong devotion and pure perception. *Self-Manifest Awareness Tantra* states: These disciples are endowed with the power of faith, strong diligence, and acute discernment.

They have no grasping and attachment;  
Are very reverential; and practice secret mantra.  
Their nonconceptual minds remain undistracted.  
They are energetic in spiritual practice while honoring their tantric bonds.

*The General Discourse That Gathers Wisdom's Realization* states:

I make every offering to the holy ones who have these eight qualities:  
Faith without sadness or fatigue,  
Flexibility without stubbornness or arrogance,  
No greed toward possessions,  
Unhesitant service,  
Honest, undeceptive speech,  
A mind free from flattery,  
Undeluded sublime insight,  
And undefiled. superior intention.

Complete mastery of the bounds of training dictated by holy beings  
Liberates your stream of being;  
You travel unimpeded in the domain of all knowledge.  
When the knots of your stream of being are untied,  
You soar like a bird in the sky of sublime insight.

## **THE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL APPRENTICESHIP [III]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) the reasons to rely upon spiritual masters and (2) how to rely upon spiritual masters.

### ***The Reasons to Rely upon Spiritual Masters [A]***

This section has six parts: (1) spiritual masters provide lastingly useful advice, (2) spiritual masters teach correct conduct, (3) cultivation of goodness and wisdom accelerates, (4) protection from suffering, (5) qualities flourish, and (6) gain of the rare opportunity to receive profound teachings.

#### ***Spiritual Masters Provide Lastingly Useful Advice [1]***

**There are six purposes for remaining inseparable from spiritual masters and to continually rely upon them: Spiritual masters provide profound and lastingly useful advice.**

Parents, local rulers, and others can teach you to perform this life's activities, but for excellent, lastingly useful advice and for training in the sacred Buddhist doctrine, you must rely upon spiritual masters. *The Discourse That Gathers Wisdom's Realization* states: They who show the path illuminated by great exaltation

To those wandering here in darkness  
Are the great refuge—spiritual masters:  
No one else can provide such refuge.

#### ***Spiritual Masters Teach Correct Conduct [2]***

**They relieve suffering by teaching discernment in relation to ennobling acts and wrongdoing.**

**They open disciples' eyes to sublime insight and illuminate the path to freedom.**

Rely upon spiritual masters because they teach you how to cultivate the cause of happiness, ennobling acts, and to reject the causes of suffering, wrongdoing. They dispel the darkness of ignorance, illuminate sublime insight, and reveal the path to freedom. *The Hundred Verses on Illusion* states: They exhibit every jewel without exception

Found in the vast treasury of noble qualities.



They eradicate every mental affliction  
And lead to the attainment of the highest result.

Serve them much better  
Than the ruler who has authority in your land.  
Show them much stronger love and affection  
Than you do toward your kind parents who gave you this body.

### ***Cultivation of Goodness and Wisdom Accelerates [3]***

**Only spiritual masters can provide the highest support  
For the swift cultivation of goodness and wisdom.**

For the accomplishment of awakening, you need to cultivate the two stores of goodness and wisdom; therefore, rely upon spiritual masters, since there is no higher field than they for such cultivation. *The Ocean of Wisdom Tantra* states:  
Whoever is fortunate

To be skillful in aiding the spiritual masters' works

Performs deeds more meaningful  
Than rendering homage to the buddhas of the three times  
During ten million, six hundred thousand eons.

*The Flaming Vajra Tantra* states:

The goodness of offering incalculable service  
To immeasurable hundred thousands of principal and surrounding buddhas  
In inexpressible numbers of buddhas' pure lands  
Cannot be compared to a fraction of the goodness  
Of offerings such as gifts of gold  
To spiritual masters, to their inner circle,  
Or to their close circle, including their servants.

### ***Protection from Suffering [4]***

**Because spiritual masters give refuge from all the sufferings of life and the miserable existences, It is worthwhile to rely upon them as your foremost refuge.**

Supreme spiritual masters provide sure refuge from the round of rebirth in general, from the miserable existences in particular, and specifically from every suffering, major or minor. Therefore, rely upon them as a holy refuge. *The King of Illusion* states: As providers of sure refuge from the dangers of the round of rebirth,

And as supreme guides to the transcendence of sorrow,  
There is none other than spiritual masters.

### ***Qualities Flourish [5]***

**For those without qualities, spiritual masters cause ordinary and special noble qualities To develop and to flourish.**

For beginners without any positive qualities whatsoever, reliance upon spiritual masters stimulates ordinary qualities, such as understanding the subjects of Buddhist culture and conventional activity; uncommon qualities, such as those born from hearing the doctrine and reflection upon it; and special qualities, such as meditative experience and realization, which culminate in the state of enlightenment. Since such qualities arise from spiritual masters, you should rely upon them. *The Discourse Showing the Transcendent Buddhas' Inconceivable Mysteries* states: A bodhisattva relies upon spiritual masters and thus perfectly

completes every positive quality.

### ***Gain of the Rare Opportunity to Receive Profound Teachings [6]***

**It is rare in this time of degeneration to find someone who surpasses spiritual masters As teachers of the deep and wide-ranging nectar of the Buddhist doctrine.**

In this time of the five degenerations' proliferation, no one surpasses spiritual masters as teachers of the deep and wide-ranging supreme nectar of the Buddhist doctrine. Therefore, you should rely upon them. *The Precious Tantra of Matrix of Mystery* states: Spiritual masters are the equals of all buddhas.

Since they reveal the spiritual path to any sentient being,  
They are more exalted than the Buddha himself.

### ***How to Rely upon Spiritual Masters [B]***

This section has nine parts: (1) search for qualified spiritual masters wherever they live, (2) realize that whatever spiritual masters do is guided by their wisdom mind's realization, (3) rely upon them considering various examples, (4) please masters with material offerings, (5) please masters physically, (6) please masters verbally, (7) please masters mentally, (8) please masters by obeying their commands, and (9) the benefits of discipleship.

### ***Search for Qualified Spiritual Masters Wherever They Live [1]***

**In any country or region qualified spiritual masters live,  
Strive to find them as if searching for rare food or wealth.**

In any country or region qualified spiritual masters live, strive to find them as you would search for very necessary food or riches. Search with pure faith and humility, as it is very important to not bungle your initial connection with a master. A discourse [*The Discourse Requested by Vishnu*] states: In searching for a spiritual guide, don't cherish your body or life;

don't cling to various material objects; don't be attached to wealth;  
don't wish for praise and service: give them all up and search!

### ***Realize That Whatever Spiritual Masters Do Is Guided by Their Wisdom Mind's Realization [2]***

**Whatever spiritual masters do—gently or forcefully, meaningful or not, major or minor— Is guided by their wisdom mind’s realization.**

During the stages of judging a worthy vessel, genuine spiritual masters overtly examine prospective disciples. To greedy persons, they display strong desire for possessions. To complete the cultivation of goodness of those who make small offerings, they ask for things. To persons with little patience, they make unpleasant, disparaging remarks. To those who are proud of having reduced their possessions and involvements, they show themselves to be busy and concerned with long-term projects.

In brief, although they are not subject to delusion, they display to others various contradictory forms of behavior. They present themselves as persons who do not examine their body and speech, thus making it seem that their minds are deluded. They thereby determine whether or not the state of the prospective disciples’ faith is stable.

It is impossible to fathom holy masters’ acts and behavior. Although they act in a multitude of ways, they do so to guide beings: their wisdom mind never strays from the nature of reality. Know any of the masters’ acts to be the display of their wisdom minds’ prodigious blessing; develop pure perception. *The Discourse of Ten Qualities* states: Develop the perception that they wake you from folly’s slumber. Develop the perception that they pull you from sinking in the mire of the round of rebirth. Develop the perception that they show you the excellent path after you have entered an evil one. Develop the perception that they free you from the fetters of the prison of mundane existence. Develop the perception that they are doctors who cure you from a chronic, oppressive illness. Develop the perception that they are rain clouds that quell your mental afflictions’ blazing fire.

### ***Rely upon Spiritual Masters Considering Various Examples [3]***

**Rely upon masters as you would, for example, ascetics, powerful guardians, warriors, rulers, Teachers, healers, or helpful companions.**

If you very diligently rely upon non-Buddhist ascetics who practice meaningless rites, why not please spiritual masters who reveal the path to liberation? If you honor powerful guardians, lords, leaders, and others, why not offer homage to spiritual masters who provide refuge from the round of rebirth’s sufferings? If you rely upon warriors who free you from dangerous paths, why not rely upon spiritual masters who liberate you from mistaken spiritual paths? If you offer to the ruler your wealth, music, parasols, and so on, why not offer service to spiritual masters who bestow what is very meaningful for the long term? If you

serve teachers of crafts, why not serve those who teach the path to the accomplishment of enlightenment? If you must give gifts to a healer who cures your sicknesses, why not make offerings to spiritual masters who rid you of the five poisons' chronic ailments? If you show consideration to companions who have helped you for a time in sharing food or money, why not serve spiritual masters who reveal the wish-fulfilling jewel of your innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature?

With these thoughts, if you correctly offer service to masters in faith and respect, the infallible interdependent connection created by this act will ensure that others will in turn genuinely respect and honor you. *The Pattern of the Stem Discourse* states: Spiritual guides have been born within the Buddha's wisdom clan, like eldest children of a universal monarch. Because they engender in you the positive qualities of the enlightened heritage, they are like mothers. They accomplish wide-ranging helpful acts, like fathers. They protect you from wrongdoing, like mothers. They teach all forms of training, like masters. They have you enter the path of the transcendent perfections, like guides. They cure the mental afflictions' sicknesses, like healers. They protect you from danger, like warriors. They liberate you from the river of the round of rebirth, like boatmen. All conduct of bodhisattvas depends upon spiritual guides.

### ***Please Masters with Material Offerings [4]***

**Offer without attachment food, clothing, material things, jewels,  
Grain, wealth, fine houses, fields, horses, vehicles,  
All your special wealth—your children, spouse, or servants;  
Sacred representations of wisdom body, speech, and mind; and the finest  
medicine.**

Offer spiritual masters the following outer material objects: particularly delicious and nutritious food; multicolored clothing; whatever tools are useful for the work they have begun; precious metals and jewels, such as gold, silver, copper, iron, turquoise, coral, and pearls; fine houses and seats; land, such as hills, forests, and fields; vehicles, such as horses, elephants, and chariots; your special wealth, such as your children, spouse, or servants; sacred representations of wisdom body, speech, and mind; and medicine that revitalizes the body's constituent elements. Offer whatever you have without cherishing it; you should please spiritual masters with gifts of material things. *The Great Design* states: To please spiritual masters, offer these as gifts:

Horses. elephants. wealth of jewels.

....., precious metals or jewels,  
Your kingdom, your children, your spouse,  
Gold, silver, copper, iron, and gems,  
Food and drink, entertainment, clothing,  
Medicinal essences, grain, flowers,  
Teachings, and material possessions.

Such acts will permit you to achieve now  
Every accomplishment without hindrance.

However, if you do not own such things,  
Present masses of offerings from your mind  
As many times as the years you have lived:  
This creates the same goodness as the previous material offerings.

If one word of the doctrine cannot be repaid by offering respectful service for the length of an eon, what can be said about repaying the masters' every kindness? *The Discourse Requested by Urga* states: To receive a reading transmission or a text for recitation of a verse pertaining to such subjects as the six transcendent perfections or the bodhisattva path of the twofold cultivation of goodness and wisdom, some bodhisattvas might serve the master who gives it with honor and offerings for as many eons as there are letters in the text, yet the respect due the master would still remain incomplete. What then needs to be said concerning respect due when the entire teaching is bestowed?

*The Garland of Tongues of Fire Tantra* states:

However, if a wise Buddhist  
Becomes bereft of food and clothing  
In making offerings to the vajra master,  
This can be compared to offering a celebration a thousand times  
To infinite numbers of fully ordained persons  
Filling an entire kingdom.  
Offering food, or even just clothing,

Just once to spiritual masters  
Has goodness hundreds of times more, inexpressible in words.

### ***Pleasing Masters Physically [5]***

This section has two parts: (1) pleasing masters physically and (2) displeasing acts to renounce.

#### ***Pleasing Masters Physically [a]***

**Physically, bow, present offerings, and perform circumambulations.**

**Do what you are asked on the masters' behalf.**

**Serve, wait upon, attend, and obey spiritual masters.**

**Protect them from fire or water, ravines, wild animals, and enemies.**

Perform all forms of activity, major and minor, such as prostrations, presenting various offerings, circumambulations, and the tasks you are asked to do on the masters' behalf. Respectfully serve, wait upon, and attend spiritual masters by performing the many duties of a servant, such as preparing their seat, and so on. Always protect them from such dangers as fire, water, ravines, wild animals, and enemies. *Gentle Splendor's Wisdom Ornament Discourse* states: Sons and daughters of the enlightened heritage! The mass of goodness gained from service offered to spiritual guides by any person endowed with sublime faith is unlimited and infinite, even when compared to having made offerings to all buddhas who lived during eons as numerous as the sands of the Ganges.

#### ***Displeasing Acts to Renounce [b]***

**Wrong physical behavior includes carelessness, disrespect, scowling,**

**frowning, clapping the hands, turning your side toward the master,**

**stretching the arms or legs, Lying down, fighting, frivolity, playing**

**games, spitting or cleaning your nose, Or stepping over the masters'**

**hair or clothes.**

Wrong physical behavior that must be renounced in the masters' presence includes various forms of carelessness, disrespect, staring and scowling, frowning, clapping the hands or snapping the fingers, turning your back, sitting sideways (that is, not facing them), stretching the arms or legs, lying down, fighting with others, frivolity and playing games, spitting or cleaning your nose, stepping over masters' hair or clothes, seat or horse, and so on; walking in front of, to the right of, or behind masters; or measuring their body. *The Sacred Yogini*



*Tantra* states: Who steps on a master's pillow, and the like,

Will climb the mountain of swords in the hells.  
Who measures a spiritual master's height  
Will be pierced by three hundred spears.

### ***Pleasing Masters Verbally [6]***

This section has two parts: (1) pleasing masters verbally and (2) displeasing acts to renounce.

#### ***Pleasing Masters Verbally [a]***

**Make requests with pleasant words, praise the masters,  
Use polite language, speak supportively of what the masters have said,  
Pray to them, relate the masters' qualities and life stories to others,  
Answer honestly, take refuge, and examine your own speech.**

Verbally, in whatever you ask spiritual masters, articulate your words and use a pleasant tone with neither too many nor too few words. Praise the masters' impressive body, speech, mind, qualities, and activity in ways that are consistent with the masters' character. Be polite and express yourself in a manner supportive of whatever the masters have said. Pray to the masters during the six periods of the day with intense faith and respect. In appreciation of your own good fortune, relate in detail to others the masters' stores of qualities and their life stories. Answer honestly any question they ask. Take refuge in the masters. Always examine your own speech when addressing them. *The Cloud of Jewels Discourse* states: Having performed service, stay on your seat

And offer expressions of praise and support.

#### ***Displeasing Acts to Renounce [b]***

**Wrong verbal behavior includes lies, slander, idle talk,  
Or using harsh language in the presence of spiritual masters, disobeying  
their commands, and talking back.**

At all times in general, and in masters' presence in particular, it is inappropriate to accumulate such negative verbal karma as lies, slander, harsh language, various forms of idle meaningless talk, disobedience toward any commands, talking back, words of annoyance, confidential malicious speech, or provocation

with the intent to test what reply the masters give. *Secret Enjoyment* states: Who ridicules the masters behind their backs

Will suffer in Vajra Hell.  
Don't even slander in jest:  
Completely control the faults of speech.

### ***Pleasing Masters Mentally [7]***

This section has two parts: (1) pleasing masters mentally and (2) displeasing acts to renounce.

### ***Pleasing Masters Mentally [a]***

**Mentally, remember the spiritual masters' kindness and qualities.  
Develop the attitude that the masters, difficult to meet, are greater than  
the Buddha.  
When recalling their acts, tremble and cry.  
Consider that to see, hear, recall, or be touched by spiritual masters is a  
very meaningful event.**

Mentally, consider that for beings such as us, whom previous buddhas were unable to subdue, these spiritual masters are exceedingly kind. The qualities of their body, speech, and mind surpass those of the buddhas since they are the foremost leaders who guide the difficult beings of this degenerate time.

Think that your meeting masters now is due to your cultivation of goodness during previous lifetimes; apart from the present moment, it will be difficult to repeatedly meet such persons. When recalling the character of their deeds and life, you tremble, your hair stands on end, and your eyes fill with tears. Consider that to see their faces just once, to hear their voices once, to hear their names, or to have them touch your head once purifies a great mass of wrongdoing and fills inconceivable stores of goodness. Therefore, develop intense joy. A tantra states: The ultimate act to gain accomplishment

Is to please spiritual masters.

*The Pattern of the Stem Discourse* states:

To keep spiritual guides inseparable from your mind accomplishes all goals.

## ***Displeasing Acts to Renounce [b]***

**Wrong mental attitudes include lack of faith, wrong views, anger, critical attention, Contempt, competitiveness, pride, and coveting. Renounce these acts.**

These attitudes incur immeasurable faults: lack of faith in the masters, wrong views, anger toward their commands, critical attention to their acts or behavior, deeply felt contempt, jealousy, competitiveness, pride (such as thinking that your own family or clan is superior to theirs), coveting their possessions, and so on. *The Tantra That Turns Back the Hordes* states: Disputes with spiritual masters or their entourage

In anger and animosity  
Lead to suffering in the hell of Uninterrupted Torment  
For as many eons as there are atoms in a pure land.

Particularly, liberation on the path of secret mantra is reached through the essence of being itself; thus, the nature of those engaged in the fearless tantric conduct of awareness, or in the conduct of integration is impossible to fathom. In Land of the Exalted (India), the great brahmin Rahula appeared to other brahmins to have allowed his caste-ordained behavior to decline, to have renounced the conduct of an elder, and to live with a woman who worked with bamboo. Many persons, including the king, censured him for this behavior. Shavari lived as a hunter together with a woman. Darikapa lived as a servant to a prostitute. Vyadalipa killed many birds in towns. The low-caste Anangavajra lived with a pig-herding woman and angrily beat her. Vinapa appeared to have attachment to his guitar. Lilitvajra presented herself as a passionate woman who sold alcohol. The master Lavapa was seen as a teacher who declared that stupidity was the path. Indrabhuti was seen as a lustful person. Jalandhariva passed his days in childish play. Tillipa roasted live fish, sometimes pounded sesame seeds, and sometimes feigned insanity. Kukuraja led a pack of dogs. The accomplished master Tantipa lived as a weaver. Gayavati lived as a village musician. The master who only ate *ghuntriri* birds he killed was named after his prey. Krishnavajra saw the female Transcendent Conqueror as a fisherwoman carrying a net on her shoulder. Shri Singha saw Manjushrimitra as a married layperson who plowed the fields. Such examples are so numerous as to be impossible to recount them all.

### ***Please Masters by Obeying Their Commands [8]***

**When the order arrives, “Devote yourself single-mindedly to meditation practice!”**  
**Stay in seclusion, abandon all forms of busyness,**  
**And single-mindedly day and night raise the banner of essential spiritual practice.**  
**Become past masters’ representative and actualize the fruit of accomplishment.**

When holy spiritual masters order, “Engage in meditation practice!” and you do as they command, this constitutes the best among all offerings. This is the purpose for which the Buddha and spiritual masters, themselves buddhas in

succession before our masters, have appeared in this world to impart the doctrine. Therefore, listen attentively to them and act with discernment in relation to acts to undertake or to relinquish. Don't be content with mere understanding: cultivate your experience in the doctrine's meaning and practice. Experiential cultivation must not be an empty façade: practice to merge your own stream of being with the teachings. Moreover, since skillful means and sublime insight are indivisibly united, do not let your spiritual life become a mere aspiration: diligent spiritual practice has unlimited benefits. *The Discourse of the Collection of Bodhisattva Teachings* states: When you begin to cultivate the experience of the spiritual master's profound instructions, your noble intention brings ten qualities to full perfection in inexpressible numbers of billion, million, and hundred thousand units: your powers increase to that degree, that many blessings arise, your obscurations are purified to that degree, you pass beyond that many demons, you enter that many gateways to the doctrine, you complete that many stores of goodness and wisdom, your conduct is purified to that degree, your aspirations are accomplished to that degree, and you attain that many qualities. In brief, you perfect all the qualities of enlightenment.

Such attainment depends on spiritual masters and arises from them.

### ***The Benefits of Discipleship [9]***

**Inconceivable numbers of benefits accrue from correct discipleship:**

**Every fault, shortcoming, suffering, and weakness ends.**

**A great treasure overflows with favorable qualities, talents, meditative experiences, and realization.**

**You bring help and happiness to Buddhism and to beings.**

Inconceivable benefits accrue from correct discipleship: all collections of faults and shortcomings are dispelled; every suffering and weakness ends; a great treasure overflows with favorable qualities, meditative experiences, and realization—you become a sublime individual who brings help and happiness to Buddhism and beings. Moreover, all your doubts are resolved; the web of your discursive thought is cut; you are pulled from the mire of the round of rebirth; the darkness of ignorance lifts; you gain the essence of accomplishment; wisdom is illuminated; you train in seeing the buddhas' pure lands; you travel to pure lands; you accomplish clairvoyance and miraculous powers; in all lifetimes, you meet spiritual guides; and you see the buddhas' perceptions: such benefits are infinite. *The Wheel of Flames Tantra* states: The qualities that arise from

discipleship

Exceed the number of the atoms  
In measureless worlds of the cosmos,  
Hence the name “the highest” (that is, “lama”).

## **FORSAKING MISLEADING COMPANIONS [IV]**

This chapter has seven parts: (1) the harm in befriending fools; (2) the harm in befriending the faithless and apathetic; (3) the harm in befriending those of the lesser way; (4) the harm in befriending those without view, meditation, and meditative states; (5) the harm in befriending those whose five poisonous mental afflictions are intense; (6) the harm in befriending those who feel no disengagement from the round of rebirth; and (7) why you must forsake misleading companions and the benefits of doing so.

### ***The Harm in Befriending Fools [A]***

**Misleading companions to be forsaken are described as follows:**

**Befriending fools diverts you from the correct path.**

**Deficient in knowledge, you unwittingly lead an ordinary, meaningless life.**

Befriending fools is a grave mistake. In general, wandering in the round of rebirth arises from the ignorance due to a foolish lack of knowledge. Karma and mental afflictions as well emerge and spread from ignorance. Specifically, if you are to accomplish awakening on the path of freedom, relying exclusively on unknowledgeable teachers or spiritual masters entails a great loss, since although you hope to gain liberation, you have taken the wrong path.

Wrong paths can be made to seem Buddhist. On such paths, the claim, “The poison of hearing the doctrine’s terminology and reflection upon it will prevent the attainment of enlightenment” belittles the canon’s scriptures. The claim, “Any act one has done furthers the round of rebirth; meditate without activity, like the sky” belittles the path of twofold cultivation. The claim, “On buddhas’ or bodhisattvas’ levels, their powers, fearlessness, bodies of enlightenment, wisdoms, and design of the pure lands’ ornaments constitutes provisional meaning; in fact, there is nothing whatsoever” belittles the result of the spiritual path. The claim, “The qualities of the abiding state, buddha nature, the ever-present luminosity the Buddha described, are provisional meaning intended for

immature persons, whereas this fresh, common experience of present deluded thought is itself the abiding nature” belittles the ground of being. The claim, “The collection of stages, paths, and meditative states are conventional truth but do not in fact exist” belittles the qualities of liberation.

These days some persons are false semblances of spiritual teachers, in discord with any discourse, tantra, pith instruction, scripture, or reasoning. Many such self-proclaimed “spiritual leaders” have appeared: they are fools, their minds untrained by either extensive hearing of the doctrine or reflection upon it, yet they appear majestic as they speak many words that act as demonic influences for the doctrine. They owe their position to nonhuman demons who obstruct faithful persons’ passage to liberation. Demons have blessed them with an entourage and seeming goodness, as described in *The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse*.

When you befriend those ignorant of grammar, you become contaminated by their lack of knowledge of the connection between words and meanings. When you befriend those ignorant of healing, you become contaminated by their lack of knowledge of how to cure sicknesses due to imbalances in the collection of the body’s constituents. When you befriend those ignorant of logical axioms, you become contaminated by their lack of knowledge of the gradual rejection of what is illogical and acceptance of what is logical. When you befriend those ignorant of construction skills, you become contaminated by their lack of success in necessary, short-term projects. When you befriend those ignorant of Buddhist knowledge, you become contaminated by their lack of knowledge of spiritual practice on the excellent path to the temporary, uplifted happiness of the higher realms or to the ultimate, certain liberation of awakening. *The Mindfulness Discourse* states: Misleading companions are the roots of desire, anger, and stupidity; thus, they resemble a poisonous trunk of a tree. They constitute a grave fault.

### ***The Harm in Befriending the Faithless and Apathetic [B]***

**When you befriend the faithless and apathetic,  
You neglect meditation practice; your humility and devotion fade.**

When you befriend those without faith in spiritual masters or Buddhism, clouds of blessings vanish, and you become contaminated by their mistaken separation from the path of freedom. When you befriend those who are indolent and complacent, this casts a shadow on your ennobling acts and contaminates you with the increase of corrupting acts. When you befriend those who do not make

offerings to the three jewels with faith and enthusiasm, you become contaminated by the decline of Buddhism's common customs. When you befriend those who do not practice the teachings with faith and enthusiasm, you become contaminated by the closed door to the increase of the twofold cultivation of goodness and wisdom. When you befriend those who do not rely upon the spiritual community with faith and enthusiasm, you become contaminated by the oppressive faults of ordinary persons. When you befriend those who do not meditate upon the wisdom deities with faith and enthusiasm, you become contaminated by the hope for accomplishment by means of mental aspirations alone. When you befriend those who do not invoke nor offer to the dakinis with faith and enthusiasm, you become contaminated by not accomplishing the messengers of enlightened activity. Therefore, I advise you to forsake these companions. *The Mindfulness Discourse* states: Misleading companions constitute the principal obstacle to all ennobling qualities. You should forsake befriending them, talking to them, or even allowing their shadow to fall on you.

### ***The Harm in Befriending Those of the Lesser Way [C]***

**When you befriend those of the lesser way, you yearn for peace and happiness for yourself alone, And you abandon significant acts for others' benefit.**

When you befriend those of the lesser way mentality, you apply yourself to spiritual practice only for your own benefit. You yearn for peace and happiness for yourself alone, and you abandon undertaking other significant acts for the doctrine and beings' benefit. *The Discourse Requested by Ocean of Intellect* states: Evil companions in the guise of spiritual guides present teachings that contain instruction drawn from the ways of the hearers and solitary sages. They discourage your intention to cultivate goodness. They teach strict seclusion and application to few activities. They rely upon and honor those who do not follow the great way's meaningful written works. They discourage your intention to lead sentient beings to full maturity through the four material means to gather others. They discourage your intention to accept the totality of the sacred Buddhist doctrine.

### ***The Harm in Befriending Those without View, Meditation, and Meditative States [D]***

**When you befriend those without correct views, meditation, or meditative**



**states, those whose training has lapsed, Those who persist in ordinary deluded thinking, those who are acquisitive, Loners, or those who are nihilist or literalist,  
You only manage to talk about Buddhism without any meaningful results.**

When you befriend those without realization of the wisdom mind's view, you become contaminated by their mistaken estrangement from the nature of reality. When you befriend those who have allowed their vows and tantric bonds to lapse, you lose your vows through contamination by the influence of their ruined tantric bonds. When you befriend those who persist in ordinary, deluded, common thinking, you become contaminated by their mistaken straying from the meaning of the abiding nature. When you befriend acquisitive spiritual guides, you lose your store of food and clothing. When you befriend those who delight in living in seclusion without the essential teachings, the Buddha's doctrine deteriorates. When you befriend those who talk vainly concerning emptiness, you become contaminated by their mistaken disregard of causality. When you befriend those without meditative experience who are attached to the literal meanings of words, you become contaminated by their mistaken pleasure in meaningless terms. When you befriend those with theorizing, literal minds, you become numb to experiential cultivation. When you befriend those without training in uplifting their minds to awakening, you become contaminated by their mistaken disregard of the altruistic act of gathering disciples. When you befriend those who consider that purity and liberation arise in a process of cause and effect, you become contaminated by their mistaken disparagement of secret mantra. When you befriend the small-minded who are attached to form, you become contaminated by their fault of considerable distance from the profound nature of reality. *The Treasury of Enlightenment Discourse* states: Worldly enemies can merely take your life: they can only force you to leave this body behind, but they cannot make you fall to the miserable realms. Foolish persons who entered a wrong path can lead those who strive at ennobling acts to the hells for a thousand eons. Why is this? This is due to their engagement in materialist and identity-focused instruction, and the teaching of misleading doctrines. Thus I declare, "Compared to killing all sentient beings, teaching misleading doctrines is a graver negative act."

***The Harm in Befriending Those Whose Five Poisonous Mental Afflictions Are Intense [E]***

**Befriending the unintelligent clouds sublime insight gained from hearing and reflection.**

**Befriending the hateful subverts your character.**

**Befriending the lustful fuels craving for the objects of desire.**

**Befriending the proud increases partiality and dualistic attachment.**

**Befriending those who are exceedingly jealous fosters the torment of competitiveness.**

When you befriend companions or spiritual masters who are mainly unintelligent, this clouds the sublime insight you have gained from hearing the doctrine and reflecting upon it. When you befriend those who are dominated by hate, you become contaminated by their mistaken short temper, malice, and inner turmoil. When you befriend those who are dominated by lust, you become contaminated by their craving for the objects of desire. When you befriend those who search for food and drink, you become contaminated by their mistaken striving for food and drink. When you befriend those whose craving for wealth prevents generosity, you become contaminated by their debilitating greed. When you befriend those carried away by the winds of distraction, you become contaminated by their attachment to sexual desire and fashion. When you befriend the proud, you become contaminated by their partiality and dualistic attachment. When you befriend those dominated by jealousy, you become contaminated by their competitiveness and aggression. When you befriend those dominated by greed, you become contaminated by their grasping attachment to their piles of manure. *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse* states: Who is a misleading companion? It is anyone who impairs ennobling acts and who leads you to corrupting acts. Don't rely upon such persons. Don't honor them. Don't even look at them.

Further in the same text:

Those of the hearers' way work hard for their own good

And reject helping others in order to help themselves.

Those who rely upon them collect objects;

It is never for the doctrine that they gather.

Therefore, as the Buddha said, reject negative spiritual guides and negative companions, And keep them at a distance.

***The Harm in Befriending Those Who Feel No Disengagement from the Round of Rebirth [F]***

**Befriending those attached to this life, those without disengagement or disillusionment at the state of existence, Those who socialize, those who seek amusement and follow fashions,  
Those who wield power or crave wealth, profiteers,  
Butchers, those who act evilly, those who act deceptively, or those who commit both good and evil acts Contaminates you with the reprehensible behavior of each.**

When you befriend common families, you become contaminated by their lifestyle of farming (or other work) and hoarding. When you befriend important government officials, you become contaminated by their discussions and negative motivation. When you befriend the young who enjoy entertainment, you become contaminated by their singing, dancing, and vulgar activity. When you befriend those who seek profit and wealth, you become contaminated by their search for food and riches. When you befriend powerful rulers, you become contaminated by their pride and power. When you befriend those who steal and fight, you become contaminated by their anger, beating, and killing. When you befriend those who do the evil work of butchers, you become contaminated by their inurement to evil acts and their pleasure in killing. When you befriend those who lie and deceive, you become contaminated by their fault of spreading false and deceptive stories. *The Collection of Sayings* states: The wise do not associate

With those who lack faith, who are envious,  
Who lie or slander.  
They do not befriend persons who act negatively.  
They do not rely upon them.  
Those who do become contaminated by their faults,  
Like an arrow once dipped in poison  
Taints even those arrows in the same sheath not dipped in poison.

### ***Why You Must Forsake Misleading Companions and the Benefits of Doing So [G]***

**Befriending misleading companions undermines lasting happiness  
And leads to extreme suffering in the round of rebirth's miserable existences: Examine your companions as you would a refuge, a guide, or an article you buy.**

**Forsaking misleading companions increases ennobling acts,  
You do not regress, and you will fully accomplish mindfulness,**

**Meditative states, vast sublime insight, and an array of qualities.**

**This life and the next will be happy; you will proceed from happiness to happiness.**

Befriending misleading companions impedes the karmic causes that produce rebirth in the higher realms, freedom, and the state of omniscience. Such persons lead you to the unbearable sufferings of the round of rebirth and the miserable existences. Therefore, fear misleading companions like wild animals fear hunters, like mice fear hawks, like you would fear an executioner, or like you would fear a wild elephant.

Examine negative companions as you would a temporary refuge or a guide along a dangerous path, or as you would an article you buy, such as gold, silver, or gems. The advantages of examining and forsaking negative companions are that your cultivation of ennobling acts increases, you do not regress into mistaken paths, and you accomplish mindfulness, meditative states, vast sublime insight, and an array of exceedingly numerous qualities. This life and the next will be happy: you will proceed from happiness to happiness until you reach the state of supreme great exaltation. *The Pristine Moon Discourse* states: In the future many fully ordained persons with manifest pride will falsify the Buddhist doctrine. At that time, they will blend their own polluted instructions with the pure ones and claim them to be sacred. They will not honor other Buddhist teachers; they will not ask questions of other instructors; they will slander them with a totally hateful mind. After death, these foolish persons will fall back into the miserable existences' lower states and take rebirth there due to these causes.

Do not forsake misleading companions with ill will; you must abandon them with compassion. *The Cloud of Jewels Discourse* states: Misleading companions must be totally forsaken. Forsake such persons as those whose ethical conduct has deteriorated, whose religious rites have deteriorated, who enjoy busyness, who are lazy, who enjoy the round of rebirth, who turn their back on awakening, or who live a layperson's life. When forsaking them, do not be hateful, angry, or contemptuous, but, in general, maintain the firm intention to avoid relying upon them at any time.

## **CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS**

The supreme way's texts, the essential doctrine,  
Contain the supreme essential meaning, upon which you must deeply reflect.  
Then, with essential effort, rely upon a sublime, holy person

And apply yourself to the essential intent—eternal cultivation of spiritual life.

Heartfelt single-minded spiritual practice of the sacred Buddhist doctrine  
Requires compassion that aids beings in any way suitable to them,  
No thought in your heart besides the good of the doctrine,  
And a firm will from the bottom of your heart and the depth of your bones.

Forsake like poison companions who act negatively in mundane ways.  
Rely upon noble companions who act according to the Buddhist doctrine as if it  
was medicine.

Gather the necessary articles and favorable conditions for the practice of the  
teachings.

Strive ceaselessly at the ten forms of spiritual conduct.<sup>7</sup>

This concludes the commentary to “Discipleship,” Book 1 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. I, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje, wrote this book because it should be known that correct discipleship constitutes the root of all excellent qualities. Fortune!

An emanation of the great scholar Shantarakshita, the omniscient Tenpé Nyima, sponsored the printing of this book.

**BOOK 2**  
**THE TRANSMISSION OF BUDDHISM**

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- I. How Buddhism Is Taught
  - A. Buddhism's Teaching Methods in General
  - B. Specific Teaching Methods
    - 1. How the Discourses Are Taught
    - 2. How the Tantras Are Taught
      - a. How Secret Mantra in General Is Taught
      - b. How Great Perfection Is Taught
  - C. A Definitive Presentation of the Doctrine
  - D. The General Categories of Canonical Texts and Treatises Translated into Tibetan
  - E. How to Teach
  - F. What the Teacher Meditates upon When Teaching
  - G. Teaching Adapted to the Disciples' Degrees of Acumen
  - H. How Teaching Completes the Stores of Goodness and Wisdom
- I. The Dedication of Goodness and an Explanation of Teaching's Benefits
- II. How to Listen to Buddhist Teaching
  - A. How to Act While Listening and When to Listen
  - B. Renunciation of Impure Motivation
  - C. Maintaining Pure Motivation
  - D. How to Complete the Eighty-Four Ways of Hearing the Doctrine and the Six Transcendent Perfections
  - E. Dedication of Goodness and the Benefits of Having Heard the Teachings
- III. The Six Styles of Faith, the Foundation of the Sacred Buddhist Doctrine
  - A. The Nature of the Six Styles of Faith, the Source of All Forms of Buddhism
  - B. Sure Examples of Faith
  - C. The Harm in Lacking Faith
  - D. The Object and Causes of Faith
  - E. Forsaking Conditions That Cloud Faith
  - F. Indications of the Arising of Faith
  - G. Tireless and Steadfast Faith

## H. The Benefits of Having Engendered Faith

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Maitreya and Manjushri,  
Shantarakshita and Lord Atisha  
Can be identified by their crowns,  
But are otherwise indistinguishable: I praise them all.

BOOK 2, “The Transmission of Buddhism,” has three chapters:

1. How Buddhism Is Taught
2. How to Listen to Buddhist Teaching
3. An Exposition of Faith, the Foundation of the Sacred Buddhist Doctrine

These three chapters contain a total of twenty-six headings.

### **HOW BUDDHISM IS TAUGHT [I]**

This chapter has nine parts: (1) Buddhism’s teaching methods in general, (2) specific teaching methods, (3) a definitive presentation of the doctrine, (4) the general categories of canonical texts and treatises translated into Tibetan, (5) how to teach, (6) what the teacher meditates upon when teaching, (7) teaching adapted to the disciples’ degree of acumen, (8) how teaching completes the stores of goodness and wisdom, and (9) the dedication of goodness and an explanation of teaching’s benefits.

#### ***Buddhism’s Teaching Methods in General [A]***

**Spiritual masters present the sacred doctrine as follows: Buddhas employ three miracles— Magical emanation, insightful exposition, and instruction.**

**Arhats employed purity in three domains—**

**The pure teacher, auditor, and subjects.**

**Among scholars, those of Nalanda Monastic College**

**Taught the canon according to five magnificent aspects of a teaching**

**And the treatises according to five initial considerations.**

### **Scholars of Vikramashila Monastic College**

**Prepared the worthy recipient, and described the author of the text,  
The spiritual teaching, how to teach, and how to listen.**

Buddhas turn the wheel of the doctrine based on three miracles. (1) The Buddha displayed immeasurable physical miracles, such as emitting light or levitation in space to a height of seven palm trees. These miracles of magical emanation inspired his disciples' faith and positive intentions. (2) Then, for the miracle of insightful exposition, the Buddha's clairvoyance viewed every disciple's spiritual affinity, attitude, and latent tendency. With the intention to teach in relation to each, he blessed his circle of followers' streams of being, and thereby performed the miracle of wisdom mind that purified and prepared their dispositions. (3) The Buddha then produced the miracle of instruction, a rain of teachings in relation to his disciples' interests. Such teachings brought beings to states of spiritual uplift and certain excellence.

Arhats expressed the doctrine based upon the presence of purity in three domains: the auditor, a pure vessel; the teacher's pure speech; and the purity of the subjects of the Buddha's excellent speech. To ensure the vessel's purity, arhats examined with clairvoyance whether or not the auditor was a worthy vessel for the doctrine and accepted worthy recipients as disciples. They then used pure speech—pleasant-sounding, flawless words and terms—in verbal articulation. They related without error or confusion the purity of the subjects, the doctrine's meaning (such as different terminologies to guide the listener to liberation), which thus became meaningful.

Why did arhats not rely upon the three miracles in their teaching, in imitation of the Buddha? Arhats of the hearers' way could not teach in this fashion since their clairvoyance has four limitations. They do not know distant places, eons of time, limitless causes and consequences, and the extremely varied aspects of buddhas' qualities.

Scholars presented the doctrine in two ways. First, scholars resident at the illustrious Nalanda Monastic College presented the canon in relation to a teaching's five magnificent aspects, and the treatises according to a teaching's five initial considerations. A teaching's five magnificent aspects are the common or extraordinary setting, the teacher, the doctrine, the circle of auditors, and the time of the teaching.

The five initial considerations identify the author who wrote the text, the scriptural sources from which the text was compiled, the category of the doctrine to which it belongs, for whose benefit it is given, and a brief synopsis of the teaching, from beginning to end.

This treatise can be described according to these criteria: (1) The author is



Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje Mapam Choklé Nampar Gyalwa, a noble person who has gained confidence from having heard the Joyful Buddha's excellent speech, and reflected and meditated upon it. (2) This text is compiled from scriptural sources in both the cause-based way of characteristics and the result-based secret mantra way. (3) This treatise belongs to natural great perfection instructions, specifically great perfection's branch that provides an entrance for persons on the eight levels of spiritual practice based on the rational dualistic mind to the ninth, final stage, atiyoga. (4) This treatise is written to provide an escort to accompany fortunate persons of present and future generations, both those individuals who develop gradually and those who reach immediate realization. (5) To provide a brief synopsis of the text from beginning to end, the root text and commentaries to *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras* can be summarized as texts that reveal the basis, path, and result of Buddhist practice; or the view, meditation, and conduct. These subjects can be synthesized in three stages—how to enter the path, the actual path, and its ultimate result. They are elucidated in this work's 25 books, 101 chapters, and 2,179 headings.

Second, scholars resident at Vikramashila Monastic College used a two-part method to teach the doctrine. They first made the listener a worthy vessel, then gave a definitive outline of the teaching. The first of these has three aspects: they described the outstanding qualities of the master, author of the text, the outstanding qualities of the spiritual teaching he or she wrote, and how to teach and listen to the doctrine imbued with such qualities.

This treatise can be described according to those criteria: (1) The master who wrote this text, I, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje, have assumed the responsibility to increase the welfare and happiness of Buddhism and beings by means of hearing the doctrine, and reflection and meditation upon it; and its teaching, debate, and composition.

(2) The teaching I write gathers into one work the profound and vast essential meaning of the discourses' and tantras' range of ways of spiritual development. This work's fortunate readers will find it easy to understand. This work's main course concerning causes and effects is unmistakable. It leads persons of varying degrees of acumen to higher levels. It does not depend upon extraneous secondary aspects of the path. Hearing it dispels the darkness of ignorance. Reflection on it brings understanding of inspiration in the abiding nature. Meditation on it brings liberation in the expanse of the nature of reality. Teaching it increases your own and others' sublime insight. Hearing it causes the lotus of your intellect to blossom. Reading it exhausts your mental afflictions' wrongdoing and obscurations. To examine it leads to finding the path of

freedom's awakening. Thus, this work embodies a vast collection of an infinite number of helpful qualities, temporary or lasting, in every moment and circumstance. Thus, this treatise, a root text and commentaries to it, constitutes a well-adorned great brimming lake, entitled *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*.

(3) How to teach and to listen to the teaching and an outline of the doctrine are presented in detail below.

## ***Specific Teaching Methods [B]***

This section has two parts: (1) how the discourses are taught and (2) how the tantras are taught.

### ***How the Discourses Are Taught [1]***

**The five elements of teaching methods**

**Are the purpose, the summary, the literal meanings, the connections, and refutations of challenges.**

**The purpose has four aspects: the subject,**

**The purpose, the innermost purpose, and the progression.**

The five elements of teaching methods are as follows: the purpose, the summary, the literal meanings, the connections, and refutation of challenges.

First, the purpose of a specific teaching has four aspects, described here in relation to this text: the subject—any essential intent of the canon, treatises, and pith instructions; the purpose—to facilitate easy and thorough understanding of the main text and of subsequent correct experiential cultivation for fortunate individuals of present and future generations; the innermost purpose—that disciples employ cultivation of goodness and wisdom to reach the far bounds of renunciation and realization, to attain supreme awakening's lasting happiness, and to then lead every being without exception to that same state; and the progression—these three aspects are related, the latter to the former.

Second, the summary is elucidated in the text *The Wish-Fulfilling Vine* (the outline), which lists this treatise's books, chapters, and headings. Third, literal meanings are clarified by concise and extensive commentaries to the meaning of each word and verse—one, two, three, or four lines—in the root text. Fourth, connections are provided by words that introduce and conclude the books, such as "The round of rebirth as suffering has been presented above; I will now describe refuge."

Fifth, refutation of challenges—as an example, it could be said, “Your so-called treatise entitled *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* is unnecessary, since within it, all the meanings of the words contained in the discourses and tantras are incomplete.” That challenge can be refuted by this statement: “Although the discourses’ and tantras’ words are incomplete in this text, I have written in the treatise *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* a new and original presentation that fully spans every indispensable vast and deep word and subject found in the discourses and tantras, and have thereby furthered the doctrine’s activity.”

### ***How the Tantras Are Taught [2]***

This section has two parts: (1) how secret mantra in general is taught and (2) how great perfection is taught.

### ***How Secret Mantra in General Is Taught [a]***

**Explanation of the tantras includes six topics—the general meaning, concealed meaning, Final meaning, auxiliary meaning, meaning of the words, and pith instructions;**

**The six parameters—definitive meaning, provisional meaning, implied meaning, unimplied meaning, Literal meaning, and not literal meaning;**

**And four methods of interpretation—by the words’ meaning, general meaning, concealed meaning, or final meaning.**

**Many systems of explanation are specific to individual tantras.**

**The four streams comprise the expository scriptures, blessing-empowerments,**

**Aural lineage instructions, and rituals for accomplishing enlightened activity.**

**Other styles of commentary include providing the structure of the meaning,**

**An outline of the main text, a word-by-word commentary,**

**And a summary into pith instructions; or a presentation, explanation, and summary.**

Although there exist inconceivable numbers of profound instructions that present methods to teach the precious tantras, I present here six profound instructions since they facilitate a teacher’s commentary and can be easily understood by

listeners. Three are pith instructions concerning the teaching of a tantra's subject: teaching of the general meaning, teaching of the concealed meaning, and teaching of the final meaning. Three concern teaching based on a tantra's content: teaching based on grammar, the auxiliary meaning; teaching of the meaning of the words; and teaching of the pith instructions' meaning. *The Glorious Tantra Equal to the Sky* states: These provide the only reliable explanations of tantras:

Presentation of the words' meanings, auxiliary meaning,  
Concise meaning, general meaning,  
Concealed meaning, and final meaning.

First, what is called "general meaning" is common to both discourses and secret mantra. It includes subjects explained in the general discourses of the way of the transcendent perfections, such as awakening's thirty-seven facets, five paths, and ten stages. Such subjects included in the category of general meaning are taught to reassure those who entered the path of transcendent perfections and who might otherwise feel regret that tantra is inconsistent with their path. These topics are also taught because they are mentioned as subjects within secret mantra's scriptures. Thus, they are called "general meaning." Further, they are called "general" because the phase of creation is generally related to, and is an auxiliary of, the vase empowerment; persons who have received this empowerment and engage in spiritual practice to gain sublime accomplishment and those who do so to gain common powers both learn this meaning. *The Compendium of Vajra Wisdom* states: The general meaning is teaching given to not antagonize those who might disdain the wonderful vajra words they hear.

Master Chandrakirti states:

The general meaning  
Is taught to prevent remorse  
Of those committed to the discourses and other such paths,  
And for those who have undertaken the phase of creation.

Second, what is called "the concealed meaning" is given this appellation because it is not revealed to those who have received just the vase empowerment: it is given exclusively to those who have received the three higher supreme empowerments beyond the vase empowerment. Further, it is called "concealed" in regard to the special techniques used for a meditation

practice referred to as self-consecration and the concealed sacred circles of the body's energy centers. *The Hévajra Tantra* states: Fully uplift the mind to awakening

In relative and ultimate manners  
Using techniques of the energy centers' sacred circles  
And the stages of self-consecration.

Third, the final meaning constitutes the manifestly accomplished result that can be gained by an individual on any path. The general final meaning is the common result, the stage of awakening called Illuminating. The concealed final meaning is the unsurpassable result of secret mantra, the stage of Vajra Holder. This meaning teaches many special instructions not taught in the transcendent perfections' scriptures, such as nondual knowledge that enlightenment's bodies and wisdoms, and all phenomena, are self-manifest; thus, the authentic final meaning. Although the former attainment—the stage called Illuminating—is not really the final one, it has been designated “final” since it is close to that state. This use of terminology resembles that found in a passage in *The Ornament of Manifest Realization*, where awakening's tenth stage is designated “the stage of enlightenment”: For those who rest in the stage of enlightenment,

The wisdom beyond the ninth stage of awakening  
Is what should be known  
As a bodhisattva's tenth stage.

Fourth, the auxiliary meaning, explanation of the tantras' content based on grammar, is taught by examining the words and terms explicitly presented in scripture. Instruction can be given depending on circumstances, according to known secular terms, to known literary terms, or to the presence or absence of definitions that rationalize the use of such terms. When the abbreviation of terms makes a text's meaning difficult to comprehend, its terms can be elucidated by enlarging or contracting them, or by adding missing subjects, objects, or verbs. The meanings of a text's terms can be determined in four ways: the lion's gaze, the frog's leap, the turtle's fourlegged gait, and the tigress's pounce.

Fifth, teaching of tantras by the meaning of their words is as follows. When the sense of a passage cannot be directly grasped from the text's sentences, the meaning might be understood when the words are taken separately. In such cases, commentary can be made based upon teaching of the words' linguistic meaning, elucidation of the separate words, or elucidation of similar words.

Sixth, teaching of tantras by means of synthesized pith instructions presents that which neither the auxiliary meaning nor the words can explain. This includes whatever can be understood by elucidation of the concise meaning with every symbol the transcendent buddhas used. Master Chandrakirti states: *Kotraksh* and other forms of grammar

That do not exist in worldly treatises  
Represent the transcendent buddhas' symbols  
Which express nonliteral meanings.

### **The Six Parameters and Four Methods of Interpretation**

The six parameters are the following: the literal meaning, the definitive meaning, the unimplied meaning, the nonliteral meaning, the provisional meaning, and the implied meaning.

A tantra's literal meaning is taught by presenting its content's two general meanings (that is, the discourses and the phase of creation) according to their auxiliary (that is, linguistic) meaning. A tantra's definitive meaning is taught by presenting its concealed meaning according to its auxiliary meaning. A tantra's unimplied meaning is taught by presenting its final meaning according to the auxiliary meaning. A tantra's nonliteral meaning is taught by presenting its two general meanings according to its words and the pith instructions. A tantra's provisional meaning is taught by presenting its concealed meaning according to the same two (words and pith instructions). A tantra's implied meaning is taught by presenting its final meaning according to these two. These are the six parameters.

The four methods of interpretation are presentation of the words' meaning, presentation of the general meaning, presentation of the concealed meaning, and presentation of the final meaning.

These teaching methods provide commentary to the tantras in the following manner: A scripture's terms and meanings are sometimes taught according to the general meaning, sometimes according to the concealed meaning, and sometimes according to the final meaning. To present the language found in a scripture, the auxiliary meaning is the principal subject, whereas the other two (concealed and final meanings) are used sparingly, according to context. These are called "teaching of the auxiliary meaning," "teaching of the words' meaning," "straightforward teaching of the text," or "the well-known teaching."

Specifically, some terms in scripture can be explained according to the general meaning for those who enjoy explanations consistent with the transcendent perfections or those who enjoy the phase of creation. Or, the same terms can also

be explained according to fierce inner heat and sacred circles of the body's energy centers for those interested in the profound, who enjoy meditation techniques focused upon their own bodies, or those who enjoy the contemplative practice of the seal of passion focused upon another's body. Texts can be taught according to the final meaning to provide a general intellectual picture of tantra for those who have realization, or to instill understanding by means of analogies of wisdom for those who have realization. These teaching techniques are called "explaining the tantras' meaning, which is like a wish-fulfilling jewel."

## **Commentaries to the Tantras**

Texts that teach the tantras in this manner among the class of nondual tantras include the commentary to the Wheel of Time tantra, *Stainless Light*.

Among tantras of sublime insight, such texts include *The Higher Commentary to the Root Tantra of Supreme Bliss* by Bodhisattva Vajra Holder; *A Collection of Jewels*, a commentary to difficult points; *The Attractive Warrior*; and *The Commentary to "The Ocean of Dakas Tantra."* Further, this category includes *The Root Tantra of Vajra Creator of Delight* and commentaries to it including one written by Bodhisattva Vajra Holder; a commentary to difficult points, *Lotus Possessing*; *Kaumuti*; a commentary to difficult points, *Vajra Tent*; and *Harvest of Pith Instructions*, a commentary to *Samputa Tantra*.

Among tantras of skillful means, in the exalted master Nagarjuna's cycle of Matrix of Mystery, texts include a commentary to the tantra, *Clear Lamp*; and commentaries to the six branches of application and others. In Venerable Buddhajnana's cycle there exists a commentary to the tantra entitled *Help to Disciples*. In all these tantras, general explanatory texts include texts of practical guidance in meditation and rituals of the deities' sacred circles, with auxiliary practices.

Among the cycles of the lower tantras, for yoga tantra, texts include the extensive explanation of *The Quintessence of the Ultimate*; for activity tantra, the commentary to *The Tantra of Buddha Illuminator's Manifest Awakening*; and for action tantra, the commentary to *The Latter Tantra of Meditative Stability*. Each level of tantra has specific and general commentaries, along with texts of practical guidance in meditation, rituals of the deities' sacred circles, and auxiliary practices.

### **The Original Translations' Four Streams of Transmission**

The original translations' four streams of transmission are the stream of the

expository scriptures, which elucidates every Buddhist way's terms and meanings; the stream of blessing-empowerments, which transforms delusion's appearances into the infinite expanse of the perception of purity; the stream of aural lineage instructions, which adds spiritual experience to the scriptures' meanings, so that meditation on them produces accomplishment of the rainbow body in a single lifetime; and the stream of the practical application of enlightened activity, which gives mastery of an ocean of infinite enlightened activity to accomplish two purposes, the ultimate goal for others and yourself.

### **Additional Styles of Teaching the Tantras**

Four other styles of teaching these tantras are presentations of the following: the tantra's structure, an outline of the main text, a word-by-word commentary, and a synthesis of the pith instructions. Among these, teaching that begins as if from the tip of an arrow describes the structure by means of the title's meaning. Teaching that begins as if from the middle of a conch presents the main text's outline by means of the teaching's five magnificent aspects that create the teaching's initial setting. Teaching that begins as if from a sword's handle provides a word-by-word commentary to the main text and finishes with a synthesis of the pith instructions.

Another system is presented in *A Garland of Flowers: Pith Instructions for Teaching*. It describes teaching in three formats: delineation of the relationship between the text's subjects, "the frog's leap"; explanation of the meaning of the terms' syllables, "the turtle's gait"; and summary of a chapter's subjects, "the elephant's swagger."

Further, the threefold "presentation, explanation, and summary" refers to a brief presentation, an extensive explanation, and a summary of the chapters, and provides a format for a thorough explanation.

Moreover, the doctrine to be transmitted must have been taught by the Buddha, collected by the compilers, elucidated by learned and accomplished masters, taught by scholars, translated by *lo-tsa-wa* (translators), be imbued with the continuity of the spiritual masters' lineages of pith instructions and scriptural transmissions, and known to the wise. Therefore, such teachings must have three characteristics: their scriptures are consistent with the discourses, tantras, and treatises; their reasoning is consistent with obvious grammatical meaning; and their instructions do not contradict the profound nature of reality.

### ***How Great Perfection Is Taught [b]***

**Great perfection tantras are taught by describing six subjects:**



**Their essence, definitions, divisions, scope, examples, and proof.**  
**The seventeen tantras are *Unimpeded Sound, Self-Manifest Awareness, Self-Liberated Awareness, Self-Arisen Perfection, The Lion's Full Strength, Auspicious Beauty, Exquisite Design of Gems, The Pearl Garland, Wordless, Mirror of Vajrasattva's Heart, Mirror of Ever Excellent's Wisdom Mind, Union of Sun and Moon, Elaborate Introduction, Blaze of the Holy Form, Heap of Jewels, Blazing Lamps, and Six Expanses.***  
**These tantras are classified as three essences, three nectars, and three flowers.**  
**Tantras encompass, plumb the depth, or turn back the assault on wisdom.**  
**There are two auxiliary tantras, a tantra of the contemplative practice of liberation, A heart-like tantra, the secret text we follow, and a weapon-like tantra.**  
**They are useful. They can be taught as tantras, transmissions, or pith instructions;**  
**Or according to the collection of twenty-three precious examples**  
**And the wish-fulfilling tree of the five principles.**

Great perfection tantras are taught by describing six subjects: essence, definitions, divisions, scope, examples, and proof. First, great perfection tantra's essence is the subject of awareness and how it is determined, sublime secrets which cannot be altered by additions or deletions. Second, great perfection tantra's definition is twofold: It is "tantra" (literally, "continuum") since it indicates the enlightened heritage—what it is and what causes that enlightened heritage to arise. It is "tantra" since it is unalterable, uninterrupted, and continually arising.

Third, if classified, great perfection tantra is twofold: natural, ultimate tantra and symbolic, verbal tantra. Ultimate tantra is the natural luminosity of mind itself, free from the impurities of discursive thought. Since this exists permanently within all beings, it is tantra; since it is indwelling enlightenment, it is tantra; and since it has enlightenment's characteristics, it is established as tantra.

To represent this ultimate tantra itself, verbal tantras contain subjects, terms, and words, which have the nature of letters, divided into chapters, and so on. Tantras that principally present the phase of creation are tantras of skillful means; those that principally present the phase of completion, sublime insight

tantras; the two in equal measure, nondual, integral union tantras; tantras that teach that which transcends everything reveal great perfection's key points.

Fourth, the scope of tantras mainly focused on the phase of creation is spanned by ten subjects here listed in five pairs: the initial, fundamental empowerment and tantric bonds; wisdom deities and mantras; sacred circles and offerings; meditative states and conduct; enlightened activity and the view. When these ten are complete, the tantra has mainly focused on the phase of creation. The scope of tantras mainly focused on the phase of completion is spanned by eight subjects here listed in four pairs: the view and result; conduct and meditation; mind and wisdom; meditative experience and profound instruction. When these eight are complete, the tantra has mainly focused on the phase of completion. Tantras of nondual integral union have eighteen subjects, since they must include both these lists' topics.

Of the phases of creation and completion, complete great perfection concerns the phase of completion. This phase has two categories: the lesser phase of completion, which presents the elaborate stages of subtle channels, circulating energy, and vital essences; and the supreme phase of completion, which presents the stages of the wisdom of luminosity. The supreme phase of completion's entire scope is spanned by five subjects: two on the entrance—empowerments and vows; two on the path and conclusive certainty; and one on the result.

Fifth, the example that illustrates tantra is a cord. A cord is produced from many threads of cloth; likewise, in tantra, we acquire a single meaning based upon many separate terms.

Sixth, the proof of tantra is that it reveals the continuity of enlightenment, buddha nature, present within ourselves. Moreover, since the ultimate state is unmistakably determined and realized based on the verbal tantras' key points, they are established as tantra.

### **Great Perfection's Eighteen Tantras**

An extensive explanation of the verbal great perfection tantras includes analysis of the following eighteen tantras:

1. *The Great Self-Manifest Awareness Tantra*. This tantra presents content that is deep and vast, like the ocean.
2. *The Mirror of Vajrasattva's Heart Tantra*. This tantra illuminates, like the sun.
3. *The Lion's Full Strength*. This tantra overwhelms the lower Buddhist ways with its brilliance.
4. *The Glorious Wordless Tantra*. This tantra presents the changeless nature of

- reality, like the sovereign mountain.
5. *Auspicious Beauty*. This wheel-like tantra presents the shattering of delusion's wheel.
  6. *Unimpeded Sound*. This key-like tantra presents the opening of doors to every collection of teaching.
  7. *The Six Expanses*. This tantra presents how to slice through mistaken paths, like a sword.
  8. *Blazing Lamps*. This tantra presents the lamps' illumination, like a torch.
  9. *The Exquisite Design of Gems*. This tantra, like molten gold, presents the relation between words and meaning, like turquoise decorating gold.
  10. *The Union of Sun and Moon*. This tantra elucidates an uninterrupted stream of definitive terms that instill definite confidence, like the relationship between mother and child.
  11. *Elaborate Introduction*. This mirrorlike tantra relates metaphors to meanings, like reflections appearing in a mirror.
  12. *The Pearl Garland*. This tantra presents the ordered series of pith instructions, like an excellent series of pearls in a necklace.
  13. *Self-Liberated Awareness*. This tantra presents how the scripture's words unravel themselves naturally, like a snake's knots.
  14. *The Mirror of Ever Excellent's Wisdom Mind*. This tantra is like a great garuda that soars in space without effort or endeavor.
  15. *Self-Arisen Perfection*. This river-like tantra presents empowerments and blessings like a river's flow.
  16. *The Blaze of the Holy Form*. This tantra is like the enduring royal line that rules the capital.
  17. *The Heap of Jewels*. This tantra is like a wealthy person's treasure vault that provides anything one wishes.
  18. *Black Wrathful Goddess*. The eighteenth, a razor-like tantra, entirely destroys contradictory influences like a tempered razor that slices through whatever it touches.

Classified according to their purpose, these eighteen tantras form eleven groups: first, the three essential tantras are as listed above, [1] *Self-Manifest Awareness*, [13] *Self-Liberated Awareness*, and [4] *Wordless*. Knowledge of these three brings mastery of tantra's general meanings, like the authority a ruler has over commoners. Further, *Wordless* presents tantra's general pith instructions, like the authority of a government official. *Self-Manifest Awareness* identifies the basis of the view, meditation, and conduct, like the service, tribute, and so on given by common people. *Self-Liberated Awareness* divulges the meaning of the

transcendent nature. Collecting these three brings mastery of all tantras, like authority wielded over an entire kingdom.

Second, the tantras' three nectars are [14] *The Mirror of Ever Excellent's Wisdom Mind*, [2] *The Mirror of Vajrasattva's Heart*, and [9] *The Exquisite Design of Gems*. Knowledge of these three brings understanding of the meaning of all tantras' inner contents, a purpose like reaching three mountains' summits from which the valleys below are visible.

Third, the tantras' three flowers are [12] *The Pearl Garland*, [5] *Auspicious Beauty*, and [3] *The Lion's Full Strength*. Knowledge of these three brings understanding without any lack of clarity in tantra's words and meanings, a purpose like three suns rising in the sky that rid the world of darkness.

Fourth, [15] *Self-Arisen Perfection* encompasses all tantras. Its purpose is to bring knowledge of how empowerments establish freedom's foundation, like a palace's solidly built foundation upon which many stories can be built.

Fifth, [11] *Elaborate Introduction* illuminates all tantras and plumbs their depths. This tantra's purpose is to bring fearlessness toward the round of rebirth's abodes, like having completed the construction of a palace's keep, where armies cannot trespass.

Sixth, [10] *The Union of Sun and Moon* turns back attacks on wisdom. Its purpose is to undo delusion in the period between lifetimes.

Seventh, [17] *The Heap of Jewels* and [16] *The Blaze of the Holy Form* are two auxiliary tantras. Like a palace roof, realization that wisdom is self-manifest is exquisitely beautiful.

Eighth, [8] *Blazing Lamps* is the tantra of the contemplative practice of liberation. Knowledge of this tantra brings accomplishment of goals, a purpose like a ruler who resides in the pinnacle of the palace and can accomplish many wishes.

Ninth, [7] *The Six Expanses* is the heart-like tantra. Realization of the view prevents mistaken paths, obscurations, and obstacles, a purpose like having locked the palace gates to prevent destruction by thieves and enemies.

Tenth, [6] *Unimpeded Sound* is the main scripture of mystery. It eliminates all hesitation, like an outer encircling iron fence.

Eleventh, [18] *Black Wrathful Goddess* is the weapon-like tantra. It entirely destroys contradictory influences and prevents all obstacles, like excellent gatekeepers who prevent harm from intruding.

These tantras' benefits are as follows. When you memorize these texts, you are introduced directly to awareness itself; when you preserve them, you rest directly in meditative states; when you read them, their contents' meaning dawns in your mind; when you teach them, you attain common feats and supreme

accomplishment; when you meditate on them, the round of rebirth empties from its depths; when you listen to them, you enjoy temporal wisdom.

## Presentation of the Tantras

How are these tantras presented? For those who delight in elaborate details, all these tantras are presented. For those of a middle degree of acumen, these tantras are condensed into eight categories, complete in eight tantras. For those of a high degree of acumen, it is sufficient to condense the tantras' meaning into five categories—two derived from skillful means and three derived from their nature. For those of the very highest degree of acumen, tantras of meaning and words are presented. For those of an extremely high level, who are free from any embellishments, the tantra of the ground of being is accomplished by awareness alone, since all tantras are complete within awareness.

Alternatively, for those who delight in details, all the tantras of the basis (mahayoga), the heart essence (anuyoga), and the cycle of the vital essence (atiyoga) are taught. The seventeen tantras are taught to disciples of a middle degree of acumen. Only the seed tantra *Self-Arisen Perfection* is taught for those of the highest degree of acumen. For those at the peak, it is said that the three testaments of the awareness holders bring liberation.<sup>8</sup>

## How These Tantras Are Taught

On the subject of auxiliary means to teach tantra, *Self-Liberated Awareness* states: In the tradition of explanation in the king's (the Buddha's) doctrine,

Teach according to circumstance in these three ways:  
Teach according to scriptures; teach according to tantras;  
And teach according to pith instructions.  
Know these from the tantra's opening remarks.

In this quote, teaching "according to scriptures" refers to presenting the five magnificent aspects of the tantra's first teaching; teaching "according to the tantras" refers to teaching three definite subjects; teaching "according to the pith instructions" refers to teaching according to the basis, path, and result.

When teaching according to the tantras for those of acute discernment who understand by hearing the title alone, express the meaning of the tantra's title. For those at a middle level, who understand merely by the table of contents,

present the preamble according to the tantra's five magnificent aspects. For those of dull acumen, who understand through metaphors and meanings, teach the main body of the text in detail.

A precise, extensive list of teaching styles presents twenty-eight guidelines—the collection of twenty-three precious examples and the wish-fulfilling tree of the five principles. *Self-Liberated Awareness* states: Those whose sublime insight is like a leaping tigress

Teach making distinctions in the great terrain of tantra's meaning.

Those whose intellect is like a soaring garuda  
Teach setting out the tantra's entire structure.

Those whose intellect is like a lion's roar  
Teach overpowering the lower Buddhist ways with their brilliance.

Those whose intellect is like a turtle's crawl  
Teach explaining the words' syllables.

Those whose intellect is like a raven's scouting  
Teach eradicating obscurations due to errors.

Those whose intellect is like an athlete's stance  
Teach synthesizing the extensive meaning.

Those whose intellect is like a prone elephant  
Teach bringing the view into focus.

Those whose intellect is like a bird collecting food  
Teach having searched for the subjects' intent.

Those whose intellect is like an eagle hunting  
Teach without doubts toward the meaning.

Those whose intellect is like a fawn climbing a cliff  
Teach explaining that which is appropriate and that which is not.

Those whose intellect is like a string of pearls  
Teach putting in order the pith instructions' meanings.

Those whose intellect is like timely rain with thunder

Those whose intellect is like a thirsty man with water  
Teach rebutting non-Buddhists' criticisms.

Those whose intellect is like blowing a trumpet  
Teach comparing all approaches to tantra.

Those whose intellect is like a wish-fulfilling tree  
Teach with very extensive details.

Those whose intellect is like the sun in a clear sky  
Teach completely encompassing all subjects.

Those whose intellect is deep and clear like the moon  
Teach with transcendence of the round of rebirth's sorrow.

Those whose intellect is like a lion's bearing  
Teach according to the meaning of meditation.

Those whose intellect is like swans always accompanying one another  
Teach having collated the tantra's contents with its outline.

Those whose intellect is like a rainbow in the sky  
Teach the basic space of phenomena with its ornaments.

Those whose intellect cuts like a razor's edge  
Teach distinguishing the views.

Those whose intellect is like the circle of a mirror  
Teach including causes and conditions.

Those whose intellect is like lightning in the sky  
Teach quickly with meanings for each word.

Those whose intellect is like empty space  
Teach with unlimited vastness.

Those whose intellect is like a deeply planted root  
Teach presenting the essence of awareness.

Those whose intellect is like a coiled tree trunk  
Teach a summation of the teachings' meaning.

Those whose intellect is like spreading branches  
Teach adding the meanings of profound instructions.

Those whose intellect is like flourishing leaves  
Teach according to the twenty-one tantras.

Those whose intellect is vivid like flowers  
Teach according to the two lamps.

Those whose intellect is like ripened fruit  
Teach without having the result devolve to a cause.

These and other teaching methods  
Should be learned in stages.

### ***A Definitive Presentation of the Doctrine [C]***

**The magnificent setting, teacher, doctrine, entourage, and time period  
characterize**

**The turning of the three cycles—on the four truths, on the absence of  
characteristics, and on definitive meaning.**

**Each of the four collections—on the monastic code,**

**The discourses, on observed phenomena, and the supreme collection on  
observed phenomena— Contains twenty-one thousand teachings  
spoken by the Buddha, the extent of the canon.**

**The doctrine's eighty-four thousand aggregations were compiled on three  
occasions.**

**The seven patriarchs, the six ornaments, the two supreme teachers, and  
others composed the treatises.**

**There are six styles of commentary**

**And three methods of teaching.**

Our Teacher initially uplifted his wisdom mind to sublime awakening, subsequently cultivated stores of goodness and wisdom during three incalculable eons, and finally attained perfect enlightenment at Vajra Seat. Thus, with these and other acts, he performed a buddha's twelve deeds.

Among these deeds, he taught the first cycle of Buddhist teaching in the magnificent setting—Falling Seers, Gift of Fearlessness Deer Park—near Varanasi, India. The magnificent teacher was Shakyamuni (Sage of the Shakyas). He taught the magnificent doctrine, the four truths, to the magnificent



entourage of the five excellent individuals and eighty thousand gods for the magnificent period of seven years after his attainment of enlightenment.

The middle cycle of Buddhist teaching was taught in the magnificent setting of Vulture Peak at Rajgir. The magnificent teacher, Shakyamuni, taught the magnificent doctrine, three versions of the canon of the perfection of sublime insight—extensive, middle-length, and abridged—organized into six sets. The magnificent entourage comprised two groups of disciples. The first was a common entourage of five thousand fully ordained monks, including Shariputra, Maudgalyayana, and Subhuti; five hundred fully ordained nuns, including Prajapati Gautami; and many ordained laymen and laywomen, including the householder Anatapindada. Second, the extraordinary entourage numbered billions of persons, including the bodhisattvas Bhadrupala, Ratnasambhava, and the holy leader. Shakyamuni taught for the magnificent period of thirty years.

The magnificent teacher Shakyamuni taught the doctrine's final cycle in magnificent settings, such as the abodes of gods and nagas, and the city of Rajgir, and the town Lotus-Possessing. He taught the magnificent doctrine, such as the enumeration of definitive meaning, buddha nature, to a particularly large entourage of common and extraordinary groups of disciples for the magnificent period of ten years.

Thus, the Buddha turned the wheel of the doctrine's three cycles, comprising four collections—on the monastic code, of discourses, on observed phenomena, and on supreme observed phenomena. Each collection contains twenty-one thousand teachings, a total of the doctrine's eighty-four thousand aggregations, the extent of the canon.

### **The Canon's Three Compilations**

Subsequently, the canon underwent three compilations. The first occurred during the summer following the Buddha's transcendence of sorrow (that is, his passing away). In the secret cave of Asurava at Rajgir, King Ajatasatru provided sustenance to an assembly of five hundred arhats. *The Minor Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct* states: Five classes of teachings—discourses, aphorisms in prose and verse,

Prophetic declarations, verses, and meaningful expressions—  
Were placed in the collection of discourses.

Four classes of teachings—narratives, legends,  
What are called fables, and tales of past lives—  
Were placed in the collection on the monastic code.

Three classes of teachings—extensive teachings, marvelous events, and established instructions— Were placed in the collection on observed phenomena.

Moreover, it is said that Ananda compiled the discourses; Upali, the monastic code; and Mahakashyapa, the collection on observed phenomena.

The second compilation occurred eighty years after the Buddha's transcendence of sorrow. In Vaishali, seven hundred arhats gathered; the arhat Upagupta compiled the three collections. The Buddhist king Ashoka served as patron.

The third compilation occurred over three hundred years and close to four hundred years after the Buddha's transcendence of sorrow. Five hundred bodhisattvas who had attained perfect memory, five hundred arhats, and sixteen thousand fully ordained monks gathered at Jalandhara in Kashmir, and were served by the patron, King Kanika. Bodhisattva Sumitra and Arhat Purnika compiled the doctrine.

The line of the doctrine's seven patriarchs began with the elder Mahakashyapa, to whom the Buddha entrusted his doctrine at the time of his transcendence of sorrow. Mahakashyapa entrusted it to Ananda, who entrusted it to Shanavashin, who entrusted it to Upagupta, who entrusted it to Dhitika, who entrusted it to Krishna, who entrusted it to Sudarshana.

## Composition of the Treatises

Finally, what were the acts of those who composed the treatises? During the Buddha's lifetime, seven arhats composed seven texts on observed phenomena. At the time of the second compilation, five hundred arhats, including Upagupta, composed *The Great Treasury of Detailed Explanations*.

Four hundred years after the Buddha's passing away, Master Nagarjuna wrote such texts as *The Collection of Sayings*, commentaries to the first cycle of the doctrine; *The Collection on Reasoning*, commentaries to the middle cycle; and *The Collection of Praises*, commentaries to the final cycle. Aryadeva composed *The Four Hundred Verses* and Chandrakirti composed such texts as *Entering the Middle Way* and *Clear Words*.

Close to one thousand years after the Buddha's passing away, the exalted Bodhisattva Maitreya composed five treatises—two “ornaments,” two “distinctions,” and *The Highest Continuity*, all of which he gave to Asanga. Asanga composed such works as five treatises on the stages of awakening and the two compendiums. Vasubandhu composed the root text and commentary to

*The Treasury of Observed Phenomena*. Dignaga composed such texts as *A Summary of the Meaning of “The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas”* and *A Compilation on Logic*. Dharmakirti composed seven texts on valid cognition, including *A Complete Commentary on Logic*. Chandragomi composed a treatise on Sanskrit grammar, *Chandra’s Grammar*, and other works. Acharya Vira composed *The Past Lives of the Buddha*. Shantideva composed *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas*. Vimalamitra composed *Generating Joy, An Elephant Drinking Water*, and other works that present the subject of the four scriptures on the monastic code. Shantarakshita’s works include *Light of the Middle Way*. Kamalashila’s works include three texts on meditation. Jnanagarbha’s works include *Distinguishing the Two Truths*. Shantipa’s works include *Purity of “The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Twenty Thousand Stanzas.”* Vimuktisena’s works include *Light of “The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Twenty Thousand Stanzas.”* Haribhadra’s works include *Clear Meaning, A Commentary to “The Ornament of Manifest Realization.”* Prajnakaragupta’s works include *Ornament to the Enlightened Intent of the Sage*. Lord Atisha’s works include *Lamp on the Path to Awakening*.

### **Treatises’ Styles and Methods**

The six styles of commentary are the following: commentary on words, commentary on meanings, commentary on distinctions, extensive commentary, commentary on the difficult points, and commentary on the legends.

The three methods of instruction are the following: instruction based on the words by the erudite, instruction based on the meaning by adepts, and instruction based on experience by the realized.

Instruction based on false pretenses of greatness or deceitfully given with much ostentation must be rejected.

### ***The General Categories of Canonical Texts and Treatises Translated into Tibetan [D]***

**Among the texts translated into Tibetan, there are 210 discourses, 907 tantras, 536 commentaries on the discourses, And 2,781 commentaries on the tantras—an approximate total of 4,400 texts.**

Among the texts in the canon belonging to the doctrine’s three cycles, the total numbers of works translated into Tibetan are as follows: discourses from the doctrine’s first cycle

original translations—72, including the four scriptures on the monastic code  
discourses from the doctrine’s middle cycle

DISCOURSES FROM THE DOCTRINE'S MIDDLE CYCLE

- original translations—24, including the long, middle, and condensed versions of *The Perfection of Sublime Insight* discourses from the doctrine's final cycle
- original translations—90, including *The Flower Ornament Discourse* and *The Pinnacle of Jewels* discourses from all three cycles
- later translations—24

Thus, a total of 210 discourses were translated into Tibetan. Likewise, the totals for the tantras are as follows: action tantras

- original translations—271
- later translations—43
- conduct tantras
  - original translations—10
  - later translations—5
- yoga tantras
  - original translations—13
  - later translations—22
- highest yoga tantras
  - original translations—a total of 424, as follows:
    - mahayoga, the phase of creation—211
    - anuyoga, the transmission—24
    - atiyoga, great perfection
      - mind category
        - The All-Creating Monarch* cycle—20
        - the eighteen lower mind category—13
        - general mind category—38
      - spatial category—15
      - pith instruction category
        - tantras of the outer and inner cycles—17
        - tantras of the secret cycle—18
        - tantras of the highest secret cycle—19
    - chi-ti-yoga tantras—15
    - yang-ti-yoga tantras—34
  - later translations—a total of 119 [sic] highest yoga tantras, as follows:
    - father tantras—35
    - mother tantras—78
    - nondual tantras—5

Thus in total, in the Tibetan Buddhist canon there are a total of 1,117 texts: 210 discourses and 907 tantras. Among the treatises translated into Tibetan, 536 treatises comment on the discourses and 2,781 comment on the tantras.

The total number of texts, including the canon's discourses and tantras, and the treatises' commentaries, is slightly over 4,400. The collection of treatises includes the following additional texts: 74 in the collection of praises, 33 Tibetan texts, 51 newly included texts, such as dedication prayers, and 17 texts that must still be found. Thus, there is a total of 3,452 texts in the collection of treatises in Tibetan translation.

### ***How to Teach [E]***

**Prepare the throne for the teachings, a seat, a canopy, banners, a parasol,  
Various forms of music, assorted offerings,  
And the universe in the form of a mandala, all arranged attractively.  
Take the teaching seat, uplift your mind to awakening,  
Then teach coherently with pure and pleasant-sounding words.**

Upon the throne for the teachings, arrange a seat of cushions made of fine brocade or other materials. Prepare a parasol, banners, a canopy, and copious collections of offerings. Make attractive arrangements of various forms of music and offerings, such as the offering of the universe in the form of a mandala. After you take the teaching seat, uplift your mind to awakening, then say the following words aloud: May all sentient beings attain the eyes of the teachings' wisdom! May I light the lamps of their wisdom! May I place them in eternal happiness, the state of enlightenment! In order that the teachings' essence long endure, I will explain the sacred Buddhist doctrine!

### ***What the Teacher Meditates upon When Teaching [F]***

**When teaching the three collections, imagine yourself clearly as Lord of  
the Shakyas;  
When teaching the outer or inner tantras, as a principal buddha of  
enlightenment's five wisdom clans; When teaching great perfection, as  
Buddha Ever Excellent.  
In each case, your adamant tongue produces the sound of the doctrine  
in the melodic voice of Brahma.  
Think that this reaches beings who fill the bounds of space,  
Wakes them from the sleep of ignorance, and causes the clearly manifest**

**qualities**

**Of their innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature, to blossom.**

When teaching any Buddhist way, imagine yourself clearly as that way's Teacher. Think that your teaching's sound pervades all worldly realms, wakes all beings from the sleep of ignorance, has them attain the meaning of wisdom, and places them on the path to freedom. Their understanding of the words' and meanings' subjects causes the qualities of indwelling awareness, their innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature, to manifestly blossom.

### ***Teaching Adapted to the Disciples' Degrees of Acumen [G]***

**Infants and adults eat different diets;**

**Likewise, teach beginners such subjects as death, and actions and consequences.**

**Teach the lesser and great ways' paths to those who have entered the Buddhist path.**

**Teach cosmology and the five subjects of Buddhist culture to those who work for others' good.**

**Teach a general outline of the tenets of philosophical schools to groups of scholars.**

**Teach instruction in the tantras to special recipients.**

**Teach the very profound essential meaning to those of supreme spiritual fortune.**

**For all those of dull minds, praise faith and purification of obscurations.**

Different diets nourish infants and adults; likewise, the subjects of teaching must be determined in relation to the audience. Teach beginners such subjects as the difficulty to gain a free and fully endowed human birth, death and impermanence, the relation between actions and their consequences, and the sufferings within the round of rebirth. Teach those who have already entered the Buddhist path the distinction between the lesser and great ways, and their respective basis, path, and result. Teach persons such as individuals who work for others' good subjects including the five major subjects of Buddhist culture—grammar, logic, art, medicine, and Buddhist studies. Teach groups of scholars distinctions that can be found among non-Buddhist and Buddhist philosophies and a detailed outline of them. Teach special recipients explanations of tantras and impart the gift of pith instructions. For supremely fortunate disciples, provide guidance in the essential meaning of the very profound abiding nature,

great perfection. For all those of dull or foolish minds, praise such subjects as the cultivation of stores of goodness and wisdom, purification of obscurations, prostrations, offerings, faith, and humility. *The Tantra That Extracts the Essential Meaning* states: These preliminary practices are techniques to purify your stream of being:

Reflection on the difficulty of attaining this support (that is, life as a human being),

On impermanence, and on the flaws of the round of rebirth;

Purification of negative acts; refuge; vows; and other subjects.

Once completed, follow this with the stages of philosophy

Of the hearers and others. Having correctly entered the path,

You become endowed with compassion and sublime insight,

Then begin this text, the correct, definitive meaning.

In following this progression, you will accomplish great goals.

In particular, three styles of guidance are known for those endowed with a propensity for the great way's enlightened heritage: the effortless path, like a garuda's descent from above; the graded path with characteristics, like a monkey's ascent from below; and the small footpath based on disciples' intellects. These approaches liberate disciples endowed with positive karmic propensities. Nevertheless, for those with inferior or uncertain karmic connections, they can prove very harmful; therefore, such individuals should train gradually.

When clear, pure, and pleasant-sounding words are used to present the teaching to either embellish or synthesize, for example, disciples will easily comprehend ordered, detailed explanations, and their doubts will be resolved. Faults in teaching that must be avoided are inappropriate contexts, unexplained symbols, mistakes in words or meanings, digressions of mind, speech motivated by the mental afflictions, obscure terms, excessive or insufficient details, former premises that contradict the latter, asides planted within the teaching that censure your own circle of disciples or others, mixing pure speech with vulgar local language, and instruction unsuited to the disciples' intellects.

Teach with impeccable eloquence. When words are clearly audible, filling the surroundings, and are pleasant to hear, everyone listens enthusiastically. Sure words and meanings dispel doubts. Skill in examples and meanings edifies the listener's mind and facilitates understanding. Teaching adapted to the disciples' intellects becomes meaningful.

Occasional recounting of amazing stories prevents the listeners' feeling of

grief. Adding words found in the treasure-chest of scripture and reasoning precludes confusion or mistakes. Articulation of opposing views and their faults shows skill in stemming errors. Teaching consistent with all Buddhist ways is accepted by all. Easily understood teaching, free from vulgar local language, is worthy to be remembered. To be skillful in elaboration and summarization is to have gained mastery in teaching. To teach at a leisurely pace, with a wide perspective, without hesitation or fatigue, is what is called “teaching with the riches of positive qualities.”

### ***How Teaching Completes the Stores of Goodness and Wisdom [H]***

**In teaching, generosity is practiced by correct explanation of words and meaning;**

**Ethical conduct, by freedom from the faults of mental afflictions;**

**Patience, by forbearance of grief or fatigue; diligence, by enthusiastic teaching;**

**Meditative stability, by remaining undistracted; and sublime insight, by making distinctions.**

While teaching, generosity is practiced by the correct explanation of words and meanings; ethical conduct, by not mixing the teaching with the mental afflictions; patience, by forbearance of grief or fatigue, hunger and thirst; diligence, by enthusiastic teaching without disillusionment; meditative stability, by remaining mentally undistracted while teaching; sublime insight, by making distinctions in the subjects of the teaching and realizing that they lack an intrinsic nature, as in a dream.

### ***The Dedication of Goodness and an Explanation of Teaching's Benefits [I]***

**“By the power of the stores of positive qualities of teaching, of hearing the doctrine, of reflection and meditation upon it, May all beings, with me, in every lifetime, Always attain the supreme good fortune Of enjoying the ten ennobling acts and the ten forms of spiritual conduct.”**

**Correct teaching's benefits**

**Are enhanced memory, meditative states, self-confidence, and stilling of mental afflictions.**



**You preserve the teachings' treasury, you receive teaching from the Buddha,  
Gods and human beings praise you, your fame increases, you achieve your goals,  
You are not separated from the doctrine in every lifetime,  
And you very quickly attain enlightenment and rain the teachings upon beings.**

“By the power of the stores of positive qualities of teaching, of hearing, of reflection and meditation upon it, may all beings, with me, in every lifetime, always attain the supreme good fortune of enjoying the ten ennobling acts and the ten forms of spiritual conduct.”

Your present enjoyment of the sacred Buddhist doctrine is due to your spiritual masters: think of their great kindness. The teaching is the Buddha's word: think of his great kindness. You have listened to the teaching together with your companions in the Buddhist spiritual community: think of their great kindness. Dakinis and oath-bound protectors' power prevented obstacles to the teaching: think of their great kindness. Your parents nourished your body that practices the doctrine: think of their great kindness. Everything is due to the kindness of the Buddha's teaching: think, “May the precious teachings long endure!”

Teaching's benefits are as follows: Presentation of the doctrine with a perfectly lucid mind focused on freedom, without wishes for gain, service, or fame, has these positive effects: enhancement of memory, meditative states, self-confidence, and liberation from the mental afflictions. You preserve the teaching's treasury; you receive teaching from the Buddha; gods and human beings praise you and are inspired by you; you will accomplish every excellent goal; you are not separated from the sacred doctrine in every lifetime; you very quickly attain enlightenment and then the rain of your teachings brings your disciples to spiritual maturity; and you will quickly attain all goals, for others and yourself. *The Matrix of Awareness Discourse* states: Merely hearing the names of secret mantra's wisdom deities puts an end to ninety-three eons of accumulated obscurations. Each recitation aloud of their name in a retention mantra has as many infinite, immeasurable benefits. Be energetic in teaching.

## **HOW TO LISTEN TO BUDDHIST TEACHING [II]**

This chapter has five parts: (1) how to act while listening and when to listen, (2)

renunciation of impure motivation, (3) maintaining pure motivation, (4) how to complete the eighty-four ways of hearing the doctrine and the six transcendent perfections, and (5) dedication of goodness and the benefits of having heard the teachings.

### ***How to Act While Listening and When to Listen [A]***

**When listening to the sacred Buddhist doctrine, present a mandala and a mass of offerings; Make prostrations, and kneel or sit straight with folded hands.**

**When conducive conditions are gathered, listen respectfully without distraction.**

Present a mass of offerings, such as a throne for teaching and a seat, incense, flowers, and lamps; and present a mandala that includes precious substances. While listening, renounce ostentation, such as carrying a parasol, a staff, or weapons; covering your head; or wearing shoes. Do not sit with your back or side turned toward the speaker; sit in half-lotus, crouched, or kneeling posture. Look downward with folded hands. *The Discourse of Gathered Precious Qualities* states: Listen with this deportment of bodhisattvas:

Firmly settled in supreme joy, humility, and faith,  
Rid yourself of mental afflictions' obscurations, transcend defilements,  
Be truly engaged in serving beings, and develop certain sublime insight.

Male persons clearly imagine themselves as Gentle Splendor; female persons, as Tara. Think that from the speaker's mouth, the doctrine's light shines and touches the heart of each person, rids each of the darkness of ignorance, and causes the lotus of their intelligence to blossom. This is a profound instruction.

When a teaching effectively counteracts your mental afflictions, its depth has reached your stream of being. You should listen when you have the intention to undertake Buddhist practice or when young, during your hearing of a number of subjects, vast as an ocean. Generally, when entering Buddhism, you must first listen to teachings since, when you know the round of rebirth's flaws and the positive qualities of transcendent states, you will engage in correct conduct. When training your mind, you must listen, since this counteracts ignorance in any subject. Even when continually engaging in Buddhist experiential cultivation, you must listen, since this enriches your experience, such as bringing increased firmness to your ennobling practice. Even when every part of your

conscious stream of being is liberated, you must listen, since this resolves any formulation of doubt.

If you first regard any measure of your listening with attachment, thinking, “That much is enough!” and then engage in meditation practice in seclusion, you will not recognize the extremes in your thinking, and thus not sense that you have taken a mistaken or misleading path. Although in others’ sight you will seem to be someone who has practiced Buddhism, you will not profit from this at all. *The Pattern of the Stem Discourse* states: Child of the enlightened heritage! If you wish to rapidly reach manifest, perfect enlightenment, you must train in striving to cross an ocean of listening!

### ***Renunciation of Impure Motivation [B]***

**When listening, avoid a vessel’s three faults,  
Six impurities, and thirty-six shortcomings—  
Six acts of obstructive influences, six acts that cause obscurations,  
Six causes of abandoning the teachings, six faults of distraction,  
Six faults of misleading yourself, and six forms of spirituality contrary to  
the great way.**

A vessel’s three faults resemble the following: the vessel’s mouth turned upside-down, a vessel’s base that leaks, and poison within the vessel. First, nectar can be poured onto a vessel turned upside down but not even one drop will enter it. This illustrates not paying attention to the teachings’ presence, or to seem attentive but to slumber, to sink into dullness, to play, to joke, or to ponder something else. Second, water can be poured into a vessel that leaks from its base, but it will seep out and disappear. This illustrates retaining the teaching while present but not making an effort to familiarize yourself with each teaching you have heard by repeatedly recalling it: you forget. Third, water poured into a poisoned vessel fills it and remains inside, but can never be used. Likewise, once you fall under the sway of the mental afflictions, even though you have heard many teachings, increasing mental afflictions such as pride taint your knowledge. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states: Listen well, listen thoroughly, and retain what I say; I will teach you.

To “listen well” corrects the fault of containing poison. To “listen thoroughly” corrects the fault of a vessel turned upside-down. To “retain” corrects the fault of a leaking base.

Six impurities are mentioned in *The Rational System of Exposition*:

The impurities are pride, lack of faith,  
Lack of interest,  
Outer distraction, inner self-absorption,  
And listening with distress.

Listen having abandoned these six: listening with particularly swollen pride, dressed fashionably, seated on a high seat, and so on; listening without faith in the doctrine, your companions, or the spiritual master; listening without the wish or intention to practice Buddhism; allowing your eyes, ears, or mind to become entranced with outer objects; becoming inwardly self-absorbed, such as in sleep or dullness; and listening with feelings of distress that impede the teachings, such as, “What’s the use of this teaching?!”

Don’t give rise for even an instant to thoughts of the teacher’s faults, such as, “This teacher comes from a bad background,” “doesn’t understand Buddhism,” “has few possessions,” “has coarse mental afflictions,” “is wrathful, is fierce,” “has an unpleasant voice,” “wears poor robes,” “is poor and destitute,” or “is accompanied by bad persons.”

Among thirty-six shortcomings, *The Complete Array of Qualities Discourse* lists six acts of obstructive influences: Laziness, apathy, lack of faith in the teaching and the teacher, lack of service to the spiritual guide, to not consider the doctrine as it is given, and to reject consideration of karma and its ripening due to mundane considerations.

*The Discourse Requested by Ocean of Intellect* lists six acts that cause obscurations: Once obstructive influences have entered your stream of being, to have your pride swell; to abandon Buddhism due to karmic obscurations; to search out and listen attentively to teaching of materialists’ secret logical syllogisms; to not heed the collection of bodhisattva instructions; to harbor negative views toward spiritual guides; and to harbor negative views toward the doctrine.

The same text lists six causes of abandoning the doctrine:

To feign physical and mental positive attitudes with a desire to commit wrongdoing; due to pride, to disrespect the one who expresses the doctrine; to not request teaching due to doubt; to gain wrong livelihood by means of feigning Buddhist practice; to be disrespectful to your parents, preceptor, or master; and to constantly argue in disharmony due to mental or physical roughness.

The same text lists six faults of distraction from the teachings:

To entertain many mundane projects; to own many material possessions; to listen to much insignificant talk; to have many misleading companions among family and friends; to entertain many misleading thoughts; and to have many sicknesses and obstructive influences due to negative karma.

*The Discourse Requested by Drita-rashtra* lists six faults of wrongful lack of principles: To not recall the great kindness you have received but to be deceptive; to practice Buddhism out of attachment to gain or honor; to regard others' possessions with jealousy and greed; to not think of the Buddhist teachers' qualities but to look for mistakes; to have faith in and to rely upon a misleading master; and to search for concepts rather than for the positive qualities of goodness.

*The Discourse of Gentle Splendor's Manifestation* lists six forms of spirituality contrary to the great way: To not seek the collection of bodhisattva teachings; to seek non-Buddhist miracles; to engage in worldly work rather than to seek erudition; to pursue study through terminology; due to that, to not seek liberation; and to not search for spiritual guides due to desire for proficiency in the subjects of Buddhist culture.

### ***Maintaining Pure Motivation [C]***

**Maintain pure motivation by means of six precious attitudes, six hardships,**

**Six armors unaffected by circumstances, six goals,**

**Six necessities, and six ways to seek instruction.**

*The Discourse Requested by Suvatu* lists the six precious attitudes, the perception of spiritual masters who express the doctrine as a treasure of jewels; of the teachings as a wish-fulfilling jewel; of hearing the doctrine as an extremely rare opportunity; that to preserve and reflect upon the doctrine is meaningful because they are precious; that the opportunity to contemplate the teachings cannot be regained, even in one hundred lifetimes; and that those who abandon their search for the teachings have declined nectar in order to drink poison.

Listen to the doctrine and contemplate it with these perceptions, and

stabilize your intent to make this opportunity meaningful.

The same text lists forbearance of six hardships:

Wherever spiritual guides or the Buddhist doctrine can be found, to forbear mental afflictions due to hot or cold temperatures, hunger and thirst, criticism or scolding, fatigue from journeys or activity, giving or searching for necessities, and even harm to your precious physical well-being.

The same text lists the six armors unaffected by circumstances:

Energetic application, undaunted even if beaten by clubs, given to the following: presenting the teachings or to their assiduous spiritual practice; to cultivation of great learning; to preservation of great learning; to knowledge of the doctrine's meaning; to having your behavior conform to the doctrine; and to having others rely on the teachings as described and to honor them.

The same text lists six special goals to be undertaken:

Undertake these six goals: knowledge of all sources of ennobling acts; once you gain that knowledge, to put them into practice accordingly; to develop supreme compassion toward sentient beings; to retain the entire sacred doctrine; to not interrupt the three jewels' lineage; and to bring sentient beings to complete spiritual maturity.

*The Discourse Requested by Kashyapa* lists six necessities to be practiced:

It is necessary to listen to and to know the specific details of the teachings; with this knowledge, to not commit unsanctioned acts; to teach this to others; to have yourself and others attain complete liberation by such teaching; to have yourself and others train in sublime insight; and to resolve the doubts of persons who come from the four directions. Be diligent in listening with these six.

The very extensive, great *Flower Ornament Discourse* lists six ways to seek instruction: Fully seek for the doctrine in these ways: seek the doctrine sincerely, without guile or deceit; seek not for your own benefit, but for the good of all; seek without the wish for gain or service, but with the wish that beings renounce

their mental afflictions; without concocting the doctrine, to seek with comprehension of sublime insight; seek unequivocally, to resolve everyone's doubts; and seek without conceit or desire, in order to realize the Buddha's entire doctrine.

### ***How to Complete the Eighty-Four Ways of Hearing the Doctrine and the Six Transcendent Perfections [D]***

**When listening in eighty-four ways,  
The mandala and other offerings constitute generosity;  
Control of body, voice, and mind, ethical conduct; forbearance of  
difficulty, patience; Enthusiasm, diligence; undistracted attention,  
meditative stability;  
Clarification of misunderstandings, sublime insight.**

*The Discourse Requested by Inexhaustible Intellect* states:

Bodhisattvas hear the doctrine in eighty-four ways: (1) with focused intention, (2) with motivation, (3) with noble intent, (4) with application, (5) as a spiritual guide, (6) without pride, (7) with care, (8) with veneration, (9) in harmony, (10) happy with the canon, (11) with reverence, (12) with service, (13) with esteem, (14) turning their ears toward the teachings, (15) attentively, (16) without distraction, (17) in stillness, (18) with the perception of the teaching as a wish-fulfilling jewel or as medicine, (19) to expel the chronic sickness of the mental afflictions, (20) with the vessel of memory, (21) with the knowledge of understanding, (22) with the wish for intelligence, (23) with intellectual receptivity, (24) insatiable in listening to the doctrine, (25) with increasing giving, (26) with discipline and alert senses, (27) with reliance on the learned, (28) with joyful humility, (29) with physical ease, (30) with verbal quietude, (31) with thorough mental joy, (32) without feelings of grief, (33) attentive to the words, (34) with reflection on the meaning, (35) with excellent behavior, (36) listening assiduously, (37) listening to others' teachings, (38) listening to gather others, (39) as if not having previously heard the doctrine, (40) with clairvoyance, (41) not wanting another way of spiritual development, (42) with the transcendent perfections, (43) with the collection of bodhisattva teachings, (44) with skillful means, (45) with purity, (46) with mindfulness, (47) with skill in taking birth, (48) with skill in not

taking birth, (49) hearing about the repulsive, (50) hearing about love, (51) hearing about interdependent arising, (52) hearing about impermanence, (53) hearing about suffering, (54) hearing about the absence of an existent self, (55) hearing about peace, (56) hearing about emptiness, (57) hearing about absence of characteristics, (58) hearing about aspirationlessness, (59) without manifest formations, (60) with gathering ennobling acts, (61) with the blessing of truth, (62) without waste, (63) independently, (64) guarding their own minds, (65) guarding others' concerns, (66) eradicating the mental afflictions, (67) with the support of the seven treasures of the exalted, (68) eradicating destitution, (69) with praise by the wise, (70) with joy from the wise, (71) with the omniscience of the exalted, (72) to inspire beings who are not sublime, (73) with the sight of truth, (74) with renunciation of the psychophysical aggregations' faults, (75) weighing the faults of composite phenomena, (76) relying on the meaning, (77) relying on the doctrine, (78) relying on wisdom, (79) relying on the discourses of certain meaning, (80) without any negative act, (81) with benefit for others and themselves, (82) without regret toward previous excellent ennobling acts, (83) with distinct improvement, and (84) to receive the Buddha's entire doctrine.

When listening to Buddhist teaching, offerings constitute generosity; control of deportment, ethical conduct; forbearance of heat and cold, patience; enthusiasm in listening, diligence; single-minded listening, meditative stability; resolving doubts and in the knowledge of all appearances as a magical illusion, sublime insight.

### ***Dedication of Goodness and the Benefits of Having Heard the Teachings [E]***

**At the conclusion of the teaching, reflect on the master's kindness, and within an appreciation of the magical nature of phenomena, Dedicate to awakening the cultivation of the ennobling act of having listened. The benefits of having heard the sound of the conch of the doctrine Are liberation from miserable existences, sublime insight, and flawless memory of what you listened to; Increase of ennobling acts; diminished wrongdoing; praise from gods and humans; And swift attainment of enlightenment, after which you turn the wheel of the doctrine.**



At the conclusion of a teaching, reflect on the spiritual master's kindness, and dedicate the magical illusion-like cultivation of ennobling acts to the attainment of awakening.

Hearing the sound of the doctrine's conch liberates you from miserable existences. The benefits of having listened to the teachings are gain of sublime insight; meditative states; retention of the teachings' stream and so on; eyes that discern correct conduct; increase of ennobling acts; diminished wrongdoing; praise from gods and humans; banishment of the darkness of ignorance; and swift attainment of enlightenment, after which you will turn the unsurpassable wheel of the doctrine. *The Gong Discourse* states: Hearing the sound of the beaten drum or gong

That announces the presentation of the sacred Buddhist doctrine  
Leads to the attainment of awakening:

What need is there to mention the even greater benefits of listening to the teachings thus announced!

## **THE SIX STYLES OF FAITH, THE FOUNDATION OF THE SACRED BUDDHIST DOCTRINE [III]**

This chapter has eight parts: (1) the nature of the six styles of faith, the source of all forms of Buddhism, (2) sure examples of faith, (3) the harm in lacking faith, (4) the object and causes of faith, (5) forsaking conditions that cloud faith, (6) indications of the arising of faith, (7) tireless and steadfast faith, and (8) the benefits of having engendered faith.

### ***The Nature of the Six Styles of Faith, the Source of All Forms of Buddhism [A]***

**Styles of faith in ennobling acts are described as follows:**

**Yearning faith prompts choices in relation to acts, causes, and consequences.**

**Devoted faith leads to dedication toward supreme ideals. Respectful faith leads to outstanding conscientiousness. Lucid faith uplifts the mind to positive qualities.**

**Trusting faith ends doubt concerning the teachings.**

**Certainty in faith leads to application in hearing the doctrine, and in reflection and meditation upon it.**

In general, most traditional sources mention three forms of faith: lucid faith, yearning faith, and trusting faith. These are defined as full inspiration toward the three jewels, yearning to apply the four truths, and trust in relation to teachings on acts, causes, and consequences. Here, I will present six forms of faith: yearning faith, devoted faith, respectful faith, lucid faith, trusting faith, and certain faith. The difference between the two presentations of faith is merely a brief or extensive presentation of the same subject. Devoted, respectful, and lucid faith belong to the category of lucid faith; yearning and trusting faith, to trusting faith; and certainty in faith, to yearning faith.

First, the essence of yearning faith is the wish to choose between the round of rebirth and transcendent states. Its definition is the yearning for and delight in positive qualities, thus yearning faith. Its three categories are the wish to renounce the round of rebirth's suffering, the wish to attain awakening, and the wish to act based upon choices between the acts that constitute their respective causes. An example consistent with yearning faith is just as those who wish to be wealthy desire riches, you wish to seek the teachings—you reject suffering and its sources, and enter the path and the cessation of suffering. Signs of this faith are lack of interest in mundane activity, and the undertaking of hearing the doctrine, and of reflection and meditation upon it. *The Lamp of the Jewels Discourse* states its benefits: Faith is the preliminary, like a mother who gives birth:

It preserves and increases all noble qualities.  
It dispels fears and crosses rivers.  
Faith illustrates the city of excellent happiness.

Second, the essence of devoted faith is utter delight in spiritual masters and the three jewels. Its definition is the devoted interest to follow those ideals. Its four categories are devotion to spiritual masters as the ones to rely upon; devotion to enlightenment as your goal; devotion to the doctrine as your path; and devotion to the spiritual community as your companions. An example consistent with devoted faith is children following their mother. The sign that this faith has arisen in your stream of being is that you feel strongly moved and you spontaneously express your positive feelings at the sight, sound, or recollection of the spiritual masters and the three jewels who have placed you on the path to freedom. The previous text states its benefits: Great individuals' attitudes have arisen

With faith in the buddhas and the teachings,  
Inspiration toward the conduct of the Buddha's spiritual heirs

inspiration toward the conduct of the Buddha's spiritual heirs,  
And faith in unsurpassable awakening.

Third, the essence of respectful faith, based upon lucid faith, is care to not transgress the doctrine. Its definition is homage in body, speech, and mind toward your spiritual ancestors, thus respectful faith. Its three categories are physical respect—acting in a restrained manner, such as performing prostrations and circumambulations; verbal respect—expressions of praise, polite speech, and service; and mental respect—bowing humbly upon seeing a venerable person or object. An example consistent with respectful faith is humility, like a subject's diligent service to a monarch. Be diligent in that way. The sign that this faith has arisen in your being is to have no pride or haughtiness in the presence of your spiritual ancestors. The previous text states its benefits: The root of humble respect is the relinquishment of pride.

Faith, like hands, gathers the roots of ennobling acts.

Fourth, the essence of lucid faith is the feeling of overt inspiration toward your spiritual ancestors' qualities. Its definition is lucidity in tranquil openness that arises from joyous faith, free from the defilement of deceit. Its three categories are inspiration toward the relative appearances of ennobling acts, inspiration toward the ultimate ennobling act of sublime insight, and inspiration toward the ennobling act of the integration of equal parts of relative ennobling acts and sublime insight. An example consistent with it is a water-purifying gem that cleans muddy water; this faith purifies the intellect's faulty conduct. The sign that lucid faith has arisen is that wrongdoing is not mixed with your body, speech, and mind, and you take joy in ennobling acts. The previous text states its benefits: Faith is the arising of utter joy in the Victor's doctrine;

Faith illustrates the city of excellent happiness;  
Faith pervades positive qualities and wisdom.

Fifth, the essence of trusting faith is lack of doubt concerning teachings on the subjects of the basis of Buddhism, its path, and its result. The definition of trusting faith is undertaking the teachings' practice in the knowledge that the words and meanings of reliable scripture and logic teach the import of the basis, path, and result. Its three categories are trust that the causes and effects of the round of rebirth must be renounced; trust that the causes and effects of transcendent states must be cultivated; and trust that acts of undetermined consequences are unnecessary. An example consistent with trusting faith is

cultivating crops in the belief of an eventual autumn harvest; this is like the cultivation of ennobling acts. The sign that this faith has arisen in your stream of being is attainment of confident conviction in your belief toward the teacher, the spiritual master, the Buddha; the doctrine, the Buddhist teachings, the lesser and great ways; the circle of disciples, the two Buddhist ways' spiritual communities; and all sacred objects that represent them. The previous text states its benefits: Faith's senses are keen and illuminating;

Faith's strength cannot be overpowered by anything else;  
Faith forms the basis for the mental afflictions' eradication.

Sixth, the essence of certainty in faith toward the excellent doctrine is yearning for the definitive meaning, the subject of the nature of reality. Its definition is settling in that meaning's ongoing state after you have seen it. Its three categories are the faith of certainty in what teaches that meaning—hearing the doctrine, and of reflection and meditation upon it. An example consistent with certainty in faith is keeping the gold you found in ore, like cherishing the correct meaning. The sign that this faith has arisen is to not separate yourself from the cultivation of its experience, day or night. The previous text states its benefits: Through faith, the state of enlightenment is attained.

### ***Sure Examples of Faith [B]***

**The nature of faith resembles a field, a ship,  
An escort, a vehicle, a jewel, a warrior:  
You should value faith as your greatest wealth.**

Faith resembles a fertile field where awakening's stems sprout abundantly. The previous text states: In the field of awakening, unspoiled seeds, the causes of noble qualities,

Grow by means of faith.  
Search for the qualities that arise naturally from faith.

Like an ocean vessel, faith crosses the waters of the round of rebirth. Like a good escort, faith provides protection from your enemies, the mental afflictions. Like an excellent vehicle, faith carries you to the land of freedom. Like a jewel, faith accomplishes your hopes and wishes. Like a warrior, faith destroys corrupting acts. Faith is the first of the seven treasures of the exalted. *The Discourse Showing the Transcendent Buddhas' Inconceivable Mysteries* states:

Therefore, with faith, inspiration, devotion, and an untroubled attitude, you have no uncertainty, doubt, or hesitation concerning acts and their maturation. With interest, understanding, and belief, you know that ennobling acts and wrongdoing and their ripening are never exhausted. Therefore, you do not commit wrongdoing even for the sake of your own life. In the spiritual practice of the ten paths of ennobling activity, generosity increases your enjoyment; ethical conduct leads to the higher realms; listening fosters sublime insight; and meditation multiplies all noble qualities.

### ***The Harm in Lacking Faith [C]***

**Without faith, you are like a stone on the ocean floor, a ship without a captain,  
An armless person, a burnt seed, the blind.  
You plunge to the depths of existence and wander forever within  
the round of rebirth.**

Like a boulder at the ocean floor that cannot rise to the surface, without faith, it is impossible to reach the dry land of freedom. Like a captainless ship that will not reach the far shore, without faith, it is impossible to cross the waters of suffering. Like an armless person who has reached an island of gold but cannot take anything, without faith, it is impossible for qualities to enter your stream of being. Like a burnt seed that cannot produce fruit, without faith, it is impossible for awakening's fruit to grow. Like the blind within a temple, when you are without faith, you cannot see the appearance of spirituality. Like clever persons whose worldly skills plunge them to the depths of the round of rebirth, when you are without faith, whatever you do remains a mundane act—you can never attain the freedom of awakening. Such are the faults of lacking faith. *The Discourse of Ten Qualities* states: Positive qualities do not arise

In persons lacking faith.

### ***The Object and Causes of Faith [D]***

**Yearning faith arises from disillusionment with existence.  
Devoted faith arises from disillusionment with evil companions.  
Respectful faith arises from disillusionment with this life.  
Lucid faith arises from pure, supreme ideals.  
Trusting faith arises from hearing about karma and consequences.  
Certainty in faith arises from all forms of hearing and reflection.**

**Causes that increase faith include relying upon holy persons, Noble companions, examination of the discourses and tantras, Reflection on death, and acts and their consequences.**

**These inspire increased effort in hearing and reflection, which cause faith to continually increase.**

**To hear the story of a holy person’s life of freedom; to suffer harm from disease, demons, or enemies; To witness death; to experience sudden suffering— Once faith has arisen from having heard the teachings, it is valuable to sustain it.**

Yearning faith arises from disillusionment with the sufferings of existence. Devoted faith arises from disillusionment with the ideas and behavior of evil companions. Respectful faith arises from disillusionment with this life’s activity. Lucid faith arises from seeing the acts and conduct of spiritual masters, the Buddha. Trusting faith arises from hearing detailed explanations of karma and its consequences. Certainty in faith arises from diligence in hearing the doctrine and reflection upon it.

Causes that increase faith include reliance upon spiritual masters and holy companions; examination of discourses’ and tantras’ texts; and reflection on death, and on acts, karma, and consequences. These cause faith to continually increase. To hear the story of a holy person’s life of freedom; to suffer harm from disease, demons, or enemies; to witness death; to experience sudden suffering—when these events inspire faith, it is very valuable to sustain it. *The Discourse Showing the Transcendent Buddhas’ Inconceivable Mysteries* states: Therefore, since faith prevents you from entering faulty ways of conduct, all exalted ones praise it.

### ***Forsaking Conditions That Cloud Faith [E]***

**Conditions that cloud faith include consideration of spiritual masters’ faults,**

**Befriending common persons, increased craving for sensual pleasures,**

**Laziness and apathy, preoccupation with this life’s affairs,**

**And activity detrimental to your spiritual life: these are signs of demons’ blessing.**

Once you enter the gateway to the sacred Buddhist doctrine, demons create impediments. It is said that when you receive their “blessing,” your faith becomes clouded. Signs that demons have entered and “blessed” you include

consideration of your spiritual masters' faults, consideration of the negative aspects of practice of the teachings in general, befriending common companions, diminished diligence in experiential cultivation, unrestrained enjoyment of the five senses' pleasures, acute laziness and apathy toward the teachings, much activity in this life's affairs, and undertaking activity detrimental to your spiritual life. These are the signs of demons' blessings: because of them, you feel neither devotion nor humility toward the three jewels.

### ***Indications of the Arising of Faith [F]***

**Indications of the arising of faith include disillusionment with the round of rebirth; Humility toward the three jewels; exertion in hearing the doctrine, reflection, training, and vows; Practice of ennobling acts; renunciation of wrongdoing; and the arising of new noble qualities.**

Indications of the arising of faith include disengagement toward the appearances of delusion in the round of rebirth, like a nauseous person seeing food; intense devotion and humility toward spiritual masters and the jewels, like children's yearning for their mother; exertion in hearing the doctrine and reflection upon it, like a thirsty person craving water; to cherish the training and vows, like a poor person finding gold or turquoise; joy in application to ennobling acts and experiential cultivation, like a merchant arriving at an island of gold; and faith in all Buddhist ways, like an eager shopper going to market. When they arise, ensure that such indications do not decline but ever increase.

### ***Tireless and Steadfast Faith [G]***

**Faith should be free from six inconsistencies.**

**Unchanging faith should have special qualities,**

**Like the king of mountains, the sun, the ocean, a mother, space, a bow-string,**

**A ship, a bridge, a stream, and a silken cord.**

Your faith should remain free from six inconsistencies: (1) Some beginners in Buddhist practice feign extreme faith while with spiritual masters, but when apart, see them as worse than ordinary persons. Renounce this. (2) Some people's faith arises very quickly when conducive conditions are encountered, but it fades and disappears as suddenly. Renounce this. (3) Some people feign strong faith while they have not yet received a teaching or an object they wish, or when in the clutches of sickness or demons. Yet, once they are cured, or get

what they want, they abandon their faith. Renounce this. (4) Some people have faith toward one noble practice, and then another, thus they entertain many and make none useful. Renounce this. (5) Some people do not have any profound teachings or masters in whom they have indivisible faith but easily accept any master and any teaching. Renounce this. (6) Some people are high-strung, and allow some small event to inspire faith and some small event to suddenly cloud it. Renounce this.

Instead, first examine spiritual masters or teachings, then once you have accepted them, maintain faith and respect without subsequent fatigue, disillusionment, or fluctuations. Rely upon spiritual masters and the doctrine with tenfold faith: unchanging and irreversible, like the sovereign mountain; vivid and without shadows, like the sun; endlessly deep, like the ocean; without an ulterior motive, like a mother; without limit or center, like space; without relaxation, like a bow-string; without discouragement and fatigue, like a ship; unperturbed by events, such as others' influence or due to scolding by the master, like a bridge; continual, like a river's stream; humble, supple, and embellished with politeness, like a silken cord.

### ***The Benefits of Having Engendered Faith [H]***

**The benefits of faith include increase of all positive qualities,  
Relief from all suffering, finding the path to freedom,  
Benevolent gods' protection, success in all your projects,  
And the attainment of enlightenment: faith's benefits are infinite.**

The benefits of faith include that it forms the foundation for all positive qualities; it relieves all the round of rebirth's sufferings; through it you find the path to freedom; you enjoy the protection of benevolent gods; you succeed in all your projects; buddhas and bodhisattvas continually think of you; you are reborn in the pure lands; at the end of a happy life, the buddhas and bodhisattvas guide you; thus, you have no fears during the period between lifetimes; you are reborn where you aspired and become a preserver of the three jewels; and you attain the exalted state of enlightenment. *The Lamp of the Jewels Discourse* states: Some serve sentient beings as numerous as the atoms in ten realms

In every pleasing way, during an eon.

Compared to them, the goodness of those who have faith in this teaching  
Is particularly outstanding, goodness the first do not have.



## CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS

Teaching the sacred doctrine provides medicine that relieves beings' torment.  
Teaching the sacred doctrine provides an inexhaustible treasure of goodness.  
Teaching the sacred doctrine crowns all beings, including the gods.  
Teaching the sacred doctrine forms the foundation of all welfare and happiness.

Hearing the teachings, the wealth of the exalted, banishes the darkness of  
ignorance.

Hearing the teachings, the source of happiness, opens a vault of noble qualities.

Hearing the teachings is your residence, companions, possessions, path, army,  
and family.

Reliance on hearing the teachings quickly leads to enlightenment.

Faith is the underlying source for magnificent ennobling acts and well-being.

Faith causes every positive quality to increase.

Faith is the powerful wish-fulfilling gem that provides whatever you desire.

Faith constitutes the means to realize the supreme meaning of the abiding nature.

This concludes the commentary to "The Transmission of Buddhism," Book 2 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all Buddhist ways of spiritual development. I, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje, wrote this description of the teachings' initial gateway and foundation, faith. Fortune!

A secondary emanation of the great scholar Bodhisato, the omniscient Tenpé Nyima Pal-zangpo, sponsored the printing of this text.

**BOOK 3**  
**OUR PRECIOUS HUMAN LIFE**

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- I. The Difficulty of Attaining a Free and Fully Endowed Human Life
  - A. A Brief Presentation of the Essence of Human Life
  - B. An Extensive Explanation of the Nature of the Leisure and Endowments of Human Life
    - 1. Eight Restless States Based in Your Own Stream of Being
    - 2. Eight Restless States due to Immediate Circumstances
    - 3. Eight Restless States due to Unconducive Attitudes
    - 4. Five Personal Endowments
    - 5. Five Social Endowments
- II. The Difficulty of Finding Such a Life, Based on Examples and Numbers
  - A. Examples to Illustrate the Difficulty of Finding Such a Life
  - B. Numbers to Illustrate the Difficulty of Finding Such a Life
- III. The Nature of the Leisure and Endowments of Human Life
  - A. A Mere Human Life
  - B. The Special Human Life
  - C. The Precious Human Life
- IV. The Need to Fully Grasp the Essence of Human Life Now That You Have It
  - A. Certainty Concerning What Human Life Supports
  - B. The Need for Exertion Now; Without It, You Will Later Suffer Within the Round of Rebirth
  - C. The Need to Grasp the Essence of Life with the Support of the Doctrine of Path and Result
  - D. The Need to Spurn Meaningless Acts
  - E. The Need for Exertion in Spiritual Practice While the Circumstances Are Conducive
  - F. Abandonment of the Six Faults, and Exertion in Any Practice of Ennobling Acts
  - G. The Benefits of Reflection on the Difficulty of Attaining a Free and Fully Endowed Human Life

Supreme bodhisattvas Essence of Earth and glorious Goddess of Charm,  
Your forms are arrayed with every mark and sign of physical perfection,  
As if you emerged from a white lotus:  
To your dual configuration, I respectfully bow.

BOOK 3, “Our Precious Human Life,” has four chapters:

1. A General Explanation of the Difficulty of Attaining a Free and Fully Endowed Human Life
  2. A Specific Explanation of the Difficulty of Finding Such a Life, Based on Examples and Numbers
  3. Identification of the Nature of the Leisure and Endowments of Human Life
  4. The Need to Fully Grasp the Essence of Human Life Now That You Have It
- These four chapters contain a total of nineteen headings.

## **THE DIFFICULTY OF ATTAINING A FREE AND FULLY ENDOVED HUMAN LIFE [I]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) a brief presentation of the essence of human life and (2) an extensive explanation of the nature of the leisure and endowments of human life.

### ***The Essence of Human Life [A]***

**The supreme contemplation of those who hear the doctrine with faith  
Focuses on a jewel valuable beyond measure, the free and fully endowed  
human life, Extremely difficult to find anywhere among the six kinds of  
beings.**

**Obtaining it is like a blind person finding a gem:  
Joyously seize its pure essence.**

A human life infused with Buddhist values is a jewel more precious than gold, silver, or other riches. Such a priceless, excellent life, replete with all eight aspects of leisure and ten endowments, is very hard to find among the six kinds of beings. When you have it, you are akin to a destitute blind person who finds a precious wish-fulfilling gem at a crossroads. With the utmost joy and gladness in your heart, grasp its pure, meaningful essence as advised in the sacred Buddhist doctrine: this will accomplish your wishes for eternal happiness. *The Discourse That Presents the Freedoms and Endowments* states: It's like this: A blind person finds a precious jewel at a crossroads. Likewise, if sentient beings who course throughout the round of rebirth blinded by the cataracts of ignorance were to attain the actual life of a human being, they would be supremely happy. Therefore, you should always put excellent Buddhist teachings into practice.

### ***The Nature of the Leisure and Endowments of Human Life [B]***

This section has five parts: (1) eight restless states based in your own stream of

being, (2) eight restless states due to immediate circumstances, (3) eight restless states due to uncondusive attitudes, (4) five personal endowments, and (5) five social endowments.

### ***Eight Restless States Based in Your Own Stream of Being [1]***

**You are free from these eight unsatisfactory, restless states based in your own stream of being: In hell, suffering from heat and cold is unbearable.**

**Starving spirits are exhausted by hunger and thirst.**

**Dumb and foolish animals suffer terribly as beasts of burden.**

**Long-lived gods have no concept of spiritual practice.**

**Barbarians of the hinterlands live without ennobling acts and in the steady increase of wrongdoing.**

**Those who are mute or mentally handicapped cannot comprehend words or meanings.**

**Those who hold wrong views abjure correct views.**

**During dark eons, people live in ignorance of the subject of which acts to undertake and which to reject.**

Meditate joyfully that you have attained an exemplary, untroubled life, free from these eight unsatisfactory, restless states based in your own stream of being: (1) If you had been born in the hells, you would have to experience intense, unbearable, constant suffering in the eight hot hells, eight cold hells, or occasional or neighboring hells: you would have no leisure to put Buddhism into practice. (2) If you had been born a starving spirit, extreme hunger and thirst's blazing fires would thoroughly exhaust your body, voice, and mind. In such despair, when would you have the leisure to put Buddhism into practice? (3) If you had been born an animal, as a very dull and foolish beast, others would force you into their service; your flesh, hides, and so on, their bounty. Animals eat one another and suffer terribly, unbearably. How could you have the leisure to put Buddhism into practice?

In these three cases, torment from physical suffering prevents the experience of leisure.

(4) Long-lived gods who dwell in the formless realm or on the four levels of meditative stability do not even conceive of the need for spiritual practice. Thus they have no leisure.

These last four experience a lack of leisure due to external circumstances: (5) If you had been born among barbarians or others in the hinterlands, you would

live without engaging in ennobling acts and in the steady increase of wrongdoing: you would have no leisure to put Buddhism into practice. (6) The mute, unable to express themselves with language, and the mentally handicapped, unable to distinguish between which acts to reject and which to undertake, cannot accurately comprehend the doctrine's words and meanings: they have no leisure to put Buddhism into practice. (7) Those whose stream of being is contaminated with wrong views of eternalism or nihilism criticize and disparage correct, supreme views: they have no leisure to put pure Buddhism into practice. (8) If you had not been born during an eon of illumination when buddhas appear, but had been born in a dark eon during which the sun of the Buddha had not dawned in the world, you would live in ignorance concerning how to choose between positive, ennobling acts to be cultivated and corrupting wrongdoing to reject: you would have no leisure to put Buddhism into practice.

These are the four inner restless states, thus eight in all. These four lack leisure due to the mind: long-lived gods, people of the hinterlands, persons with wrong views, and those born during dark eons.

Joyfully meditate that you have acquired this exemplary human life, free from these eight restless states based in your own stream of being, and endowed with eight innate forms of leisure. *The Concise Discourse of the Perfection of Sublime Insight* states: Those who abandon the eight restless states always find leisure.

*The Major Commentary to "The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas"* states: The eight restless states are these:

Hell beings, starving spirits, animals,  
Long-lived gods, barbarians, those born at a time without buddhas,  
Those holding wrong views, and the mute or mentally handicapped.

*Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states:

To hold wrong views; or to be born an animal,  
Starving spirit, hell being,  
In a time or place without the Buddha's word,  
A barbarian in the hinterlands, mute or mentally handicapped,  
Or a long-lived god: any of these births  
Is known to have the fault of the eight restless states.  
Once you have gained freedom from them,  
Strive to prevent rebirth there!

## ***Eight Restless States due to Immediate Circumstances [2]***

**Renounce these eight restless states due to immediate circumstances:**

**Corrupting acts due to the five poisons' turmoil;**

**To fall under misleading companions' influence due to foolish and deluded thinking; To fall into demons' clutches due to mistaken views and conduct on a wrong path; Distraction by indolence although you intended to further your spiritual training; Although diligent, to be tormented by events when the lake of your bad karma overflows; To belong to the class of servants who live helplessly in others' power; To strive for materialistic goals because you entered the teachings for this life's sake; To practice Buddhism for gain, fame, or honor because your spiritual practice is contrived.**

*The Precious Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* states:

Troubled by the five poisons, dull and foolish, clutched by demons,  
Indolent, the wide lake of karma has overflowed,  
Under another's control, seeking security, and contriving spirituality:  
These are the eight restless states due to immediate circumstances.  
They indicate an unworthy, unqualified vessel for instruction on the path to  
freedom.

## ***Eight Restless States due to Unconducive Attitudes [3]***

**Eight restless states due to unconducive attitudes are the following:**

**To be bound by cords of attachment to family, friends, food, or wealth;**

**To have ignoble behavior and character that makes spiritual practice unprofitable; To feel no fear toward the sufferings of the round of rebirth or the miserable existences;**

**To feel no faith whatsoever in ennobling acts;**

**Your acts in thought, word, and deed consist of corrupting wrongdoing;**

**To never consider the positive qualities of ennobling acts or the sacred doctrine; To have damaged your vows of individual liberation or of awakened mind; To have violated secret mantra's principal or secondary bonds.**

**Freedom from these twenty-four (three groups of eight) unsatisfactory, restless states is crucial.**

*The Precious Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* states:

To be tightly bound with attachment; to have particularly ignoble behavior;  
To not fear the round of rebirth; to have no faith whatsoever;  
To perform corrupting wrongdoing; to have no consideration for the  
doctrine; To allow vows or tantric bonds to be damaged:  
These are known as the eight restless states due to uncondusive attitudes.  
With them, the teachings are distant and the lamp on the path to freedom  
dims.

### ***Five Personal Endowments [4]***

**Five personal endowments must be complete:**

**Previous spiritual training in ennobling acts has awakened—you attained a human birth.**

**You were born in a central country where the doctrines of Buddhist teaching and practice have spread.**

**You possess the supreme conditions for spiritual practice—all your senses are intact.**

**You have not transgressed the laws of karma because you feel inclined toward ennobling acts.**

**You have faith in the sanctuary of faith, the three jewels.**

Strive at spiritual life when you have gained the special conducive circumstances of all five personal endowments, as follows. (1) The endowment of life as a human being: you attained a precious human body due to the awakening of your previous series of lifetimes' excellent habits of training in ennobling acts. (2) The endowment of the country: you have been born in a central country where the epitome of the Buddha's scriptural word and realization—the doctrines of instruction and meditation practice—spread very widely and flourish. (3) The endowment of the qualities of the sense faculties: you possess the supreme, conducive condition for correct spiritual practice—your body, including your senses and limbs, is complete. (4) The endowment of not transgressing the laws of karma: you have not transgressed the laws of karma by becoming a butcher, for example, and you feel very inclined toward ennobling acts. (5) The endowment of faith: you feel faith in the sanctuary of faith, the precious three jewels.

*The Discourse That Presents the Freedoms and Endowments* states:

To have attained a human life, to have been born in an exalted country, to have the sense faculties intact, to have not transgressed the laws of karma, and to have faith in the sacred representations of Buddhism: these five are the five magnificent endowments that depend on you.

### ***Five Social Endowments [5]***

**The twelve unsurpassable teachers have appeared in this world.**

**They turned the wheel of the doctrine's nine ways of discourses and tantras.**

**The general and specific durations of the doctrine have not expired.**

**Many persons have entered the teachings' gate and accomplished the two goals.**

**Qualified spiritual masters have accepted you and benefactors support you.**

**These five social endowments together with the five personal endowments comprise the ten conducive endowments.**

**Now that they are complete, accomplish your long-term aspirations.**

The five social endowments are as follows. (1) The endowment of the teacher: from the time when human life span was unlimited until the present period during which life expectancy is one hundred years, a series of twelve teachers of unsurpassable great perfection has appeared. (2) The endowment of the teachings: these twelve turned the inconceivable wheel of the doctrine's nine ways of discourses and tantras. (3) The endowment of time: the duration of the doctrine has not expired. This refers to the fact that the five-thousand-year general duration of the Buddha's teaching has not elapsed; and specifically, that great perfection teachings will increasingly spread until human life expectancy diminishes from sixty to ten years. (4) The endowment of others' following the teachings: many others have entered Buddhism through the sacred doctrine's gate, and spontaneously accomplish the two goals—their own and others' well-being. (5) The endowment of conducive circumstances: you have good fortune in that spiritual masters replete with all the qualifications of spiritual guides have accepted you, and benefactors provide you with conducive conditions for your practice.

These five social endowments together with the five personal endowments constitute the ten conducive endowments: now that they are complete, you should achieve your long-range aspirations—the sacred exalted state of enlightenment. *The Discourse That Presents the Freedoms and Endowments*



states: The five magnificent social endowments are these: a Buddha appeared, he enunciated the doctrine, his sacred doctrine endures, other persons engage in it, and others give you their loving support to put Buddhism into practice.

## **THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING SUCH A LIFE, BASED ON EXAMPLES AND NUMBERS [III]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) examples to illustrate the difficulty of finding such a life and (2) numbers to illustrate the difficulty of finding such a life.

### ***Examples to Illustrate the Difficulty of Finding Such a Life [A]***

**To give an example, to attain a precious human birth is rarer  
Than for a turtle to stick its head through the hole  
Of a yoke adrift on the open seas.  
It is more difficult to be born with a body possessing these qualities Than  
for beans to sprout on the surface of a plastered wall.  
It is even more difficult than for a mustard seed to grow on the point of a  
needle.**

To give examples, obtaining a precious human birth is much rarer than for a blind turtle to stick its head through the hole of a yoke adrift on the wide and open seas. It is more difficult to take rebirth with a body possessing these qualities than for scattered beans to sprout on the surface of glass or a plastered wall. It is rarer to attain a human birth than for mustard seeds poured on the point of a needle to grow there. A discourse states: O fully ordained ones! If the entire world were to become a single ocean and if a long-lived, blind turtle lived within it and came to the surface once every hundred years, and if on that wide ocean, a single yoke with one opening was carried by the east wind toward the west, then carried by the west wind toward the east, and similarly carried to all points of the compass, would the turtle stick its neck through the hole in the yoke or not?

The circle of monks replied: If the ocean were small, it might be possible, but the ocean is wide. If the yoke stayed in one place and had many openings, it might be possible, but it drifts from east to west and then south and north, and it has but one opening. If the turtle was not stationary, always swimming on the surface of the ocean, and if it had

eyes, it might be possible, but it comes to the surface once every hundred years and is blind. Therefore, it would never put its neck through the opening.

O fully ordained ones! There would be a time when such a blind turtle who moves in that way would put its neck through the opening of the yoke. But, monks, I tell you that to attain a human birth is much more difficult than that!

Further,

Since this is the case, don't allow this leisure of yours to become meaningless! Once your life becomes a restless state, it can't be restored to one of leisure: that's for sure!

Another discourse [*The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse*] states: O monks! If someone quickly throws grains on the eye of a needle he or she has placed standing up, it would be exceedingly difficult for them to grow in the needle's eye. Likewise, it is rare to become a human being with all your faculties intact.

Further,

If someone had built a sturdy wall, smoothed its surface well, and beans were thrown toward it, it would be difficult for one or two to not fall, but to sprout there. Likewise, it is difficult to attain the magnificent leisure of human life.

### ***Numbers to Illustrate the Difficulty of Finding Such a Life [B]***

**Concerning number, humans, animals, starving spirits,  
And hell beings are like daytime stars and stars at night:  
The former is far outnumbered by the latter.**

**It is said that animals fill the oceans like the fermented grains left after  
beer has been brewed; Starving spirits cluster like snowflakes in a  
snowstorm;**

**And hell beings are as numerous as the particles of dust on the earth.**

If the number of humans is compared to daytime stars, the number of animals equals the stars at night. Or, if animals are the daytime stars, starving spirits are the stars at night. Or, if starving spirits are the daytime stars, hell beings equal the stars at night.

Likewise, it is said that animals fill the outer oceans like the fermented grains left after beer has been brewed; starving spirits cluster like snowflakes in a snowstorm; and the number of hell beings equals the particles of dust on the earth. If you calculate the number of animals in one forest, in one valley, in one anthill, or in one dirty swamp, by comparison, the attainment of a human body is even rarer than gaining the rank of a universal emperor.

### **THE NATURE OF THE LEISURE AND ENDOWMENTS OF HUMAN LIFE [III]**

This chapter has three parts: (1) a mere human life, (2) the special human life, and (3) the precious human life.

#### ***A Mere Human Life [A]***

**Mere human beings have no notion  
Of ennobling acts or wrongdoing and their ripening:  
Their evil behavior leads them to fall to the miserable existences' endless  
depths.**

Mere or common human beings do not consider undertaking ennobling acts. They exert themselves in body, speech, and mind to perform wrongdoing, the ten corrupting acts. In future lifetimes they will only experience repeated series of sufferings in the three miserable existences. *The Precious Sky Discourse* states: Some, due to previous ennobling causes, have been born into the human world, have unimpaired faculties, and live in a land where the Buddhist teachings are always practiced. Nevertheless, because they have no notion of acts and their ripening, they often take corrupting paths. Although they might be called “human beings,” they are only mediocre: after death, they fall to the endless depths of the miserable existences.

#### ***The Special Human Life [B]***

**Special human beings, either householders or practitioners,  
Confound ennobling acts and wrongdoing—  
Sometimes they perform spiritual acts, but mostly materialistic ones.  
At death, they have nothing but the seed of freedom.**

Special human beings usually perform corrupting acts but sometimes act nobly. At death, they have nothing but the seeds of freedom rather than freedom itself.

*The Precious Sky Discourse* states: Among sentient beings' realms, when those who have not entered this doctrine, or even those who have, mix ennobling and corrupting activity and strive at busyness and distraction, their body, speech, and mind become rough and careless. They fall to the miserable existences and remain in the lower realms. However, the sunlight of the Buddha's nondual compassion sees beings with such karma and provides them with the seeds of freedom which will be activated after a long time. Therefore their human life is special.

*The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states:

Kashyapa! The monk Devadatta heard and retained as many discourses as a large Nepalese elephant can carry, but due to the force of his corrupting acts, he fell to the lower realms. Consider him!

### ***The Precious Human Life [C]***

**The precious human life is the supreme support or vessel for the practice of the Buddhist teachings.**

**Such persons diligently apply themselves to hearing the doctrine, and to reflection and meditation upon it, subduing well their own minds, And they energetically bring others to the correct path.**

**The victors have commended and praised this life as sublime.**

The precious human life is a life dedicated entirely to concerted hearing the sacred Buddhist doctrine, and to reflection and meditation upon it. Such persons first thoroughly tame their own mind and then guide others with skillful means. *The Discourse of Shrigupta* states: Shrigupta! To become well-versed in these teachings, first hear them, then reflect on their meaning. Apply them in contemplative practice using meditation free from mental afflictions, and encourage others to do so. This is the most sublimely beautiful life in the world, including that of the gods. This is called "using the essence of a free and fully endowed life." It is also called "the precious free and fully endowed life."

*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

Subhuti! Bodhisattvas who themselves engage in ennobling conduct and encourage others to do so make use of the essence of their free and fully endowed life. All buddhas commend, praise, and esteem them.

## **THE NEED TO FULLY GRASP THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN LIFE NOW THAT YOU HAVE IT [IV]**

This chapter has seven parts: (1) certainty concerning what human life supports; (2) the need for exertion now—without it, you will later suffer within the round of rebirth; (3) the need to grasp the essence of life with the support of the doctrine of path and result; (4) the need to spurn meaningless acts; (5) the need for exertion in spiritual practice while the circumstances are conducive; (6) abandonment of six faults and exertion in any practice of ennobling acts; and (7) the benefits of reflection on the difficulty of attaining a free and fully endowed human life.

### ***Certainty Concerning What Human Life Supports [A]***

**Even the Buddhist teachings depend on the mind.**

**The mind is based upon this free and fully endowed life. Therefore, when all the causes and conditions are gathered, Make subduing the mind the focus of your Buddhist practice.**

When you have this excellent free and fully endowed life, subdue your mental stream of being by reflecting on the words and meaning of the subject, the difficulty of attaining a free and fully endowed human life. *The Discourse Requested by Ocean of Intellect* states: Lord of Nagas! Mind is the root of all phenomena: They arise from mind and emanate from mind; thus, you should know thoroughly the mind's nature.

### ***The Need for Exertion Now; Without It, You Will Later Suffer Within the Round of Rebirth [B]***

**Now that you have it, ride the ship of the free and fully endowed human life Across the wide sea of existence's unbearable suffering.**

**If you do not make this exemplary life a vessel for the teachings, The round of rebirth's many sufferings will torment you later.**

Since time immemorial, you have not freed yourself from the round of rebirth's wide sea of suffering. Therefore, now that you have this excellent ship replete with leisure and endowments, use it to cross that ocean however you can. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: Ride the ship of your human life to freedom

Across the wide river of suffering.

Later, such a ship will be difficult to find.

Later, such a ship will be difficult to find.  
Fools do not wake from sleep in time!

If you do not make this precious human life an excellent vessel to fill with the teachings' nectar, existence's myriad sufferings will later torment you. *The Tale of the Buddha's Past Life in an Iron House* states: Although I attained the vessel of the free and fully endowed human life,

I didn't collect a drop of the teachings.  
Thus the unbearable fires of hell now burn me;  
I am tortured by my long-lasting karma!

### ***The Need to Grasp the Essence of Life with the Support of the Doctrine of Path and Result [C]***

**Like returning empty-handed from an isle of jewels,  
To waste this free and fully endowed life in meaningless acts is  
unconscionable.  
Since time immemorial, sufferings of existence have fallen like rain, The  
fault of not reflecting on the difficulty of attaining this human life.  
Upon the attainment of the precious human body  
Depends the support for the doctrine of the lesser and great ways,  
discourses and mantra; And the results of the paths of hearers, solitary  
sages, arhats, the victors' heirs, and sublime victors.  
Therefore, grasp the essence of this life and always meditate joyously.**

To not grasp the essence of this precious human life once you attain it is more foolish than to return empty-handed from an isle of jewels: to waste this opportunity in meaningless acts is unconscionable. Since time immemorial, existence's sufferings have fallen upon you like rain, due to the fault of your lack of reflection on the difficulty of attaining this free and fully endowed life. Based on the human body, you can put any form of Buddhism into practice and easily accomplish any result among the three states of awakening. Therefore, you should grasp the essence of this life and always meditate joyously. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: Now that I have found this leisure,

If I do not familiarize myself with ennobling acts,  
What greater deception is there?  
What greater folly is there?

## ***The Need to Spurn Meaningless Acts [D]***

**You must spurn all materialistic, meaningless acts.**

**Renounce both lifestyles' activities: farming, companions,  
Fortune, giving counsel, partiality, and philosophies.**

You must spurn all materialistic acts. Renounce farming in the fields, since farming cannot be meaningful in the long term; renounce marriage and close family ties, since long-term relationships are meaningless; renounce accumulation of food and fortune, since possessions cannot last; renounce giving counsel on how to improve this life's situation, since such advice provides no long-term benefit whatsoever; renounce partiality to friends against foes, since disputes cannot prove useful in the long term; and renounce belief in extreme views, since philosophy cannot be lastingly meaningful. *The Great Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states: Completely reject any act affiliated with what is corrupting in life. You must reject it just as any high person, such as a noble, avoids filth. You must reject it in the same way that you would not put your hand into a large blazing fire. You must reject it in the same way that a brahmin refuses to eat beef. You must reject it just as someone who regularly eats good food does not wish for bad food. You must reject it like a universal emperor who does not give an audience to those who have evil associates. You must reject it like a pure ordained person who refuses to touch a rotten corpse.

To remain in either a lay or monastic lifestyle creates a lot of activity and provides the basis for the deterioration of spiritual life.

First, in a worldly lifestyle, partiality toward friends rather than foes, caring for the needs of children and spouse, and worries concerning taxes and damages make you a servant to tonight's and tomorrow's food and clothing, thwart the completion of anything, blind you to life itself, prevent your feeling pleasure in anything you've done, make the day without respite and the night without rest, and yet you never finish your busyness. Thoughts of spiritual life become rare, and whatever you do becomes a wide arena for mingling with wrongdoing. The flames of your spouse's attachment and anger are searing, and the burden of your karmic debt to your children is crushing. Whatever you do, you become weighed down by an oppressive load of suffering. You suffer, but you cannot stand to see others in opulent circumstances. These events repeat themselves many times; spiritual life becomes distant.

Adopting the second lifestyle, that of an ordained person in a monastic institution, also entails suffering. You renounce a small home for a big one. You

strive at commerce and agriculture; you make horses and donkeys beasts of burden; you become preoccupied with increasing your wealth; you plan for your old age; and you give counsel to close relations. You become attached to craving for pleasure; you long for happiness in the enjoyment of food and drink; you lay plans for your residence and its protection; and you are distracted by never-ending activity. Day and night, your horizon is defined by your attachment or anger. You are burdened by the obligation to remember rank. Because of your worldly pleasures, your spirituality becomes a hypocritical, false image of someone who has heard the doctrine and reflects upon it. Flames of your attachment, anger, and competitiveness tower; those attitudes' thorns always sting. Whatever you do is for this life's benefit; you always make hopeful plans. Master and disciple struggle with one another, without faith; you feel jealous competitiveness toward your spiritual brothers and sisters. The strongest part of your character is the mountain of your eight worldly concerns; the weakest, your behavior due to lack of hearing the teachings. So many faults separate your mind from spiritual life—authentic spirituality focused on freedom is very difficult! *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states: It is difficult to initially renounce home life, abandoning both large and small family duties.

### ***The Need for Exertion in Spiritual Practice While Circumstances Are Conducive [E]***

**When you have these conditions, you can achieve their related work:**

**The finest horse; warmth, moisture, and manure; a warrior's troops;**

**A mine; autumn crops; a guide; equipment; or servants.**

**Likewise, energetically make your human life's leisure and endowments meaningful now.**

When you have the finest, smartest horse, you travel fast along your way. When warmth, moisture, and manure are gathered, you plant the seeds you have. When warriors' troops assemble, you defeat your enemies. When a mine of silver or gold opens, you take whatever you can. When autumn crops ripen, you harvest what you can. When accompanied by a guide in a dangerous place, you try to traverse it. When you have borrowed equipment, you use it energetically. When servants apply themselves to their jobs, you accomplish your work.

Just as these conditions facilitate achievement of their related activity, energetically make your human life's leisure and endowments meaningful now by applying yourself to spiritual practice diligently without the sense that you have any time to spare, since impermanence will soon arrive.



## ***Abandonment of the Six Faults, and Exertion in Any Practice of Ennobling Acts [F]***

**In any activity, such as moving about or sitting, abandon six faults, including indolence.**

### **Like the hungry seeing food**

**Or the thirsty seeing drink; the destitute, wealth and possessions;  
Doctors, medicine; parents, their children;  
Those in danger seeking any refuge they can find,  
Practice every form—elaborate or simple—of the cultivation of ennobling acts.**

At all times—when moving about, standing, sitting, lying down, waking up, eating, looking around outside, talking, and so on—guard against six faults: indolence, complacency, apathy, distraction, busyness, and anything that disturbs the peace of your body, speech, or mind, along with acts of uncertain effect. Carefully protect your mind with the thought, “I have entered the great way’s sacred doctrine; I am unlike an ordinary person.”

Examples to illustrate how you need not choose between formal or informal ennobling practice are these: The hungry will eat any food they can, good or bad. Those tormented by thirst will drink whatever they can. The destitute will keep any wealth they find. Skillful doctors will store any medicine they find. Parents will nurture affectionately any child born to them. Those in danger will search for any refuge they can find. Likewise, energetically undertake any ennobling activity you can.

Don’t pass the time taking things easy, as if to say, “That is formal (that is, ritual-based) religious practice. I’m a great meditator, therefore it doesn’t apply to me. Buddhism is inactivity.” Don’t take pleasure in always lying down: be diligent in such acts as prostrations, circumambulations, reading discourses, reciting prayers, repeating mantras, meditating, or making offerings to the three jewels. *The Discourse Requested by Achintyaprabhasa* states: Every joy and happiness found in the world

Has come from offerings to the three jewels:  
Therefore, always be diligent in offering to them.

*Bodhisattva Essence of Earth’s Ten Wheels Discourse* states:

Every joy and happiness in the world  
Has come from offerings to the three jewels:  
Therefore, if you wish for joy and happiness,  
Be diligent in offering to the three jewels.

At the very least, each morning, present a bowl of water as an offering. Foster the belief that the three jewels also reside outside yourself. Ennobling practice has many varieties, such as the ten forms of spiritual conduct. The time for such practice is variable, such as an instant, a moment, or for periods of months or years; the essence of its substance is variable, such as formally structured or unstructured; its techniques can have varying degrees of ease or difficulty; and the location for such spiritual practice can be in a secluded place or not. In every case, cultivate your experience without choosing between forms of ennobling practice, without self-satisfaction, and without judgment. Like a rich person who has every kind of wealth, anything can become the spiritual path for an adept. Therefore, be diligent.

Further, whether your religious practice has a formal structure or not depends on your attitude. The structures of an intellectually reified belief in emptiness constrict you; whereas persons with an expansive outlook can perform prostrations and offerings, yet find their realization of the nature of reality—baseless magical appearances—makes such structured spiritual practice an aid to that realization of the nature of reality. Thus, always spend your time in ennobling activity.

### ***The Benefits of Reflection on the Difficulty of Attaining a Free and Fully Endowed Human Life [G]***

**Energetic reflection as described leads you to forsake this life's concerns, To strive for the next life, and to spend this life busy in the practice of ennobling acts.**

**The blaze ignited by diligence will quickly liberate you from the ocean of existence: You will hold the victory banner of freedom.**

Reflecting day and night as described on the difficulty of attaining a free and fully endowed human life has unlimited benefits: In brief, develop the attitude that this life's concerns are meaningless, then don't engage with them. Concentrate on your next life's goals—thus, whatever you do will not contradict instruction concerning acts and their consequences. Do not take things casually; with enthusiasm like a blazing fire, apply yourself to the meaning of hearing the teachings, and reflection and meditation on them. Forsake misleading

companions, always act virtuously, and remain restrained. Give up aspirations for the round of rebirth; without having wasted your leisure, you will arrive at death happy and joyful. Untie the knot of greed: use generosity to accumulate provisions for your journey after death—wherever you are reborn, you will not be poor. Be always content: you will have no attachment to wealth; and your body, voice, and mind's acts will conform with the Buddhist doctrine. All things lack a solid core; therefore, realize that whatever you have done is without meaning: cut your bonds of attachment. In the knowledge that all things will pass away, free yourself from the pain of arguments and, within your stream of being, deeply embrace ennobling acts. Seeing that whatever you have done was unnecessary, the walls of conformity will collapse and the mountains of the eight worldly concerns will tumble. Since you have found the path to freedom, put the sacred doctrine into practice correctly and you will quickly attain enlightenment.

### **CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS**

Now, on this occasion of attaining an exemplary life endowed with leisure, I  
should now focus without distraction on techniques to reach happiness.  
From now on, I should develop diligent strength  
To develop the means to stop continual circling within the round of rebirth.

What my eyes once found so beautiful, beautiful—enticing forms and shapes;  
What my ears once found so pleasing, pleasing—sounds of news I followed;  
What my mind once found so exciting, exciting—thoughts of this life:  
All has proven so truly deceptive, deceptive—life within the round of rebirth.

What is certainly necessary is the Victor's doctrine, source of everything needed  
and desired.

What is certainly beneficial are the three jewels who act benevolently.

What brings certain well-being are acts consistent with the doctrine, source of  
well-being.

What provides certain happiness is the experience of meditation, inseparable  
from happiness.

This concludes the commentary to “Our Precious Human Life,” Book 3 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. This has been written by Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje in order that it be known that when we have gained this supreme

life of freedom, so difficult to attain, it is essential to not be attached to this life's meaningless projects, but to purely seize the essence of life. Fortune!

This text has been printed for the benefit of the doctrine and of beings, by one who considers the upholding, preservation, and spread of the Victor's precious doctrine to be his heart's jewel, the fully ordained monk of Buddha Shakyamuni's order, holder of the discipline, a reincarnation of the great scholar Bodhisato, the omniscient Tenpé Nyima Pal-zangpo.

**BOOK 4**  
**REFLECTION ON DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE**

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- I. Impermanence, Briefly
  - II. Impermanence, in Detail
    - A. The Impermanence of All Environments and Beings
    - B. The Impermanence of Great Beings, Such as Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, and Universal Monarchs
    - C. Impermanence Shown by Past Victors and Their Spiritual Heirs Who Demonstrated the Transcendence of Sorrow
    - D. The Certainty and Unpredictability of Death
    - E. At Death, This Life's Appearances Will Be of No Use Whatsoever
  - III. Examples to Illustrate Impermanence
    - A. The Example of a Marketplace
    - B. Development of Disillusionment Through Consideration of Various Examples
  - IV. Advice to Be Diligent Because of Impermanence
  - V. Signs of Success in Meditation on Impermanence, and Its Benefits
    - A. Signs That Indicate Success in this Meditation
    - B. The Benefits of Familiarization with Death and Impermanence
- 

Mountains with the color of the sun's halo,  
Like a thousand-petalled golden lotus—  
Handsome bodhisattvas Sky Essence  
And Goddess of Garlands, you are laudable.

BOOK 4, "Reflection on Death and Impermanence," has five chapters: 1. A Brief Presentation of Impermanence

- 2. The Extensive Explanation of Impermanence
- 3. Examples to Illustrate Impermanence

## **4. Advice to Be Diligent Because of Impermanence**

- 5. The Measure of Signs of Success in Meditation on Impermanence, and Its

Benefits These five chapters contain a total of nine headings.

## IMPERMANENCE, BRIEFLY [I]

**Although you have gained a life with leisure, so difficult to attain, It is  
definitely impermanent, like a jewel found in a dream.  
This body and possessions, seemingly so real,  
Are all impermanent in their minutest detail; even your body will change  
into another.**

Although you have momentarily gained this human life that is so difficult to attain, it will definitely prove to be impermanent, like a jewel found in a dream. You will have to abruptly leave your life's home, body, possessions, entourage, friends, and loved ones, and from that moment on, you will have to collect a new body, home, friends, and possessions. You should consider this. *The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states: In every world,

Where there is birth, death follows.  
Where there is meeting, parting follows.  
Know that even those able to live incalculably long  
Finish with their longevity exhausted.

*The Collection of Sayings* states:

Alas! Composite phenomena are impermanent!  
That which is born will be destroyed.  
Since things are subject to birth and destruction,  
It's best to quickly reach peace.  
Composite phenomena are said to resemble these:  
Stars, an optical illusion, a lamp,  
An illusion, dew, water bubbles,  
A dream, lightning, and clouds.

## IMPERMANENCE, IN DETAIL [III]

This chapter has five parts: (1) the impermanence of all environments and beings, (2) the impermanence of great beings, such as Brahma, Vishnu, and universal monarchs, (3) impermanence shown by past victors and their spiritual

heirs who demonstrated the transcendence of sorrow, (4) the certainty and unpredictability of death, and (5) at death, this life's appearances will be of no use whatsoever.

### ***The Impermanence of All Environments and Beings [A]***

**The four elements, Supreme Mountain, and the four continents, with the sun and moon, And any being of the six kinds in billions of realms are impermanent.**

**All undergo the four stages of formation, duration, destruction, and vacuity: How can this bubble-like body be permanent?**

None of the four major elements, Supreme Mountain, the golden mountain ranges, dancing oceans, the four continents, the iron mountain ranges, the sun and moon in this or in billions of universes, nor any of the infinite beings within them—gods, demigods, humans, animals, starving spirits, or hell beings—is permanent, since all undergo the complete cycle of a great eon of the world's formation (twenty intermediate eons), duration (twenty intermediate eons), destruction (twenty intermediate eons), and vacuity (twenty intermediate eons). Therefore, attachment to this bubble-like body is pointless. Likewise, reflect upon the impermanence of every realm in the ten directions, and have yourself feel disillusionment. *Sayings on Impermanence* states: Since everything gathered will separate,

It is wrong to place your confidence in anything:  
Eradicate desire and attachment  
Toward beings and toward yourself.

*Advice from a Spiritual Friend* states:

The blazing of seven suns  
Will consume the Earth, the central massive mountain, and the oceans; If  
not even the ashes of such impressive forms will last,  
Why even mention the fate of this very lowly human form?

### ***The Impermanence of Great Beings, Such as Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, and Universal Monarchs [B]***

**If very powerful beings, such as Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, planets, nagas, noxious spirits, Universal monarchs, and others imbued with glowing strength, wealth, and glory Are subject to impermanence,**

**This body of negligible goodness will soon pass away.**

Due to their dissipating goodness, even great gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Indra, who temporarily enjoy the glories of mundane happiness and wealth; spirits of planets and constellations, great *nagas*, earth gods, and powerful noxious spirits; and powerful human sovereigns, such as universal monarchs who possess the seven precious articles, are surely subject to impermanence, will perish, and will disappear. Therefore, your body and possessions of negligible goodness, as fleeting as lightning racing across the sky, cannot remain forever. *The Transmission of the Monastic Code* states: O monks! Regard these riches' fragility and lack of a solid core! During my past lives in the round of rebirth that I recall, I experienced inconceivable power during lifetimes as such beings as Brahma, Indra, or lord protectors of the world, but in a dissatisfied state I descended to the miserable realms after my death.

Further, the same text states:

If those who live continually for an eon and whose glory is resplendent—  
Gods who have reached high levels of meditative stability, semihuman  
spirits, Demigods, seers, ascetics—are impermanent,  
Why even mention that humans who have undependable water-bubble  
bodies must each die and be parted?

*The Collection of Sayings* states:

A sovereign with his seven precious possessions,  
Lesser kings, their officials,  
Noble practitioners, brahmins, householders, and others—  
All these are impermanent,  
Like beings in a dream.

### ***Impermanence Shown by Past Victors and Their Spiritual Heirs Who Demonstrated the Transcendence of Sorrow [C]***

**Guides of this world, mighty sage buddhas; hosts of victors' spiritual  
heirs; Hearers, solitary sages, the circle of disciples, and the doctrine  
Have previously appeared in infinite numbers but were each subject to  
impermanence: This life which is like dew cannot last.**

During previous incalculable eons, inconceivable numbers of mighty sage



buddhas; hosts of the victors' spiritual heirs, the bodhisattvas; congregations of hearers, solitary sages, and exalted beings; as many divine and human disciples as there have been; along with the teachings, the sacred Buddhist doctrine, have appeared, but all proved to be impermanent. Therefore, you cannot have the slightest confidence that this body and life-force of yours, fleeting as dew, can last. *Sayings on Impermanence* states: If the body of manifest buddha nature, that blazes with a thousand marks of physical perfection, Fashioned from hundreds of forms of goodness, is impermanent,

Why won't our bodies, unreliable as water bubbles,  
Not surely pass away?  
He who came to help beings, the sun-like Victor,  
With the moon of the treasure of sacred Buddhist doctrine, has set: Look!  
Our own splendid companions and possessions  
Are all impermanent: Be aware of that, I beseech you!

### ***The Certainty and Unpredictability of Death [D]***

**After birth, death is certain  
But its time, place, and causes are not.  
Many things cause death; few prolong life.  
Time cannot be added; life passes in an instant. It is impossible to stay.**

All those born in the past have died: death is certain. Although in this degenerate time, life expectancy is unpredictable, death remains a certainty. The year, month, and time of death are impossible to determine: the time of death is uncertain. There is no set place—a particular region, country, home, or bed—where you will die. Many things, such as sicknesses, demons, enemies, poisons, weapons, ravines, fire, and water, can bring rapid death. There are many ways that things which normally sustain life, such as food, clothes, medical treatments, and wealth, can cause death. It is impossible to go back and add time to your life—life passes in years, months, days, hours, and instants. *The White Lotus of the Sacred Doctrine Discourse* states: Where there is birth, death follows.

Where there is meeting, parting follows.

*The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states:

Some die choking on food;

Others die taking medicine.

There's no need to mention death from adverse conditions:

Thus, there's no certainty at all to the causes of death.

### ***At Death, This Life's Appearances Will Be of No Use Whatsoever*** **[E]**

**At death, your home, possessions, family, glory, abilities, Masses of supporters, and other things are all of no use.**

**Therefore, it makes sense to abandon now the projects of this life's deluded perceptions And to strive single-mindedly at the sacred Buddhist doctrine.**

At death, your home is of no use: even if you own a divine celestial palace, you have to leave it behind. There is no place in the wilderness to hide from death. Your accumulated wealth is of no use: even if you own the gods' precious possessions, a universal monarch's dominion, or a wealthy person's treasury, you have to leave it all behind. *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states: When a tree withers,

What good are its branches and leaves?

Likewise, when people die,

What good is all they owned?

At death, family and friends are of no use. Even if the universal monarch is your friend; even if five hundred young divine spouses surround you; even if your one thousand young god children and cousins frolic around you; even if Indra is your uncle; even if your dominion includes the demigods' armies; even if your subjects include the beings of the four continents and the heavens; even if you own a universal monarch's seven precious possessions; even if your father's brother is Brahma or Indra; even if the four great divine kings are your companions; even if a thousand heavenly servants attend you, none can preserve your life-force; none can help you; none can lengthen your life; none can go to assist you; none can accompany you. Like a hair pulled out of butter, you are alone and must walk unaccompanied along the narrow pass between this life and the next. *The Vast Enjoyment Discourse* states: When the time comes for you to leave this life, to die and go elsewhere, You will leave destitute, stricken with separation from others.

You cannot return from death; you will never see them again,

Like the leaves scattered from a tree; like a river's stream.

At death, a warrior's strength is useless: there is no fight. A chief's advice is useless: there is no dialogue, no negotiation. Extreme speed is useless: there is no escape. Amazing beauty is useless: there is nothing to seduce. Wrathful activity is useless: there is nothing to attack. Evil deception is useless: there is nothing to deceive. You must depart alone.

Powerful friends are no use: Brahma, Indra, Ishvara, Vishnu, and other gods do not transcend death. Noxious spirits, ogres, demons, nagas, and other such beings are not free from it. Such means as medicine, astrology, or divinations cannot free you from it. Such things as powers of secret mantras, awareness mantras, miraculous powers, clairvoyance are of no use. Guardians, such as male gods, protectors of the teachings, and dakinis, cannot shelter you from death. Powers gained from alchemy, from objects, or from medicine are of no use. You must die.

Food, wealth, and possessions are useless: neither divine nectar's sweet taste, the finest clothes of Punjabi silk, the best food of a hundred flavors, nor various brocades and smoothest cottons. In brief, fine forms, sweet sounds, delicious tastes, enticing smells, and soft sensations are of no use: the end of your life has arrived.

### **EXAMPLES TO ILLUSTRATE IMPERMANENCE [III]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) the example of a marketplace and (2) development of disillusionment through consideration of various examples.

#### ***The Example of a Marketplace [A]***

**The people gathered in one household and close entourage  
Are like shoppers in the marketplace—each goes his or her  
own way.**

**Old or young, it is uncertain who will have to depart for the next life:  
Everyone should avoid animosity or quarrels and devote themselves to  
ennobling acts.**

In marketplaces where people gather to buy or sell, at crossroads, or in hotels, many people gather for a moment. It seems lasting, but each quickly leaves in his or her own direction. Likewise, now when you and sentient beings—your enemies, friends, and those to whom you are indifferent—are gathered in one place, or when you see such a gathering, reflect that all this is transitory.

Therefore, wherever you are together with parents, relatives, teachers, students, or ordinary friends, do not fight with one another, do not quarrel, do not say negative things, do not verbally abuse anyone—when you are separated, you will have no regrets.

Think of when you were young, when you lived with your parents, your brothers and sisters, livestock, domestic animals, and work animals: everything seemed like it would last forever. You were self-centered, you fought and argued, you agreed or disagreed. But where are they now? They are no longer together with you as one: some have died. Some have gone elsewhere. Some still live together. Some are about to depart. Wherever you live, whoever your friends are, and whatever you do, you will have to part. Keep this perception in mind and never quarrel with anyone.

### ***Development of Disillusionment through Consideration of Various Examples [B]***

**A tree on the riverbank, a decrepit house, an old tree trunk, Dry wood,  
autumn flowers, thunder or echoes,  
Clouds, fog, a rainbow, the sun and moon,  
And the extinguishing of a flame: these illustrate the body's  
impermanence.**

Your body is like a tree growing on a steep riverbank; the Lord of Death is like the water that erodes the earth holding the tree. Your body is like a decrepit house in summer; the Lord of Death is the deluge that will destroy it. Your body is like an old tree trunk on a cliff; the Lord of Death is a violent wind that will topple it. Your body is like dry wood or dead grass; the Lord of Death is towering flames that will burn it. Your body is like autumn flowers; the Lord of Death is like that season's wind which dries them.

Loud sounds of thunder or echoes are not followed by anything. Likewise, regardless of what others say to you, pleasant or unpleasant, in praise or in blame, don't affirm or deny it. Clouds, fog, or rainbows in space appear for a moment and then dissolve and disappear. Likewise, appearances' outer worlds—and your inner mind that affirms or denies them—appear suddenly, disappear just as suddenly, and pass away. Train in nonattachment to their reality. When this life's appearances fade and clinging based on the mind's natural clarity vanishes, like the setting of the sun or moon, or the extinguishing of a flame, contemplate impermanence. *The Discourse of Advice to the King* states: Your majesty! It's like this: For example, if four great mountains which stand in the

four directions—solid, firm, dense; unbroken, without crevices, very hard; undamaged; massive, grand, reaching the heavens—were to topple to the ground, all the mountains' grass, trees, trunks, branches, leaves, and all living beings on them would be crushed to dust. Speed could not effect an escape; force could not prevent it; wealth could not ransom it; objects, mantras, or medicine could not easily deter it.

Your majesty! Likewise, four great dangers approach. Speed cannot escape them; force cannot prevent them; wealth cannot ransom them; and objects, mantras, or medicine cannot easily deter them. What are they? Aging, sickness, death, and decline.

Your majesty! The aging that ruins youth approaches. The sickness that ruins health approaches. The decline that ruins all splendor approaches. The death that ruins vitality approaches. Speed cannot escape them; force cannot prevent them; wealth cannot ransom them; and objects, mantras, or medicine cannot easily pacify them.

Further, the same text states:

Your majesty! It is like this: For example, if a lion, the ruler among beasts, enters an animal's lair and seizes it, he has the power to do as he pleases. An animal is powerless once between the ferocious jaws of that mighty beast.

Your majesty! Likewise, once you've been planted on the Lord of Death's spear, you can take no provisions; you'll have no protector, no refuge, no supporters, no friends. Your joints will be broken and split apart; your flesh and blood will dry; disease will wrack your body; your throat will dry; your complexion will change; your arms and legs will tremble; you will be unable to move; you will have no strength; and your body will be covered in saliva, mucus, urine, and reeking vomit.

The power of your senses—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental function—will be blocked; you will sob and breathe with rasping sounds. Your doctor will give up; and you will reject all medicine, sustenance, food, or drink.

You prepare to go to another world: you lie on your last bed. The beginningless course of birth, aging, and death fades. Only the faintest remnant of your vitality remains and with fear and apprehension you fall under the Lord of Death's ominous power.

Your breathing stops. Your mouth and nose open, and you bare your teeth. You beg, "Please give me something!" Your karma impels you from one life to another. You go alone, without anyone, without a companion. You leave this world behind to go toward another. You make the great migration. You enter a great darkness; you fall down a high cliff; you join a large crowd; you go into a large wilderness; a wide ocean sweeps you away; the wind of your karma pushes you; you go in every direction without a resting place. You enter a great battle; a great demon seizes you; space envelops you.

Your father, mother, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters gather around as you breathe your last. Some say, "Distribute his wealth!" Some wail, "Alas, father!" or "Alas, mother!" or "Alas, child!" and tear at their hair.

At that time, your previous generosity, ascetic practice, or spiritual life will be your only companions. Apart from the doctrine, you will have no refuge, no protection, no support. Your majesty! At that time, the doctrine will be your oasis, your home, your protection, your teacher.

Your majesty! At that time, as you lie on your bed, you will experience the appearances of your future life. If you are headed for the miserable existences, those places' terrifying appearances will loom. At that time, nothing apart from the doctrine can give you refuge.

Your majesty! You carefully protect and perfectly care for this body of yours, but still the time will come when it will die. To live long while endowed with every greatness, you nourish your body with many pure, satisfying foods and drink. Yet when you lie on your deathbed, the doctors will give up, everyone will give up, and in misery the time of your death will arrive.

Your majesty! Now you wash your body, anoint it, burn incense, and wear sweet-smelling flowers. But without a doubt, at death no sweet smell will waft.

Your majesty! Now you cover your body with such fabrics as the finest Benares cottons and silks, but on your deathbed, you will die clothed in filth and you will depart alone and naked.

Your majesty! Now you enjoy various sensual pleasures, but you will abandon them all without satisfaction as you die.

Your majesty! Now your residence contains various perfumes, flowers, silk banners, seats, and fabrics. You lie on your throne with

cushions to your right and left. But without a doubt you will be banished to a large charnel ground filled with ravens, foxes, and nauseating corpses, and your lifeless body will lie there on the ground.

Your majesty! Now you mount the backs of elephants or horses, accompanied by various kinds of attractive and pleasing music, with hoisted banners and parasols; kings, officials, family, and friends all cheering praises to you as you proceed, looking straight ahead. However, before long, after you die on your bed, four men will carry you; your parents, brothers, and others will beat their breasts and be crushed by sadness. You will be carried out through the city's southern gate to a wilderness where they will bury you. Or perhaps ravens, vultures, foxes, and other animals will eat you, and your bones cremated, carried away by water, or buried: it makes no difference. The wind, sun, and rain will reduce your body to dust: it will be dispersed in every direction or will rot.

Your majesty! In these ways, all composite phenomena are impermanent; in these ways, they are unstable.

Thus the Buddha taught extensively on this subject. Keep this in your heart. A *Commentary to the Certain Intention* states: Like the sun, moon, planets, and stars moved by energy

And the flame of a lamp fluttering in the breeze,  
Life is never still for an instant:  
Therefore, strive to accomplish whatever goals are very meaningful.

#### **ADVICE TO BE DILIGENT BECAUSE OF IMPERMANENCE [IV]**

**At death, the three jewels and your stores of ennobling acts will surely prove helpful.**

**Rely upon holy persons; and in everything you do, whether sitting or moving, Remember death as a means to inspire yourself to spiritual life.**

**You should guard this as the heart of your experiential cultivation.**

At death and between death and your next life, spiritual masters, the three jewels, and the hosts of wisdom deities and dakinis will surely prove helpful. Your discipleship will surely prove helpful: rely on authentic spiritual masters

without distancing yourself from them. The place of refuge that will surely prove helpful is the three jewels: take refuge in them. The intention that will surely prove helpful is the thought to practice the sacred Buddhist doctrine: apply yourself impartially to ennobling acts. The possessions that will surely prove helpful are your stores of goodness and wisdom: add to them continually, without complacency. The residence that will surely prove helpful is meditative stability: build a palace of tranquility and insight. The companions that will surely prove helpful are spiritual persons: humbly befriend your spiritual brothers, sisters, and companions. The result that will surely prove helpful is enlightenment's three wisdom bodies: accomplish enlightenment with diligence. *The Discourse of Advice to the King* states: Your majesty! Then, at that time, in that moment, your spiritual life will be an oasis, a residence, a protector, and a support. For example, it will be like fire for those tormented by cold; a cool house for those tormented by heat; a cool drink for those tormented by thirst; shade for weary travelers; a vehicle for those traveling a long road; a fine residence and bed for the tired; good food for the hungry; satisfaction for those who longed; a guide for those who have lost their way; a doctor for those beset by sickness; a cord for those sinking in quicksand; a boat for those swept away by a river; a bridge in a place difficult to cross; stairs that lead from a frightening passage; a lamp in a dark enclosure; a ship on a wide sea; wealth for the poor; a helper for work; tools for cutting; armor for entering battle; an excellent guide in a frightening place; friendly forces in a fight; grain during famine; open space in a cramped place; a home for wanderers; and a protector and refuge in danger.

The impermanence of our steps while walking encourages us to walk to the state of enlightenment. The impermanence of sitting places encourages us to dwell in the changeless place. The impermanence of waking and rising from bed encourages us to rise within evenness. The impermanence of enjoyment of food and drink encourages us to consume the food of meditative states. The impermanence of home encourages us to dwell in the body of ultimate enlightenment's palace of evenness. The impermanence of bending the limbs encourages us to constrict the activity of the composite. The impermanence of stretching the limbs encourages us to enjoy the wide space of transcendence of the mundane. The impermanence of sleep encourages us to sleep in the abiding nature. The impermanence of the road we travel encourages us to stay on awakening's path. The impermanence of frightening enemies encourages us to defeat our enemies, mental afflictions. The impermanence of spoken words encourages us to recite prayers and mantras. The impermanence of the work of farming encourages us to always do spiritual work. The impermanence of food



and drink encourages us to make offerings to the sacred circle of wisdom deities. The impermanence of objects of wealth encourages us to gather the seven treasures of the exalted. The impermanence of the fame of power encourages us to always take a humble position. The impermanence of pleasure encourages us to cultivate stores of goodness and wisdom. The impermanence of sentient beings encourages us to place them on the path to awakening. The impermanence of causes of sudden death encourages us to grasp the unassailable state of deathlessness. The impermanence of washing and purification encourages us to use the four forces to purify wrongdoing and obscurations. The impermanence of the five poisonous mental afflictions encourages us to realize self-arisen wisdom. The impermanence of the appearing world encourages us to turn toward buddhas' pure lands. The impermanence of sound encourages us to make the music of the sacred doctrine. The impermanence of conscious discursive thought encourages us to increase the wisdom of renunciation and realization. *The Hundred Procedures* states: Always, in any activity,

Remember the Lord of Death.

*Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

During the entire day and night,  
It makes sense for me to think only of this.

*The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states:

Among all agriculture, the autumn harvest is best. Among all hoofed creatures, a calf is the best. Among all perceptions, the perception of impermanence and death is best: it counteracts all perceptions of the three realms.

## **SIGNS OF SUCCESS IN MEDITATION ON IMPERMANENCE, AND ITS BENEFITS [V]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) signs of success in this meditation and (2) its benefits.

### ***Signs That Indicate Success in This Meditation [A]***

**Reflecting on death, you see the destructibility of composite phenomena. Your diligence increases and you abandon pursuit of this life's activity.**

**You have not even an instant of leisure time to dwell in the mundane.  
Disillusionment and renunciation diminish your preoccupations.**

Reflecting on death day and night, you see that any appearance can be destroyed and a deep-seated detachment from outer events is born in you. An attitude that burns like fire with diligence toward ennobling acts is born in you. Extraordinary, heartfelt fear and apprehension toward the round of rebirth's sufferings are born in you. You give up pursuit of this life's activities in the knowledge that at death they will be of no use to you whatsoever. You do not dwell for even an instant in mundane relaxation: you practice the sacred Buddhist doctrine in thought, word, and deed. You see acts' ripened results: disillusionment and disengagement arise. When you understand the uncertainty of the time of death, you do not count on anything. These signs indicate that you have sincerely familiarized yourself with death.

When reflection on impermanence wells up in your stream of being, disillusionment with and mental disengagement from the phenomena of the round of rebirth surge from the depths of your mind. This has the benefit of turning your attention away from the events of this life. The way you turn away from attachment is with the thought, "Nothing can help me: I am sure to die."

You feel as if you were caught by the son of a man you murdered; like a fish caught in a net; like a condemned person delivered into the hands of the executioner; as if you had stepped into a nest of poisonous snakes; as if you had entered an ogre's mouth; as if you had arrived on an island of female ogres; as if you had slipped into a shark's mouth; as if your ship had broken up at sea; as if your boat were sinking; as if in a terrifying place, your guide proved deceptive; as if you had fallen down a ravine from which escape was impossible; or as if you were shot in the heart with an arrow: you know that nothing can help you and you let go of worldly activity. *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states: Compared to giving one hundred fully ordained persons their noon meal and an offering, how much better it is to give a moment's thought to the impermanence of composite phenomena!

### ***The Benefits of Familiarization with Death and Impermanence [B]***

**The benefits are abandonment of faulty behavior; the natural gathering of qualities; Liberation from delusion, from desire and anger, and from attachment to things as permanent; Utmost diligence in ennobling acts; completion of stores of goodness and wisdom; and consideration by the victors: You die in happiness and quickly attain enlightenment.**

The infinite benefits of meditation on death include the following: many new qualities are born within your character; you turn away from belief in permanence; you feel no attachment toward friends or anger toward enemies; you become constantly diligent in ennobling acts; you know that this life amounts to perceptions of delusion; you complete the two stores of goodness and wisdom; buddhas and bodhisattvas think of you; and you die joyful and happy. In your next life, you take rebirth in the worlds of the pleasant higher realms; as soon as you are born there, you encounter the sacred Buddhist doctrine and spiritual masters and guides; you will always be autonomous; you will become a renunciant within the Buddha's doctrine; you will have the ability to maintain lifelong pure behavior; you will spend day and night in spiritual practice; you will befriend holy persons; and you will quickly attain complete enlightenment. So it is said.

## CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS

The round of rebirth's phenomena pass with the fleetingness of lightning.  
Their nature is unreal and ever-changing.  
They cause every unwanted suffering.  
To fall under the power of foolish unconsciousness of impermanence is real torment.

At the time of death, you leave your home, your body, and every possession, To go into the Lord of Death's frightful presence.  
At death, nothing but the Buddhist doctrine is of any use:  
The time has come for you to practice the true instructions for death.

It's surely impossible to remain living for long:  
What are all your long-range plans for?  
If you do nothing meaningful to prepare for the end of life coming soon, In no time at all, these appearances will cease and you will go to the next life.  
This concludes the commentary to "Reflection on Death and Impermanence," Book 4 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. I, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje, wrote this sincerely remembering that since all composite phenomena are impermanent, I must quickly die, so I must foster energetic application to everlasting goals. Fortune!

This text has been printed for the benefit of the Buddhist doctrine and of

beings, by one who considers the upholding, preservation, and spread of the Victor's precious doctrine to be his heart's treasure, the fully ordained monk of Buddha Shakyamuni's order, upholder of the monastic code of conduct, a reincarnation of the great scholar Bodhisato, the omniscient Tenpé Nyima Palzangpo.

**BOOK 5**  
**THE WORKINGS OF KARMA**

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- I. The Nature of Action, Karma, and Consequences
  - II. Corrupting Acts and Their Consequences
    - A. The Ten Corrupting Acts of Body, Speech, and Mind
    - B. The Consequences of Ripened Corrupting Acts
    - C. Experience Consistent with Corrupting Karma
    - D. Acts Consistent with Corrupting Karma
    - E. The Personal or Environmental Consequences of Corrupting Acts III.  
Ennobling Acts Consistent with Goodness and Their Consequences A. The  
Ten Ennobling Acts of Body, Speech, and Mind
    - B. The Consequences of Ripened Ennobling Acts
    - C. Experience Consistent with Ennobling Karma
    - D. Acts Consistent with Ennobling Karma
    - E. The Environmental Consequences of Ennobling Acts
  - IV. Acts Consistent with Freedom and Their Consequences
    - A. Acts Consistent with Freedom
    - B. Results Consistent with Freedom
- 

Your bodies are supple vines of coral;  
Your voices, sweet melodies of Brahma;  
Your minds, towering waves on seas of love:  
Bodhisattvas All-Seeing Eyes and Goddess of Song, to you I bow.

BOOK 5, “The Workings of Karma,” has four chapters: 1. A Brief Presentation of the Nature of Action, Karma, and Consequences 2. The Extensive Explanation of Corrupting Acts and Their Consequences 3. The Explanation of Ennobling Acts Consistent with Goodness and Their Consequences 4. A Concise Presentation of Acts Consistent with Freedom and Their Consequences These four chapters contain a total of twelve headings.

## THE NATURE OF ACTION, KARMA, AND CONSEQUENCES [I]

**Death is certain; therefore, the choice between ennobling acts and wrongdoing is our central issue.**

**On the foundation of the storehouse of all dualistic experience, ignorance and its associated factors— The afflicted mind's three poisons— produce the ten corrupting acts, Which result in the three miserable existences; and the ten ennobling acts, which result in birth as a god or human; And uncontaminated ennobling acts, which lead to the attainment of freedom.**

Death is certain; therefore, we must choose to undertake ennobling acts and reject wrongdoing.

The foundation underlying both kinds of acts is the storehouse of all dualistic experience, which has an undetermined nature (that is, neither positive nor negative). All our acts of all kinds occur supported by that foundation. Acts done in ignorance and its associated factors—the afflicted mind's three or five poisons—are the ten corrupting acts. Among acts done without those poisons' influence, inferior ennobling acts merely accord with goodness; sublime ennobling acts (the causes of separation from ignorance) lead to transcendent states and accord with freedom; and acts of complete purity are manifest realization on the spiritual path.

Although their common ground, the storehouse of all dualistic experience, has no primordial existence, it serves as the underlying foundation for the store of that which comes into being circumstantially. *The Hundred Procedures* states: How amazing! The world arises from karma!

Karma designs happiness and suffering!  
When conditions gather, karma arises!  
Karma creates happiness and suffering!

Further in the same text,

Even after one hundred eons,  
Karma is not exhausted. When the conditions and the time meet,

The fruit of karma ripens  
To those embodied beings who created it.

*The Discourse of Individual Liberation* states:

These words the Buddha's teaching span:  
Leave any wrongdoing behind;  
Make perfect ennobling acts yours;  
And subdue your own mind.

*The Concise Collection of Teachings on Awakening* states:

That which is free from the three aspects of mental afflictions  
Is goodness and the acts that accord with freedom: keenly accomplish them.  
Due to the mind, due to karma, and due to their being causes consistent  
with beings' rebirths, Acts resemble the seeds of significant results.

## **CORRUPTING ACTS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES [II]**

This chapter has five parts: (1) the ten corrupting acts of body, speech, and mind, (2) the consequences of ripened corrupting acts, (3) experience consistent with corrupting karma, (4) acts consistent with corrupting karma, and (5) the personal or environmental consequences of corrupting acts.

### ***The Ten Corrupting Acts of Body, Speech, and Mind [A]***

**Killing is the unmistakable, deliberate ending of another's life; Striking, beating, or other acts that harm another's well-being belong to the same category.**

**Taking what is not given is to steal another's wealth; Gain through deceitful or dishonest means belongs to the same category.**

**Wrong sexual conduct is to have intercourse with a partner claimed by another; Inappropriate sexual activity belongs to the same category.**

**Lying is to confound truth and lies in order to deceive another;**

**Manipulation with seeming honesty belongs to the same category.**

**Divisive speech is to speak words that estrange persons in harmony or those already unfriendly; To incite animosity by speaking of another's faults belongs to the same category.**

**Meaningless speech is to talk of unsound treatises or gossip; To speak of irrelevant or materialistic topics belongs to the same category.**

**Rough speech is to use words that hurt another's feelings;**

**To talk of things that cause others discomfort belongs to the same category.**

**Covetousness is the wish to acquire another's possessions;**

**To be attached through desire to another's wealth belongs to the same category.**

**Ill will is mental agitation with malicious thoughts toward another; To not wish for another's good fortune belongs to the same category.**

**Wrong views are views of eternalism, nihilism, or of no relation between action and consequence; To exaggerate or denigrate the correct teachings belongs to the same category.**

There are three physical corrupting acts. (1) Taking of life is the deliberate killing of any form of life, an insect or greater. Striking, beating, and so on belong to the same category. *The Journey to Langka Discourse* states: Mahamati! If my exalted hearers do not eat common food, how could it be appropriate for them to eat flesh and blood? Mahamati! I perceive all sentient beings as my only child: how could I give permission to the hearers to eat my children's flesh? Do I need to add that I myself could not eat it? Mahamati! I have never given such permission to the hearers or claimed that I eat such food.

Further in the same text,

To kill a sentient being for profit  
And to pay money for meat—  
These two persons' karma  
Is to be cooked in Crying Out or other hells.

Further,

I completely reproach eating meat.

Further,

In the future,



Foolish meat eaters  
Will claim, "The buddhas taught  
That eating meat is not a sin and is appropriate."

Further,

Meat is never pure in relation to three considerations—  
Not examined, not requested,  
And not ordered.  
Therefore, do not eat meat.

(2) Taking what is not given is defined as stealing or robbing another's wealth; gain through any dishonest means belongs to the same category.

(3) Wrong sexual conduct is defined as sexual intercourse with a partner claimed by another, with a relative, with a woman who has taken celibacy vows, in another opening, or at an unsuitable time or place; ejaculation by any other means apart from intercourse belongs to the same category.

There are four corrupting acts of speech: (4) Lying is defined as to speak something untrue to change another's perception; to speak honestly seeing that this will mislead another belongs to the same category.

(5) Divisive speech is defined as words that estrange two other persons; to repeat to one friend divisive speech said by another belongs to the same category.

(6) Meaningless speech is defined as talk of Vedas, poetry, and other such subjects, or various forms of jokes; to talk of irrelevant subjects in disharmony with Buddhism at inappropriate times belongs to the same category.

(7) Rough speech is defined as use of words that are unpleasant to another's ear and that upset another's mind; to talk of things that cause another discomfort, even if said pleasantly, belongs to the same category.

There are three corrupting acts of the mind: (8) Covetousness is defined as the thought, "Why shouldn't another's possessions, and so on, be mine?"; angry thoughts toward another, "Why shouldn't their education, and so on, be mine?" belong to the same category.

(9) Ill will is defined as malicious thoughts toward another; to be angry or unhappy at what helps them belongs to the same category.

(10) Wrong views are defined as criticism of belief in the relation between action and consequence, and to fall into extremes of eternalism or nihilism; to exaggerate or denigrate that which is consistent with the sacred Buddhist doctrine, such as correct instruction, and instructors, spiritual guides, belongs to

the same category. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states: Taking of life is the deliberate,

Unmistaken killing of another being.

Taking what is not given  
Is to make another's wealth your own by force or by stealth.  
Desire for intercourse that is inappropriate  
Leads to the four kinds of wrong sexual conduct.  
Lies change others' perceptions  
When they credit those false words and meaning.  
Divisive speech is words spoken under the influence of the mental  
afflictions To separate others.  
Rough speech is unpleasant speech.  
All words spoken under mental afflictions' influence are meaningless  
speech.  
Misguided covetousness is to desire another's wealth.  
Ill will is to hate another sentient being.  
The view that there are neither ennobling acts nor corrupting acts Is a  
wrong view.

In the past, a fully ordained nun called others of the same order, "Bitch!" Even that minor fault of speech resulted in her rebirth five hundred times as a female dog.

### ***The Consequences of Ripened Corrupting Acts [B]***

**Corrupting acts produce four consequences:**

**Ripened consequences, experience consistent with karma, acts consistent with karma, and environmental consequences.**

**Acts' ripened fruits are these:**

**Minor acts among the ten corrupting acts result in rebirth as an animal;**

**Medium acts, as a starving spirit; and serious acts, as a hell being.**

Corrupting acts have four aspects: a corrupting object, a corrupting intent, a corrupting thought, and a corrupting deed. These produce four consequences detailed below: the ripened consequence, experience consistent with karma, the personal or environmental consequence, and acts consistent with your karma.

The ripened consequence of corrupting acts functions as follows: engaging in minor acts among the ten corrupting acts results in rebirth as an animal; medium acts, as a starving spirit; and serious acts, as a hell being. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: One moment of wrongdoing

Confines us for an eon in the hell of Uninterrupted Torment.

Therefore, do I need to say it? The wrongdoing we have accumulated in the round of rebirth without beginning Will not propel us to pleasant realms!

*The Garland of Jewels* states:

Ennobling acts produce happiness  
And, likewise, every happy existence;

Corrupting acts produce suffering  
And, likewise, every miserable existence.

*The Mindfulness Discourse* states:

The ripening of these acts produces these consequences: minor corrupting acts result in birth as an animal; medium acts, as a starving spirit; and serious acts, as a hell being.

### ***Experience Consistent with Corrupting Karma [C]***

**Experience consistent with corrupting karma is as follows: even if you attain rebirth in the higher existences, Killing results in a short life span and in many sicknesses that prove incurable.**

**Taking what was not given results in poverty and in encountering many enemies and thieves.**

**Wrong sexual conduct results in an unattractive spouse and in many competitive enemies.**

**Lying results in slander and deceit.**

**Divisive speech results in separation from friends and in general disharmony.**

**Rough speech results in hearing many unpleasant things and in arguments.**

**Meaningless speech results in lack of self-confidence and in not being believed.**

**Covetousness results in not accomplishing your hopes and in lack of contentment.**

**Ill will results in fearfulness and in often being harmed.**

**Wrong views result in continued bad views and in often being deceived.**

**Thus, each consequence of the ten corrupting acts has two aspects.**

*The Hundred Procedures* states:

However, even if by chance you enter the realms of gods or humans, the effect of killing will make your life short and full of sickness. Taking what was not given results in separation from your possessions and destitution, and to have to share your possessions with your enemies. Wrongful sexual conduct due to desire makes your spouse unattractive and to have to share him or her with others. Telling lies makes you often the object of slander and of others' deceit. Divisive

speech makes your social circle evil and fractious. Rough speech makes your words unpleasant and argumentative. Meaningless speech makes your words unworthy of consideration and you lack self-confidence. Covetousness makes your desires increase and makes you discontent. Ill will becomes the basis for not searching for what could help but in accomplishing harm. Wrong views increase your bad views and significant deception.

### ***Acts Consistent with Corrupting Karma [D]***

**Acts consistent with the ten corrupting forms of karma**

**Incline a person to continue to do now**

**Whatever acts he or she did in the past and thus, naturally and effortlessly, To commit many evil deeds and to fall once again to miserable existences.**

*The Hundred Procedures* states:

Familiarization and intimate acquaintance with corrupting conduct lead to later rebirth in a life immersed in corrupting acts, corrupting conduct, and following corrupting tendencies.

### ***The Personal or Environmental Consequences of Corrupting Acts [E]***

**Environmental consequences ripen in the place of birth:**

**Taking another's life results in birth in an unattractive region Where medicinal plants do not grow, the food and drink are not nutritious and hard to digest, And any sickness can be life-threatening.**

**Taking what was not given results in birth where harvests do not ripen, Frost and hail are common, and famines occur.**

**Wrong sexual conduct results in birth in a swampy area,**

**In a region which is unhygienic and malodorous with feces and urine, And in a frightening and depressing place.**

**Lying results in birth in a land of disharmony and changing fortunes, And in a deceptive region full of fear.**

**Divisive speech results in birth in a land of ravines, steep cliffs, and deep gorges, Where travel is difficult, the land is very uneven, And both moving and settling down are inconvenient.**

**Rough speech results in birth in a dusty, filthy land of bad crops, Where rocks, stunted tree trunks, thorns, salty ground, and other things Make the land disturbing and unpleasant.**

**Meaningless speech results in birth in an unstable land where the seasons are unpredictable, And where harvests do not ripen.**

**Covetousness results in birth in a land where fruit is sparse but bark plentiful, And where the place and time are evil.**

**Ill will results in birth in a land where harm abounds:**

**Bandits, thieves, snakes, poison, rulers' punishments,**

**Wild malicious animals, and hot-tasting fruit.**

**Wrong views result in birth in a land without natural resources, such as jewels, Where flowers, fruit, and medicinal trees are rare, And where there is no security or powerful friends to provide sanctuary.**

I have written this clear presentation based upon Asanga's *Concise Definitions. The Discourse of Advice to the King* states: Wherever people go,

Their acts follow like shadows.

### **ENNOBLING ACTS CONSISTENT WITH GOODNESS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES [III]**

This chapter has five parts: (1) the ten ennobling acts of body, speech, and mind; (2) the consequences of ripened ennobling acts; (3) experience consistent with ennobling karma; (4) acts consistent with ennobling karma; and (5) environmental consequences of ennobling acts.

#### ***The Ten Ennobling Acts of Body, Speech, and Mind [A]***

**The path of ennobling acts has ten aspects:**

**Having renounced killing, you ransom the lives of those sure to die.**

**Not taking what was not given, you give gifts of material goods.**

**Not engaging in wrongful sexual activity, you act purely.**

**Not lying, you speak honestly.**

**Not speaking divisively, you seek to reconcile discord between others.**

**Not speaking nonsense, you talk about meaningful subjects.**

**Not speaking roughly, you speak pleasantly.**

**Not coveting, you are content.**



**Untroubled by ill will, you develop an altruistic attitude.  
Having abandoned wrong views, you devote yourself to correct views.**

**Acts of stillness are meditations of the four levels of meditative stability  
And the four formless realms.**

Thus, the ten ennobling acts of body, speech, and mind accord with goodness and are the causes for rebirth in the higher realms. Mental acts of stillness are meditations on the four levels of meditative stability and the four formless states of composure. *The Sublime Essence* states: The gods' ways of spiritual development—the four levels of meditative stability and the four formless states of composure—and human religions' ten ennobling acts provide the support for all excellent religious teachings.

### ***The Consequences of Ripened Ennobling Acts [B]***

**The consequences of ripened ennobling acts are these:**

**Ennobling acts tainted by jealousy and associated factors result in birth in regions of demigods; Minor accumulation of ten ennobling acts tainted by pride results in birth as a human being; Middle accumulation of such acts, among gods of the desire realm; Major accumulation of such acts, if done in conjunction with the four levels of meditative stability, among gods in the form realm.**

**If the ten ennobling acts are performed in conjunction with the four levels of formless meditative stability, among gods in the formless realm.**

**In the desire realm, karma principally manifests in the seven collections of coarse consciousness; In the form realm, in clarity without discursive thought, the storehouse consciousness; In the formless realm, in tranquility that remains one-pointed within the storehouse of all dualistic experience.**

The consequences of ripened ennobling acts are as follows: ennobling acts tainted with the mental affliction of jealousy and its associated factors result in birth in the demigods' four regions. Minor accumulation of the ten ennobling acts tainted with pride and its associated factors results in birth as a human being on the four continents or their subcontinents; middle accumulation of the ten acts, among gods of the six kinds of desire realm gods; major accumulation of the ten acts in conjunction with meditation on the four levels of meditative stability, in birth in the form realm. The ten ennobling acts performed in conjunction with meditation on the four levels of formless meditative stability

result in rebirth in the formless realm.

In the desire realm, the main form of conscious experience is the seven collections of consciousness: the six collections of sense-based consciousness arisen in response to sensory fields plus coarse consciousness that has arisen from circumstances. In the form realm, the main form of conscious experience is meditative stability within clarity without discursive thought. This dwells within the ongoing state of the storehouse consciousness itself. In the formless realm, the main form of conscious experience is the meditative state of one-pointed tranquility. This dwells within the ongoing state of the storehouse of all dualistic experience, while the other aspects of consciousness exist as latent potentials. *The Bodhisattvas' Stages of Awakening* states: A state without thoughts, which is unrelated to sensory fields, is the experiential context of the storehouse of all dualistic experience itself. A state without thoughts, which is related to sensory fields, is the experiential context of the storehouse consciousness. Awareness of each sensory field is the experiential context of the five sense-based aspects of consciousness. The initial arising of thoughts in relation to sensory fields, followed by examination, creates dualistic experience—the experiential context of the mental function's consciousness and the afflicted mind.

### ***Experience Consistent with Ennobling Karma [C]***

**Experience consistent with ennobling karma is as follows:**

**Renunciation of killing results in long life, freedom from illness, and happiness.**

**Renunciation of taking what was not given results in attainment of magnificent power and wealth.**

**Renunciation of wrong sexual conduct results in an attractive partner and no competitive enemies.**

**Renunciation of telling lies results in gaining others' praise and respect.**

**Renunciation of divisive speech results in being attractive in others' sight.**

**Renunciation of meaningless speech results in your words being credited as trustworthy.**

**Renunciation of rough speech results in the increase of your favorable renown.**

**Renunciation of covetousness results in accomplishment of all your goals.**

**Renunciation of ill will results in being attractive and subduing others on sight.**

**Renunciation of wrong views results in correct views arising in your mind.**

*The Discourse That Presents the Ten Ennobling Acts* states:

Those inclined toward and diligent in these ten ennobling acts find their situations improve: their lives are long; their possessions increase; they live in harmony with their spouse and have no rivals; slander does not occur; they are popular; their speech is esteemed; their speech is pleasant to everyone; they are content; they give and receive love; and they have excellent views.

### ***Acts Consistent With Ennobling Karma [D]***

**The consequence of having practiced the ten ennobling acts in previous lifetimes is turning away from corrupting acts in thought, word, and deed, And natural application to the ten ennobling acts.**

**This leads to the attainment of excellent lifetimes among gods and humans.**

The consequence of having practiced the ten ennobling acts in previous series of lifetimes is, in the present life, you turn away from negative, corrupting acts in thought, word, and deed, and you are naturally compelled to engage in the ten ennobling acts. Those acts lead to the attainment of excellent future lifetimes among gods and humans. *The Vast Enjoyment Discourse* states: With enthusiasm for ennobling acts, your stores of goodness increase, And you fully sustain the excellent cultivation of awakening.

### ***The Environmental Consequences of Ennobling Acts [E]***

**The environmental consequences of engaging in the ten ennobling acts are as follows: Renunciation of killing results in birth in a pleasant land, Where medicine and grains are nutritious and life is secure.**

**Renunciation of taking what was not given results in birth in a land where harvests are abundant And wealth in food and riches increases.**

**Renunciation of wrong sexual conduct results in birth in an attractive land, Which is clean, wide, and sweet-smelling.**

**Renunciation of lying results in birth in a land**

**Where wealth lasts, which lives in harmony with its neighbors, and where there is no deceit or fear.**

**Renunciation of divisive speech results in birth in a land**

**Which is spacious, happy, and even; where both travel and settling down are easy.**

**Renunciation of meaningless speech results in birth in a land Where the seasons are regular, where leaves, flowers, and fruit ripen on time.**

**Renunciation of rough speech results in birth in a land**

**Where the land and fields are even, and which is adorned with lakes and pools.**

**Renunciation of covetousness results in birth in a land**

**Where plentiful harvests of every desirable object multiply.**

**Renunciation of ill will results in birth in a land**

**Where all inhabitants—humans and nonhumans—are not harmful, and which has every conducive condition.**

**Renunciation of wrong views results in birth in a magnificent land,**

**Which has jewel mines, security, and powerful allies.**

As explained, corrupting acts create suffering and rebirth in the three miserable existences; ennobling acts, happiness and the higher existences. Therefore, to attain the uplifted happiness of the gods' and human realms, you must apply yourself to ennobling acts. *The Mindfulness Discourse* states: Whatever appears in any world

Has arisen directly from your own karma.

## **ACTS CONSISTENT WITH FREEDOM AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES [IV]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) acts consistent with freedom and (2) results consistent with freedom.

### ***Acts Consistent with Freedom [A]***

**To gain freedom from the sufferings of existence,**

**Enter the way of the hearers, solitary sages, or bodhisattvas, Then strive day and night at ennobling acts,**

**Epitomized by awakening's thirty-seven facets,**

**The four immeasurable aspirations, and the six transcendent perfections.**

**Ennobling acts of body, speech, and mind such as these**

**Sealed with dedication to enlightenment are called "acts consistent with freedom."**

To gain freedom from every suffering of unbearable existence, enter the way of the hearers, solitary sages, or bodhisattvas, then strive day and night at ennobling acts within your chosen path, synthesized as awakening's thirty-seven facets; or,

in the great way, by the four immeasurable aspirations and the six transcendent perfections. Such ennobling acts of body, speech, and mind, sealed with dedication to enlightenment, are called “acts consistent with freedom.”

### ***Results Consistent with Freedom [B]***

**Physical, verbal, and mental ennobling acts guided by the skillful means and sublime insight Of the three Buddhist ways constitute acts That result in the temporary attainment of life as a god or human and in the ultimate attainment Of the hearers’ or solitary sages’ awakening or of supreme awakening.**

Accumulation of physical, verbal, and mental ennobling acts, guided by the special skillful means of each of the three Buddhist ways and by sublime insight, emptiness, constitute acts that result in the temporary attainment of gods’ or human beings’ wealth, glory, and excellent incarnation; and in the ultimate attainment of the hearers’ or solitary sages’ awakening, or of supreme awakening—the holy exalted state of unsurpassable enlightenment. These subjects will be clearly presented in detail below, in chapters that describe the discourses’ and tantras’ foundation, path, and result.

### **CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS**

Evil acts created by the five poisons  
Resemble enjoyment of poisoned food.  
The fruit of what has grown from poisonous seeds  
Is certain to produce only poison-like consequences: suffering.

The sacred nectar of ennobling acts,  
Beneficial for yourself and others, is the nectar of fully positive acts.  
Those fortunate enough to drink the Buddhist teachings’ nectar  
Will attain the supreme exalted state of everlasting nectar.

Suffering arises from evil wrongdoing;  
Those who want to avoid suffering renounce such acts.  
Happiness results from ennobling acts;  
Those who wish for happiness apply themselves in thought, word, and deed to  
ennobling acts.

This concludes a commentary to “The Workings of Karma,” Book 5 of *The*

*Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. I, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje, wrote this to foster understanding that since ennobling acts surely result in happiness and wrongdoing in suffering, those who wish every happiness should always apply themselves to ennobling acts, and since no one wishes to suffer, we should never commit wrongdoing. Fortune!

A reincarnation of the great scholar Bodhisato sponsored the printing of this book.

**BOOK 6**  
**THE FLAWS OF THE ROUND OF REBIRTH**

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- I. The Suffering from Heat and Cold in the Hells
  - A. The Eight Hot Hells and the Differences in Their Fires' Heat
    - 1. Reviving Hell
    - 2. Black Line Hell
    - 3. Crushing Hell
    - 4. Wailing Hell
    - 5. Great Screaming Hell
    - 6. Hot Hell
    - 7. Extremely Hot Hell
    - 8. The Hell of Uninterrupted Torment
    - 9. The Differences in the Heat of the Fires of Hell
  - B. The Eight Cold Hells
  - C. The Neighboring Hells
  - D. The Occasional Hells
- II. The Suffering from Hunger and Thirst among Starving Spirits
  - A. Starving Spirits Who Live in Specific Locations
  - B. Starving Spirits Who Fly Through Space
- III. The Suffering among Beasts of Burden
- IV. The Suffering from Birth, Aging, Sickness, and Death among Humans
  - A. Principal Sufferings
  - B. Secondary Sufferings
    - 1. The Suffering of Birth
    - 2. The Suffering of Aging
    - 3. The Suffering of Sickness
    - 4. The Suffering of Death
    - 5. The Suffering of Meeting Hated Enemies
    - 6. The Suffering of Separation from Loved Ones
    - 7. The Suffering of Poverty and Destitution
    - 8. The Suffering of Contamination
- V. The Suffering from Conflict among Demigods
- VI. The Suffering from Death and Falling among Gods

- A. The Suffering from Death and Falling Experienced by Gods of the Desire Realm  
B. The Suffering of Seeing the Next Life for Gods of the Form and Formless Realms  
C. A Teaching on the Need to Achieve Freedom for Yourself Once You Have Understood the Round of Rebirth as Suffering

With quick, quick enlightened activity, Lord of Secrets  
Guides each, each being according to their interests;  
Goddess of Dance gives to each, each according to their wishes:  
To you both, I quickly, quickly humbly bow.

BOOK 6, “The Flaws of the Round of Rebirth,” has six chapters, describing 1.  
The Suffering from Heat and Cold in the Hells

2. The Suffering from Hunger and Thirst among Starving Spirits  
3. The Suffering of Beasts of Burden in the Animal Realm  
4. The Suffering from Birth, Aging, Sickness, and Death in the Human Realm  
5. The Suffering from Conflict in the Demigods’ Realm  
6. The Suffering from Death and Falling in the Realm of the Gods

These six chapters contain a total of twenty-eight headings.

## **THE SUFFERING FROM HEAT AND COLD IN THE HELLS [I]**

As described, action and consequences function precisely and subtly. This chapter has four parts: (1) the eight hot hells and the differences in their fires’ heat, (2) the eight cold hells, (3) the neighboring hells, and (4) the occasional hells.

### ***The Eight Hot Hells and the Differences in Their Fires’ Heat [A]***

This section has nine parts: (1) Reviving Hell, (2) Black Line Hell, (3) Crushing Hell, (4) Wailing Hell, (5) Great Screaming Hell, (6) Hot Hell, (7) Extremely Hot Hell, (8) the Hell of Uninterrupted Torment, and (9) the differences in the heat of the fires of hell.

#### ***Reviving Hell [1]***

**As described, action and consequences function precisely and subtly.  
Therefore, many evil acts motivated by the power of anger  
Result in the hells’ excruciating suffering.**



**Among these, in Reviving Hell, beings take miraculous birth on a ground of hot iron, On seeing one another, they become uncontrollably enraged, and strike one another with sharp weapons. Once dead, a sound revives them, and they reexperience the same torment.**

**Their duration of life is calculated as follows:**

**Fifty human years equal a day for the gods of the four great divine kings.**

**Thirty such days equal a month; twelve months, one year.**

**Five hundred of such years equal one day in Reviving Hell.**

**Beings in this hell live five hundred of their own years:**

**Thus, they suffer for a total**

**Of one trillion, six hundred and twenty billion human years.**

In Reviving Hell, the force of previous acts assembles hell beings on a ground of blazing iron embers. They strike one another with such weapons as clubs, axes, spears, and wheels. When they spy their sworn enemy, they act as if deranged and finally everyone dies. A voice from the sky exclaims, "Come to life again!" and the beings immediately revive as before. They must experience the suffering of being killed by weapons day and night, countless times. *Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states: In this world, the suffering of being fiercely beaten

By three hundred clubs during one day  
Cannot compare, even in part,  
To a minor suffering in hell.

Life there lasts until the being's karma is spent. In the great way's common discourses and treatises, it is said that beings migrate from the hells according to the seriousness of their karma; thus, these texts do not specify definite life spans for beings reborn there. It is said that beings can leave hell if a forceful remedy to a particular act has arisen in their stream of being, or conversely, that such acts as contempt toward the vajra master can require beings to remain in hell for many great eons. Therefore, the length of life in hell depends on the karmic obscuration which caused that rebirth. *Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states: Such totally intolerable suffering

Can be experienced for billions of years;  
Yet until the karma of that corrupting act is spent,  
You cannot be free from that life.

According to the common Buddhist perspective, the duration of life in this hell is stated in *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena*: It is said that a single day in Reviving Hell and the other six hells, in stages, Equals the longevity of a specific class of the desire realm's gods.

If the calculation of longevity in this hell is based upon *The Mindfulness Discourse* and *Discernment of Karma*, fifty human years equal a day for the gods among the four great divine kings; thirty such days equal one month; twelve months, one year. Five hundred such years equal one day in Reviving. Beings there live for five hundred of their own years. In human terms, fifty human years equal a day for the gods of the four great divine kings; one thousand, five hundred human years equal one of their months; eighteen thousand, one year; nine million years, the life span of those gods. Nine million human years equal one day in Reviving; two hundred and seventy million human years, one month; thirty billion, two hundred and forty million human years, one year; one trillion, six hundred and twenty billion human years, the life span of beings in this hell.<sup>9</sup> *The Mindfulness Discourse* states: In human years, sentient beings in the Reviving Hell live for one hundred thousand times ten million years, plus sixty-two thousand ten millions.

Further in the same text,

Human beings who have killed other humans  
Or killed humans in fetal development  
Will definitely be reborn in Reviving Hell.

Why is it called Reviving?  
For many thousands of years,  
Beings are struck and beaten, then revived.  
Thus it is called "Reviving."

### ***Black Line Hell [2]***

**Below, in Black Line Hell, beings are sliced up by saws, then rejoined, and again cut and rejoined: Their sufferings are immeasurable. Their duration of life is calculated as follows: one hundred human years equal one day for the gods in Heaven of the Thirty-Three; One thousand of their years equal one day in Black Line Hell; Beings in that hell live one thousand of their own years. In human terms, this equals three trillion, two hundred and forty billion**

**years Of enduring suffering from being cut and sliced up.**

*Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states:

Some are sliced up by saws;  
Others, by axes' unbearably sharp blades.

In Black Line Hell, eight or sixteen lines are drawn on beings' bodies, then sharp saws slice along those lines from the crown of their heads; then their bodies are rejoined, and again cut. They experience this for a thousand of their own years.

Eighteen million human years equal one day in Black Line Hell. The beings' life span there equals, in human terms, three trillion, two hundred and forty billion years. *The Mindfulness Discourse* states: Persons who have insulted,

Slandered, or lied to  
Their parents, companions, relatives, or spiritual guides,  
Will be reborn in Black Line Hell.

Why is it called that?  
Black lines are drawn  
Then saws and flames slice along them.  
Thus, it is called "Black Line."

### ***Crushing Hell [3]***

**Below, in Crushing Hell, the mountains are shaped  
Like heads of tigers, lions, horses, or camels.  
Beings are pulverized to dust between these; the mountains separate, and  
the beings return to life.  
In a region of iron, hammers beat them to powder;  
They are pressed so their blood flows in great streams.**

**Their duration of life is calculated as follows: two hundred human years  
equal one day in the Heaven of Twins; Two thousand years there equal  
one day in Crushing Hell;  
Beings in this hell live two thousand years,  
Equal in human terms to six trillion, four hundred and eighty billion  
years Of torment due to unbearable karma.**

*Letter to a Disciple* states:

A pair of fearsome long sheep horns, the size of mountains,  
Meet, crushing to powder all bodies in the valley between them.  
A slight cool breeze rises, restores the beings to life,  
Then the process is repeated a hundred times, reducing them to powder.

*Advice from a Spiritual Friend* states:

Some are squeezed like sesame;  
Others are pulverized, ground like fine flour.

In Crushing Hell, iron mountains are shaped like heads of tigers, lions, goats, or sheep. Beings suffer for two thousand of their own years, pulverized to dust between these; then they return to life and are again crushed.

Thirty-six million human years equal one day in Crushing Hell. Thus, in human terms, their lives last for six trillion, four hundred and eighty billion years. A previous text [*The Mindfulness Discourse*] states: Those who killed living beings,

Such as a goat, sheep, fox, or pig,  
Rabbit, mouse, or wild boar,  
Go to the Gathering and Crushing Hell.

Why is it called this? Flung where things gather,  
Beings are killed.  
Thus, it is called “Crushing Hell.”

### ***Wailing Hell [4]***

**Below, in Wailing Hell, beings are burned in blazing fires and cooked in molten iron: They cry out in agony.  
Their duration of life is calculated as follows: four hundred human years equal one day in Joyful Heaven.  
Four thousand years there equal one day in Wailing Hell;  
Beings in this hell live four thousand of their own years,**

## **Equal in human terms**

**To twelve trillion, nine hundred and sixty billion years.**

*Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states:

Some, on a pyre of red-hot cinders,  
Are continually burned, their mouths open wide in screams.  
Some, in huge caldrons of molten lead,  
Are cooked head-down, like handfuls of grain.

*Letter to a Disciple* states:

Some fall into great cauldrons of boiling oil.  
Others step onto ground of burning sand from which flames rise:  
They can't find a place to put their feet.

In Wailing Hell, beings suffer from burning in blazing fires and being cooked in molten iron; they scream loudly in agony. Beings in this hell live four thousand of their own years. One day in Wailing equals seventy-two million human years; in human terms their lives last twelve trillion, nine hundred and sixty billion years. A previous text [*The Mindfulness Discourse*] states: Here, embodied beings

Under the influence of physical, verbal, or mental afflictions  
Who slander or deceive others  
Go to Wailing Hell.

There, burned  
Continually in ferocious fires,  
Beings cry out fiercely.  
Thus, it is called "Wailing Hell."

### ***Great Screaming Hell [5]***

**Below, in Great Screaming Hell, in iron buildings,  
Beings are burnt in blazing fires: a great screaming resounds.**

**Their duration of life is calculated as follows: eight hundred human years  
equal one day in Heaven of Joy in Creation.  
Eight thousand years there equal one day in Great Screaming Hell.  
Beings in this hell live eight thousand of their own years,**

**Equal in human terms to twenty-five trillion, nine hundred and twenty billion years.**

*Letter to a Disciple* states:

Hell fires and reeking smoke change the sky's color.  
Many tongues of flames diffuse, covering the whole surroundings.  
Numb with fear, hell beings see guards with garlands of small white bones,  
Wearing elephant skins and making threatening gestures. Hell beings cry  
in anguish.  
In some places, the flames grow stronger and make thundering sounds.  
Fat falls from beings' bodies, making some crackling sounds at the flames'  
tips.  
Hissing rises from the ashes in the beings' rib cages.  
They have fallen into fires of an intensity unknown even at the end of time.

In Great Screaming Hell, in closed iron buildings, beings are burnt in blazing fires for eight thousand of their own years. One day in Great Screaming equals one hundred and forty-four million human years. Their lifetime lasts for twenty-five trillion, nine hundred and twenty billion human years. A previous text [*The Mindfulness Discourse*] states: Those who cause suffering by stealing the possessions

Of gods, brahmins, or spiritual masters,  
Or who steal something entrusted to them,  
Go to Great Screaming Hell.

Because beings there are burnt in fierce flames,  
Their cries are intense  
And their karma is serious and strong,  
It is called "Great Screaming."

### ***Hot Hell [6]***

**Below, in Hot Hell, beings enter blazing iron buildings,  
Where they are beaten by hammers and pierced by spears.  
Their duration of life is calculated as follows:  
One thousand, six hundred human years equal one day in Heaven of  
Control of Others' Creations.  
Sixteen thousand years there equal one day in Hot Hell.**

**Hell beings there live sixteen thousand of their own years,**

## **Equal in human terms**

**To fifty-one trillion, eight hundred and forty billion years of the experience of suffering.**

*Letter to a Disciple* states:

A monstrous snake with a raised head,  
Like the fateful noose in the Lord of Death's hand, tightly binds the living  
beings, While hawks, white *kangka* herons, and vultures  
Fearlessly pluck out their eyes and brains.

In Hot Hell, in iron buildings, hammers fiercely beat hell beings and spears split their heads. Blazing fires burn them inside and out. This suffering lasts for sixteen thousand of their years. One day in Hot Hell equals two hundred and eighty-eight million human years. Their life span lasts for fifty-one trillion, eight hundred and forty billion human years.

### ***Extremely Hot Hell [7]***

**Below, in Extremely Hot Hell, in two-storied iron buildings, Beings are pierced by a three-pronged spear that protrudes from the head and the two shoulders, Then placed on a flat slab of blazing iron and cooked in molten copper.**

**Life there lasts half an eon,  
A time incalculable in human years.**

*The Mindfulness Discourse* states:

Those in Extremely Hot Hell must endure the torment of the sensations of suffering during half an intermediate eon.

Another discourse states:

This hell's harmful things blaze fiercely: it is called Extremely Hot. Three-pointed spears and vajras pierce hell beings' bodies. They are cooked in molten copper, and placed on a slab. Fire burns them inside and out—this is just a pause.

In Extremely Hot Hell, in two-storied iron buildings, beings are pierced by a three-pronged spear, placed on a flat slab of blazing iron, and cooked in molten copper. Their experience of suffering lasts half an eon.

### ***The Hell of Uninterrupted Torment [8]***

**Below, in the Hell of Uninterrupted Torment, in blazing iron buildings,  
No difference can be perceived between sentient beings and fire, Apart  
from hell beings' anguished cries.  
They are consumed like a lamp's wick.**

**Life there lasts for an intermediate eon.  
Since no greater suffering exists,  
This hell is known as Torment Without Respite or Interruption.**

*Letter to a Disciple* states:

At their hearts, their lungs ignite in fire like dry grass.  
Flames leave their throats and mouths; smoke flows out in streams.  
Their bellies open and their inner organs pour out:  
The hell beings' alarm makes them utter loud, incomprehensible cries. Then  
they cease.

They wish to become free from this enormous suffering.  
Through an open door, they repeatedly see others at a distance and they  
watch for a chance to escape.  
When it comes, the karmic door closes tightly, cutting off that chance.  
At that time, other dismal, intolerable sufferings occur.

A great cluster of large, sharp arrows falls on them,  
Then hell guardians beat them with clubs.  
As their tears flow, liquid molten lead falls with garlands of flames.  
Smoke billows from the openings of their mouths, nostrils, and ears.

Liquid matter oozes from their eyes and brains; they are horrified.  
Dark masses of blazing tongues of fire rise from their skulls.  
The fire, as if in anger, spreads through their bodies  
As if burning a heap of dry firewood.



*Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states:

Similarly, among all sufferings,  
The Hell of Uninterrupted Torment's sufferings are the most intolerable.

*Discernment of Karma* states:

At the gates of Hell of Uninterrupted Torment, there stands an iron mountain sixty thousand leagues wide. When hell beings have destroyed it and it exists no longer, they leave that existence for another: thus, their life span is infinite.

It seems that these beings committed especially serious acts, such as abandoning the teachings or violating the tantric bonds. *The Mindfulness Discourse* states: Those in Hell of Uninterrupted Torment leave that life after an intermediate eon. Even if they are born a human being, their senses will be impaired, and so on.

### ***The Differences in the Heat of the Fires of Hell [9]***

**The differences in the heat of the hells' fires are this:  
Each is seven times more intense than the one above.**

Each hell's fire is seven times more intense than the last: each fire is progressively hotter and the beings' sufferings more extreme. *Discernment of Karma* states: Like the progression from an ordinary fire of sandalwood

To that of the fire at the end of time,  
The hell fires are progressively seven times hotter  
And cause seven times more suffering.

### ***The Eight Cold Hells [B]***

**The eight cold hells are located in layers directly above the eight hot hells.  
In their dark expanse, raging snowstorms swirl  
In icy enclosures that are extremely cold.  
In descending order, they are Blistering, Blister Bursting,  
Teeth Chattering, Sneezing Achoo, Sneezing Kerchoo,  
Splitting like a Water Lily, Splitting like a Lotus,  
And Splitting like a Large Lotus.**

**Inside the hell beings' open wounds live various sharp-toothed insects that gnaw into their flesh.**

**Their duration of life is calculated as follows:**

**If one hundred bags of sesame seeds are emptied at the rate of one grain each hundred years, this equals the life of a being in Blistering.**

**Longevity in each hell is double that of the preceding one.**

These are located in layers directly above the eight hot hells. In their dark expanse, raging snowstorms swirl.

In the eight very cold hells, beings are driven by blizzards of ice and snow. Among them, in the hell named Blistering, the extreme cold makes blisters form that are the size of the top of the thumb. When the cold is sufficient to cause these to burst, this marks Blister Bursting Hell. When the cold provokes sneezing, Sneezing Achoo. When beings make no sound besides sneezing, Sneezing Kerchoo. When beings are too cold to make any sound whatsoever, Teeth Chattering. When their bodies split into six pieces, Splitting like a Water Lily; when they split into eight pieces, Splitting like a Lotus; and when they split into sixteen, thirty-two, one hundred, or a thousand pieces, Splitting like a Large Lotus.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows: If eighty or one hundred full bags of Kosala sesame seeds are emptied at the rate of one grain each hundred years, the emptying of the load equals the life span of a being in Blistering Hell. The length of life in each hell below is double that of the preceding one: thus, longevity in Blistering Hell equals one such bag; Blister Bursting, two; Sneezing Achoo, four; Sneezing Kerchoo, eight; Teeth Chattering, sixteen; Splitting like a Water Lily, thirty-two; Splitting like a Lotus, sixty-four; and Splitting like a Large Lotus, one hundred and twenty-eight. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states: If each hundred years, one sesame seed

Is taken from a bag of sesame,  
The emptying of the load equals the duration of life in Blistering Hell.  
Other cold hells last twenty times more.

### ***The Neighboring Hells [C]***

**The neighboring hells are located around the eight hot hells or around the Hell of Uninterrupted Torment.**

**Four lie in each of the four directions, sixteen in all:**

**Fire Pit, Swamp of Corpses, Plain of Weapons,  
And River Without Ford.**

**In Fire Pit, beings find a good trench where they can hide, but when they enter it, it becomes a pit of coals Where they experience the suffering of their flesh and bones being burned.**

**In Swamp of Corpses, they see a cool swamp but when they enter it, it becomes a swamp of corpses, Where stinking worms with sharp iron and copper beaks eat them.**

**In Plain of Weapons, they see a pleasant plain but when they go there, Many extremely sharp razors slice them to pieces.**

**When they go to an attractive forest, it becomes a forest of swords— The wind moves the swords, which fall, cutting them.**

**They see their previous homeland at the top of a mountain, but as they go toward it, Sharp iron spikes cut them so they bleed.**

**At the top, vultures pluck out their brains, eyes, and fat.**

**Then they think they hear a summons from the bottom of the hill— During their descent, the spikes turn upward and they are again tormented by being pierced.**

**At the bottom, they are embraced by sharp-toothed men or women, Burned, and then eaten by dogs and wolves.**

**In River Without Ford, they see a river, but on entering it, they sink up to their necks In hot ash, burning their flesh and bones.**

**On the banks they see fearsome death demons who prevent them from leaving.**

**In these hells, suffering is experienced for many thousands of years.**

*Letter to a Disciple states:*

Massive dogs with many locks of hair matted together  
And long teeth with vajra points viciously attack their bodies.  
The River Without Ford's banks are filled with flames, liquid ash,  
And rocks with sharp edges and piercing points.

Further in the same text:

Some experience the suffering of a mass of wriggling, tiny insects  
That bite into their bodies, making them rot and decompose.  
Those caught by these sensations in the snare made by karma  
Cannot even move and are killed.

Further in the same text:

Filled with sharp razors, the willow forest has branches of swords.  
Running exhausted within the forest, beings' bodies are defenseless from  
wounds.

They fall into a well filled with sharp tridents, clubs, arrows, and swords—  
The Lord of Death's vicious mouth.

Further in the same text:

Tormented by the fierce sun, with pitiful bodies overcome by unbearable  
suffering, They see and go toward a thick forest of green-leafed trees.  
Once there, the leaves become hundreds of weapons that fall, besetting their  
bodies.

There, for a long time, except for screams, they have no companions.

Further in the same text:

When beings quickly climb up the unbearably high hell-tree,  
Its thorns turn downward, and pass through the beings' skin.  
In intense pain, their insides are mangled and disappear into the thorns.

Further in the same text:

When they descend, iron thorns turn upward—  
Many rough, sharp points pierce their bodies, and they faint.  
There, three-pointed, blazing spears assail them,  
Wracking their bodies with pain, making descent impossible.  
Then, ravens with sharp weapon-beaks  
Pull at everything and extract their guts and intestines, which protrude and  
scatter.  
Some beings fall over terrifyingly high cliffs.

Further in the same text:

Fires of hundreds of flames leave the female hell guardians' bodies.  
They wear such jewelry as intersecting garlands of flames.  
Their bodies, jagged as saws, are heedless of mercy:  
They savagely clutch the hell beings.

*The Mindfulness Discourse* states:

After they go there, they perceive a river. As they cross it, they are burned up to their necks. Even their bones crack and split apart. When they revive, they see on the riverbanks the appearance of the former, imposing death demons, who prevent them from leaving.

### ***The Occasional Hells [D]***

**Occasional hells are located in various places—**

**On mountains, in forests, between rocks, in fire or water, or at the edge of the continents.**

**Beings can be few, many, or alone, and so on;**

**Each is oppressed by suffering appropriate to their karma.**

The occasional hells are located in various different places, such as on mountains, on rocks, in fire or water, or at the edge of the continents. Hell beings can have various different forms, like a pestle, a rope, a broom, split wood, or a tree stump. They can live together or alone, as appropriate. Each suffers—such as from heat, cold, hunger, thirst, being split apart, cut, or cooked—in ways corresponding to their previous karma. Their intolerable sufferings can last half a day, an instant, or be continual, according to the power of each being’s specific karma. Thus, these states are called “occasional” hells. *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states: Then Maudgalyayana said, “I’ve gone to the ends of the oceans and seen in occasional hells beings who resemble a pestle, a broom, or a tree. They are very numerous and are tormented by suffering.” He concluded with, There is no happiness in existence.

As in these occasional hells,  
All beings are tormented by their own sufferings,  
As if they lived circled by masses of flames.

## **THE SUFFERING FROM HUNGER AND THIRST AMONG STARVING SPIRITS [II]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) starving spirits who live in specific locations and (2) starving spirits who fly through space.

### ***Starving Spirits Who Live in Specific Locations [A]***

**A moderate number of evil acts motivated by desire and greed results in birth as a starving spirit.**

**Starving spirits obscured in relation to outer phenomena see any of four mistaken perceptions: Those who mistakenly perceive mountains see a cool forest, but on going there, The forest burns and falling pieces of wood scorch them.**

**Those who mistakenly perceive rivers see a stream, but on going there, The wind blows hot sand: the place becomes a plain of agony.**

**Those who mistakenly perceive rain clouds see a cloud from which a rain of iron arrows Falls like bolts of lightning with fire-arrows and smoke, cutting them.**

**Those who mistakenly perceive temperature feel snowstorms hot when heat threatens them, And fire cold when cold threatens.**

**Those obscured in relation to physical perceptions have a mouth the size of the eye of a needle, A belly the size of a province, and arms and legs the size of blades of grass.**

**When they eat a little, a fire burns inside, Scorches their inner organs, and sends smoke billowing out their mouths.**

**Those who have general obscurations are obsessed with food and drink But see others aggressively guarding the food.**

A moderate number of evil acts motivated by desire and greed results in birth as a starving spirit.

Among starving spirits, those obscured in relation to outer phenomena experience the suffering of mistaken perceptions. Those obscured in relation to physical perceptions have mouths the size of the eye of a needle, bellies the size of a province, and arms and legs the size of blades of grass. When they eat a little, a fire burns inside them, scorches their inner organs, and sends smoke and flames billowing out their mouths. Those with general obscurations have intolerable hunger due to desire for food and drink, but do not even hear of water for twelve years. Yet, when they see some water it dries up, or it seems protected, and they are prevented from drinking.

If a mendicant or brahmin expels mucus or impurities and dedicates this to these spirits with a mantra, some of these dedicated substances might arrive to their mouths but first not enter. Once the starving spirits swallow, it makes them suffer, as if a fire burned inside them. Even if they drink from a large lake, the water doesn't reach their throats; their mouths become dry with heat. Apart from these and other sufferings, which are limitless, they experience considerable physical and mental distress due to others' harm. *Letter to a Disciple* states:

Those with mouths the size of needles have a fearsome belly, many leagues wide.

In their exhaustion, even if they were to drink from a great ocean, The water would not pass the wide cavern of their throats— Their mouths' poison even dries water!

### ***Starving Spirits Who Fly through Space [B]***

**Starving spirits who fly through space include ruler demons, Noxious spirits, ogres, *tsen* spirits, and demons.**

**They fly unhindered through the power of their miraculous karma.**

**They cause diseases, steal radiant well-being, obstruct vitality, And perform various kinds of harmful acts.**

**Their duration of life is calculated as follows: one human month is a day for the starving spirits.**

**They live five hundred of their own years: in human terms, fifteen thousand years, During which they experience suffering corresponding to their previous acts.**

Starving spirits who fly through space include ruler demons, noxious spirits, ogres, *tsen* spirits, and demons. They fly unhindered through the power of their miraculous karma.

Since these beings belong to the class of starving spirits, they experience unlimited suffering. Their homeland is unattractive, harmful, frightening, and afflicted with hunger and thirst. When these spirits feel attracted to individuals, they approach and infect those individuals with the same fatal illness that killed them in the past. The same sickness forever torments them and they spread it to others. They steal others' longevity and radiant well-being, and thereby only cause others palpable harm and immediate experiences of unhappiness.

They are able to travel through miraculous powers, but they perceive guardians blocking their way. They have various forms, such as a door, saw, firebrand, dog, or bird. Due to past, faint ennobling acts, some own possessions but are tormented by many other sufferings. For most of them, the seasons are disordered. Others' happiness causes them suffering; such miseries are infinite.

The life span of starving spirits is calculated as follows: one human month is a day for the starving spirits; they live five hundred of their own years. In human terms, this equals fifteen thousand years. *The Essence of the Sun Discourse* states: Large starving spirits' bodies measure one thousand leagues wide; the smallest, a thumb's length.

*The Short Discourse on Mindfulness* states:

Those who harm the immature (that is, sentient beings)  
Or whose craving leads them to cheat another  
Will be born “rotten body spirits”  
Who eat feces inside the body.

Those who cause harm,  
Overthrow towns, and mine the earth for its treasure  
Will take birth  
As an ugly ghoul to whom offerings can be made.

Those who always enjoy smells and garlands,  
Who give songs and dance, and have little wrath,  
Will be born as celestial musicians  
Who please the gods.

Those who commit great slander,  
Are angry, and force laughter  
Will be reborn as ugly-faced,  
Wild, meat-eating spirits.

Those who are always very hateful and busily preoccupied,  
And who like to make gifts,  
Will be born after death as spirits.

Human beings who are wild and angry, but generous,  
And who enjoy delicious alcohol,  
Will be born after death as wild noxious spirits  
Who enjoy alcohol.

Those who offer themselves as any conveyance wished for  
By parents or spiritual masters,  
Will be reborn as happy noxious spirits,  
With those acts the cause of their celestial palaces.

After death, the faults of craving and greed  
Lead to rebirth as these kinds of starving spirits.



### **THE SUFFERING AMONG BEASTS OF BURDEN [III]**

**A small number of corrupting acts motivated by stupidity results in birth as an animal.**

**Submerged in the depths of oceans between the continents,  
Dolphins, fish, crustaceans, and other such wealth of the nagas— Animals  
of various shapes and sizes—**

**Live crowded together like the fermented grains left after beer has been  
brewed.**

**The large eat the small; the small pierce the large.**

**At such dark places as the sides of the iron mountains at the far reaches  
of the world-system, Animals experience the limitless suffering of being  
eaten by one another.**

**Species scattered among the five other realms of existence—**

**Such as birds, deer, wild animals, horses, cattle, and sheep—**

**Are made beasts of burden or are slaughtered for their meat, skin, or  
bones.**

**Hot sand and fear of garudas torment nagas.**

**The animals who live the longest live for an eon; the shortest, for a day.**

**Life span is uncertain and varied.**

A small number of evil acts motivated by stupidity results in birth as an animal. Submerged in the depths of the vast oceans between the four continents, animals live crowded together, like fermented grains left after beer has been brewed. The large eat the small; the small pierce the large. Such sufferings are boundless. In such dark places as the sides of the outer iron mountain range or between those mountains, at the far reaches of our world-system, limitless suffering torments infinite numbers of animals.

Various species of animals, such as birds, deer, wild animals, horses, cattle, and sheep, live scattered among the five other realms of existence, including the gods' realms and the human realm. Animals owned by other beings suffer from being made beasts of burden or slaughtered in various ways for their meat, skin, or bones. Their sufferings are immeasurable.

Nagas can experience happiness at any time of the day or night, but can also fall prey at any time to many sufferings from heat, cold, hunger, or thirst. Rains of hot sand on their homes torment some; some don't enter a group and must live alone. In general, they suffer from stupidity, fear of garudas, fear of forceful mantras, and countless forms of harm.

Animals' life span is not determined: some live for just an instant; some for a

day, and so on; some, such as the naga king Takshaka, live for an intermediate eon. *Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states: In animals' birthplaces, they undergo myriad sufferings,

Such as being killed, bound, or beaten.

Those who have spurned ennobling acts that foster peace  
Experience the unbearable suffering of being eaten by one another.

Some die for their pearls, wool, bones,  
Blood, meat, or skin.

Powerless, they are enslaved, beaten with others' whips,  
Hands, iron, or hooks.

## **THE SUFFERING FROM BIRTH, AGING, SICKNESS, AND DEATH AMONG HUMANS [IV]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) principal sufferings and (2) secondary sufferings.

### ***Principal Sufferings [A]***

**A small number of ennobling acts motivated by pride and attachment  
Results in birth as a human of the four continents.**

**Humans of all four continents, and particularly those of this world, Land of Jambu, Experience torment by three principal and eight secondary sufferings.**

**The three principal sufferings are suffering heaped upon suffering: For example, when assailed by enemies, to fall ill.**

**The suffering of change: for example, after suffering from hunger, to be unable to digest food.**

**The suffering of the composite: for example, to act corruptly to acquire food or clothing; Or afflictive poisons that lead to committing the causes of suffering.**

A small number of ennobling acts motivated by pride and attachment results in birth as a human of the four continents. Humans of all four continents, and particularly those of this world, Land of Jambu, experience torment by three principal and eight secondary sufferings.

Humans have three principal sufferings: (1) suffering heaped upon suffering: for example, when assailed by savage enemies, to fall seriously ill. (2) The

suffering of change: for example, after being tormented by the suffering of hunger and thirst, to be unable to digest food. (3) The suffering of the composite: for example, to eat poisoned food, to wear demon-infested clothing, or to act in ways that produce suffering's causes, such as eating poison. *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states: The round of rebirth's aggregation of suffering

Has the suffering of suffering, of the composite, and of change:  
Due to these three and eight other sufferings,  
Human beings suffer greatly.

### ***Secondary Sufferings [B]***

This section has eight parts: (1) the suffering of birth, (2) the suffering of aging, (3) the suffering of sickness, (4) the suffering of death, (5) the suffering of meeting hated enemies, (6) the suffering of separation from loved ones, (7) the suffering of poverty and destitution, and (8) the suffering of contamination.

### ***The Suffering of Birth [1]***

**In the womb, energy, mind, semen, and ovum conjoin:  
The fetus grows and develops for nine months and ten days,  
During which time it experiences the sufferings of being cramped in a  
dark, nauseating place.**

**When the mother eats, the fetus feels as if crushed under a mountain;  
When she moves, as if falling down a precipice.**

**When karma turns the child's head and backsides around at birth, The  
child experiences suffering like that of the Crushing Hell.**

In the womb, a future child's energy and mind, and the parents' semen and ovum conjoin: the human fetus grows and develops for nine months and ten days, during which time it experiences the suffering of being cramped in the dark and confined in a tight, nauseating place. When the mother eats, it feels as if crushed under a mountain; when she moves or sits, as if falling down a precipice; when she drinks something hot, as if falling into fire; when she drinks something cold, as if falling into water. When the karmic circulating energy turns the child's head and backsides around at birth, it is squeezed between her bones; the suffering is like that in the Crushing Hell. At birth, when touched by others, a newborn feels as if its skin is being peeled off; when washed, as if cut by razors. In these and other ways, the sufferings of birth are boundless.

## ***The Suffering of Aging [2]***

**During the suffering of aging, the complexion fades, hair turns white, Teeth fall out, eyes weaken, warmth grows faint, digestive strength is exhausted, Memory fades, and you walk, sit, or move with difficulty.**

**The tongue cannot taste distinct flavors, sounds are unheard, Faults multiply, qualities diminish: everybody disdains you.**

During the suffering of aging, flesh disappears, bones protrude, and the complexion fades. Hair turns white, teeth fall out, eyes weaken and are unclear, the body's warmth grows faint, digestive strength is exhausted, and memory fades. You are unable to walk, sit, or move much. The tongue loses its function and cannot taste flavors, and sounds are unheard or misunderstood. Faults, such as the five poisons, multiply; and your store of positive qualities diminishes: everybody disdains you. These and other sufferings are incalculable. *Letter to a Disciple* states: Then the Lord of Death grasps the elderly's hand;

It is impossible to let go.

White hair spreads;

The teeth fall out together, as in a smile.

Then the joints separate.

Your intellect becomes spoiled, walking deteriorates:

Your body slowly disintegrates.

Only wrongdoing is sure to increase.

The senses gradually fade.

Although your attachment to objects continues, your power to enjoy them deteriorates.

For a time, your state in this human realm

Would be frightful even in hell.

## ***The Suffering of Sickness [3]***

**During the suffering of sickness, this healthy body  
Is made seriously ill by disturbances of circulating energy, bile, or  
phlegm.**

**Food and drink seem revolting,**

**Sleep is impossible, lancinating pain racks your body,**

**And intolerably strong medicines and treatments, such as burning and  
blood-letting, must be borne.**

When this healthy body is struck suddenly by serious illness or demons, you

cannot enjoy the food and drink you want; you must eat and drink what you don't want. Sleep is impossible during the day and doesn't come at night. Unbearable lancing pain racks your body; neither rest nor getting up are possible. Intolerably strong medicines and treatments must be borne; such suffering is unendurable. *The Upper Commentary to the Hundred Procedures* states: Those who are tormented by sickness

Experience sensations like those of the hells:  
Whatever the sufferings, they arise repeatedly,  
Like the pain of life in the hells.

### ***The Suffering of Death [4]***

**When life's creative force is spent, karma at an end, and conditions that nurture life dissipate, The signs of death appear and delusory perceptions arise.**

**You must leave behind this cherished body, possessions, family, and companions To wander alone along the terrifying passage between lifetimes.**

**You assume the new miserable body your karma impels you to take—  
Miseries such as these make the suffering of death interminable. How heartbreaking!**

When life's creative force is spent; when its remaining forces of accumulated karma and goodness end; when conditions that nurture life dissipate, and all outer, inner, and secret signs of death appear, various delusory perceptions arise. You must leave behind whatever you arduously dedicated your life to—food, wealth, possessions, your body, close friends, spouse, and family—and are compelled to go alone to the dismal place of the period between lifetimes. You must assume whatever miserable new body your karma impels you to take, without any foreknowledge of what that will be. Such heartbreaking suffering is immeasurable. *Letter to a Disciple* states: Along an arduous path through water, between close boulders and thick vines, Hampered by sharp thorns along fearsome paths,

The dead are bound at the neck by the noose of time.  
Ferocious death demons brandish clubs as they lead the way.

### ***The Suffering of Meeting Hated Enemies [5]***

## **The suffering of meeting enemies**

**Includes the misery of not having the means to prevent their harm**

## **To your body or possessions**

**Due to their numbers; their foul, harmful acts; or their time of appearing.**

The suffering of meeting hated enemies is the constant sadness of not knowing when food, clothes, loved ones, wealth, possessions, or your own life will be lost because dreaded enemies appear; because you do not have the means to prevent their harm when they appear; or you have few supporters.

### ***The Suffering of Separation from Loved Ones [6]***

**When separated from loved ones,**

**You remember their qualities and wail with many laments.**

**Without companions or loved ones, your power is weak, your mind hesitant.**

**You have no opportunity for happiness; you feel great anguish.**

When separated from loved ones, without making an effort to think of them, everything about them—their qualities and behavior—comes to mind and you heave long sighs. You think little of profit or loss, and consider any activity meaningless. Your mind becomes hesitant and you have no opportunity for happiness; you feel anguish.

### ***The Suffering of Poverty and Destitution [7]***

**With no food for your mouth, no clothes for your back,**

**No place to stay, no useful wealth,**

**You sink into the misery of poverty and destitution,**

**When no matter how hard you try, you can't accomplish the slightest fraction of your wishes.**

When you have no food, clothes, home, or useful possessions, you suffer and become depressed. No matter how hard you try physically, verbally, or mentally, it becomes difficult to accomplish even a fraction of your wishes.

## ***The Suffering of Contamination [8]***

**The five contaminated psychophysical aggregations—**

**Form, sensation, perception, formative factors, and consciousness— Are nothing but suffering's support, vessel, and source.**

Form is the location where the harm of suffering takes manifest existence. Sensation, that which engages with phenomena, is suffering's vessel. Perception is suffering's support, the first door through which thoughts move. Formative factors and consciousness are suffering's source, the agent of acts and of awareness. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states: Subhuti! Because the five psychophysical aggregations are contaminated, they are the location of all suffering, the support for all suffering, the vessel for all suffering, and the source of all suffering.

## **THE SUFFERING FROM CONFLICT AMONG DEMIGODS [V]**

**Ennobling acts influenced by jealousy and associated factors**

**Result in birth as a demigod of four kinds.**

**They feel overpowering jealousy toward the gods' wealth and splendor**

**And are wounded or killed in battle during conflicts and disputes with the gods.**

Ennobling acts influenced by jealousy and its associated factors result in birth as a demigod of four kinds. Demigods feel overpowering jealousy toward the gods' wealth and splendor. Their acts in battles and disputes lead them to experience boundless panic and suffering from wounds, or having their head or limbs cut off and dying, and so on. *Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states: As for the demigods, because they naturally despise the gods' splendor, They suffer great mental anguish.

These beings are intelligent,

But are obscured and cannot see the truth.

## **THE SUFFERING FROM DEATH AND FALLING AMONG GODS [VI]**

This chapter has three parts: (1) the suffering of death and falling experienced by gods of the desire realm, (2) the suffering of seeing the next life for gods of the form and formless realms, and (3) a teaching on the need to achieve freedom for yourself once you have understood the round of rebirth as suffering.

## ***The Suffering of Death and Falling among Desire Realm Gods [A]***

**Accumulating a large number of the ten ennobling acts motivated by pride results in birth as a god of the desire realm.**

**When they suffer death and falling,**

**Their color worsens, their seat becomes uncomfortable, their flowers wilt,**

**Their clothes reek, and their bodies perspire.**

**Abandoned by friends, they sit alone and confused.**

**With clairvoyant power, they see the place of their future rebirth: they become terrified.**

**These unbearable experiences last for seven days of the gods.**

Accumulating a large number of the ten ennobling acts motivated by pride results in birth as a god of the desire realm. The six kinds of desire realm gods have five signs at death: their bodies' color becomes unattractive; their seat becomes uncomfortable; the flowers on their heads wilt; their clothes reek; and they perspire for the first time.

Their friends abandon them—they sit alone. With clairvoyant power, they see the place of their future rebirth. This suffering of death and falling, like that of a fish thrown on hot sand, lasts for seven days. *Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states: After reflection on that,

The best individuals no longer crave for the higher realms, which will pass away.

The gods' color becomes unattractive;

Their seats become uncomfortable; their flower garlands wilt;

Clothes reek;

And their bodies perspire for the first time.

These five signs of impending death, lamps that signal death in the higher realm, appear to gods in the heavens.

## ***The Suffering of Seeing the Next Life for Gods of the Form and Formless Realms [B]***

**When the form realm gods' karma of meditative stability is spent Or when the formless gods' karma of stillness is exhausted,**

**They plummet from level to level, experiencing endless descent into the suffering of conditioned existence.**



**Therefore, attainment of higher existences is but a fleeting respite from suffering.**

When the form realm gods' propelling karma of meditative stability is spent or when the formless gods' karma of stillness is exhausted, they plummet from level to level, experiencing myriad sufferings in the round of rebirth. Since even these gods do not transcend this round, the attainment of higher existences is nothing but a fleeting respite from suffering, and has no lasting value. Nagarjuna states: Those who live in naturally present meditative stability, such as the gods of the Pure, Exhibit boundless radiance, colors, and beauty,

But since they do not perceive their own latent thoughts of self,  
After they die, they may even be reborn in hell!

*Letter to a Disciple* states:

There is no place in the universe you have not made home;  
There is no place in space you have not traveled.  
Nevertheless, your desires still increase  
Although there is no suffering you have not already experienced many times.

### ***The Need to Achieve Freedom for Yourself Once You Have Understood the Round of Rebirth as Suffering [C]***

**Since suffering exists wherever you are born within the round of rebirth,  
You must exert yourself to achieve freedom.**

**The techniques taught by innumerable victors have not been sufficient in themselves: Think, "I will strive above all else at the sublime means to reach freedom And accomplish my aspirations for a lasting state of sure excellence."**

Wherever we are born within the round of rebirth, high or low, that life is like an illness that brings constant pain, or like upper or lower stories within the same prison. Therefore, if we don't exert ourselves wholeheartedly to achieve freedom, it is difficult for the buddhas to subdue us. Innumerable buddhas have appeared in the past but were unable to guide us: we have been left behind. Our karma and mental afflictions were too strong: we turned our backs on freedom's path and mistakenly sought happiness within the round of rebirth. Therefore, we should think repeatedly, "From now on I will strive day and night at the sacred

Buddhist doctrine, the means to freedom, and accomplish my aspirations for a lasting state of sure excellence, the sacred exalted state of enlightenment.” *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states: I have taught you the means to achieve freedom;

Freedom depends on you: be diligent!

Shantideva (in *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas*) states: To aid sentient beings,

Innumerable buddhas have attained transcendence;  
Yet due to my own fault,  
I was not among those they healed.

## CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS

In the three worlds’ frightful imprisoning trench,  
The three bonds’ ropes hold you tightly,  
And the three sufferings’ punishments torment you continually.  
The three miserable existences’ weapons are very sharp and painful.

On this wide plain of the round of rebirth’s unending anguish,  
Birth, aging, sickness, and death’s sharp thorns pierce you;  
Heat, cold, hunger, and thirst’s barren earth and stone surround you; Myriad  
sufferings’ savage, wild animals attack you.  
The mountains of flesh, bones, limbs you have discarded rise high;  
The oceans of blood, pus, and tears you have shed measure deep;  
The bodies of your various karmic rebirths swirl like fine atoms:  
How sad, this dense darkness of ignorant folly!

This concludes a commentary to “The Flaws of the Round of Rebirth,” Book 6 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. I, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje, wrote this to foster certainty that from now on we must strive intently to free ourselves from the round of rebirth’s imprisoning trench. We have previously taken innumerable births within the great ocean of the round of rebirth’s six realms and experienced boundless sufferings. Further, if we cannot find time now to strive for freedom, we will again take an inconceivable number of rebirths and be obliged to undergo myriad sufferings. Fortune!

The omniscient Tenpé Nyima Pal-zangpo, root of the doctrine, a further reincarnation of the great scholar Shantarakshita, a fully ordained monk of Shakyamuni's order and holder of the monastic code, sponsored the publication of this work.

**BOOK 7**  
**TAKING REFUGE AND THE LESSER WAY**

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- I. How to Take Refuge, the Foundation for All Vows
  - A. The Individual Who Takes Refuge
  - B. The Period For Which Refuge Is Taken
  - C. In Whom Refuge Is Taken—the Three Jewels
  - D. How to Take Refuge as a Cause for a Later Result
  - E. Taking Refuge as the Result in Itself
  - F. Training in Refuge as a Cause and as a Result
  - G. How the Refuge Vows Are Violated
  - H. The Benefits of Taking Refuge
- II. How to Keep the Seven Kinds of Individual Liberation Vows
  - A. The Original Setting of the Vows
  - B. The Essence of the Vows
  - C. Classification of the Vows
  - D. How to Receive the Vows Not Yet Taken
  - E. How to Keep the Vows Taken
    - 1. Vows for Laypersons
      - a. Temporary Discipline for Laypersons
      - b. Sustained Discipline for Laypersons
    - 2. Vows for Renunciants
      - a. Training for Novices
      - b. Training for Female Spiritual Apprentices
      - c. Acts That Constitute Downfalls for Fully Ordained Monks
        - i. Four Principal Defeating Acts
          - A) Impure Conduct
          - B) Taking What Is Not Given
          - C) Killing
          - D) Lying Concerning Spiritual Attainments
        - ii. Thirteen Remaining Downfalls
        - iii. Thirty Downfalls That Require Forfeiture
        - iv. Ninety Downfalls That Only Require Confession
        - v. Four Acts to Be Acknowledged Individually

- vi. One Hundred and Twelve Reprehensible Acts
- vii. Vows for Fully Ordained Nuns
- F. The Life That Is the Support for the Vows' Arising
- G. How the Vows Are Violated
- H. How to Restore the Vows
- III. The Foundation, Paths, and Results of the Hearers' Way
  - A. The Foundation of the Hearers' Way
  - B. The Paths and Results of the Hearers' Way
- IV. The Foundation, Paths, and Results of the Solitary Sages' Way

The moon in all her changing moods  
 Can never equal the beautiful forms  
 Of bodhisattvas Lord Loving Kindness and Goddess of Incense:  
 Supreme field for the cultivation of goodness, to you I offer praise.

BOOK 7, "Taking Refuge and the Lesser Way," has four chapters:

1. How to Take Refuge, the Foundation for All Vows
2. How to Keep the Seven Kinds of Individual Liberation Vows
3. An Explanation of the Foundation, Paths, and Results of the Hearers' Way
4. An Explanation of the Foundation, Paths, and Results of the Solitary Sages' Way

These chapters contain a total of thirty-six headings.

## HOW TO TAKE REFUGE, THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL VOWS [I]

This chapter has eight parts: (1) the individual who takes refuge, (2) the period for which refuge is taken, (3) in whom refuge is taken—the three jewels, (4) how to take refuge as a cause for a later result, (5) taking refuge as a result in itself, (6) training in refuge as a cause and as a result, (7) how the refuge vows are violated, and (8) the benefits of taking refuge.

### *The Individual Who Takes Refuge [A]*

**Refuge is taken in fear of the round of rebirth as described,  
 And with the wish for freedom.  
 Lesser individuals take refuge in fear of miserable existences**

**And to gain the higher existences of gods and humans.  
The two kinds of middle individual fear the round of rebirth.  
Great individuals take refuge to liberate all beings and in fear of both  
existence and the bliss of static peace.  
These three individuals' attitudes are inferior, middle, and best.**

People belong to one of three groups. Lesser individuals take refuge in the three jewels wishing for pleasant results within the round of rebirth and in fear of miserable existences. This impure motivation relegates them to the rank of lesser individuals. *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states:

Ananda explained to a brahmin woman how taking refuge would result in the attainment of the higher realms. The Transcendent Conqueror remarked, "Ananda! That is not the right approach! Those who strive for worldly happiness are called 'inferior.' Therefore, genuinely proclaim the qualities of liberation."

Middle individuals, those with an affinity for the hearer or solitary sage ways, take refuge in fear of the round of rebirth, and seek peace for their own sakes. *The Sacred Victory Banner Discourse* states:

Those who have taken refuge  
In the Buddha, doctrine, and spiritual community,  
See with the eyes of sublime insight  
The four noble truths—  
Suffering, the source of suffering,  
The true transcendence of sorrow,

And the eightfold exalted path  
That leads to such transcendence.  
Those refuges are the principal ones;  
They are sublime.  
Based on those refuges,  
You become completely free from suffering.

Great individuals take refuge for others' sake, in fear of both existence and the bliss of static peace. *The Discourse of Great Liberation* states:

Whoever takes refuge for the sake of those who have fallen into the river of existence and fully rejects personal peace out of fear of that state is called the most sublime individual or a holy leader.

*Lamp on the Path to Awakening* states:



Three kinds of individual  
Can be known as lesser, middle, and sublime.

To distinguish between them  
According to their distinct characteristics, I write these words:

Those who are content with worldly happiness  
Gained through any means,  
And strive for their own good  
Are known as “lesser individuals.”

Those who turn their backs on worldly happiness,  
Turn away from wrongdoing,  
And strive for personal peace alone  
Are called “middle individuals.”

Those who, based on their own suffering,

Sincerely yearn  
For the end of others' sufferings  
Are "sublime individuals."

Among lesser individuals, some are non-Buddhists reborn in the higher realms through purity, nonviolence, and spiritual practice; while others have taken refuge in the Buddhist three jewels and have reached the higher realms through some goodness. In either case, they must make their guiding principles the ten ennobling acts consistent with goodness and formless states of meditative stability, since without them, a future rebirth within the higher realms is impossible. Non-Buddhist spiritual traditions, such as that of the Hindu enumerator tradition, have some, but not all, teachings related to those subjects.

Middle individuals definitely enter the paths of the hearers or solitary sages; great individuals, the path of the great way.

### ***The Period for Which Refuge Is Taken [B]***

**The duration of refuge: Lesser individuals take refuge until they achieve positive results later.**

**Middle individuals take refuge either temporarily, for as long as they live, Or ultimately, until they achieve the results of the ways of hearers or solitary sages.**

**Great individuals take refuge until they reach unsurpassable awakening.**

Common individuals take refuge until they gain whatever they wish from their chosen god; special individuals take refuge until they reach the higher realms. In the context of this teaching, such persons resemble the lesser individual. The two kinds of middle individual take refuge either temporarily—for as long as they live—or ultimately, until they achieve the state of an uncorrupted arhat. Great individuals take refuge until they reach the heart of unsurpassable awakening, the wisdom of enlightenment.

### ***In Whom Refuge Is Taken—the Three Jewels [C]***

**The formless body of ultimate enlightenment is endowed with five kinds of vision, six forms of clairvoyance,**

**Ten powers, aspects of retention, ten forces,**

**Four forms of fearlessness, four modes of individual awareness,**

**And eighteen unique qualities.**

**Enlightenment's two bodies that have form—the body of perfect rapture**

**and the sublime manifest body—  
Display the thirty-two excellent signs, the eighty marks of physical  
perfection,  
And all sixty aspects of melodious speech. They epitomize wisdom, love,  
and capability.  
The doctrine of scripture comprises discourses, aphorisms in verse,**

**Prophetic declarations, verses, meaningful expressions, narratives,  
Parables, legends, extensive teachings,  
Tales of past lives, established instructions, and marvelous events;  
And the tantras—action, conduct, yoga, father, mother, and nondual.  
The doctrine of realization comprises realization  
Gained from experiential cultivation on the paths of the ways of the  
discourses and tantras.**

**The spiritual community comprises hearers and solitary sages in four  
pairs,  
The victors' heirs who have reached stages of awakening, and hosts of  
dakinis, adepts, and awareness holders.**

### **The Refuge of the Buddha**

The formless body of ultimate enlightenment is endowed with the following five kinds of vision: omniscient sight, sight of all phenomena, sight of sublime insight, divine sight, and physical sight. Six forms of clairvoyance: miraculous abilities, clairaudience, knowledge of others' minds, recollection of past lives, clairvoyance of divine sight, and the end of contamination. Ten powers: over longevity, mind, necessities, acts, birth, interest, aspiration, miracles, wisdom, and instruction. Aspects of retention include undiminished recollection, no distraction due to thoughts, an intellect without delusion, manifest sublime insight, and knowledge of each specific word of all teachings.

Ten forces: unhindered knowledge; knowledge of every substantial thing of the past, present, and future; knowledge of sentient beings' various interests; knowledge of sentient beings' various constituent natures; knowledge of sublime and nonsublime acumen; knowledge of beings' paths; knowledge of mental afflictions and purification; knowledge of recollection of previous places; knowledge of death, transmigration, and rebirth; and knowledge of the end of contamination.

Four forms of fearlessness: fearlessness toward magnificent realization, fearlessness toward impediments to presentation of the teachings, fearlessness

toward showing the path, and fearlessness toward magnificent renunciation. Four modes of genuine individual awareness: genuine individual awareness of phenomena, genuine individual awareness of meaning, genuine individual awareness of words, and genuine individual awareness of confidence.

In *The Highest Continuity*, Bodhisattva Invincible Lord (a name of Bodhisattva Maitreya) listed the buddhas' eighteen unique qualities:

Buddhas (1) make no mistakes and (2) do not chatter.  
Teachers have (3) faultless recollection.  
(4) Their mind has no lapse in settling in evenness,  
(5) Nor do they have various dualistic perceptions.  
(6) Their composure is not without discrimination.  
They are not subject to failure in  
(7) Intention, (8) diligence, (9) recollection,  
(10) Sublime insight, (11) complete liberation, and (12) the wise sight of  
complete liberation.  
(13–15) Wisdom precedes their acts in body, speech, and mind;  
And (16–18) their wisdom sees time past, present, and future without  
obscuration.  
These are the teachers'  
Eighteen natural unique qualities.

Wisdom bodies that have form display enlightenment's thirty-two excellent signs, such as flat soles, a thousand-spoked wheel design on the palms and soles, and long and narrow fingers and toes. The eighty marks of physical perfection include fingernails that are copper-colored pink; shiny; and without depressions. *Returning the Buddha's Kindness Discourse* states:

If all the goodness of every sentient being was gathered in one place, it would equal the sign of perfection of one pore of the transcendent buddhas. If the goodness of their every pore was gathered and heaped together, this would equal one of the eighty marks of physical perfection. If all the goodness of every mark of physical perfection was multiplied one hundred times, this would equal one of the thirty-two signs of physical perfection, apart from the curl of white hair between their eyebrows and the invisible mark on the crown of their head. The goodness of the other signs of perfection, multiplied by one thousand, equals the last two. All the goodness of the thirty-two signs and the eighty marks gathered and heaped together, multiplied ten

million times, equals the sign of the transcendent buddhas' deep, melodious, thunder-like voice which far resounds. The sound of their speech resonates throughout buddhas' pure lands in limitless, infinite, inconceivable numbers, equal to the number of the finest atoms, and their voice acts with pervasive love and compassion for the benefit of sentient beings, in the knowledge of their kindness and in repayment for it. This is inconceivable.

The sixty aspects of melodious speech include soft, gentle, compelling, agreeable, pure, faultless, completely clear, sweet-sounding, and worthwhile. Buddhas epitomize the knowledge of phenomena's nature and multiplicity, immeasurable loving compassion, and the infinite capability of enlightened activity.

### **The Refuge of the Doctrine**

The sacred doctrine has two categories, scripture and realization. The doctrine of scripture comprises the three turnings of the doctrine's wheel, its eighty-four thousand (or eight ten-thousand, plus four thousand) aggregations of instructions gathered into twelve categories of the Buddha's speech, the following: (1) *Discourses* present the meaning of any desired subject spoken in the mode of brief dialogues. They are called discourses because they are expressed in prose. (2) *Aphorisms in verse* are verses of melodious poetry interspersed within the discourse or found at its conclusion, or discourses that are still subject to further analysis and thus constitute conventional meaning. (3) *Prophetic declarations* include such information as predictions concerning the past lives, deaths, and future rebirths of hearers, bodhisattvas, and others. This category also includes any clarification and definition of the Buddha's intention, and thus, this category includes discourses of definitive meaning. (4) *Verses* include any scripture spoken that was composed in verses of two to six stanzas. (5) *Meaningful expressions* include declarations made not in relation to an individual's request, but by the Transcendent Conqueror's own initiative, spoken only in the spirit of ensuring the preservation of his teaching. (6) *Narratives* include words spoken for some individuals' benefit and to introduce points of training in the monastic code, for instance, including the story of their original context. (7) *Parables* include teachings of analogies, including those drawn from other accounts, to aid those who listen to the teachings to understand their meaning and to gain excellent realization. (8) *Legends* include teachings of proverbs from past generations. (9) *Tales of past lives* recount well the time when the Transcendent Conqueror performed the acts of a bodhisattva—who he was, where he was

born, his hardships, and his deeds. (10) *Extensive teachings* include extremely vast and profound teachings, such as those within the great way's bodhisattva collection of teachings on the stages of awakening and the six transcendent perfections. (11) *Marvelous events* include amazing and marvelous accounts of the wisdom, miracles, blessing power, and so on, of hearers, bodhisattvas, and perfect buddhas. (12) *Established instructions* include presentations of the discourses and other texts' correct meaning, through definitions of the general and specific characteristics of all phenomena.

The three collections are as stated in *The Minor Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct*:

Five classes of teachings—discourses, aphorisms in verse,  
Prophetic declarations, verses,  
And meaningful expressions—are gathered in *the collection of discourses*.

Four classes of teachings—narratives, parables,  
What are called legends,  
And tales of past lives—are gathered in *the collection on discipline*.

Three classes of teachings—extensive teachings, marvelous events,  
And established instructions—are gathered in *the collection on observed phenomena*.

How are the three trainings found within these three collections? Vasubandhu states:

The three collections present the three trainings. The collection on discipline presents higher ethical conduct and higher mind training. Maintaining ethical conduct leads in stages, such as having no regrets, to meditative states. The collection on observed phenomena accomplishes higher sublime insight since it presents the incontrovertible meaning.

If considered separately, the awareness holders' collection constitutes a fourth collection. Aryadeva states:

The awareness holders' collection . . .

This collection includes six groups of tantras: three groups of exoteric tantras—action, conduct, and yoga; and three groups of esoteric highest tantras—father,

mother, and nondual great perfection.

All discourses and tantras that appear in the form of words comprise the doctrine of scripture.

The doctrine of realization comprises realizations in the stream of wisdom mind based on experiential cultivation: the paths of cultivation, application, seeing, and meditation—the hearers and solitary sages’ eight stages of awakening and the bodhisattvas’ ten stages of awakening; and the path of no further training—all qualities of such stages as the eleventh, Universal Light; the twelfth, Lotus-Possessing; and the thirteenth, Vajra Bearer.

The hearers’ and solitary sages’ eight stages of awakening are listed in *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight*:

These are the hearers and solitary sages’ stages of awakening: the stage of affinity, the eighth stage, the stage of seeing, the subtle stage, the stage free from desire, the stage of realization of acts, the stage of the hearer, and the stage of the solitary sage.

### **The Refuge of the Spiritual Community**

In the lesser way, the spiritual community comprises hearers and solitary sages in four pairs, thus eight: the pair of hearers or solitary sages who entered the stage of stream-enterer and those who abide in the result of stream-enterer, entering and abiding returners, entering and abiding nonreturners, and entering and abiding arhats.

Nonreturning bodhisattvas’ spiritual community has eight qualities of liberated awareness. The first three are the qualities of awareness of phenomena’s nature, awareness of phenomena’s multiplicity, and awareness that sees inner wisdom. The next three are techniques to gain these: the qualities of liberation from the obscurations of attachment (that is, the part that is relinquished on the path without obstacles); the qualities of liberation from the obscurations of impediments (on that same path without obstacles); and the qualities of liberation from the obscurations of inferior spiritual approaches (on that same path). To these are added the last two, the basis

of the identification of these six: the qualities of awareness and the qualities of liberation.

The inner spiritual community includes spiritual heroes, dakinis, protectors of the doctrine, and guardians, who possess eyes of wisdom. Among these, some fly in space, or move powerfully, or are born from mantras or activity. This spiritual community also includes the supramundane assemblies belonging to the wisdom clans—transcendent, vajra, jewel, lotus, and action; and gatherings of



awareness holders who rest on the stages or results of the attainment of the four states of awareness holder: awareness holder subject to the maturation of karma, awareness holder with control over longevity, awareness holder of supreme seal, and awareness holder of spontaneous presence.

Why are the Buddha, doctrine, and spiritual community called “jewels”? Their omniscient wisdom, which is impossible to find elsewhere, encompasses all knowledge without hindrance: they are rare, like precious, wish-fulfilling jewels. They have loving compassion for all beings as if each was their only child. They are even bound uncontrollably by this love, and are thus impartial toward any possibility—praise or blame, close or distant connections; and they are free from the impurity of disharmony. They have the supreme strength to guide every sentient being, and their inexhaustible qualities adorn the entire world. They lead beings through boundless enlightened activity. *The Highest Continuity* states:

Because they appear rarely,  
Are flawless and powerful,  
Adorn the world, and are sublime and changeless,  
They are jewels.

### **Perspectives on the Three Jewels**

In general, according to the common, lesser way, the Buddha is the supreme manifest body of enlightenment; the doctrine is the epitome of scripture and realization, the twelve categories of the excellent speech of the Buddha, and, in each individual’s mind, such things as the spiritual path and meditative states. In the lesser way, the lesser spiritual community is that of ordinary individuals—male and female novices and laypersons—since they provide beings with a field for the cultivation of goodness. The sublime spiritual community comprises those who have taken full ordination. As is said,

The sublime spiritual community of the fully ordained . . .

If the number of fully ordained individuals reaches four, this is called a gathering of the spiritual community. The exalted spiritual community comprises individuals who have attained the state of stream-enterer, returner, nonreturner, or arhat.

According to the great way, the Buddha personifies the three wisdom bodies. The doctrine’s essence is indescribable, inconceivable, and ineffable; its nature is the path or remedy that leads to enlightenment. Its appearing aspect is that which has the characteristics of the truth of the path and the truth of cessation—

the ultimate doctrine. The verbal doctrine is the twelve categories of the Buddha's excellent speech. The spiritual community comprises those who have newly gained sight of the meaning of the mind's luminous nature, exalted ones who dwell on awakening's ten stages.

According to action and conduct tantras, the Buddha personifies the four wisdom bodies, whose emanations and blessed deities are gathered in three wisdom clans—buddha, lotus, and vajra—as deities of major or minor sacred circles, who display peaceful or wrathful attributes as the body of perfect rapture or as the manifest body. The doctrine is as mentioned above, plus the texts of the action and conduct tantras. The spiritual community comprises the hearers, bodhisattvas, and awareness holders.

According to the yoga tantras, the Buddha is the sacred circles' peaceful and wrathful wisdom deities appearing as central and surrounding deities gathered into five wisdom clans. The doctrine is as above, plus the yoga tantras; the spiritual community is as before.

According to the highest yoga tantras, the Buddha is the transcendent conqueror of supreme rapture, inseparable from all those who epitomize all transcendent buddhas' vajra body, speech, and mind in the gatherings of various central and encircling deities, and all emanations that issue from those sacred circles. The doctrine is the highest yoga tantra; the spiritual community is composed of persons who cultivate the experience of the highest tantras.

### ***How to Take Refuge as a Cause for a Later Result [D]***

**In the vivid presence of the places of refuge, imagined in space,  
All beings respectfully fold hands in prayer with you and recite:**

**“To become free from every danger  
Of the realms of existence and of static peace,  
I respectfully take refuge with faith in the spiritual master,  
The Buddha, the doctrine, and the spiritual community, until I attain  
unsurpassable awakening.”**

**After repeating those lines three times, consider that you receive the  
refuge vows.**

**The givers of refuge joyfully send their blessings in the form of a mass of  
light**

**That purifies your own and every being's physical, verbal, and mental  
wrongdoing and obscurations:**

**This completes your cultivation of goodness and plants the fortune for you to attain enlightenment's bodies that have form.**

**The Buddha is the teacher of your teacher of refuge;  
The doctrine is the path; the spiritual community, your companions in its practice.**

The places of refuge dwell in the sky before you. In the center sits your principal spiritual master, surrounded by a congregation of the lineage masters; the Buddha, the teacher who epitomizes the three wisdom bodies; peaceful and wrathful deities; and the victors' spiritual heirs—bodhisattvas, hearers, solitary sages, and awareness holders. Behind them, the scriptural doctrine of discourses and tantras in the form of volumes are carefully arranged. Spiritual heroes, dakinis, and protectors, who guard the doctrine, gather like circling, billowing clouds, surrounding them.

In their presence—our parents, all sentient beings of the six kinds whose numbers fill space and we ourselves—fold our hands at our hearts in physical respect, sing fervently the words of refuge with verbal respect, and with utmost faith and in utter fear of the frailty of the round of rebirth and states of static peace, we recite:

I take refuge in the spiritual master and the three jewels until I attain unsurpassable awakening.

After having taken refuge by repeating those words three times, think that you receive the vows of refuge. Finally, the field for your cultivation of goodness joyfully sends blessings in the form of a mass of light that purifies your own and every sentient being's physical, verbal, and mental wrongdoing and obscurations. This completes your store of goodness and plants in your stream of being the fortune to attain the bodies of enlightenment that have form.

In taking refuge, consider the Buddha as the teacher of your teacher of refuge; the doctrine as the path; and the spiritual community as your companions in the practice of refuge. *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse* states:

Whoever takes refuge in the three  
Will fully complete the stores of goodness and wisdom,  
Achieve enlightenment,  
And gain the doctrine and the spiritual community.

## ***Taking Refuge as the Result in Itself [E]***

**The place of refuge which is the result is the body of ultimate enlightenment's wisdom—**

**The ultimate jewel, luminosity, the sublime state free from embellishment.**

**Settle in evenness in the ultimate ongoing state**

**In which the giver of refuge and the taker of refuge are indivisible.**

**This completes the store of wisdom and leads to the attainment of the body of ultimate enlightenment.**

**After, in the understanding of phenomena as illusory, dedicate the goodness of the act of having taken refuge.**

In taking refuge done as a cause for a later result, you considered the three jewels in the sky before you as the appearing aspect of the place of refuge; and all sentient beings and you yourself as the takers of refuge. Now, in taking refuge as the result in itself, you consider that ultimately, apart from your own mind's miraculous appearances, neither the taker of refuge nor the giver of refuge has even an iota of separate existence. The mind's nature is totally impartial, its essence like space. Therefore, settle in an ongoing state without embellishment. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

Subhuti! When even the Buddha is not imagined, and neither the doctrine nor the spiritual community conceived of, that is the true taking of refuge.

*The Highest Continuity* states:

The doctrine's two aspects and the exalted assembly  
Are not sublime, permanent refuges.

The Buddha is the sole refuge,

Since that refuge has the body of ultimate enlightenment

And is the final goal of the ultimate assembly.

This nonconceptual emptiness constitutes the cultivation of wisdom, which accomplishes the formless body of ultimate enlightenment. *The Discourse That Presents the Two Truths* states:

Manjushri! Stores of goodness have you attain enlightenment's bodies that have form; stores of wisdom actualize the holy formless body of ultimate enlightenment.

After, within the understanding that appearing existence, the round of rebirth and transcendent states, appears even as it does not exist, like a dream or a magical display, dedicate the goodness of taking refuge to the attainment of enlightenment.

### ***Training in Refuge as a Cause and as a Result [F]***

**Training in refuge as a cause includes the following points: do not forsake the spiritual master and the three jewels**

**Even for the sake of your life or country.**

**After having taken refuge in the spiritual master, do not mislead venerable persons;**

**Forsake slander or unpleasant speech to holy persons.**

**After having taken refuge in the Buddha, do not bow or make offerings to other gods; respect Buddhist images.**

**After having taken refuge in the doctrine,**

**Renounce harming others; respect the slightest amount of the written word.**

**After having taken refuge in the spiritual community, do not make close friendships with non-Buddhists, and foster respect toward even a scrap of orange cloth.**

**During the day and night's six sessions, remember the three jewels and take refuge.**

**Training in refuge as a result includes training in the native state of the nature of reality,**

**Unembellished by concepts of high and low, what must be done or not done, and so on.**

Do not forsake the three jewels for the sake of your life or country, as Shantideva states:

Don't give up the large for the sake of the small:  
The main point is the thought of others' welfare.

*The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states:

Do not renounce the three jewels for the sake of your life, your country, or even for as little as laughter.

To not mislead the spiritual master is stated in *The Pattern of the Stem*:

In relying on spiritual mentors, do not deceive venerable persons, completely forsake saying unpleasant words to holy persons, and follow the sacred doctrine.

The training in taking refuge in the three jewels is as stated in *The Great Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse*:

Who takes refuge in the Buddha

And never takes refuge

In other gods  
Is a genuine layperson.  
Who takes refuge in the sacred doctrine  
Is free from harming others and thoughts of doing so.  
Who takes refuge in the spiritual community  
Does not side with non-Buddhists.

*The White Lotus Discourse* states:

He sent emanations in many forms at that place  
To aid beings' ennobling practice.

*The Upper Earring* states:

In the final age of five hundred years,  
I will dwell in the form of words:  
With "It is the Buddha!" in mind,  
Respect them at that time.

Remember the jewels and take refuge continually day and night, or at the six or three designated times during the day, or at least once a day.

Training in refuge as a result in itself is as stated in *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight*:

Those who wish to meditate on the perfection of sublime insight should train to not conceptualize any phenomena and to not later look back at them. What does this mean? "This is best; that is inferior." "This is to be done; that is to be rejected." "This is the Buddha's doctrine; that is other ascetic sages' teachings." Do not examine things in such a dualistic fashion.

### ***How the Refuge Vows Are Violated [G]***

**The refuge vows are given up when wrong views have arisen and the training is violated.**

When wrong views have arisen, and you reject the three jewels, are unable to practice refuge, and offer back the training in refuge, this constitutes the formal cause for giving up refuge vows. Slight violations of the training, such as by rendering homage to other gods, are called "an inferior tendency."



These faults resemble a monarch whose family has lost its status—you are no longer a Buddhist. Like merchants deceived by their escort, you are fearful in whatever you do. Like a painting made on a crumbling wall, all training and vows based on refuge are easily destroyed once the refuge vows are violated. Like a common person without supporters, you are easily beset by harm. Like a person who has broken the law, violating the promise of refuge causes many misfortunes, such as rebirth in the miserable existences.

Therefore, having surveyed the shortcomings of violating the training of refuge, you should regretfully admit any fault in the training and repair it by taking refuge again with determination to keep it in the future.

### ***The Benefits of Taking Refuge [H]***

**The benefits of refuge are freedom from fear during future lifetimes;  
Rapid completion of the stores of goodness and wisdom; increase of  
qualities;**

**And protection by benevolent gods: refuge has limitless benefits.**

**It forms the supreme foundation for all qualities.**

The benefits of refuge include not falling to the miserable existences and rebirth in the higher realms, as stated in *The Parable of the Pig*:

Those who take refuge in the Buddha  
Will not go to the miserable realms;  
Even after relinquishing human life (that is, death),  
They will be reborn in the body of a god.

That the two stores of goodness and wisdom are completed in taking refuge is stated in *The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse*:

Who takes refuge in the three jewels  
Cultivates sacred stores of goodness and wisdom,  
Spreads the Victor's doctrine in the world,  
And will attain enlightenment itself.

The benefit of the limitless qualities of having taken refuge is stated in *The Discourse Requested by the Precious Child*:

Those who have taken refuge in the Buddha will experience the manifest increase of every ennobling quality; they will know modesty;

and they will be conscientious.

Those who have taken refuge in the teachings will become careful; they will have many qualities; they will always recall their past lives; and they will gain their share of the collections of the doctrine.

Those who have taken refuge in the spiritual community will see their minds become supple; many gates to meditative states and retention will open; they will always belong to a noble family; and even in dreams they will not be separated from the Buddha, doctrine, and spiritual community.

The benefit of the gods' protection is stated in the same text:

Further, gods who feel very joyful in positive acts will protect you. Moreover, the root of your ennobling acts will increase.

That the benefits are limitless is stated in *The Unstained Discourse*:

If the benefits of having taken refuge  
Had form,  
They would fill the sphere of space  
And still exceed its bounds.

*The Sacred Victory Banner Discourse* states:

O fully ordained ones! You may stay in secluded hermitages, cemeteries, empty plains, and other such places. Take refuge in the three jewels: this will eradicate any cause you might have for fear, suffering, or anxiety.

*The Essence of the Sun Discourse* states:

When sentient beings go for refuge in the Buddha,  
Ten million demons cannot kill them.  
Even if their ethical conduct is damaged and their minds become deranged,  
They will certainly transcend rebirth.

That refuge forms the foundation of all qualities is stated in *The Seventy Verses on Refuge*:

Although you might claim you have every vow,  
Without refuge, you don't have any.

without refuge, you don't have any.

*The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse* states:

The wise emulate the example of others' qualities;  
They thereby accomplish magnificent goals.

As stated in *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse* and *The Moon Lamp Discourse*, you should remember the three jewels by repeating passages in those texts that begin, "Just as the one called the Buddha, the Transcendent Conqueror . . ."

Thus, emphasizing the taking refuge, the foundation for all vows, is to be cherished at the beginning of the path.

## **HOW TO KEEP THE SEVEN KINDS OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERATION VOWS [II]**

This chapter has eight parts: (1) the original setting of the vows, (2) the essence of the vows, (3) classification of the vows, (4) how to receive the vows not yet taken, (5) how to keep the vows taken, (6) the life that is the support for the vows, (7) how the vows are violated, and (8) how to restore the vows.

### ***The Original Setting of the Vows [A]***

**In the sublime doctrinal cycle of the four truths,  
The Teacher, the Buddha, emphasized training in ethical conduct.  
In Varanasi, he taught this to the five excellent individuals. Upali  
compiled these teachings.**

**Five hundred arhats composed *The Treasury of Detailed Explanation*.  
Gunaprabha wrote and spread *The Root Discourse on the Monastic Code  
of Conduct*;**

**Shakyaprabha, *The Three-Hundred-Verse Commentary on the Training of  
Novices*, and other texts.**

**In Tibet, Shantarakshita spread the lineage of the substantialist order's  
vows.**

**The original translations include four texts on the transmission of  
discipline:**

***The Basic Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct, The Detailed  
Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct, The Supplementary***

***Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct, and The Highest Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct.***

**These books contain a total of 104,800 stanzas.**

**The Tibetan canon contains seventy-two discourses**

**And sixty-three treatises of commentary that belong to this cycle.**

In the region of Varanasi, on the fourth day of the sixth lunar month, the Teacher Shakyamuni began teaching to the circle of the five excellent individuals and to eighty thousand gods. His instructions emphasized the subject of training in higher ethical conduct.

Within the written record of those teachings, the collection on the monastic code has three parts: the collection on the monastic code's section on regulations provides an extensive presentation of designated and natural ethical conduct;<sup>10</sup> its discourse section delineates the stages of the contemplative practice of meditative states and pure conduct; and its observed phenomena section presents the stages of renunciation and antidotes, including detailed explanations of the regulations' and discourses' classifications.

The circle of five excellent individuals attained the state of arhat based on their experiential cultivation of Buddha's turning of this wheel of the four noble truths. After the Teacher's transcendence of sorrow, Upali compiled the collection on the monastic code.

Treatises based on these texts were composed as follows: During the Buddha's lifetime, Shariputra, Maudgalyayana, Purna, and others composed the seven texts on observed phenomena. After the Buddha's transcendence of sorrow, five hundred arhats composed *The Great Treasury of Detailed Explanation*, which contains one hundred thousand stanzas. Master Vasubandhu composed the root text and commentary of *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena*. Gunaprabha wrote works including *The Root Discourse on the Monastic Code of Conduct* and *The Hundred Procedures*. Shakyaprabha wrote *The Three-Hundred-Verse Commentary on the Training of Novices* and other texts. All these works continue to be propagated in the present day.

Here in the Himalayan region, the original transmission of the monastic vows originated with the great Indian preceptor Shantarakshita, who spread the lineage of the substantialist order vows. Later, Lord Atisha spread the lineage of the great community order vows.

In Tibet, the original translations include translations of four texts on the transmission of monastic discipline:

1. *The Basic Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct* presents the

- seventeen basic procedures of monastic discipline in an extensive format, in 32,700 stanzas [no. 1: 3,350 pages]<sup>11</sup>
2. *Analysis of the Monastic Code of Conduct* provides the following:
    - a brief presentation of the conduct of fully ordained monks, in 700 stanzas [no. 2, *Individual Liberation for Fully Ordained Monks*: 59 pages]
    - an extensive presentation of the two hundred and fifty-three vows for fully ordained monks, in 24,900 stanzas [no. 3, *Analysis of the Monastic Code of Conduct for Fully Ordained Monks*: 3,093 pages]
    - a brief presentation of the three hundred and sixty-four vows of conduct for fully ordained nuns, in 800 stanzas [no. 4, *Individual Liberation for Fully Ordained Nuns*: 69 pages]
    - an extensive presentation of those vows, in 8,400 stanzas [no. 5, *Analysis of the Monastic Code of Conduct for Fully Ordained Nuns*: 827 pages]
  3. *The Bases of Minor Points of the Monastic Code of Conduct*, in 17,800 stanzas [no. 6: 1,852 pages]
  4. *Highest Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct*, with 15,900 stanzas that were not checked with the Sanskrit [no. 7: 253 pages] and 15,900 that were checked [no. 8, *Holy Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct*: 1,443 pages]

These four scriptures contain a total of 104,800 stanzas.

Among the original translations, the category of lesser way discourses also contains the following texts:

5. *Mindfulness Discourse*, which contains 12,900 stanzas, in 43 volumes, with some stanzas remaining [no. 305, *Settling within Full Recollection of the Exalted Sacred Doctrine*: 2,844 pages]
6. *Net of Illusion*, 31 volumes and 41 stanzas [no. 306: 40 pages]
7. *Meeting with Bimbisara*, one half volume [no. 307: 17 pages]
8. *Emptiness*, 90 stanzas [no. 308: 14 pages]
9. *Supreme Emptiness*, half a volume [no. 309: 24 pages]
10. *Sublime Victory Banner*, 40 stanzas [no. 310: 11 pages]
11. *Sacred Victory Banner*, 40 stanzas [no. 311: 7 pages]
12. *Fifty-Three*, 220 stanzas [no. 312: 24 pages]
13. *A Thrown Stone*, two volumes [no. 313: 55 pages]
14. *Metaphor of Youth*, 20 stanzas [no. 314: 6 pages]
15. *Many Elements* [no. 315: 14 pages]<sup>12</sup>
16. *Reliance on a Spiritual Guide* [no. 318: 4 pages]<sup>13</sup>
17. *Very Valuable to the Fully Ordained* [no. 320: 6 pages]

18. *Possessed of Correct Ethical Conduct* [no. 321: 4 pages]<sup>14</sup>
19. *Supreme Designation* [no. 323: 4 pages]
20. *Valuable to the Fully Ordained* [this text does not appear in the modern edition]
21. *Showing the Qualities of Having Trained on the Path of Liberation* [no. 324: 29 pages]
22. *Limits of Life*, 205 stanzas [no. 325: 19 pages]
23. *How Death and Transition Transpire* [no. 326: 26 pages]
24. *Impermanence*, fifteen stanzas [no. 327: 3 pages]
25. *Impermanence* [no. 328: 6 pages]
26. *Ten Perceptions*, eight stanzas [this text does not appear in the modern edition]
27. *Showing Eleven Perceptions*, eleven stanzas [no. 329: 3 pages]
28. *Entering the Town of Vaishali*, one hundred stanzas [no. 330: 13 pages]
29. *Good Night*, fifty-two stanzas [no. 331: 8 pages]
30. *Door of the Dark Garden* [no. 332: 16 pages]
31. *Parents* [no. 333: 3 pages]
32. *Four Noble Truths* [no. 334: 4 pages]
33. *Definitive Meaning*, one volume and seventy stanzas [no. 335: 14 pages]
34. *Extensive Meanings*, one hundred stanzas [no. 336: 15 pages]
35. *The Marvelous*, seventy stanzas [no. 337: 10 pages]
36. *Genuine Description of the Benefits of Setting Up Sacred Images of Transcendent Buddhas*, sixty stanzas [no. 338: 7 pages]
37. *On Circling a Stupa*, seventy stanzas [no. 339: 8 pages]
38. *Verses of King Prasenajit*, one hundred stanzas [no. 340: 10 pages]
39. *One Verse* [no. 341: 2 pages]
40. *Four Verses* [no. 342: 2 pages]
41. *Verses of the Naga King Bheri*, one hundred stanzas [no. 343: 3 pages]
42. *Composition of Purposeful Speech*, four volumes [no. 344: 87 pages]
43. *Holy Person*, two hundred stanzas [no. 345: 5 pages]
44. *Ananda Leaving the Home Life*, fifty stanzas [no. 346: 9 pages]
45. *The Gods*, thirty-seven stanzas [no. 347: 7 pages]
46. *The Gods' Short Discourse*, seventeen stanzas [no. 348: 6 pages]
47. *The Moon*, thirteen stanzas [no. 349: 3 pages]
48. *Small Storied House*, sixty stanzas [no. 350: 11 pages]
49. *Settling in Tranquility*, twenty stanzas [no. 351: 13 pages]
50. *Joyous*, two hundred stanzas [no. 352: 9 pages]
51. *Mendicant's Staff* [no. 353: 10 pages]
52. *Conduct of Holding the Mendicant's Staff*, in the same volume with the

- last [no. 354: 5 pages]
53. *Wheel of the Doctrine* [no. 355: 7 pages]<sup>15</sup>
54. *Analysis of Karma* [no. 357: 59 pages]
55. *Transformations of Karma*, two volumes [this text does not appear in the modern edition]
56. *Transformation of Karma*, 270 stanzas [no. 358: 23 pages]
57. *One Hundred Procedures*, seven volumes [no. 360: 1,232 pages]
58. *The Wise and the Foolish*, twelve volumes [no. 361: 597 pages]
59. *Discourse Requested by the Wandering Mendicant Long Nails, Dirghanakha*, thirty-seven stanzas [no. 362: 6 pages]
60. *Hundred Parables of Purna (Abundant) and Others*, twenty-two volumes and ten concluding stanzas [no. 363: 778 pages]
61. *Story of the Buddha, the Mindful*, fifteen stanzas [no. 364: 9 pages]
62. *Parable of the Sow, Sukarika*, one hundred stanzas [no. 365: 7 pages]<sup>16</sup>
63. *Parable of Strength of Goodness, Punyabala*, two volumes [no. 367: 59 pages]
64. *Presentation of the Actions of the Golden One's Past Lives*, seventeen stanzas [no. 370: 17 pages]
65. *Prince Siddharta*, one volume [no. 371: 43 pages]
66. *Net of Brahma Discourse*, two volumes [no. 372: 45 pages]
67. *Supreme Skillful Means of Returning the Buddha's Kindness*, seven and a half volumes [no. 373: 314 pages]
68. *Consequences of Excellent and Faulty Karma*, two volumes [no. 374: 32 pages]
69. *Ripening of Ennobling and Corrupting Acts*, one volume [no. 375: 21 pages]
70. *Prophecies Concerning the Duration and Destruction of the Buddha's Teaching*, from the *Discourse Requested by Core of the Moon, Chandragarbha*, one volume [no. 376: 17 pages]
71. *Prophetic Declaration of Goshringa*, one volume [no. 377: 35 pages]
72. *Twelve Eyes* [no. 380: 17 pages]<sup>17</sup>

Thus, there are seventy-two texts altogether. Further, sixty-three treatises of commentary related to these texts were translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan.

### ***The Essence of the Vows [B]***

**The essence of the vows is abjuration, based on an attitude of disengagement,**

**Of acts that harm others and the basis of such acts.  
Since the vows arise based upon the body and voice,  
They are considered to have form.  
The seed of a continual attitude of renunciation is crucial.**

The essence of individual liberation vows is abjuration, motivated by an attitude of disengagement that sees the entire round of rebirth as a fire pit, of acts that harm others and the basis of such acts. Since these vows must arise based upon the body and voice, they are considered to have form. However, a continual attitude of renunciation, in the manner of a seed, is crucial.

### ***Classification of the Vows [C]***

**The vows' classification includes three vows for laypersons:  
Vows for temporary fasting, and vows for male and female laypersons;  
And five kinds of vows for renunciants: vows for male novice monk and  
female novice nun, female spiritual apprentice, and fully ordained  
monk and fully ordained nun.  
Together, these constitute the eight kinds of individual liberation vows.  
Another classification counts four: vows of temporary fasting, layperson,  
novice, and full ordination.**

The classification of the vows includes three kinds of vows for laypersons: a temporary fasting vow, male layperson's vows, female layperson's vows; and five kinds of vows for renunciants: male novice, female novice, female spiritual apprentice, fully ordained monk, and fully ordained nun.

Together, these constitute the eight kinds of individual liberation vows. Classified according to content, four kinds of vows are counted: temporary fasting, layperson, novice monastic ordination, and full monastic ordination.

### ***How to Receive the Vows Not Yet Taken [D]***

**Rituals of former times to receive vows included natural full ordination;  
Full ordination was also completed by understanding wisdom; acceptance  
of the command, "Come forward!";  
Promises; replies to questions; and messages.  
In modern rituals, an individual free of the five certain hindrances and  
with none of the four obstacles  
Receives the ordination gradually, in three stages.  
In the former two stages, before full ordination, refuge,**



**Personal affirmation, and others' acceptance constitute the three parts. The vows arise after the personal affirmation. In the latter stage, which comprises recitations of the essence, action, and performance, The vows arise immediately after the action recitation.**

In former times, rituals through which an individual reached full ordination included the following: the perfect Buddha and solitary sages became fully ordained monks through self-arisen wisdom—this is to say, by virtue of their knowledge of cessation and nonarising. The circle of five excellent individuals became monks through understanding wisdom when the path of seeing arose in their stream of being. These three (the Buddha, solitary sages, and the five disciples) reached full ordination when the ultimate state of full ordination arose in their experience.

Shariputra became a monk when he accepted the Buddha's command, "Come forward!"; Mahakashyapa, when he promised to accept the Buddha as his teacher; Bhadranivaha, when he promised to take refuge in the three jewels; and Prajapati Gautami and others, when she promised to renounce the eight serious acts. Likewise, Adhavari, whose parents controlled him, received ordination through messages carried by the fully ordained nun Utpala.

In modern rituals, postulants for ordination must be free from five certain hindrances as follows: place—the thought that they can keep the ordination in a region where conducive circumstances are complete but not elsewhere; time—the thought that they can keep the ordination for a certain number of years or months but not longer than that; circumstance—the thought that they can keep the ordination except during disputes; sentient being—the thought that they will not kill anyone except enemies; and secondary vows—the thought that they can keep the major vows but not the minor ones. They must renounce these five.

They must also have none of the four obstacles concerning (1) birth—to have been born without genitals, or to have committed such deeds as one of the five acts of immediate fruition; (2) residence—to have not received the permission from the ruler or the postulant's parents to take ordination; (3) special conditions—to be unable to drive away crows (that is, to be too young), to be ill, to be beset by suffering and the like, and (4) lack of beauty—to have a defective body, such as one with blond hair (that is, an albino) or mutilated arms, or to belong to a deficient caste, such as the outcastes.

Ordination must be taken in three stages—layperson, novice, and full ordination. None may be taken before the last has been fully received. In the former two stages of ordination (that is, lay and novice vows), at the third of the ritual's three recitations—refuge, personal affirmation, and others' acceptance—

the vows of laypersons or novice arise immediately on completion of the personal affirmation with the words, “as a layperson” or “as a novice.”

The latter stage, full ordination, depends upon the experience of the monastic community’s basic procedures. Ordination is received by repeating the action recitation three times. In the course of these three, the words until “I will . . .” (Tib. *chi-té*) constitute the essence recitation; until “I request . . .” (Tib. *sol-na*), the action recitation; and until “for that purpose . . .” (Tib. *dé’i lé-du*), the performance recitation. The vows arise in the postulant’s being immediately after the completion of the action recitation.

### ***How to Keep the Vows Taken [E]***

This section has two parts: (1) vows for laypersons and (2) vows for renunciants.

#### ***Vows for Laypersons [1]***

This section has two parts: (1) temporary discipline and (2) sustained discipline.

#### ***Temporary Discipline for Laypersons [a]***

**The temporary fasting vows have eight aspects:**

**The four main vows—aspects concerned with ethical conduct;**

**Renunciation of intoxicants—an aspect concerned with conscientiousness;**

**Renunciation of seats that are large or high, dancing and wearing garlands,**

**And eating after the noon meal—three aspects of disciplined conduct.**

Temporary fasting vows have eight aspects, of which four concern ethical conduct: renunciation of killing, renunciation of taking what was not given, renunciation of impure conduct, and renunciation of telling lies. One aspect concerns conscientiousness: renunciation of grain alcohol, distilled alcohol, intoxication, and circumstances of immodesty. Three aspects concern disciplined conduct: renunciation of dancing, and related acts—dancing, song, or playing music; and wearing garlands and related attire—garlands, perfume, jewelry, or make-up; the second of these three, renunciation of seats that are large or high; and renunciation of eating after the noon meal.

Since these vows are kept for a day at a time, not permanently, only seven true kinds of individual liberation vows are counted.

#### ***Sustained Discipline for Laypersons [b]***

**Lay practitioners who maintain the three refuges  
Renounce three things and practice three things.**

**Among five acts, four principal acts can be renounced—to kill, to steal,  
wrongful sexual conduct, and to lie;**

**And a supplementary act—to take intoxicants.**

**One, two, three, or five of these can be renounced.**

**To do so represents, respectively, “one part,” “some parts,” “most,” and  
“complete” conduct.**

**To renounce all impure (that is, sexual) activity constitutes the “pure-  
living layperson’s” vows.**

**To sustain these eight vows permanently constitutes the “venerable  
layperson’s” vows.**

Lay practitioners who maintain refuge in the three jewels renounce three things: homage or offerings to other gods, harming sentient beings, and close friendships with non-Buddhists. They train in three practices: respect toward even a fragment of a sacred image or a clay mold (Tib. *tsa-tsa*), even a letter or half a letter of the written word, and a person wearing even a patch of orange cloth.

Among five acts, four principal acts can be renounced: to take life, to take what has not been given, to engage in wrongful sexual conduct due to desire, and to lie. One constitutes a supplementary vow: to abstain from drinking intoxicants.

To renounce one act (that is, to take one vow) constitutes the vow of “a layperson who maintains one part of the conduct.” To renounce two, “some parts”; three, “most parts”; five, “complete conduct.”

To renounce all impure (that is, sexual) activity constitutes a “pure-living layperson.” To keep the eight aspects (mentioned in the last section as “temporary discipline”) as a sustained discipline for as long as you live constitutes “venerable layperson’s” vows. Thus, there are six or seven kinds of layperson. Renunciation of the remaining six of the ten corrupting acts constitutes conducive renunciation.

## ***Vows for Renunciants [2]***

This section has three parts: (1) training for novices, (2) training for female spiritual apprentices, and (3) downfalls for a fully ordained monk.

## ***Training for Novices [a]***

**Novices renounce four principal acts—**

**Taking life, taking what was not given, impure conduct, and lying;**

**And six supplementary acts—taking intoxicants, dancing and related acts, wearing garlands and related attire, resting on a high bed,**

**Eating after the noon meal, and accepting gold and silver.**

**When added to the first four, these comprise ten coarse acts.**

**There are thirty fine points of training, thirteen permissions,**

**And three pertinent offenses to be renounced.**

Novice monks and nuns renounce four principal acts: (1) taking human life, (2) stealing something of value, (3) impure conduct (that is, sexual penetration) in any of the three openings, and (4) lying concerning spiritual attainment.

They renounce six supplementary acts: (5) taking intoxicants (a supplementary renunciation concerning conscientiousness), (6) dancing and related acts, (7) wearing garlands and related attire, (8) resting on a large or high bed, (9) eating after the noon meal, and (10) accepting gold and silver (these latter five are supplementary aspects of disciplined conduct).

When added to the first four, these comprise the ten coarse bases of training. Breaking one of the four principal vows of the novice incurs a fault equivalent to a defeating act for the fully ordained.

The following twenty-six vows added to the four principal vows above constitute thirty fine points of training. Three aspects of killing pertain to the fault equivalent to the defeating act of taking life: (1) to kill animals, (2) to throw grass that contains insects into water, and (3) to use water that contains insects. Twelve pertain to lying: (4) unfounded accusation of another ordained person's commission of a defeating act, (5) slightly founded accusation of a defeating act, (6) to cause a schism in the community, (7) to side with those who create such a schism, (8) to create disappointment among the lay community, (9) to consciously tell a lie, (10) to make accusations of favoritism, (11) to make accusations against those among the monastic community responsible for service, (12) to claim that another monk teaches the doctrine to gain a little food, (13) to make an unfounded claim that another monk has committed a remaining downfall, (15) to criticize and abandon the training, and (16) to conceal rice in order to receive more. The principal four plus these fifteen [*sic*] equal nineteen. (16) Renunciation of intoxicants makes twenty. The following must be counted separately: (17–19) three concerning dancing, and so on; (20–22) three concerning garlands, and so on; and (23, 24) two concerning large or high beds.

The final two are (25) a prohibition against eating after the noon meal, and (26) a prohibition against accepting gold or silver. Thus, there are thirty in all.

Ngari Penchen lists the thirteen permissions:

Thirteen acts are without fault for novices due to permissions granted:

- (1) To keep extra robes, (2) to keep an extra begging bowl, (3) to be without the robes,
- (4) To till the soil, (5) to touch precious objects, (6) to touch fire,
- (7) To eat again after one has finished eating, (8) to climb trees, (9) to cut trees,
- (10) To eat food not formally offered and accepted, (11) to urinate or defecate on a heap of green grass,
- (12) To eat stored food, and (13) to destroy seeds.

Apart from these, a novice follows the same rules as the fully ordained. Included in the permission to keep, the novice is permitted to store cloth for one month;

Included in the permission to be without, the novice is permitted to be without the robes in a monastery;

And, included in the permission to save and store, the novice is permitted to save and store.

If “keeping” in the first line of this quotation is considered to cover both robes and begging bowl, thirteen acts are without fault.

Three offenses must be guarded against after renunciant vows have been taken: (1) not relinquishing the signs (that is, clothing) of householder life, (2) not wearing the signs of renunciant life, and (3) holding the preceptor in contempt.

### ***Training for Female Spiritual Apprentices [b]***

**Female spiritual apprentices must renounce six principal acts—**

**To travel alone, to swim, to touch an adult male person,**

**To sit together with an adult male, to match-make, and to conceal their faults;**

**And six related ones—to keep gold, to shave their pubic hair,**

**To till the soil, to eat food that has not been formally offered and accepted,**

**To eat stored food, and to cut grass.**

Vishakhadeva states:

Six principal rules have been determined  
For female spiritual apprentices:

Do not travel alone,  
Do not swim across a river,  
Do not touch an adult male person,  
Do not sit together with an adult male,  
Do not conceal your faults,  
Do not match-make.

These are the six related rules;  
Do not commit any of them:

Do not accept the highest quality material (that is, gold),  
Do not shave your pubic hair,  
Do not till the soil,  
Do not cut grass and other plants,  
Do not eat food not formally offered and accepted,  
Do not eat stored food.

Seven acts are without fault:

To keep an extra robe or begging bowl, to be without the robes, to touch  
fire,  
To eat again, to destroy seeds,  
To urinate or defecate on green grass,  
To climb trees.

### ***Acts That Constitute Downfalls for Fully Ordained Monks [c]***

This section has six [sic] parts: (1) four principal defeating acts, (2) thirteen remaining downfalls, (3) thirty downfalls that require relinquishment, (4) ninety downfalls that only require confession, (5) four acts to be acknowledged individually, (6) one hundred and twelve reprehensible acts, and (7) vows for a fully ordained nun.

### ***Four Principal Defeating Acts [i]***

This section has four parts: (1) impure conduct, (2) taking what is not given, (3) killing, and (4) lying concerning spiritual attainment.

### ***Impure Conduct [A]***

**The discipline for fully ordained monks comprises two hundred and fifty-three regulations.**

**They are divided into five classes of downfalls.**

**The first class is the four principal defeating acts;**

**The first of these is impure conduct.**

**Its basis one of the three openings of another's body;**

**The intention is to satisfy desire; the act is the movement of the penis; the completion is satisfaction.**

The discipline of fully ordained monks comprises two hundred and fifty-three regulations.

Among these, the original context for the defeating act of impure conduct is as follows: Thirteen years after the Teacher attained manifest, complete enlightenment, in the district of Parggi, an individual, the fully ordained monk Sudinna, fell under the power of the mental affliction of desire and engaged in impure conduct with his former partner. Based on that event, the Buddha designated this regulation.

An act has four aspects: its basis, intention, act, and completion.

(1) Concerning the basis—the object upon which this act depends—is a part of the body that can create the pleasure of sexual intercourse. To be complete, any of the following are considered sufficient: it must be half a body or more, which includes any of the three physical openings that represent the birth canal—the mouth, anus, or vagina—that is undamaged and can serve for intercourse. The active support for this act is a healthy penis capable of engaging in intercourse.

(2) The intention is the wish to experience the pleasure of touch, motivated by attachment, and an absence of modesty or fear.

(3) The act is to touch a recipient of the opening of another's body with the penis and to penetrate it.

(4) The completion is for the monk's penis to have crossed the boundary of any one of the three openings for intercourse and to have gained satisfaction—to experience physical pleasure, and to have mentally identified with it.

When these four aspects are complete, the act becomes an actual defeating act

of impure conduct. Vishakhadeva states:

If the jewel passes beyond the labia, the teeth, or the skin,  
This constitutes a defeating act.

If it remains outside, depending on the degree,

This can constitute either a serious act or a remaining downfall reparable by  
the monastic community.

### ***Taking What Is Not Given [B]***

**The second defeating act is to take what has not been given.**

**The basis of theft is another's wealth; the intention is the wish to make it  
the monk's own;**

**The act is to steal a valuable object.**

**The completion of the act is to have thought that he has obtained it. At  
that moment, the vow is broken.**

The original context for this regulation occurred in Rajgir: the fully ordained monk Dhaniya stole wood from King Ajatashatru, to use it to build a house. Based on the event, the Buddha designated this regulation.

Among this act's four aspects, (1) the basis is the object of theft—a thing claimed by a human being with whom the monk's wealth is not shared. The material must not be such trifles as food or objects from charnel grounds. To cause a defeating act, the specific object must be of an equal value to the measure set forth in the Buddha's time, regardless of the region or time; such value depends on both the object and the prevailing social circumstances (that is, times of famine, for example). The measure is stated in *Fifty Stanzas on Novice Vows*:

If one quarter of a *kasharpana* is stolen,  
That theft breaks the monastic code.

Thus, the measure is the value of one quarter *kasharpana*. In India, calculation was usually based on the weight of ashes of burnt shells, therefore calculation for other places and times must be based on that measure: twenty shells equal one *kakani*; four *kakani*, one *mashaka*—eighty shells; twenty *mashaka*, one *kasharpana*—one thousand, six hundred shells.

Thus, one quarter *kasharpana* equaled four hundred shells; or five *mashaka*. Although, in general, the relation between *mashaka* and *kasharpana* cannot be precisely determined, the definition of one *kasharpana* as five *mashaka* is an



average taken from *The Root Discourse on the Monastic Code of Conduct*.

If this value is calculated for gold, what is called a *kakani* equals a jequirity bean (*kanchi* in Sanskrit; *maru go-nak* in Tibetan); four of them equal a *mashaka*, which equals two *sé* (a Tibetan measure) of gold. Five of them equal a quarter *kasharpana*, or ten *sé*. In this country of Tibet, we can designate the value of an object the theft of which constitutes stealing at five loads of barley, since in a period without famine, twenty *sé* of gold equals one central Tibetan *zho*, worth ten loads of barley.

(2) The intention is the wish to steal wealth for the monk's own use, in the knowledge that it belongs to a human being, or with some doubt concerning that fact.

(3) The act is to undertake with physical or verbal endeavor the theft of an object that has the value mentioned above.

(4) The completion of the act is the arising of the attitude that the object stolen has been taken from its owner and has come into the monk's possession by his own hand, or through his encouragement to others to steal, or by any other means.

## ***Killing [C]***

**The third defeating act is taking human life.**

**The basis of killing is another human being.**

**The intention is the wish to kill the individual the monk knows is present.**

**The act is to begin the act of murder. Its completion is achieved when the other dies before the monk.**

The original context for the rule occurred in Parggi, where many fully ordained monks meditated upon the state of revulsion. They came to loathe their bodies' impurities and requested the mendicant Migalandika to kill them. Based on the event, the Buddha designated this regulation.

Of this act's four aspects, (1) the basis is a human being or a human being in fetal development,<sup>18</sup> endowed with a stream of being other than the monk's own, whom one unmistakably intends to kill.

(2) The intention is the perception of the presence of the intended murder victim, which inspires the sustained motivation to kill.

(3) The act is to begin the act of murder with poison or weapons, and so on, and for the monk to not restrain himself.

(4) The completion is achieved when at that time or at another time the intended victim's life ceases before the killer's, a monk. *The Three Hundred*

*Stanzas for Novices* states:

Apart from a dream, whoever is of sound mind and has received the  
designated training,  
Knows another human being to be a human,  
And with the thought to kill him or her, attempts to do so without mistake,  
Has destroyed the vow when the victim dies.

This does not only apply to killing by the monk's own hand, but equally includes inciting others to kill, or verbal expression of joy at a murder, if such events contribute to the death. For example, if many fully ordained monks discuss and decide among themselves that someone should be murdered and one of them carries out the killing, the defeating act is shared by them all. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

Those united in war or similar situations  
Share the same karma as the one who acts.

### ***Lying Concerning Spiritual Attainments [D]***

**The fourth defeating act is to lie concerning spiritual attainment.  
The basis of lying is a human being who understands the meaning of the  
monk's words;  
The intention is to wish to speak in order to change the other's  
perception;  
The act is to claim clairvoyance or other abilities, although the monk has  
none;  
The act is completed when the other understands the lie.**

The original context for the rule occurred in Vaishali, where fishermen, five hundred fully ordained monks who renounced home-life, told lies concerning their spiritual attainment. Based on that event, the Buddha designated this regulation.

Of the four aspects, (1) the basis is the auditor of the monk's speech, a human being endowed with a mind other than the monk's own, who has the five bases for this designation: he or she knows how to speak, understands the words' meaning, has a sound mind, is not a neuter, and is not a hermaphrodite.

The content of the pertinent speech is the claim to have attained any worldly or transcendent quality above those of the desire realm, from the level of the first exalted meditative state of the gods to enlightenment. Vishakhadeva states:

In this context, the five obscurations<sup>19</sup>  
Are understood as common human characteristics.  
Their dissipation is considered to be superior spiritual attributes.

(2) The intention is the wish to tell a lie to alter another's perception.

(3) The act is to claim clairvoyance or other abilities that make one different from others, although the monk has no such collection of qualities. In words of six characteristics, the lie concerning higher spiritual attainment must be spoken without obvious pride. This can also be committed by inciting others to speak for the monk. The six characteristics of the words are that they are speech, the monk's own, related to him, spoken unmistakably, spoken clearly, and spoken perceptibly.

(4) The act is completed when the other (that is, any listener) understands.

In the case of the commission of any of the four acts just described, if any of the four aspects of a defeating act's specific causes as listed is incomplete, the act constitutes a serious offense. If all aspects are complete, it constitutes an actual defeating act, since the act's negative influences have destroyed any antidote that might repair the violation and have defeated the fully ordained monk who committed it. Therefore, the omniscient Teacher called these "the four defeating acts." *The Discourse of Individual Liberation* states:

As it has been, so it will be: Fully ordained monks who have committed any of those downfalls have been defeated. They are thereby not permitted to remain in residence with other fully ordained monks, nor to share living conditions with them.

### ***Thirteen Remaining Downfalls [ii]***

**The thirteen remaining downfalls are to ejaculate, to touch a female out of desire,**

**To speak lustful words to a woman, to extol service for intercourse, to match-make,**

**To construct an oversized house, to construct a large house for himself, Baseless accusation, slightly substantiated accusation,**

**To create a division within the monastic community, to side with those who split the monastic community,**

**To disappoint laypersons, and to voice discontentment with the commands of the monastic assembly.**

Because the reparation of the following offenses depends upon a formal meeting of the monastic community and the remaining vows of complete purity are left intact, they are called “the remaining community downfalls.” Their characteristic is any downfall that contradicts the monastic code determined for a fully ordained monk; these violations are given the name “remaining” because they can be purified by reparations.

To classify these thirteen vows, seven concern desire (five concern desire toward sentient beings; two, toward external objects); two concern harm toward others; and four concern community directives.

(1) Ejaculation: The original context for this and the next three downfalls (including number 4, to extol service) occurred in Shravasti and were first designated in relation to Udayin.

The basis of this downfall is any part of the monk’s own or another’s body, apart from the three paths for intercourse; the intention is the wish to ejaculate; the act is contact with and stimulation of the penis; the act is complete upon ejaculation of semen and the experience of pleasure.

(2) Grasping: The basis of this downfall is the suitable body of a female human being; the intention is the wish to touch her out of desire; the act is to touch her body or even a part of it, such as her hair, without having restrained himself; and the act is complete with the experience of pleasure.

(3) To speak lustful words: The basis of this downfall is any appropriate female human being who comprehends language; the intention is with desire; the act is to say clearly to her at that time any actual term for sexual intercourse; and the act is complete when she has understood.

(4) To extol service: The basis of this downfall is a female human being; the intention is with desire; the act is, in order to have intercourse, to state, “The best kind of service you can offer to a fully ordained monk, such as me, is the service of sexual intercourse,” or, if the woman makes the statement, to assent. The act is complete when the woman has understood.

(5) To match-make: This rule was first designated in Shravasti in relation to the group of six monks. The basis of this downfall, what must be renounced, is the persons meeting—any male and female that can meet, apart from the monk himself; the intention is the wish that they have intercourse; the act is to have carried or to arrange for three messages to pass between them to match-make; the completion occurs when, after they meet, their genitals unite.

(6) To construct an oversized house: This rule, and the one concerning a large house, were first designated by the Teacher in Kaushambi, in relation to the group of six monks. The basis of the downfall is a location where there are many insects, a place where ownership is disputed, or which is dangerous; to search

assiduously for materials from others; and to not have received authorization from the monastic community. The intention is the monk's wish to build a house for himself; the act is to build, or to have others build, a house measuring over eighteen cubits long and ten and a half cubits wide; the act is complete when the walls and roof are finished.

(7) To construct a large house: The basis of this downfall is to construct a house greater than for four persons. In this case, the aspects of searching for the materials and exceeding the measure are unnecessary. Otherwise, it is the same as the last rule.

(8) Baseless accusation: This rule, and the next, that of slightly substantiated accusation, were first designated in Rajgir, in relation to Mettiya and Bhummajaka. The basis of this downfall is another fully ordained monk; the act is to make a clear accusation that he committed any of the four principal downfalls, although the monk's claims lack the basis of having seen the act, having heard proof of it, or material evidence; the act is complete when the monk's words have been understood.

(9) Slightly substantiated accusation: The basis of this downfall is a fully ordained monk; the act is on the basis of a slight infraction, to accuse a monk of a principal downfall through indirect insinuation; the act is complete when the monk's words are understood.

(10) To create a division within the monastic community: This rule was first designated in Rajgir, in relation to Devadatta. The basis of the downfall is the monastic community, apart from the monk himself, who live within the same defined area. They become split, for example, over the monk's nonconformist views or conduct. The act is complete when, although the five preventive actions have been undertaken, the monk persists after the third of three admonishments.

The five preventive actions are giving a reminder, the monastic community's request, and three admonishments. The seriousness of the downfall in these cases is after the first, each stage is a serious infraction; if the act is continued after the third admonishment, it is an actual remaining downfall. The following three downfalls follow the same pattern.

Is this remaining downfall of creating dissension different from the act of creating a schism that constitutes an act of immediate fruition? There is a difference: In the case of the act of immediate fruition, the monastic community must become definitely divided and the person responsible for the schism must definitely be a fully ordained monk. In the case of a remaining downfall, although the individual proves unable to provoke dissension in the community, he undertook that act and persisted even after the five preventive actions had been completed. That much is sufficient for the downfall to be incurred.

Moreover, in the case of a remaining downfall, the person responsible for the dissension does not necessarily have to be a fully ordained monk, as a fully ordained nun who commits a similar dissension incurs the same remaining downfall.

(11) To side with those who split the monastic community: This rule was first designated in Rajgir, in relation to the four fully ordained monk companions of Devadatta, including Kokalika. The basis of the downfall is any fully ordained monk who has begun to create dissension in the monastic community; the intention is the wish to side with that monk; the act is to side with him; and the act is complete when the monk persists in doing so after the five preventive actions have been completed.

(12) To disappoint laypersons: This rule was first designated in Shravasti, in relation to Punnabbasu and Assaji. This downfall applies to any fully ordained monk banished from a monastic community for having caused laypersons disappointment toward a monk's negative behavior inconsistent with the training, such as to joke, play, eat, or drink in the company of women. If the monk then criticizes the community that banished him, claiming they have four faults (desire, fear, anger, and stupidity), this downfall is incurred when he persists after the five preventive actions have been completed.

(13) To vocalize discontent with the commands given by the monastic assembly to encourage reparation of vows: This rule was first designated in Kaushambi, in relation to Channa. It applies to a fully ordained monk who has been formally admonished and is able to understand that fact. To encourage him in higher ethical conduct, the monastic community proposes acts to repair the training. The monk, discontented with the command, replies, "Whatever we do, whether an ennobling act or wrongdoing, you should not say anything at all to us." The downfall is incurred if the monk persists after the five preventive actions have been completed.

### ***Thirty Downfalls That Require Forfeiture [iii]***

**The thirty downfalls for which the object that caused the downfall must be forfeited concern the robes, the mat, and the begging bowl—ten for each.**

This class of regulation is literally called "forfeiture downfalls" because the infraction is repaired through *forfeiture* of the object that caused the downfall and if it is not repaired, the ripening of the act causes *falling* into the miserable existences. The first set of ten is as follows:

(1) The forfeiture of keeping: The next three regulations, which concern keeping, being without, and storing, were first designated in Vaishali, in relation to many monks. This regulation applies to an individual not participating in the ritual for distribution of robes during a monsoon season retreat, and who owns a piece of cloth for his own use, sufficient in size to cover the three circles (that is, the waist and the two knees). If the monk has his own three consecrated robes, or in the case in which he has not, if he has no expectation of an additional set of robes, this may apply to a cubit-length of cloth. Whether through their own force (the cloth has not been consecrated with its name or any other designation) or through the force of contamination-by-association (the cloth was consecrated but has been contaminated), the infraction is incurred at the first light of dawn on the eleventh day.

This does not only apply to additional clothing: If the monk has of his own accord, and for his temporary use, gained cloth, it must be consecrated with the name of any of the thirteen articles of livelihood during the next ten days. As is said,

However, if the monk previously owned consecrated clothing, he must sincerely intend to give the latterly gained cloth to someone else or he must have it consecrated, designated as a remainder or as a necessary article. Moreover, must the unconsecrated cloth produce the requirement of forfeiture by its own force, by having been kept for over ten days? No: When a monk keeps unconsecrated cloth for a period of one to nine days, if he obtains a second cloth, the first cloth's date of keeping contaminates the second's, in that the extent to which he kept the first cloth must also be counted for that of later cloth. If he has yet another, the unconsecrated cloth contaminates it as well.

Therefore, as is said,

Can the fault be prevented just by consecration? It might be said that this fault can be prevented if both former and latter items are consecrated, or if the former is consecrated before contamination-through-association. However, if the former is not consecrated, the latter is contaminated even when consecrated, by the force of the former item.

(2) To be without the robes: This regulation applies to an individual who has not received permission to be without the outer cape and who is not participating

in the distribution of robes. It is incurred if a monk stays apart from the vicinity (except in the case of a dangerous, isolated place) where he has left the three consecrated robes or any part of them. The infraction is incurred at dawn of the second day.

(3) To store for one month: This regulation applies to a monk not participating in the ritual for distribution of robes, who does not own one of the three robes. It is incurred if the monk, with the wish to make an extra set of robes, keeps a piece of cloth for robes at least one cubit in length but not sufficient to cover the three circles. This can apply to unconsecrated cloth or consecrated cloth contaminated by being kept with other cloth. Thus either on its own or through contamination, the stored cloth is considered to have created the downfall after thirty days, at dawn of the thirty-first.

(4) To request laundry service: This regulation was first designated in Vaishali, in relation to Udayin. This infraction concerns a monk who requests a fully ordained nun, with whom he has no family relation through seven generations, to wash any article of his three robes or his old mat. It is incurred when she washes even a part of those items.

(5) To accept cloth: The next six regulations, until that of accepting money (number 10), were first designated in Vaishali, in relation to Upananda. This infraction concerns a monk who owns the three robes, who begs, from a fully ordained nun who is not his relative, cloth that measures at least enough to cover the three circles. It is incurred when such cloth comes into his possession.

(6) To beg for cloth: This infraction is incurred if a monk who already owns the three robes begs, from a layperson who is not his relative, cloth that measures at least enough to cover the three circles and he receives such cloth.

(7) Inappropriate begging: This infraction concerns a monk without the three robes who begs from a layperson who is not his relative. While he might be given much cloth, it is appropriate for him to accept only enough for the upper and lower robes. The downfall is incurred if he accepts more than that amount.

(8) To calculate the article begged: This infraction concerns a monk who calculates what he begs, from a layperson who is not his relative, saying, "Gather here the cloth you wish to give me." The infraction is incurred when, before the formal offering and acceptance, the monk tells from memory the price and length he has calculated and then receives that amount.

(9) To calculate articles begged separately: This infraction concerns a monk who hears that a layman or a laywoman is considering making separate offerings of a piece or a lot of cloth to him. The infraction is incurred when, to test whether the offering will be made or not, the monk tells from memory the price and length he has calculated and then receives that amount.



Although it has been said that these two cases apply when the monk receives something better than what was intended, the actual presentation in the discourses states clearly that the fault lies in accepting the object before formal offering and acceptance.

(10) To accept money in exchange: This infraction concerns offerings received from any of three laypersons: patrons, their messengers, or their attendants. If a patron through a messenger offers a monk such substances unsuitable for the cost of cloth, such as gold or silver, the monk must refuse, saying, "I cannot accept this." If the messenger then gives this to the monk's own attendant, asking him to buy cloth, and if the monk directly encourages his attendant three times to do so, or if he sees him three times and says nothing as the attendant undertakes that task, a fault (but not this downfall) is incurred until the time the cloth is bought. This forfeiture downfall is incurred after that point, when the monk acquires the cloth.

The second ten concerning the mat are as follows: (1) This infraction is incurred when a monk makes a mat with expensive material, such as silk.

(2) This infraction is incurred when a monk makes a mat entirely of black wool, where black wool is rare.

(3) This infraction is incurred when a monk makes a mat of more than two parts black wool. In these three cases, whether the mat with a lining has been newly made by himself or others, the infraction is incurred by simply spreading such a mat.

(4) The six year regulation: This infraction is incurred when a monk, in possession of a former mat, within six years from the making of the former mat, has made a second mat with a lining, without having gained permission to do so.

(5) The thumb-size regulation: When a monk is in possession of an old mat when he makes a new one, he must include in it at least as much material from the old one as the measure of a thumb of the Joyful Buddha (equal to a human's half-cubit). The infraction is incurred when the monk uses a mat that has not included such a piece.

(6) To carry wool on a path: This and the next four regulations (until number 10, bartering) were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This infraction is incurred when a monk, out of attachment, carries a large load of wool or other items he owns beyond the distance of an earshot during one day.

Concerning this, permission is given for such transport over less than three leagues in the case of aiding a novice who has no help to carry his load. In that case, the infraction is incurred after a further earshot or, if the other has a helper for the carrying, when one goes beyond an earshot from the point of departure.

(7) To request laundry service: This infraction concerns a monk who requests a fully ordained nun, who is not his relative, to wash the wool, to comb it out, or to dye it. The infraction is incurred when she carries out his request.

(8) To touch precious objects: This infraction concerns a monk who, out of attachment, touches or induces another to touch inappropriate precious objects, such as gold or silver, that have not been deemed appropriate, and which have no fault such as having been wasted, to make the object becomes his.

There are three ways an object may be appropriate to touch: when the monk considers the object as the patron's own; when the object is promised to belong to the attendant; or by consecration.

(9) Overt commerce: This infraction concerns a monk who, out of desire for gain, overtly trades merchandise, such as jewels, or makes loans with interest, with laypersons who are not relatives. The infraction is incurred when he acquires and accepts profit from the trade, equaling the value of a cubit's length of cloth.

(10) Bartering: This infraction concerns a monk who, with desire for gain, trades with laypersons who are not relatives any merchandise, apart from jewels. The infraction is incurred when he acquires any profit by buying in times of plenty and selling in times of want.

The third ten concerning the begging bowl and other possessions are as follows:

(1) To keep a begging bowl: This regulation was first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This infraction is incurred by keeping a proper begging bowl that has not been consecrated, or one that has been consecrated but contaminated by having been kept with another. The infraction is incurred at dawn of the eleventh day.

(2) To search for another begging bowl: This and the next three regulations (until number 5, "to take back") were first designated in relation to Upananda. This infraction concerns a monk who owns and uses a begging bowl (of correct material, shape, and color, and which holds at least nine double handfuls after a thumb-sized rim), who requests another from a person who is not his relative. It is incurred when he receives one. If the one received is not consecrated and exceeds the time limit, this incurs the previous infraction.

(3) To request weaving: This infraction concerns a monk who requests, or has others request, a weaver who is not his relative to weave cloth for him without remuneration. It is incurred when he receives it.

(4) To improve the weave: This infraction concerns woven cloth offered to a monk by a person not his relative. If, before the patron offers the cloth, the monk asks for cloth of better quality than what was intended, the infraction is incurred

when he receives it.

(5) To take back something given: This infraction concerns a monk who takes back articles, such as cloth or a begging bowl, that he previously gave another monk of similar views and clothing. It is incurred when the other is separated from that article.

(6) Distribution of offerings: This regulation and the next (number 7, to be without the robes in isolation) were first designated in Vaishali in relation to the group of six monks. This infraction is incurred when the offerings made to the community participating in the monsoon season retreat are appropriated as the monk's own, are distributed to the others during the retreat period, or are not distributed to the others on the day after the lifting of the restrictions. These constitute the three infractions concerning early or late distribution.

However, as is said in *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct*,

There are five exceptional circumstances: in the case of sickness, for the sick, in the case of death, for the dead, and for departure.

Thus, before the lifting of restrictions, the offerings made by patrons whose situations conform to the exceptional circumstances can be distributed for these reasons to each monk within ten days of the completion of the monsoon season retreat without this constituting a fault. This regulation does not apply to such cases as the monk who gives instruction during the retreat, and to the portion used for care of the sick.

(7) To be without the robes in isolation: Permission has been granted for fully ordained monks who live in isolation to be without their consecrated three robes for a period up to six days. However, although this is without fault, if no danger exists, this infraction is incurred at dawn on the seventh day.

(8) The large cotton rain cloth: This regulation was first designated in Vaishali in relation to many monks. Regardless of whether a monk has promised to enter the early or later summer retreat, when a monk searches for and acquires the large cotton summer cloth one month before the retreat, he incurs the early-searching downfall that requires forfeiture, or when he keeps it one half month after the lifting of the restrictions, he incurs the late-keeping downfall that requires forfeiture.

(9) To divert offerings: This regulation was first designated in Vaishali, in relation to Upananda. This infraction concerns any offering made by a layperson to the monastic community or any belonging of another fully ordained monk, such as clothes or a begging bowl. The infraction is incurred when a monk diverts such an article and then appropriates it as his own.

(10) To store: This regulation was first designated in Rajgir, in relation to those in residence with exalted Anāpindada. What is actually expressed in the discourses in relation to storing medicine for seven days is merely an example. Here, this infraction is incurred by keeping any of the four medicines beyond its appropriate time.

The appropriate time for each is as follows: for any of the four medicines that has not been consecrated, each must be formally given and received during one of the four periods and it expires during the next. For example, if formally offered and received in the morning, it expires at noon. Similarly, the afternoon offerings expire at sunset; those of sunset, at the end of the evening; and those of the evening, at the end of the night.

For consecrated substances, four possibilities apply. First, even though consecration is unnecessary during periods appropriate for eating, this applies to medicine formally offered and accepted in the morning, which can be kept until the afternoon. Second, medicine appropriate for a period is consecrated in the morning and expires at the end of the night. Third, those consecrated for seven days expire at the dawn of the eighth day. Fourth, medicine for a lifetime is consecrated for a period until a sickness is cured; however, it can be kept even after the monk is free from the illness. Thus this can be considered as consecrated for as long as the monk lives, and therefore cannot incur this infraction of storing.

When these thirty forfeiture downfalls are repaired, the object that incurred the infraction must be totally forfeited, as in the case of taking back something given and searching for a second begging bowl. In all other cases, it is sufficient that the offending object be forfeited for the period of one day before being consecrated.

### ***Ninety Downfalls That Only Require Confession [iv]***

**The ninety downfalls are divided into nine categories of ten each:**

**Conscious, seeds, without designation, repetition,**

**Within water, layperson, intentional, many travelers, and teaching the doctrine.**

This category is called downfalls that only require confession because committing these acts makes one *fall* to the miserable existences and *only* confession of them is required for their purification, without this having been preceded by forfeiture of an object. *The Root Discourse on the Monastic Code of Conduct* states:

The categories' headings are: conscious, seeds,  
Without designation, repetition,  
Water, layperson, intentional,  
Many travelers or a thief, and teaching the doctrine.

First, the conscious downfalls: (1) To tell a lie. This was first designated in Vaishali in relation to Hattaka of the Shakya clan. This concerns lies other than the four kinds of lies mentioned in other categories—defeating acts, remaining downfalls, serious infractions, and faults—and the six kinds of lies within this category of downfalls. This downfall is incurred when a fully ordained monk consciously tells a lie and the listener understands his words and their meaning.

The four other categories of lies are as follows: (1) a lie that constitutes a defeating act; (2) a baseless accusation or slightly substantiated accusation, which constitute remaining downfalls; (3) conscious affirmation of what is untrue or denial of what is true, serious infractions; and (4) to remain silent in reply to the question “Have you kept these vows purely?” asked during ritual purification and renewal of the vows, a lie that constitutes a fault.

The other six kinds of lies within this category of downfalls are accusation of favoritism, slander, accusation of doing something for “a little food,” blame, storing, and disparagement.

(2) To speak of faults: This regulation and the others in this set, apart from the fifth, eighth, and ninth, were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall concerns a monk who speaks without a beneficial attitude of another monk's faults committed at a specific place and time. This downfall is incurred when the listener understands.

(3) To speak divisively: This downfall is incurred when a monk causes friendly monks to become estranged through divisive speech.

(4) To recreate division: This downfall concerns two fully ordained monks whose dispute had been settled by the community according to the regulations. Once the differences between one monk and the other have been reconciled, if a monk (who belonged to the group who formally resolved the dispute) intends to recreate the dissension and says, “That dispute has not been settled! It must be settled!” thereby speaking argumentative words that incite regret for the past community activity and destroy the reconciliation, this downfall is incurred when the words are understood.

(5) To give religious instruction to a woman: This regulation was first designated in relation to Udayin. This downfall concerns a monk who, unaccompanied by another monk who keeps the discipline, teaches a woman who wishes to listen to instructions she does not know. It is incurred when he

says more than five or six words, such as, “All composite phenomena are impermanent.”

(6) To recite scriptures: This downfall is incurred when a monk, with the intention to entertain himself or others, recites the words of the doctrine in a variety of melodies with someone who is not fully ordained.

(7) To speak of negative behavior: This downfall concerns a monk not designated to speak of the defeating acts or remaining downfalls incurred by another fully ordained monk. It is incurred when the monk speaks of a defeating act or a remaining downfall to a person who is neither a monk nor learned in the training, and when that person understands the monk’s words.

(8) To truthfully tell of spiritual attainment: This regulation was first designated in relation to the five hundred monks of the fisherman caste. This downfall concerns a monk who has gained the qualities of spiritual attainment. It is incurred when, without a special reason, he claims such attainment to a person not a monk, and that person understands.

(9) To make accusations of favoritism: This regulation was first designated in relation to Mettiya and Bhummajaka. This downfall concerns a monk who cannot bear the gift of any appropriate item, apart from food, by the community intendant to another monk. It is incurred when the monk accuses the intendant, “He gave community property to an individual out of favoritism!” and another person understands his words.

(10) To denigrate: This downfall concerns a monk at the time of purification-renewal, when *The Root Discourse on the Monastic Code of Conduct* is recited. It is incurred when he denigrates it by complaining, “What’s the point of reciting these details of training?” and another understands his words.

The second set of ten, the seeds downfalls: (1) To destroy seeds or sprouts: This regulation and the tenth of this set were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall is incurred by a monk who destroys, or induces others to destroy, seeds, such as barley, or any potential plant, such as sprouts, that have their specific attributes, that are not spoiled, that monks are not permitted to destroy, and that are not causes of difficulty, such as obstructing plants.

When such plants are destroyed, a downfall is incurred for each tree, or each blade of grass, or each seed destroyed. To pick a fruit from its tree, such as a walnut tree, is a fault. It is permissible to pick such food items as fruits that have been touched by fire (that is, are burned or singed) or damaged by sharp objects, fingernails, or parrots. Apart from designated times, when partaking of the three other medicines in the afternoon, sprinkling them with cold water makes them

permissible.

(2) To slander: This regulation was first designated in relation to Mettiya and Bhummajaka. This downfall concerns a monk who slanders another fully ordained monk who has acted or is acting in harmony with the community's sponsor and who has not misappropriated the community's residence or bedding, and so on. This downfall is incurred when the monk openly slanders the other, saying, "In my presence, he misappropriated an item!" or indirectly slanders him, saying, "Some monks act like this!" and those words are understood.

This becomes an actual offense when the community declares of the slanderer's act, "It has been decided that this is an actual offense."

(3) To not heed a monastic community command: This regulation and the ninth of this set were first designated in Kaushambi in relation to Channa. This downfall concerns a monk who pretends not to hear or who criticizes appropriate questions asked him concerning a downfall he incurred, in order to repair it. It is incurred when he does not reply to the question, but gives an opposing reply and his words are understood.

(4) To not collect "the seats, and so on" of the residence: This regulation was first designated in Vaishali in relation to many monks. This downfall is incurred when, in relation to the bedding of the community, including large and small seats, a monk does not collect his own and disregards those of others, thus causing them to be wasted where there is no roof, or even if they are not damaged, when the monk has gone from the area around the residence to a distance of more than forty-nine arm spans.

(5) The bedding: This regulation was first designated in relation to the two monks who came from the southern road. This downfall concerns not gathering up the mats that the monk himself has spread, or others have arranged, in the community's temple, on the grass, or at other places that have the disadvantage of containing insects. The downfall is incurred when the mats not gathered are spoiled by insects or other causes, or even if unspoiled, when the monk leaves the vicinity.

(6) To chase away: This and the next regulation were first designated in relation to Udayin. This downfall is incurred when a monk in anger chases away or has others chase from the community's temple another monk and the monk goes outside.

(7) To bully a junior monk: This downfall concerns a more senior monk in a community temple who, with contempt for another monk, begins to harm him physically or verbally. It is incurred when the monk is oppressed.

(8) To make a hole in the temple: This downfall was first designated in Vaishali in relation to Upananda. This downfall is incurred when a monk sits

down heavily on a bed with pointed legs on the old roof of a monastic community's temple and thereby punctures the roof.

(9) To throw: This downfall is incurred when a monk strikes or uses in any way, or has others strike or use, such things as water, grass, or wood that the monk knows contain insects. The downfall is incurred to the degree that insects are killed.

(10) To build an additional level: This downfall concerns construction of a temple large enough to allow the four physical movements. The downfall is incurred when the monk knows the site to be dangerous, such as building on an unstable foundation or without regard to a water source, and he lays, or has others lay, more than two or three layers of bricks with mortar.

The third set of ten, the without designation downfalls; this set alone is known to have been designated in relation to monks' conduct toward fully ordained nuns.

(1) To teach without designation: This regulation and the sixth, seventh, and tenth of this set were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall concerns a monk who teaches a fully ordained nun without having been designated as a teacher of fully ordained nuns, or even if designated, if he is unqualified. This downfall is incurred when she hears his words.

(2) To teach until sunset: This regulation and the third were first designated in relation to Chulapantaka. This downfall concerns a monk who, even having been designated as a teacher of fully ordained nuns, teaches a fully ordained nun in a dangerous place until after the sun sets. This downfall is incurred when she hears his words.

(3) To accuse a monk of teaching for food: This downfall concerns a jealous monk who, although a fully ordained monk is both worthy and designated as a teacher of fully ordained nuns and does not do so for gain, criticizes the monk, "He teaches to gain a small amount of food!" This downfall is incurred when a listener understands the monk's words.

(4) To make clothes: This regulation, the eighth, and the ninth were first designated in relation to Udayin. This downfall concerns a monk who sews the clothes of a fully ordained nun who is not his relative. It is incurred by the sewing.

(5) To give robes: This regulation was first designated in relation to a former chieftain who became a fully ordained monk. This downfall concerns a monk who, out of simple friendship, gives his own, proper robes to a fully ordained nun who is not a relative. This downfall is incurred when she receives them.

(6) To walk together on a path: This downfall concerns a monk who, on a path that is not dangerous, walks together for company with a fully ordained nun who



is not his relative. Each earshot walked represents a separate downfall; each half-earshot, a fault.

(7) To sit together in a boat: As in the previous case, this downfall concerns a monk who sits together with a fully ordained nun in a boat and does not go directly across the river but against the current, upstream, or with the current, downstream. This downfall is incurred when they travel beyond an earshot.

(8) To sit together: This downfall concerns a monk who, without being accompanied by a monk-companion, sits on the ground with a woman who is not his relative, at a distance of an arm span, in an isolated, secure place.

(9) To stand together: This downfall concerns a monk who, in an isolated place at a distance of one arm span, stands with a woman or, particularly, a fully ordained nun.

(10) To have the monk's food prepared: This downfall concerns a monk who falsely claims to a patron householder to have qualities he does not possess, to thus encourage a fully ordained nun who is not his relative to offer him food at the proper time. This downfall is incurred when he eats.

The fourth set of ten, the repetition downfalls: (1) To repeatedly eat: This regulation and the following three, the ninth, and the tenth of this set were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall does not concern monks who are sick and thus unable to be nourished by one round of begging, those involved in community or construction work on religious monuments, those living in times of famine, or those who travel half a league.

This downfall concerns a monk not participating in the ritual for distribution of robes, and who is not receiving a cubit's length of cloth or more from a layperson who is not his relative. This downfall is incurred when the monk, after having eaten once that day at a layperson's home at the appropriate time, begs repeatedly two or three times, and eats repeatedly.

(2) To eat in the residence: This downfall concerns a monk who stays more than one day in the abode of a non-Buddhist who is not his relative. It is incurred when on the second day the monk eats food not offered by the patron.

(3) To accept more than three begging bowls of food: This downfall concerns a monk who, from a layperson who is not his relative, has not been offered as much as he pleases. It is incurred when, eating at the proper time, he begs for more than one full measure of a large begging bowl, two full medium-sized begging bowls, or three small-sized begging bowls, that is, four and a half *dré* (measures), an acceptable amount. The downfall is incurred when he begs for more and takes the food elsewhere to eat.

(4) To renounce and again eat: This downfall does not concern monks living

at a time of famine or who are sick. This downfall concerns a monk who, after he has finished eating at the proper time, decides mentally and then announces, "I won't eat again today." It is incurred if the food he then eats has not been consecrated as extra.

However, to eat after renouncing food for the rest of the day, a monk must kneel in the presence of a fully ordained monk who remains in his place, and make a request concerning further eating. The presiding monk takes the

requester's begging bowl and eats two or three mouthfuls from that monk's bowl. If the presiding monk has already renounced food for the day, he does not have to eat from the bowl. In any case, he returns the begging bowl to the monk who wishes to continue eating, who is thereby permitted to do so.

As is said, "Don't rise before having finished eating." The meaning of this is that a downfall is incurred if a monk rises before he has eaten his fill and eats leftovers later.

(5) To serve a monk who has finished eating: This regulation was first designated in Vaishali in relation to an elderly monk. This downfall concerns a monk who, with the negative attitude of wishing for another to incur a downfall, serves a monk who has finished eating food that has not been designated as leftover, falsely claiming, "This food is a leftover." When the monk understands the words and eats, he who served the food incurs the downfall.

(6) To gather and eat: This regulation was first designated in Rajgir in relation to Devadatta and his circle. This downfall does not concern permitted times of repeated eating, such as during sickness. This downfall concerns a monk motivated by disharmony with the community that lives within the boundaries. It is incurred when three or more monks separate themselves from the general community to eat elsewhere at the appropriate time.

(7) To eat at the wrong time: This regulation was first designated in Vaishali, in relation to seventeen youths. What are inappropriate times for eating? Except for such circumstances as sickness, a downfall is incurred to the extent that any food is swallowed after noon (literally, "after the sun reaches its mid-transit"), until the first light of dawn in the continent where the monk resides. Those who are sick, when eating at other times, must remain mindful in the thought, "This is permitted for the sick."

(8) To eat what has been stored: This regulation was first designated in relation to the monk Belattasisa. This downfall concerns a monk who, except in such circumstances as sickness, stores beyond the appropriate time any of the four medicines that has been formally offered and accepted. It is incurred when he eats any of them that are unspoiled, except in times of famine.

Here, there are four variations of storing: to touch food without formal

procedures, to cook within the community's boundaries, the passing of the day, and preparation of food by a monk.

The first refers to food, except in such cases as wasted food, touched by a monk before it has been formally offered and accepted. The second refers to preparation of raw food within the actual boundaries controlled by the monk or in their vicinity. The third refers to any such food within those boundaries kept beyond one day. The fourth refers to any such food prepared by a monk within or outside the boundaries. These four cases entail a fault, except in such circumstances as care for the sick or during famine.

(9) To eat what was not offered and accepted: This downfall does not concern the continent of Unpleasant Sound or similar places, nor such circumstances as having been prevented from eating or in order to cure sickness. This downfall concerns a monk who consciously swallows as much as a mouthful of any of the four medicines, except water or for cleaning teeth, that has not been formally offered and accepted.

Formal offering and acceptance is described as follows: The recipient and the server must not be side by side or behind one another; the service must be uninterrupted by anyone. The recipient must beg, extending both hands with the palms turned upward.

The causes that destroy the formal offering and acceptance are listed in *The Detailed Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct*:

These things destroy the formal offering and acceptance:

Theft, mixture, touch,

Dedication, a nonmonk,

Change in essence, change in birth, and rejection.

(10) To beg for delicious food: This downfall concerns a monk who, except in such cases as sickness, is not asked by a layperson who is not his relative to take what delicious food he wishes, such as milk, considered fine in that time and region. It is incurred when he is not content and begs for and eats such food.

The fifth set of ten, the within water downfalls: (1) To use water that contains insects: This regulation was first designated in Koshambi, in relation to Channa. This downfall concerns a monk's use for his own benefit of water that contains insects, such as for washing, drinking, washing clothes, or dyeing cloth. It also concerns cutting grass or wood and burning them, after having seen that sentient beings will thereby die, yet to continue to carelessly use the water, grass, or wood. A downfall is incurred in the measure of the number of beings who die.

Therefore, monks must make enclosures for oil lamps and keep a water strainer. The different water strainers are a hanging strainer, a vase strainer with a beak, a triangular strainer, a round water strainer with a base, and a cleaning strainer.

(2) To sit in a house where persons are having sexual intercourse: This regulation, as well as the third, eighth, ninth, and tenth of this set, was first designated in relation to Udayin. This downfall concerns a monk who enters a house, lies or sits beside it, or sits in the vicinity of a couple having sexual intercourse or engaging in similar acts in their own home. It is incurred when they become conscious of the monk's presence.

(3) To stand in a house where persons are having sexual intercourse: This downfall is the same as the last, except for "in the vicinity" replaced by "with a barrier between them and the monk" and "lying or sitting" replaced by "standing."

(4) To give food to naked ascetics: This regulation was first designated in relation to Ananda. This downfall concerns a monk who gives by his own hand food appropriate for himself and for the recipient at appropriate times to non-Buddhist naked ascetics, either male or female, except in the cases of sickness, the recipient being his relative, or for the monk's ennobling practice. This downfall is incurred when the food is received.

(5) To watch military displays: This regulation, the sixth, and the seventh were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall concerns a monk who leaves the vicinity of his residence without a special reason, such as a king's command, to watch an army. It is incurred when he sees it.

(6) To stay with the military: This downfall concerns a monk who, without special reasons as in the former case, stays more than one or two days with the military.

(7) To take part in the military: This downfall concerns a monk who, although obliged by circumstances to stay with the military, intentionally touches their armor and weapons, or arranges their banners.

(8) To strike: This downfall concerns a monk who strikes a fully ordained monk in anger or incites others to do so. A downfall is incurred for each blow struck.

(9) To pretend to strike: This downfall concerns a monk who, in anger, makes a threatening gesture as if preparing to strike a fully ordained monk. It is incurred when the other monk understands.

(10) To conceal wrong behavior: This downfall concerns a monk who, in the midst of a formal setting for divulgence, conceals (without special reason, such

as doubt concerning the act) his recognition of another fully ordained monk's incurrance of a downfall of negative behavior, either a defeating act or a remaining downfall. To conceal the fact beyond that night incurs this downfall; to conceal an act apart from a defeating or remaining downfall entails a fault.

The sixth set of ten, the householder downfalls: (1) To try to prevent a gift of food: This regulation, the fourth, sixth, and seventh of this set were first designated in relation to Upananda. This downfall concerns a monk who, with negative intent and discouraging words, incites a householder to stop offering food at an appropriate time for such offering to another fully ordained monk. This downfall is incurred when the householder has understood the meaning of the monk's words.

(2) To touch fire: This regulation, the eighth, ninth, and tenth of this set were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall concerns a monk who carelessly or carefully touches fire, or incites another to touch fire. It is incurred when the fire is touched. However, if fire must be touched in the course of a religious activity, on that occasion the monk must think, "The Teacher gave permission for such an act." With such recollection, touching the fire does not incur a downfall.

(3) To change assent: This regulation was first designated in relation to Ananda. This downfall concerns a monk who first gave his assent to the monastic community's formal procedure in relation to another monk, which then begins. The originally assenting monk later says dissenting words, "I withdraw my assent." The downfall is incurred when his words are understood.

If the monk changes his assent before the act has begun and the act is not carried out, this downfall is not incurred.

(4) To sleep an additional night: A monk is permitted to sleep two nights in the same place as an individual not fully ordained. Except for special circumstances, such as sickness, this downfall is incurred after the third night, at dawn of the fourth day.

However, in the case of sleeping in the same residence, if a distance of at least eight and a half cubits separates the persons, no downfall is incurred. A discourse states, "This separation represents the distance a hen can fly and land," because this indicates that the two do not share the same residence.

(5) To not reject negative views: This regulation was first designated in relation to the monk Aritta. This downfall concerns a monk who expresses the negative view that taking intoxicants, eating after noon, or other such acts are without fault. It is incurred when he does not reject such beliefs after a five-part encouragement to abandon them.

(6) To side with an expelled monk: This downfall concerns a monk who acts in harmony, such as conversing, with a monk who has been expelled from the residence of the monastic community. It is incurred in the first instant after the night passes.

(7) To join a banished novice: This downfall concerns a monk who lives in harmony, such as sleeping in the same place, with a novice banished by the community because he did not reject negative views. It is incurred after one night.

(8) To wear undyed clothing: This downfall concerns a monk who, without another's aid, wears more than a cubit length of white cloth that has not been dyed to one of three designated colors. This does not include cloth for a water strainer. If the monk wears cloth dyed black, gray, or one of the eight major colors, this incurs a fault.

(9) To touch precious objects: This downfall does not concern special circumstances, such as to prevent waste, service by a patron who wishes to acquire goodness, or the teaching of the doctrine. This downfall concerns a monk who, with an unrestrained attitude, touches or incites others to touch the following objects or their arrangements that do not belong to him: precious substances, such as jewels or pearls; things that are called by that name, such as weapons like arrows and spears; or musical instruments, such as a drum.

(10) To bathe: This downfall concerns a monk who, except for permissible times, such as during the three hot summer months or to relieve illness, deliberately submerges half his body in water to bathe less than half a month after last having washed.

The seventh set of ten, the intentional downfalls: (1) To kill an animal: This regulation, the second, and the sixth were first designated in relation to Udayin. This downfall concerns a monk who, with the intent to take life, kills an animal or incites such killing. It is incurred when that being dies before the monk, and for each animal killed.

(2) To cause regret: This downfall concerns a monk who, in order to make another fully ordained monk unhappy, says words to cause regret, such as, "The vows have not arisen in you" or "You have broken your vows." It is incurred when the monk understands the words.

(3) To tickle: This regulation and the fourth were first designated in relation to seventeen monks. This downfall concerns a monk who, in order to cause a tickling sensation in another monk, touches his armpits or other parts of his body.

(4) To play in the water: This downfall concerns a monk who, with an

undisciplined attitude, submerges half his body in the water to play or incites others to play.

(5) To sleep together with a woman: This regulation was first designated in relation to Anuruddha. This downfall concerns a monk who, without a companion who shares the same vows, sleeps in the same place as a woman. It is incurred when the night has passed.

(6) To frighten: This downfall concerns a monk who, with the intent to frighten another fully ordained monk, shows various unpleasant, scary forms or incites another to do so. It is incurred when the other becomes afraid.

(7) To conceal: This regulation was first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall concerns a monk who, without the intent to steal or to help another, conceals or incites others to conceal the robes, begging bowl, or other possessions of any member of the five classes of renunciant. It is incurred when the object is concealed.

(8) To use without assurance: This regulation was first designated in relation to Upananda. This downfall concerns a monk who reappropriates and uses as he wishes an object that he previously gave another fully ordained monk, without the assurance of the other monk's permission. In this case, the monk does not intend to steal nor is a close companion of the other monk who would automatically share his possessions.

(9) To accuse: This regulation was first designated in relation to Mettiya and Bhummajaka. This downfall concerns a monk who, without basis in sight, hearing, or material evidence, accuses a fully ordained monk of having committed any of the remaining defeating acts. It is incurred when his words are understood.

(10) To walk along a path with a woman: This regulation was first designated in relation to a monk traveling to Vaishali. This downfall concerns a monk who walks along a road with a woman who is not his relative, without their being accompanied by a male companion who keeps the vows. It is incurred for each earshot thus traveled; each half-earshot constitutes a fault.

The eighth set of ten, known as travelers-or-thieves downfalls: (1) To travel with a thief: This regulation was first designated in relation to a traveling monk. This downfall concerns a monk who travels with a thief or a merchant who does not pay his taxes. Like the former downfall, it is incurred for each earshot traveled.

(2) To take full ordination before twenty years of age: This regulation was first designated in relation to Maudgalyayana. This downfall concerns an individual who has not reached twenty years of age, even if his age is calculated from the moment of conception. If that person is aware of the fact, or has doubts,

and takes full ordination, once the three repetitions of the action recitation are complete and the performance recitation has begun, the preceptor incurs a downfall; the master and participating community, a fault.

(3) To till the soil: This regulation, the fourth, and the fifth were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall concerns a monk who tills what is known in the world as firm, solid soil, or incites another to till the soil, except in the cases of special need. It is incurred when it is tilled more than four finger-widths deep.

(4) To overstay an invitation: This downfall concerns a monk who stays for longer than the period indicated by the patron or, if no limit was indicated, to remain and eat his food for longer than four months.

(5) To disdain encouragement to learn the training: This downfall concerns a monk who is encouraged by other fully ordained monks to learn the training. It is incurred when the monk rejects such encouragement with disdain, such as, “You don’t know the training and until I can ask someone who does, I won’t learn!” and when another understands his words.

(6) To eavesdrop: This regulation was first designated in relation to Upananda. This downfall concerns a monk who is in conflict with another fully ordained monk. It is incurred when he listens to a conversation between that monk and one or more other monks, without wishing to resolve the argument but to further the dispute, and when he understands the words of the conversation he eavesdrops upon.

(7) To leave unannounced: This regulation was first designated in relation to Ananda. This downfall concerns a monk qualified to act as an additional participant and who first joined the row of monks attending the community’s religious activity, such as purification and renewal of the vows. It is incurred when the monk leaves beyond hearing distance before having requested permission and without having been accorded common assent by the community, or if the monk leaves without announcing this to the monks sitting next to him, above and below in rank. If the monk leaves after an audible request, it is a fault. If the monk is not qualified to be an additional participant, for example, his leaving does not incur a downfall.

(8) Disrespect: This regulation was first designated in relation to Nak-pa, son of Lang-chen Lhé-kyi Dakpo. This downfall concerns a monk who, in the actual presence of the Buddha, of the community of fully ordained monks, or of a symbol of the community, disrespectfully says without regret concerning his inability, “I am unable to fulfill the religious duty I was assigned.” It is incurred when he rejects the command and contradicts it.

(9) To take intoxicants: This regulation was first designated in relation to



Sagata. This downfall concerns a monk who wishes to eat or drink any substance that has the potential to induce intoxication, such as fermented grain alcohol, alcohol from grapes, or their malt or dregs. It is incurred when he swallows any such substance.

There is no fault in drinking alcohol that has been boiled and has lost its flavor and potency, as a remedy for illness, or in rubbing it on the body.

(10) To go to a town at an inappropriate time: “Inappropriate time” refers to the afternoon, considered to be after the sun reaches its mid-transit until the first light of dawn in the continent where the monk resides. This downfall concerns a monk who, without specific reason, leaves to go to a town of laypersons without informing his community companions. It is incurred when he leaves the gate and the vicinity.

The ninth set of ten, the teaching of the doctrine downfalls: (1) To go to another town: This regulation, the sixth, and the tenth were first designated in relation to Upananda. This downfall concerns a monk who, in the morning, is invited by a patron’s own words to eat at his home. If the monk does not set the time, saying, “Offer at this time,” and goes from home to home, if he visits more than three homes, this disrupts the community’s noontime meal; if in the afternoon, he visits more than four homes, this disrupts the community’s partaking of the doctrine.

(2) To go to the king’s palace in the evening: This regulation was first designated in relation to Udayin. Except for a special reason, such as a religious duty, this downfall concerns a monk who goes to the king’s palace when the king’s wife, the queen, is in residence. It is incurred when the monk leaves the gate and the vicinity of his residence between sunset and before the end of dawn. This downfall is also incurred when the monk goes during the day and sleeps there at night.

(3) To disdain the points of training: This regulation and the fifth were first designated in relation to the group of six monks. This downfall concerns a monk who has heard two or more times *The Discourse of Individual Liberation*. To show that knowledge of the subjects therein is worthless, he says ironically during the purification and renewal ceremony, “I didn’t know this point before, but now I do,” thus speaking words of disdain for the training in the monastic code. A downfall is incurred when another understands the monk’s words. To similarly disdain the discourses or other texts constitutes a fault.

(4) To make a needle case: This regulation, the seventh, eighth, and ninth were first designated in relation to very many monks. This downfall concerns a monk who makes or has another make a needle case of a rare and precious

material. It is incurred when he takes possession of it.

(5) To make a seat with legs: This downfall concerns a monk who makes or has others make a seat for the community or a small seat whose legs measure longer than a cubit from a hole in the ground where they are inserted for support or stability. It is incurred when the monk takes possession of it.

(6) To cover with cotton: This downfall concerns a monk who, with malicious intent, spreads cotton on the community's seats and small seats. It is incurred when they are covered.

(7, 8, 9) To make an oversized mat, rash cover, or great cloth for the summer retreat: This downfall concerns a monk, who makes for his own use, or has another make any of these articles in a size that exceeds the correct measure for him. It is incurred when he takes possession of it.

The measures for each are as follows: The mat should measure three cubits long and two cubits and six finger-widths wide. The rash cover should measure six cubits long and three cubits wide. The great-cloth should measure nine cubits long and three cubits and eighteen finger-widths wide. As to the cubits and finger-widths' sizes, each should correspond to the owner's proportion. If they exceed such measure by more than a half, this incurs a downfall.

When these downfalls are acknowledged, the needle case must be broken; the cotton on the seats gathered; or the excess of the seat's legs, mat, rash cover, or great cloth cut. If he who acknowledges the downfall does not ask, "Should I break, or gather, or cut the item concerned?" this constitutes a fault.

(10) To make the monk's robes the size of the Joyful Buddha's robes: If a monk's body is not the size of the Teacher's, he incurs a downfall by taking possession of robes of that size or larger that he has made, or has had others make.

The size of the Teacher's robes is five of the Teacher's cubits long, equal to an average person's fifteen cubits, and three of the Teacher's cubits wide, equal to an average person's nine cubits. These differences are due to the Teacher's cubit being three times the average length.

### ***Four Acts to Be Acknowledged Individually [v]***

**The four acts to be acknowledged individually are to beg for food, to eat food served with favoritism,**

**To beg in spite of restrictions, and to not watch the forest but to eat.**

This category is called "to be acknowledged individually" since they must be acknowledged separately with words of regret. The first regulation was first

designated in relation to Upananda; the other three, in relation to the group of six monks.

(1) To receive food from a fully ordained nun: This regulation concerns a monk who in a town, in the vicinity, or on a road, begs from a fully ordained nun, who is not his relative, food that she herself has prepared for herself at the appropriate time. It is incurred when he eats the food.

(2) To not refuse but to eat food served with favoritism by a fully ordained nun: This regulation concerns three or more fully ordained monks invited by a layperson in whose home a fully ordained nun directs the service. When, instead of following rank, she orders with favoritism, “Give to this one,” and the monk in question does not refuse and all the monks subsequently eat, all of them incur the fault of this act to be acknowledged individually.

(3) To forgo the training and to enter a home: This act concerns a community’s consensual decision through formal procedures to formulate a rule to not beg for food at certain homes due to restrictions and special circumstances. This fault is incurred when a monk subject to that regulation begs at the appropriate time from that home things other than what is said to be permissible, such as leaves. It is incurred when he eats the food.

(4) To not watch the forest: This act concerns a monk designated by the community to keep an eye on the forest when the community residence is located in a dangerous place of isolation, more than one earshot from a town. The monk incurs this fault when he thinks, “What’s the point of guarding the community and the patron from harm?” and does not watch the forest but begs food from a household at an appropriate time. It is incurred when he eats the food.

### ***One Hundred and Twelve Reprehensible Acts [vi]***

**The one hundred and twelve reprehensible acts include ten concerning wearing clothes—**

**Seven concern the lower robe; three, the upper robe.**

**Twenty concern behavior when walking to homes; nine, how to sit;**

**Eight, acceptance of food; twenty-one, eating food;**

**Fourteen, handling the begging bowl;**

**Twenty-six, teaching; three, practice of hygiene; and one, movement.**

**In total, there are two hundred and fifty-three vows for fully ordained monks.**

These acts have the nature of minor offenses so are reprehensible acts. The one hundred and twelve reprehensible acts have nine categories:

The first category concerns wearing clothes; monks must train to avoid these ten mistakes. Seven concern the wearing of the lower robe: (1) It should not be worn unevenly round, with its upper and lower extremities uneven in height. (2) It should not be worn too high, reaching the knees in length. (3) It should not be worn too low, touching the ankles in length. (4) It should not be worn with a long overhanging piece of material in front, like an elephant's trunk. (5) It should not be worn with the belt tied upward, like a palm leaf. (6) It should not be worn with the belt sticking out in the middle, like a sack of grain. (7) It should not be worn over the belt with the upper part uneven, like a cobra's hood.

Three concern the wearing of the upper robe: (8) The cloak of patches and the upper robe should not be worn unevenly round. (9) They should not be worn too long. (10) They should not be worn too short.

The second category concerns behavior when traveling. The following twenty faults should not be committed. Instead, when walking to visit homes, monks should learn to walk in a peaceful and restrained manner. It is a reprehensible act (1) to not mindfully restrain body and speech; (2) to not wear the upper and lower robes properly; (3) to make meaningless sounds; (4) to allow the eyes to wander right or left; (5) to look farther than a yoke's breadth in front; (6) to cover the head with clothes; (7) to hoist up the lower robe so that the genitals are exposed; (8) to cover both shoulders with the upper robe; (9) to cross the arms over the nape of the neck; (10) to cross the arms behind the back; (11) to skip while walking; (12) to walk with overly long steps, extending and pulling back the knees; (13) to lift the heels and thus to walk on the front part of the foot; (14) to walk crouched, on the heels; (15) to walk with the hands on the hips, elbows extended; (16) to walk crookedly, twisting the body; (17) to walk waving the hands; (18) to walk shaking and twisting the head; (19) to walk with the shoulders touching another's; and (20) to walk holding another's hand.

The third category concerns how to sit on a seat. The following nine faults of sitting must be renounced. In a home, a monk should sit with his legs folded in meditation posture. In a layperson's home, it is a reprehensible act (1) to sit in a seat not designated by the patron; (2) to sit down without checking whether or not insects are on the seat; (3) to sit down heavily, striking the posterior; (4) to stretch and cross the legs; (5) to cross the legs at the thighs; (6) to sit with one ankle on the other; (7) to tuck the legs under the seat, like the Mongolian sitting style; (8) to spread the legs in different directions; and (9) to sit with the genitals exposed.

The fourth category concerns receiving food. A monk should learn to

renounce these eight faults in receiving food. In any place, such as a town or a temple, it is a reprehensible act (1) to not accept food politely, in a manner inconsistent with monastic discipline; (2) to accept as much food as will entirely cover the brim and the mouth of the bowl; (3) to take rice and vegetables in unequal measure; (4) to accept food out of strict order of rank; (5) to accept while not paying attention to the begging bowl but to look to the side; (6) to extend the bowl before the food arrives; (7) with the wish for more, to conceal the food already received, then to again present the bowl; and (8) to present the monk's bowl holding it higher than others' bowls.

The fifth category concerns eating food. A monk should learn to renounce these twenty-one faults in eating food. In any situation, it is a reprehensible act (1) to eat improperly in a manner inconsistent with the monastic code; (2) to eat too large mouthfuls; (3) to eat too small mouthfuls; (4) to not eat moderately sized mouthfuls, in keeping with the monk's own or common standards; (5) to open the mouth wide before the food reaches it; (6) to talk while chewing; (7) while eating, to make *tsuk-tsuk* sounds when the food is sour; (8) to make *chak-chak* sounds when the food is sweet; (9) to make *hu-hu* sounds when the food is cold; (10) to make *pu-pu* sounds when the food is hot; (11) to extend the tongue while eating; (12) to set apart one grain at a time of barley, or other grain, before eating it; (13) to criticize the food, by saying such things as, "The patron's food is awful!" or "The food is sour!"; (14) to move a mouthful of food from the right cheek to the left; (15) to make sounds with the palate while eating; (16) to bite off what doesn't fit in the mouth, like an animal; (17) to lick off food stuck to the hands; (18) to lick the begging bowl or cups, and so on; (19) to shake off food stuck to the hands; (20) to tip back and forth a begging bowl containing food; and (21) to form the food into the shape of a replica of a religious monument, then to crush and eat it.

The sixth category concerns the handling of the begging bowl. The following are the fourteen points of training concerning the begging bowl: (1) do not examine another's begging bowl to disparage it; (2) do not touch the water container with food stuck to the hands; (3) do not throw water containing food, or other things, toward a fully ordained monk; (4) do not discard food and dirty washing water in the house without asking the home owner; (5) do not place leftover food in the begging bowl and leave it there; (6) do not place the begging bowl without a support on bare ground; (7) do not place the begging bowl by a crevice; (8) do not place the begging bowl at the top of a mountainside precipice; (9) do not place the begging bowl on the slope of a terrace; (10) do not wash the begging bowl by a crevice; (11) do not wash the begging bowl at a precipice; (12) do not wash the begging bowl on the slope of a cliff; (13) do not wash the

begging bowl while standing at a junction of paths; and (14) do not use the begging bowl to draw water from a stream with a strong current.

The seventh category concerns teaching the doctrine. Fully ordained monks must not teach in these twenty-six cases: (1) do not teach the doctrine if the listeners, who are not sick, are seated, while the teacher stands; (2) do not teach those who are lying down; (3) do not teach if the listener's seat is high and the teacher's seat low; (4) do not teach those who walk in front if one is following behind; (5) do not teach those who walk in the middle of the road if one is walking on the side of the road; (6) do not teach those who have covered heads when not sick; (7) do not teach those who have their clothes hoisted up; (8) do not teach those who have both shoulders covered by the upper robe; (9) do not teach those who have their arms crossed at the nape of the neck; (10) do not teach those who have their arms crossed behind the head; (11) do not teach those who have their hair gathered in a bun on the head; (12) do not teach those wearing a hat; (13) do not teach those wearing an ornamental headdress; (14) do not teach those wearing garlands on the head; (15) do not teach those wearing a turban; (16) do not teach those riding an elephant; (17) do not teach those riding a horse; (18) do not teach those carried on a palanquin; (19) do not teach those riding a horse cart or other vehicles; (20) do not teach those wearing shoes; (21) do not teach those holding a staff; (22) do not teach those carrying a parasol; (23) do not teach those carrying a club or other weapons; (24) do not teach those carrying a sword; (25) do not teach those carrying weapons, such as a bow and arrow; and (26) do not teach those wearing armor.

However, teaching a listener who is ill does not incur any fault.

The eighth category concerns practice of correct hygiene: (1) except if sick, do not defecate or urinate while standing; (2) unless one cannot find another place, do not defecate, urinate, spit, discharge mucus, or vomit, and so on, into water; and (3) unless one cannot find another place, do not defecate, urinate, spit, discharge mucus, or vomit, and so on, onto green grass.

The ninth category concerns movement. It has one point: except in cases of danger of harm by tigers, and so on, do not climb a tree to a height higher than that of a man.

Thus, in total, there are two hundred and fifty-three vows for a fully ordained monk.

### ***Vows for Fully Ordained Nuns [vii]***

**In brief, a fully ordained nun renounces eight defeating acts, twenty**

**remaining downfalls,  
Thirty-three downfalls that require forfeiture, one hundred and eighty  
simple downfalls,  
Eleven acts to be acknowledged individually, and one hundred and twelve  
reprehensible acts—  
Three hundred and sixty-four regulations in all.**

In brief, a fully ordained nun renounces eight defeating acts, twenty remaining downfalls, thirty-three downfalls that require forfeiture, one hundred and eighty simple downfalls, eleven acts to be acknowledged individually, and one hundred and twelve reprehensible acts—three hundred and sixty-four regulations in all.

### ***The Life That Is the Support for the Vows' Arising [F]***

**The life that is the support for the vows is a male or female human being  
From one of three continents. Non-Buddhists, those who have committed  
one of the acts of immediate fruition,  
Persons without genitals, or persons from the continent of Unpleasant  
Sound are ineligible.**

The life that constitutes the support for the vows is a male or female human being from one of three continents—the southern, eastern, or western.

These persons are ineligible to receive the vows: non-Buddhists; those who have committed one of the acts of immediate fruition; neuters—persons with no genitals (literally, “without the possibility for sexual intercourse”); the five kinds of asexual persons (persons born with no genitals, those whose gender changes each fortnight, those repulsed by sexual relations, the jealous—that is, persons of either gender who wish to have sexual relations but are physically incapable of doing so—and those whose genitals are impaired); persons with physical sexual dysfunction, such as those who have both male and female genitals or persons whose gender has changed three times; and persons from the continent of Unpleasant Sound.

### ***How the Vows Are Violated [G]***

**The vows are terminated by offering back the training, by death, by  
change of gender,  
By the arising of wrong views, by the commission of one of the principal  
downfalls,  
By the decline of the sacred Buddhist doctrine, or by other events.**

The vows are terminated by offering back the training, by death, by change of gender, by the arising of wrong views, by the commission of one of the principal downfalls, by the decline of the sacred Buddhist doctrine, or by other events.

### ***How to Restore the Vows [H]***

**If a defeating act has been committed, the fact must not be concealed. The training must be offered back with regret:**

**It is said the vows can thereby arise again.**

**If a defeating act is concealed, the vows cannot be repaired during this lifetime.**

**In the case of remaining downfalls, downfalls that require relinquishment, and others, they must be regretted**

**In the presence of the monastic community. By energetic application to restoring the vows, they can be purified.**

If a defeating act has been committed, the fact is not concealed, and the training is offered back with regret, the vows can arise when taken again. If the defeating act has been concealed, the vows cannot be repaired during this lifetime. Remaining downfalls, downfalls that require relinquishment, and other infractions can be repaired by regret (that is, acknowledgment) in the presence of the monastic community. By energetic application to the formulae for restoring the vows, they can be purified.

### **THE FOUNDATION, PATHS, AND RESULTS OF THE HEARERS' WAY [III]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) the foundation and (2) the paths and results of the hearers' way.

#### ***The Foundation of the Hearers' Way [A]***

**On the basis of the vows of individual liberation, taken so that the holder reaches freedom from existence,**

**The hearers practice the four guidelines of ennobling training.**

The exalted hearers take the vows of individual liberation as their basic support to grasp the banner that signals their freedom from the great prison pit of the three realms' existences. They then practice the four guidelines of ennobling training: to not return anger with anger, to not return verbal abuse with verbal



abuse, to not return blows with blows, and to not return criticism with criticism.

The essence of the hearers' way is the wish to free yourself alone from the round of rebirth. This attitude is a technique to realize the nonexistence of the individual's sense of self. The literal definition of hearer (Tib. *nyan thos*, pronounced "nyen-tö") is that, relying on a master, one listens to (*nyen*) and hears (*tö*) the doctrine, then makes this known to others (Tib. *sgrogs*,

pronounced "drok"). Thus, they are called either "hearer-proclaimers" (*tö drok*) or "listener-hearers" (*nyen-tö*). The purpose for this path is that through the accomplishment of awakening in this final lifetime in existence, you can surely exit from the round of rebirth. A classification of these individuals has two categories: followers of the discourses—the discourse school; and followers of *The Great Treasury of Detailed Explanations*—the analytic school.

The truth of suffering teaches that existence is like a sickness produced in the body, speech, and mind by outer or inner conditions, with various effects, such as pain, undesirable circumstances, illness, and injury. These experiences exemplify the suffering due to the five psychophysical aggregations, and their perpetuation, during life within the round of rebirth. To extricate yourself from this suffering in which you have become enmeshed, you begin by understanding the nature of suffering.

The truth of the source of suffering teaches that formative karma resembles the cause of sickness. Formative karma is the cause (such as the three poisons, along with ignorance) which creates suffering, like the artist who draws a picture. You begin to renounce that cause.

The truth of cessation resembles the comfort of a cure from sickness. You exert yourself to attain the result—the special joy of freedom, as if from an epidemic or from the chasm of the round of rebirth.

The truth of the path resembles medicine. To become liberated from the sickness of suffering, you begin to meditate.

What is suffering? It is the arising psychophysical aggregations—sentient beings' births and their birthplaces. What is meant by "birth" is the cycle from one rebirth to another among the six kinds of beings. What is meant by "birthplace" is the worlds of outer environments. An enumeration of sufferings includes heat, cold, hunger, thirst, aging, sickness, and death. The source of suffering refers to the aspects of its causes: karma and mental afflictions. What is meant by "mental afflictions" includes desire; what is meant by "karma" is twofold: an act that is intended and the mind, which are reflected in ennobling, corrupting, and neutral acts. What is "intended" is physical and verbal karma; the "mind" is mental karma. Corrupting acts include killing and the other nine corrupting acts; the five acts of immediate fruition (such as killing your mother

or father); the five acts of proximate fruition (such as killing a bodhisattva); and such acts as forsaking Buddhist training. Ennobling acts include the renunciation of killing. Acts of undetermined outcome include the creative arts and construction. Cessation is the definite pacification, either with or without remainder, of suffering and of its causes. The path is the knowledge of suffering, the renunciation of its source, the actualization of cessation, and the five paths' meditations while relying on those paths' courses.

### ***The Paths and Results of the Hearers' Way [B]***

**The view is realization of the nonexistence of a self sensed in the individual;**

**Meditation is actualization of the thirty-seven facets of awakening along the paths of cultivation, application, seeing, and meditation.**

**The code of conduct is to keep the two hundred and fifty-three monastic vows during ten thousand great eons.**

**Having thus trained, the result beyond training is the state of arhat.**

The view is the realization of the nonexistence of a self sensed in the individual: you reach a conclusion concerning the basis of the self, the five psychophysical aggregations—the absence of an I, the absence of a self—and realize that the sense of self is intrinsically nonexistent, empty.

Meditation along the lesser path of cultivation is on the four forms of mindfulness; along the path's middle level, on the four forms of correct renunciation; and at the highest level, on the four supports for miraculous power. At the heat and peak levels of the path of application, meditation is on the five powers; at the levels of forbearance and sublime qualities, on the five forces. Along the path of seeing, meditation is on the seven aspects of awakening; at the path of meditation, on the branches of the eightfold exalted path. Thus, these thirty-seven facets of awakening are actualized by these stages of meditation.

### **The Path of Cultivation according to the Hearers' Way**

First, all paths begin with the lesser path of cultivation. Beginners who enter it have attachment to their own and to others' bodies; to remedy this, they meditate on mindfulness of the body. The general remedy for desire is to meditate on your own and others' bodies, and on all appearances, as skeletons: this counteracts attachment. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

Meditate on skeletons as a remedy for all that involves attachment.

Specific remedies are provided by meditations on eight perceptions: the image of a corpse, its decomposition, its destruction by insects, and so on. Once free from attachment, you can sometimes regard the body with the mindfulness of the subsequent observation of the body, such as meditating on it as a hollow reed.

This is followed by the mindfulness of sensation: perception of three sensations—pleasure, pain, or neutral—as a descent into suffering, and meditation on the perception of sensation as without a core, like a hollow reed. A discourse states:

Know that any sensation whatsoever is entirely suffering.

This is followed by meditation on the mindfulness of mind. This takes the form of mental tranquility and insight. Once you hold your attention on the outward and inward movement of the breath, you experience the stilling of discursive thoughts and the mind's relative truth. Upon examining this, you experience its ultimate truth—the mind's indivisible moments. Within this insight, you meditate on the meaning of the nonexistence of the sense of self.

This is followed by meditation on the mindfulness of phenomena. You meditate that, within the phenomena included within the aggregations of formative factors and consciousness, your external and internal senses of an existent autonomous identity lack an intrinsic nature, are impermanent, or like an illusion, and so on.

In the course of these four forms of mindfulness, you use mindfulness of body, sensation, and mind to meditate on the aggregations of form, sensation, and perception as not having an essential core, and so on. Then you use the mindfulness of phenomena to meditate upon the aggregations of formative factors and consciousness. Thus, these meditations counteract in various ways the mental afflictions induced by manifest attachment to phenomena, subsumed as the five psychophysical aggregations. The coarse objects to be renounced are thereby suppressed and you enter the higher paths. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

By thorough examination of the two characteristics  
Of the body, sensation, mind, and phenomena . . .

Thus, “the two characteristics” are general characteristics and the characteristics unique to each. Meditate on the body as unclean, sensation as suffering, the mind as impermanent, and phenomena as intrinsically lacking an autonomous identity.

Then, once the middle path of cultivation has arisen, you undertake diligent

endeavor and meditate to prevent the development of corrupting acts not yet arisen, to restrain those that have, to develop ennobling acts not yet arisen, and to increase those that have. Since these stages cause whatever is corrupting to be entirely relinquished, they are called the forms of correct renunciation.

Then, when the higher path of cultivation has arisen, you meditate on the meditative states of intent, diligence, mind, and examination. In sequence, these are meditation having developed single-focused intent on the framework of relative or ultimate ennobling acts; full effort within this ongoing state, to prolong it; single-focused concentration; and meditation based on examination that completely discerns the meaning. Because these meditations produce any number of states of meditative stability, which in turn produce the skillful means (or aspects) of miraculous powers, they are called “the supports for miraculous powers.”

### **The Path of Application according to the Hearers’ Way**

The path of application then arises in your stream of being. At the heat and peak levels of this path, meditation is on the five powers: faith, diligence, mindfulness, meditative states, and sublime insight. With confidence based on faith in the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths, you meditate; diligence fosters interest; mindfulness ensures that your understanding of the subjects is not forgotten; meditative states allow your mind to grasp subjects one-pointedly; and sublime insight discerns the nature of those subjects. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

Heat’s domain is the four noble truths.

Meditation has sixteen aspects, after which heat

Leads to the peak, which is similar.

What are these sixteen aspects? The four aspects of the truth of suffering are (1) impermanence, (2) suffering, (3) emptiness, and (4) absence of an autonomous identity. The four aspects of the truth of the source of suffering are (5) cause, (6) source, (7) production, and (8) the very essence of conditions. The four aspects of the truth of cessation are (9) nonself, (10) peace, (11) abundant happiness, and (12) isolation. The four aspects of the truth of the path are (13) the path, (14) reasoning, (15) achievement, and (16) certain release.

At the levels of forbearance and sublime qualities on the path of application, meditation is on the five forces. They are called forces due to the aspect of their special capacity to overcome the mental afflictions. Their style of meditation is similar to that of the five powers.

Concerning this style of meditation on the aspects of the four noble truths, the same text states:

Forbearance arises from that;  
Its two stages are similar.

In this context, the four aspects of the truth of suffering in the desire realm are joined with the four aspects of suffering in the higher two realms (counted as one), eight in all. In a similar fashion, each of the aspects of the truths of the source, cessation, and path has eight, a total of thirty-two. Further, these thirty-two aspects can be multiplied by seven—the levels of heat and peak (that is, three each for the desire realm and the higher two realms) and the lesser level of forbearance—to give a total of two hundred and twenty-four aspects to meditate upon.

At the middle level of forbearance, among the thirty-two aspects, you relinquish the four of the truth of the path of the higher realms; thus you meditate on twenty-eight aspects. Further, once you relinquish the four aspects of the truth of the path related to the body in the desire realm, you meditate on twenty-four aspects. After relinquishing the four aspects of the truth of cessation in the higher realms, you meditate on twenty. After you relinquish the four aspects of the truth of cessation in the desire realm, sixteen. After you relinquish the four aspects of the truth of the source of suffering of the higher realms, twelve. After you relinquish the four aspects of the truth of the source of suffering of the desire realm, eight. After you relinquish the four aspects of the truth of suffering of the higher realms, four.

Thus, as described, in the meditation on the four aspects of the truth of suffering in the desire realm, there are two kinds of individual, those who are characterized principally by craving and those characterized by views.

The first (that is, individuals characterized by craving) meditate on three aspects of the desire realm's four truths, having relinquished either the truth of cessation or that of the path. Then they relinquish the other: they meditate on the truths of suffering and its source. At that point, there are two kinds of faults: one from pride at the thought, "I exist"; the other from complacency due to apathy. Those who have the first fault meditate twice on the aspect of impermanence to complete the middle level of forbearance. Thus, on the middle level of forbearance, apart from the aspects discarded, a total of one hundred and nineteen aspects remain to be meditated upon. *The Designation* states:

One hundred and nineteen instants . . .

Then, by meditating once upon the aspect of impermanence, they complete the highest level of forbearance. They complete the level of supreme qualities by another repetition of this meditation. Then, when they see impermanence, forbearance of the knowledge of the reality of suffering arises. In relation to the second fault, that of complacency due to apathy, individuals meditate twice on the aspect of the truth of suffering to complete the middle level of forbearance, and so on, as before in the case of individuals with pride.

Second, those characterized by views relinquish either of the first two aspects of the four truths, then meditate upon the three remaining aspects. They then relinquish the other and meditate on the final two. Here as well there are the two kinds of individuals: Those characterized by the view of what pertains to a sense of self meditate twice on the aspect of emptiness and thus complete the middle level of forbearance. Those characterized by the view of the sense of self meditate twice on the aspect of lack of an intrinsic self, and thus complete the middle level of forbearance. Attainment of the highest level of forbearance and supreme qualities follows similar patterns as before.

### **The Path of Seeing according to the Hearers' Way**

After the path of application is thus completed, the stages of the sixteen instants of the path of seeing arise sequentially. The first fifteen belong to the path of seeing. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

Concerning that, there are the fifteen moments:

What was not seen is seen; thus, "the path of seeing."

The sixteenth instant belongs to the path of meditation; it is also the antidote that prolongs the process of renunciation on the path of seeing.

Concerning the process of renunciation on the path of seeing, what is to be abandoned on that path is pervasive labeling. If this is classified from the perspective of its essence, there are six categories; *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

The root of existence expands from six subtle parts:

Desire, and likewise, anger,

Pride, ignorance, views,

And doubt. Moreover, these six . . .

### **The Path of Seeing according to the Hearers' Analytic School**

If these six things to be abandoned are categorized by focus, realm, and mistaken

engagement, the hearer analytic school focuses on the four truths to describe ten stages of mistaken engagement within the three realms—five views and five nonviews. The five views are to consider “an accumulation of perishable things” as a self, to cling to extremes, wrong views, to esteem philosophical views as sublime, and to esteem ethical conduct and ascetic practice. The five nonviews are desire, anger, pride, ignorance, and doubt.

How does one engage in these? *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

With the exception of three or two views,  
There are ten, seven, seven, and eight subtle roots of existence that are  
abandoned.

“The three views” mentioned here refer to the first two and the last among the five listed above; “the two views” refer to the first two. While one does not engage in these, one does with the rest; thus there are thirty-two things renounced on the path of seeing in the desire realm. In the upper two realms, since anger is subtracted from each of the four, there are twenty-eight views and nonviews renounced in each realm through focus upon the four truths. Thus, in all, eighty-eight things are renounced on the path of seeing.

To explain, in relation to the appearance of the truth of suffering in the desire realm, there are five manners of direct engagement and five manners of engagement based on that mistaken connection having begun. The first five are the following: the view of “an accumulation of perishable things” as a self perceives a self and that which pertains to a self within the domain of the truth of suffering; the view that clings to extremes adheres to existence or nonexistence, eternalism or nihilism; wrong views adhere to nothingness; ignorance engages in things without comprehension of their characteristics; and doubt is engagement while uncertain whether or not the five psychophysical aggregations constitute the truth of suffering.

The second five (the five manners of engagement based on that mistaken connection having begun) are based on the five views: desire is to be attached and fixated on the five views; pride is to be prideful and arrogant in relation to them; the view that esteems philosophical views considers such views to be sublime; the view that esteems ethical conduct and ascetic practice considers them to be purity and liberation; and anger is to be irritated when hearing the view of the absence of autonomous identity, which contradicts the above five views.

Further, to explain the “seven, seven” in the quote above, in a manner similar to that of the truth of suffering, the truth of the source of suffering and the truth

of cessation in the desire realm effect the relinquishment of seven mistaken manners of engagement. These are the above ten, minus three views—the view of “an accumulation of perishable things” as a self, clinging to extremes, and esteem of ethical conduct and ascetic practice.

Further, to explain the “eight” in the quote above, the truth of the path in the desire realm effects the relinquishment of eight mistaken manners of engagement. These are the above ten, minus two views—the view of “an accumulation of perishable things” as a self and clinging to extremes.

Thus, in the desire realm, the four truths counteract a total of thirty-two things renounced on the path of seeing. In the higher two realms, anger is subtracted, but the others are counted as before. Thus it is stated,

They are nine, six, six, and seven.

Thus, each of the two higher realms has twenty-eight things to be abandoned on the path of seeing, a total of fifty-six, to which are added the previous thirty-two of the desire realm, a total of eighty-eight.

### **The Path of Seeing according to the Hearers’ Discourse School**

According to the discourse school, the truth of suffering counteracts the desire realm’s ten aspects of mistaken engagement; the other three truths, eight each (the view of “an accumulation of perishable things” as a self and clinging to extremes are subtracted), a total of thirty-four. For the upper two realms, because anger focused on the four truths is subtracted, there are thirty for each realm. Thus the discourse school believes that a total of ninety-four things are abandoned on the path of seeing. *The Compendium of Definitions* states:

The truth of the source of suffering has—except for the two views of clinging to impermanent phenomena as a self and clinging to extremes—eight manners of mistaken engagement with the mental afflictions. The truths of cessation and of the path are similar.

Renunciation of these things on the path of seeing can be either gradual or sudden. First, in the course of the path of seeing’s fifteen instants, those of gradual progress relinquish eight times what must be abandoned on that path. To explain, patience that has the knowledge of suffering’s reality as its object effects the direct abandonment of the desire realm’s ten manners of mistaken engagement in the truth of suffering. This is effected by the arising path without obstacles. Knowledge of suffering’s reality is the indirect antidote’s manner to



abandon the ten. Forbearance of the subsequent knowledge of suffering effects the direct abandonment of the eighteen mistaken manners of engagement in the truth of suffering in the higher two realms; subsequent knowledge is the indirect antidote's manner of abandoning them. Abandonment in relation to the remaining three truths follows the same pattern.

Second, in the course of the path of seeing's fifteen instants, those of sudden progress renounce four times what must be abandoned on the path of seeing, a process similar to the bodhisattvas' manner of renunciation.

Along the path of seeing, meditation is on the seven aspects of awakening: correct mindfulness, correct analysis of phenomena, correct diligence, correct joy, correct extreme refinement, correct meditative states, and correct equanimity.

### **The Path of Meditation according to the Hearers' Way**

Following the path of seeing, the path of meditation arises. Along its three stages—lesser, middle, and higher—there are nine levels: lesser lesser, middle lesser, and higher lesser; lesser middle, middle middle, and higher middle; lesser higher, middle higher, and higher higher.

The nine antidotes on the path of meditation, which counteract what must be abandoned, are divided into three degrees—greater, middle, and lesser—but are presented in reverse order from the levels of the path where they are relinquished, from greater greater, and so on. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

The path of meditation has nine stages and proximate stages,  
And, similarly, qualities,  
Divided into lesser, middle, and higher.  
Therefore, the lesser and the others are distinct.

Moreover, the essence of the nine levels, the ninefold path of meditation's functional antidote, is meditation on the eightfold exalted path: correct view, correct thought, correct speech, correct limits to actions, correct livelihood, correct effort, correct mindfulness, and correct meditative states.

Likewise, meditation includes the nine final states of composure: (1–4) the first, second, third, and fourth levels of meditative stability, (5–8) the four levels of formlessness—infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothing whatsoever, neither existence nor nonexistence; and (9) cessation. Moreover, meditation is sometimes done with a general focus, to gain what is not yet attained, and sometimes to complete what is already gained.

The impurities to be abandoned on these stages are of a coemergent nature. *The Compendium of Definitions* states:

“Coemergent” refers to those impurities of immature ordinary individuals, even those of birds or animals.

Classified by essence, there are four impurities: desire, anger, pride, and ignorance. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

Four are relinquished on the path of meditation.

Classified by realms, there are four impurities to be relinquished in the desire realm; and in the two higher realms, three each, a total of ten.

Classified by the levels of beings’ existences, in the desire realm’s stages, there are four impurities to be relinquished, and three on each of the eight stages of the two higher realms—four on the level of the form realm’s meditative stability and four on the levels of formlessness: a total of twenty-eight.

Classified according to the stages, and their great and middle levels, there are nine stages: the desire realm, the four levels of meditative stability in the form realm, and four levels of formlessness. Each stage has three degrees of desire (lesser, middle, and greater), each of which in turn is subdivided into three levels, to give nine sets of nine. Similarly, there are nine sets of nine for pride, nine sets of nine for ignorance, and one set of nine for anger in the desire realm, a total of two hundred and fifty-two. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

Four things are what is abandoned on the path of meditation.  
Except for anger, these same  
Are also present in the form and formless realms.

How are these things abandoned on the path of meditation? They are relinquished through cessation, as they are relinquished at the same time the previous stage ceases. The same text states:

When the mind of no further training arises,  
You are freed from obscurations.

The path of cessation  
Completely abandons those obscurations.

Those of sudden progress on the path renounce together the things abandoned on the path of meditation in the three realms. For them, cessation of the lesser lesser path of meditation and the noncausal cessation of the highest highest path of meditation happen simultaneously. Those of gradual progress renounce sequentially the nine degrees of things to be abandoned on the path's nine stages. By following this path, the actualization of the thirty-seven facets of awakening takes eleven great eons.

The code of conduct of the hearers is the traversing of the path while guarding the supreme ethical conduct of the two hundred and fifty-three vows of a fully ordained monk.

### **The Result of the Spiritual Path according to the Hearers' Way**

After having trained in these paths as described, the result, the path of no further training, is the state of arhat of the hearers' way—lesser manifest awakening. In this, two wisdoms are actualized: knowledge of exhaustion and knowledge of no coming-into-being. The same text states:

Knowledge of exhaustion and of no coming-into-being  
Is awakening.

“Knowledge of exhaustion” refers to the perception of these aspects: “I will know suffering; I will relinquish the source of suffering; I will actualize cessation; and I will rely on the path's course.” The same text states:

Knowledge of exhaustion is to have certain renunciation and knowledge  
In relation to the truths.

“Knowledge of no coming-into-being” refers to there being no further object of knowledge, once suffering, and so on, is known. The same text states:

“No further object of knowledge,” and so on,  
Is what is believed to be no coming-into-being.

Those endowed with these two aspects of wisdom are arhats, either with remainder or without remainder. Arhats with remainder have not rejected the assumed psychophysical aggregations and thus have a slight remainder of the truth of suffering; thus they protect the senses carefully from the senses'

objective domains. Arhats with remainder's sublime insight realize that the remainder's support has no autonomous identity. Thus, they have renounced what is to be abandoned in the three realms; yet such arhats can be two kinds: "without ornaments" if their meditative stability has not led to the attainment of miraculous powers, and so forth; or "adorned," if they have attained such powers.

Another distinction in the classification of arhat can be made, based on renunciation and capability. First, in a classification based on renunciation, arhats can reach liberation through both meditative states and sublime insight or through sublime insight alone. Accordingly, the force of sublime insight and meditative states produces liberation from both the obscurations of the three realms' mental afflictions and obscurations to composure; the second, sublime insight alone, produces liberation from the obscurations of mental afflictions but not from obscurations to composure.

Obscurations of mental afflictions are what produce an afflicted state, such as the three poisons. Obscurations to composure, such as depression and elation, impede meditative states. Further, obscurations to composure that prevent the arising of its causes precede meditative states, whereas obscurations that impede resting in the result do not permit abiding in the mind of the present.

Although these terms are identical to terminology used in the great way, their meanings in this context are different.

Second, when classified according to capability, there are six kinds of arhat: those who can deteriorate, those who kill themselves, those who can preserve their state, those who cannot progress, those who have the fortune of realization, and those who are immovable.

First, those who can deteriorate: for these arhats of inferior acumen, comfortable abiding deteriorates due to phenomena they perceive. Moreover, their bliss of meditative stability deteriorates. Second, those who kill themselves: these arhats of inferior acumen think that they will not deteriorate if their self is killed but they will deteriorate if it is not. Not wanting longevity or possessions, they are called "those who consider dying." Third, those who can preserve their state: for these arhats of inferior acumen, blissful stillness deteriorates if they are inebriated; it does not deteriorate if they are not. "Inebriation" or its lack refers to mental distraction due to sensual pleasures or the lack of such distraction. Fourth, those who cannot progress: for these arhats of inferior acumen, blissful stillness does not deteriorate, but they do not have the fortune to progress. Fifth, those who have the fortune of realization: for these arhats of inferior acumen, blissful stillness does not deteriorate, and they have the fortune to progress. Their fortune in realization comes from hearing instruction from more advanced

teachers. Sixth, those who are immovable: for these arhats of acute acumen, blissful stillness in phenomena they perceive will not deteriorate.

All six of these arhats live within the desire realm. Two kinds of arhats live in the upper two realms: those who do not move and those who cannot be moved. These are the arhats characterized by a support with remainder.

Those without remainder, like a fire that has consumed its fuel, leave nothing behind when they transcend sorrow. It is believed that their wisdom of the ceasing of mind has entered the basic space of cessation. *The Collection of Sayings* states:

When there is no body, perception ceases,  
You are free from all sensation,  
Formative factors are entirely still,  
And consciousness has vanished.

*The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states:

Arhats who completely transcend suffering have entered cessation. After ten thousand eons, they uplift their minds to unsurpassable, authentic, perfect awakening.

## **THE FOUNDATION, PATHS, AND RESULTS OF THE SOLITARY SAGES' WAY [IV]**

**The foundation of the way of solitary sages is to correctly restrain yourself, motivated by disengagement.**

**The view is the nonexistence of the individual sense of self, but without renunciation**

**Of the clinging consciousness that grasps objective phenomena.**

**The rhinoceros-like sage traverses the path during the course of one hundred great eons;**

**The solitary sage of a large community, during one hundred lifetimes;  
And the solitary sage of a small community, in just thirteen human lifetimes.**

**On the four paths—cultivation, application, seeing, and meditation—  
Meditation is done on the thirty-seven facets of awakening, the three**

**gateways to liberation,  
And the unfolding and reversal of the twelve links of causation—  
Ignorance, formations, consciousness, name and form aggregations,  
Senses, contact, sensation, craving,  
Grasping, existence, birth, and aging and death.**

**The code of conduct is to sustain the sublime ethical conduct of serenity  
and self-control.**

**The result of no further training is the state of a solitary sage arhat, a  
middle state of awakening.**

**Solitary sages rest in the sphere of static peace for as long a period as they  
spent cultivating goodness and wisdom.**

**Then they are born in a lotus in a pure land of the manifest body of  
enlightenment;**

**After seven years, the lotus opens,**

**The sages see the Buddha's face, and they learn the great way.**

The essence of the way of solitary sages is initial erudition in hearing the collection of hearer teachings and reflection upon it, followed by the aspiration to be reborn in a world without buddhas or hearers, and to there present the teachings through symbols. Solitary sages do not rely on a teacher; they realize one and a half of the two aspects of the nonexistence of an autonomous identity, a self.

The literal definition of “solitary sage” is a person who does not intend to serve many beings but wishes for enlightenment for his or her own sake. The purpose of this path is to attain a middle stage of awakening, free from the round of rebirth. The classification of such sages is as community-dwellers, like parrots; or as those who live alone, like a rhinoceros.

The foundation of this way is acceptance of the vows of individual liberation, motivated by authentic disengagement from the round of rebirth. This way's view is the absence of self in the individual and half of the lack of autonomous identity in phenomena—that outer particles have neither parts nor no parts; they realize that, like reflections, phenomena by their nature have no essence and do not come into being.

They realize the nature of half of phenomena—the absence of autonomous identity in outer grasping, but they do not realize the absence of an autonomous identity in the inner clinging to objective appearances. They mistakenly give the name “truth” to the absence of autonomous identity in phenomena, both the

outer grasping and the inner antidote, the clinging consciousness. The individual sense of self is the consciousness to be relinquished, the grasping as “I” or “mine” in relation to phenomena, gathered into the five psychophysical aggregations. These are called “the autonomous identity of phenomena and of the individual.”

Hearers realize the nonexistence of the individual sense of self but not the absence of an autonomous identity in phenomena. Solitary sages meditate on the objective absence of an autonomous identity in phenomena, the lack of an intrinsic nature within all outer objects. On the other hand, the subjective absence of an autonomous identity in phenomena can be defined as the realization that the grasping consciousness, free from coming-into-being, cessation, or abiding, is emptiness that does not come into being. This latter (absence of autonomous identity in phenomena) is realized by the great way and not by the hearers or solitary sages; thus, the term “half the absence of autonomous identity in phenomena” is used to describe the realization of the solitary sages.

The special cultivation of the solitary sages is cultivation of the stores of goodness and wisdom gathered on the path of cultivation during a period of one hundred eons. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

The rhinoceros gains awakening in a process that involves one hundred eons of cultivation.

The special path accomplished is described as follows. *The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* states:

When perfect buddhas have not appeared  
And the hearers have disappeared,  
The wisdom of the solitary sage flourishes  
Without reliance on a teacher.

Therefore, after a previous life as a hearer, when solitary sages are reborn in a world without buddhas or hearers, they go to a cemetery, see bones, and immediately become disillusioned with the round of rebirth: “Alas! Where have these bones come from? They have come from aging and death. Where have aging and death come from? They have come from birth,” and so on. In this way, they examine the unfolding of the twelve links of causation and consider how to become free from this world. In the course of such reflection, they discover the twelve links of the reversal of causation: if ignorance ceases,

formations cease, and so on, until aging and death cease. With the knowledge that all phenomena only reflect the arising of interdependent causation, the solitary sage meditates on the twelve links of causation and on the sixteen aspects (such as impermanence) of the four truths. Thus the path of application arises.

Through meditation, like that of the hearers, the four levels of the path of application, the sixteen moments of the path of seeing (direct realization of the four truths), and the path of meditation arise in turn, as they do for bodhisattvas. Following this, they actualize two aspects of wisdom—knowledge of exhaustion and knowledge of no further coming-into-being. Thus the manner in which they actualize the five paths in a single session concurs with that of bodhisattvas. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states:

The awakenings of the Teacher and of rhinoceros solitary sages  
Rely on the same culminant meditative stability.

The special place has two aspects: First, the special place of their wisdom body is alone, like a rhinoceros. Second, the special place of their wisdom mind is reflection upon and abiding within the twelve links of causation, the thirty-seven facets of awakening, and the three gateways to liberation. The twelve links of causation are as follows:

Ignorance, formations, consciousness, name and form aggregations,  
The six senses, contact, sensation,  
Craving, grasping, existence, birth,  
And aging and death.

(1) Ignorance is lack of knowledge. (2) Due to ignorance, to fall into the round of rebirth is formations. (3) From formations, the consciousness that develops from beings' storehouse of dualistic experience is consciousness. (4) From consciousness, individual sensation, perception, and formative factors (the four psychophysical aggregations that exist in name alone) develop, and based on them, form (the fifth aggregation), are the name and form aggregation. (5) Based on these, six senses arise—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty. (6) The gathering of the sense domains, the sense organs, and the mental faculty produce contact. (7) This produces sensation—pleasurable, painful, or neutral. (8) Sensation leads to craving—the centering around a sense of self that rejects unwished-for sensations or accepts what is wished for. (9) From craving, focused intent toward your own desires arises, leading to grasping of the result—



grasping. (10) Due to grasping, you enter the womb of your next birth—existence. (11) Exit from the womb is birth. (12) Once youth fades, aging arrives, which leads to the cessation of life, death.

Beings take existence due to their continual karma, and they circle in this manner. For more details, consult *The Great Chariot* [that is, Longchenpa's *Trilogy of Rest*].

The thirty-seven facets of awakening are as follows:

Four forms of mindfulness, four forms of correct renunciation,  
Four supports for miraculous powers, five powers,  
Five forces, seven aspects of awakening, and the eightfold exalted path:  
These are the thirty-seven facets of awakening.

The three gateways to liberation are as follows:

There are three gateways to liberation from all obscurations:  
Emptiness, absence of characteristics, and aspirationlessness.

Of the three gateways to liberation of knowledge, absence of autonomous identity is emptiness; not perceiving things as related to such an identity is absence of characteristics; and the lack of an orienting axis is aspirationlessness. Of the path's three gateways to liberation, the truth of cessation is emptiness; the truth of the path is absence of characteristics; and the truths of suffering and the source of suffering are aspirationlessness. Of the result's three gateways to liberation, the result without remainder is emptiness and absence of characteristics; and the result with remainder is aspirationlessness.

The special instructions taught are as follows: Solitary sages are beings of the desire realm; to nourish themselves with this realm's food, they go to settlements to beg and to teach their spiritual instructions by physical gestures. To their disciples, who apply themselves to the ten ennobling acts, the four truths, and the twelve links of causation, they present a single gesture that is understood by each disciple in a different way. The chapter on solitary sages in *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

Any meaning is presented to anyone  
In whatever way the person wishes to hear—  
That specific meaning to that specific person  
Appears, but without words.

Second,<sup>20</sup> the description of the solitary sage who lives in a large community also has five parts:

The special group is characterized by a middle degree of acumen, strong pride and disillusionment, faint compassion, and pleasure in large communities. It is said that these solitary sages live in groups of five hundred. Their special cultivation is cultivation of stores of goodness and wisdom gathered before the middle level of the path of application, during a period of one hundred lifetimes. The aspiration they formulate is similar to the one mentioned above. The way they accomplish the path is as above. The special place has two parts: The special place of their wisdom bodies is together with many solitary sages, circling together like parrots. The place of their wisdom mind is as above. The teaching of their instructions is also as above.

Third, the description of the solitary sage who lives in a small community also has five parts. Their special group is characterized by the lowest degree of acumen, strong pride and disillusionment, and faint compassion. Their special cultivation is cultivation of stores of goodness and wisdom subsumed as the fifteen instants of the path of seeing during a period of thirteen lifetimes. The remaining features are as solitary sages who dwell in large communities.

The designation of solitary sages into acute or lesser degrees of acumen is related to whether five, four, or three paths are actualized in a single session. This depends upon the duration—long, medium, or short—of their preceding cultivation of the stores of goodness and wisdom.

The conduct of solitary sages is to sustain the sublime ethical conduct of tranquility and self-control—the two hundred and fifty-three monastic vows.

### **The Results of the Spiritual Path according to Solitary Sages**

The result of the spiritual path is the path of no further training, the exalted state of a solitary sage arhat, which constitutes actualization of a middle state of awakening. Hearer and solitary sage arhats depart without remainder and abide in the sphere of cessation. Although hearer and solitary sage traditions believe that such arhats never move from the sphere of static peace, the great way has a superior perspective. According to that tradition, the arhats' minds enter and dissolve in the sphere of static peace for the period they previously spent cultivating goodness and wisdom. Then they are reborn in the enclosure of a lotus in a pure land, such as Blissful, Joyous, or Lotus-Filled, and remain for seven years within that closed lotus due to subtle obscurations of habitual ignorance and cognitive obscurations. At the moment of their birth, the sun of compassion of the pure land's Buddha sends light of the Buddha's speech to open the lotus. The verses that cause them to arise from the unconsciousness of

inebriation within meditative states are recorded in *The White Lotus of the Sacred Doctrine Discourse*:

How can you call your state the transcendence of sorrow?  
You are free from every suffering of the round of rebirth,  
Yet you have not entirely transcended sorrow:  
Search for the way of enlightenment!

As soon as arhats hear this, enthusiasm for the path of the great way arises, and the lotus opens. Arhats go before the Transcendent Buddha, uplift their minds to the aspiration to awaken, and through meditation on the path, attain enlightenment during that very lifetime. *The Journey to Langka Discourse* states:

By the blessing of the Transcendent Buddha, they gain mastery over rebirth, entirely complete the twofold cultivation, and attain enlightenment itself.

The first path they enter can only be the lesser level of the path of cultivation, after which they complete the great way's five paths. This has led some to contend that such exalted persons fall to the level of ordinary beings, since they enter the path of cultivation. Such a view has arisen from a lack of understanding. If ordinary individuals enter the path of cultivation as beginners, the state of an exalted one has not yet been attained in their experience, thus they are called ordinary persons. When hearers or solitary sages enter that path, they are exalted beings who enter the path by meditation on the qualities of mindfulness. If performing such meditations on mindfulness transforms exalted beings to ordinary individuals, they could change into ordinary individuals even at the tenth stage of awakening! The stages of the solitary sages' path include the forms of mindfulness; thus the view that they change to ordinary individuals is mistaken.

Further, some believe that when exalted hearers or solitary sages meditate on the forms of mindfulness, they can be considered exalted beings of the great way. They contend this because such individuals are exalted beings who meditate on the forms of mindfulness of the great way. Is this correct? From the perspective of the great way, they do not have the characteristics of an exalted being, since their state is not equal to the renunciation and realization of the great way's exalted beings. Without such initial qualifications, they cannot be considered exalted beings of the great way: they are exalted beings of the lesser

way. Further, the fact that they meditate on the forms of mindfulness of the great way does not prove that they are exalted beings of the great way. This is similar to the mistaken attitude of considering bodhisattvas who are said to refine the pure lands of the buddhas as perfect buddhas themselves.

Therefore, arhats of the hearer and solitary sage ways who enter the path of the great way must do so from the level of the lesser path of cultivation, since enlightenment in the great way must be accomplished through the great way's five paths and their content.

### **CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS**

The fearless three jewels, a lasting refuge,

Provide supreme secure sanctuary  
From the eight great dangers, the sixteen minor ones,  
And every other source of fear and loss.

Reliance on refuge brings lasting supreme joy and happiness.  
The supreme bestower of refuge is the outstanding epitome of compassion:  
I wholeheartedly take refuge in this supreme individual.  
May you compassionately watch over my parents, beings of the six kinds!

May your watchfulness not fade with time.  
May all beings and myself now be fully placed in the incomparable good fortune  
Of being manifestly like you—a sublime great treasure—  
Faultless, an endlessly bountiful mine of qualities.

This concludes a commentary to “Taking Refuge and the Lesser Way,” Book 7 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. I, Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje, wrote this to foster certainty in how refuge, the basis for all vows, is taken, and in the general and subtle delineations of supreme ethical conduct determined by the Buddha.

The printing of this first volume of the common discourses was sponsored by one who considers the precious training in higher ethical conduct as described in the basis of the doctrine, the collection on the monastic code, as his own precious ornament.<sup>21</sup> He is the fully ordained monk of Buddha Shakyamuni’s order, upholder of the discipline, reincarnation of the great scholar Bodhisato, son of the Victor, the omniscient Tenpé Nyima Pal-zangpo Chok Tamché-lé Nampar Gyalwa.

Through the ennobling act of printing this work, may the precious doctrine’s sugarcane of omniscience spread and flourish in every time, direction, and circumstance! May all sentient beings without exception enjoy comfort and happiness in their lives and may they ultimately attain the state of perfect enlightenment!

Fortune! Fortune! Fortune!

My disciple, Tsultrim Drimé, performed the work of scribe.

**BOOK 8**  
**THE FOUNDATION OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

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- I. The Doctrine's Final Cycle, and an Explanation of Ultimate Truth and Relative Truth
  - A. How the Buddha Taught the Doctrine's Final Cycle
  - B. An Explanation of Ultimate Truth
    - 1. The Nature of the Enlightened Heritage
    - 2. How the Enlightened Heritage Is All-Pervasive

### **3. A Complete Classification of the Enlightened Heritage**

- a. Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Its Support and Content
- b. Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Its Circumstances
- c. Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Metaphors and Meaning
  - i. Metaphors for the Enlightened Heritage and Their Meanings
  - ii. Names for the Enlightened Heritage
  - iii. How the Essential Nature Is Realized
- 4. Proofs Based on Instruction in the Enlightened Heritage
- C. An Explanation of Relative Truth
- II. The Doctrine's Middle Cycle, The Buddha's Past Lives, and Mental Training by Means of the Four Immeasurable Aspirations
  - A. The Turning of the Doctrine's Middle Cycle and Its Compilation
  - B. The Buddha's Past Lives
    - 1. How the Buddha Initially Uplifted His Mind to Sublime Awakening
    - 2. The General Way the Buddha Cultivated Goodness and Wisdom
    - 3. A Specific Description of Thirty-Four Past Lives (Three Sets of Ten and One Set of Four)
  - C. Mental Training by Means of the Four Immeasurable Aspirations

# **1. Immeasurable Equanimity**

- a. The Domain of Immeasurable Equanimity
- b. How to Meditate on Equanimity

# **2. Immeasurable Love**

- a. The Domain of Immeasurable Love
- b. How to Meditate on Love

# **3. Immeasurable Compassion**

- a. The Domain of Immeasurable Compassion
- b. How to Meditate on Compassion

# **4. Immeasurable Sympathetic Joy**

- a. The Domain of Immeasurable Sympathetic Joy
- b. How to Meditate on Sympathetic Joy
- 5. Renunciation of Worldly Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity

## **III. The Actual Uplifting of the Mind to Sublime Awakening**

- A. The Nature of Uplifting the Mind to Awakening
- B. The Benefits of Uplifting the Mind to Awakening
- C. Stages of the Preliminary Preparation to Uplift the Mind to Awakening
  - 1. Preliminary Arrangements

## 2. Offering of the Seven-Part Service

- a. Homage
  - b. Offering
  - c. Admission of Wrongdoing
  - d. Rejoicing in Others' Ennobling Acts
  - e. Request to Turn the Wheel of the Doctrine
  - f. Prayer to the Buddhas to Not Transcend Sorrow
  - g. Dedication of Ennobling Acts to Awakening
- D. The Main Ritual to Uplift the Mind to Awakening
1. The Difference between Aspiration and Application
  2. How to Uplift the Mind to Awakening

## 3. Meditation on Joy

Even glowing saffron clouds at the day's edges  
Fail to compare with you, Veil-Free and Goddess of Flowers—  
Your forms cannot be compared to anything else:  
To you, sublime bodhisattvas, I pay homage.

BOOK 8, "The Foundation of the Middle Way," has three chapters:

1. How the Buddha Taught the Doctrine's Final Cycle, and an Explanation of Ultimate Truth and Relative Truth
  2. The Doctrine's Middle Cycle, the Buddha's Past Lives, and Mental Training by Means of the Four Immeasurable Aspirations
  3. The Main Explanation of the Uplifting of the Mind to Sublime Awakening.
- These chapters contain a total of forty-eight headings.

### **THE DOCTRINE'S FINAL CYCLE, AND AN EXPLANATION OF ULTIMATE TRUTH AND RELATIVE TRUTH [I]**

This chapter has three parts: (1) how the Buddha taught the doctrine's final cycle, (2) an explanation of ultimate truth, and (3) an explanation of relative truth.



## ***How the Buddha Taught the Doctrine's Final Cycle [A]***

**On the foundation established by the vows of refuge,  
The enlightened heritage's meaning can be explained within the context  
of the great way's uplift of the mind to that which is sublime.**

**In lands of gods, nagas, and others,  
Shakyamuni taught a variety of disciples  
His final cycle of instructions, definitive ultimate truth.  
The original translations include *Flower Ornament Discourse; Mound of  
Jewels Discourse; Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse;  
Discourse Requested by the King, the Powerful Formula; Lion's Roar of  
Shrimaladevi;  
Discourse Requested by the Girl Named Ratnadevi; Discourse Requested by  
the Goddess Vimalaprabha;  
Discourse to Help Angulimala; Discourse Requested by Maitreya;  
Discourse on Buddha Nature, and others— Ninety units in all. The new  
translations include twenty-four discourses  
And forty treatises of commentary.***

The previous book described the foundation of the Buddhist path, established by the vows of refuge. Upon that basis, this book describes beings' enlightened heritage, innate constituent enlightenment, or buddha nature, in the context of the great way's instruction in uplift of the mind to sublime awakening.

In the lands of gods, nagas, and others, Honored Shakyamuni taught disciples among many kinds of beings the final cycle of the doctrine, his definitive instructions in ultimate truth.

Among those teachings, ninety large units were translated into Tibetan during the period of the original translations.<sup>22</sup> Of these, discourses that belong to the final cycle of teaching include the following: 1. *Flower Ornament* [in Tibetan, literally *Supreme Host of Buddhas*]: 39,030 stanzas in forty-six chapters<sup>23</sup> [no. 61: 4,022 pages]<sup>24</sup>

2. *Mound of Jewels*, forty-nine chapters [nos. 62–110]
3. *Great Complete Transcendence of Sorrow* [no. 137: 868 pages]
4. *Discourse Requested by the King, the Powerful Formula: Certain Demonstration of the Transcendent Buddhas' Great Compassion* [no. 165: 259 pages]
5. *Lion's Roar of Glorious Garland Goddess, Shrimaladevi* [no. 109: 64

- pages]
6. *Discourse Requested by the Girl Named Ratnadevi* [no. 187(?): 132 pages]
  7. *Discourse Requested by the Goddess Undefined Light, Vimalaprabha* [no. 186: 143 pages]
  8. *Discourse to Help Finger Garland, Angulimala* [no. 231: 193 pages]
  9. *Discourse Requested by Loving Kindness* [no. 102: 34 pages]
  10. *Discourse on Buddha Nature* [no. 276: 39 pages]

Among these, *The Flower Ornament Discourse* is generally considered to contain one hundred thousand stanzas, in one hundred chapters, of which forty-five are listed here.<sup>25</sup>

1. *Ornaments of Lords of the World*
2. *The Transcendent Buddha*
3. *Magic of Ever Excellent's Meditative State*
4. *Oceans of Realms of Existence*
5. *Foundation of Realms of Existence, the Heart Ornament*
6. *Ornaments of Encircling Worlds*
7. *Ornaments of the Foundation of Oceans of Realms of Existence*
8. *Continuity of Realms*
9. *Design of the Continuity of Realms of Existence*
10. *Buddha Illuminator*
11. *Great General Gathering of Transcendent Buddhas*
12. *Names of the Buddhas*
13. *Noble Truths*
14. *Enlightenment from the Transcendent Buddhas' Lights*
15. *Appearance of Questions from Bodhisattvas*
16. *Completely Pure Experiential Domains*
17. *Splendor of Ever Excellent*
18. *The Transcendent Buddha's Journey to the Summit of Supreme Mountain*
19. *Verses of the Bodhisattvas' Assembly*
20. *Instruction in the Ten Intentions*
21. *Pure Conduct*
22. *Stores of Goodness of Bodhisattva Development of Power*
23. *Appearance of the Doctrine*
24. *Miracles in the Abode of the Heaven called Twins*
25. *Gathering of Bodhisattvas in the Heaven called Twins*
26. *Conduct of Bodhisattvas*

27. *Ten Inexhaustible Treasures*
28. *Ornaments of the Transcendent Buddhas' Travel and Arrival*
29. *Gathering of Bodhisattvas in Joyful Heaven*

These are the first twenty-nine volumes; to continue with the thirtieth,

30. *Vajra Banner's Full Dedication of Goodness*
31. *Ten Stages of Awakening*
32. *Ever Excellent*
33. *Ten Meditative States*
34. *Clairvoyance*
35. *Patience*
36. *Calculation Based on Questions by Sovereign Mind*
37. *Life Span*
38. *Place of Bodhisattvas*
39. *Buddha's Inconceivable Positive Qualities*
40. *Oceans of the Signs of the Transcendent Buddha's Physical Perfection*
41. *Light of the Marks of Physical Perfection*
42. *Conduct of Ever Excellent*
43. *Birth of Transcendent Buddhas*
44. *Transcendence of the World*
45. The forty-fifth chapter contains *Pattern of the Stem*, with its subchapters.

Thus, there are 45 chapters that contain 39,030 verses, divided into 130 divisions, with 30 verses remaining.

The one hundred thousand chapters of *The Mound of Jewels Discourse* include the following forty-nine chapters:

1. *Three Vows* [no. 62: 126 pages]<sup>26</sup>
2. *Infinite Gateways of Purification* [no. 63: 160 pages]
3. *Inconceivable Mysteries of the Transcendent Buddhas* [no. 64: 310 pages]
4. *Dreams* [no. 65: 98 pages]
5. *Design of Infinite Light's Pure Land* [no. 66: 99 pages]
6. *Design of Buddha Immutables' Pure Land* [no. 67: 185 pages]
7. *Design of Armor* [no. 68: 213 pages]
8. *Inseparable Nature of the Basic Space of Phenomena* [no. 69: 69 pages]
9. *Ten Positive Qualities* [no. 70: 62 pages]
10. *From Every Gateway* [no. 71: 32 pages]

11. *Radiance Arising Everywhere* [no. 72: 183 pages]
12. *Collection of Bodhisattva Teachings* [no. 73: 758 pages]
13. *Ananda's Resting in the Womb* [no. 74: 100 pages]
14. *Long-lived Ananda's Entering the Womb* [no. 75: 38]
15. *Design of the Qualities of Gentle Splendor's Pure Land* [no. 76: 137 pages]
16. *Reunion of Father and Child* [no. 77: 493 pages]
17. *Discourse Requested by Purna* [no. 78: 187 pages]
18. *Discourse Requested by Rashtrapala* [no. 79: 92 pages]
19. *Discourse Requested by the Householder Urga* [no. 80: 94 pages]
20. *Discourse Requested by Vidyutprapta* [no. 81: 44 pages]
21. *Prophecy Concerning the Excellent Magician* [no. 82: 54 pages]
22. *Great Miracles* [no. 83: 90 pages]
23. *Great Lion's Roar of Loving Kindness* [no. 84: 133 pages]
24. *Discourse Requested by Upali to Define the Monastic Code of Conduct* [no. 85: 46 pages]
25. *Encouragement to Higher Intention* [no. 86: 63 pages]
26. *Discourse Requested by Subahu* [no. 87: 78 pages]
27. *Discourse Requested by Surata* [no. 88: 40 pages]
28. *Discourse Requested by the Householder Viradatta* [no. 89: 32 pages]
29. *Discourse Requested by the Vatsa King, Udayana* [no. 90: 36 pages]
30. *Discourse Requested by the Girl Sumati* [no. 91: 19 pages]
31. *Discourse Requested by Gangottara* [no. 92: 12 pages]
32. *Prophecy Requested by Ashokadatta* [no. 93: 47 pages]
33. *Discourse Requested by Vimaladatta* [no. 94: 60 pages]
34. *Discourse Requested by Gunaratnasangkusumita* [no. 95: 15 pages]
35. *The Inconceivable Domain of Enlightenment* [no. 96: 58 pages]
36. *Discourse Requested by the Young God Sustitamati* [no. 97: 140]
37. *Discourse Requested by Singha* [no. 98: 10 pages]
38. *Skillful Means in Supreme Mysteries of All Buddhas, Requested by the Bodhisattva Jnanottara* [no. 99: 115 pages]
39. *Discourse Requested by the Merchant Bhadrapala* [no. 100: 64 pages]
40. *Discourse Requested by the Girl Vimalashraddha* [no. 101: 28 pages]
41. *Discourse Requested by Maitreya* [no. 102: 34 pages]
42. *Questions on Eight Subjects by Maitreya* [no. 103: 9 pages]
43. *Discourse Requested by Kashyapa* [no. 104: 93 pages]
44. *Prophecy Concerning Ratnarashi* [no. 105: 69 pages]
45. *Discourse Requested by Akshayamati* [no. 106: 21 pages]
46. *Prophecy Concerning "The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Seven*

- Hundred Stanzas*” [no. 107: 74 pages]  
 47. *Discourse Requested by Ratnachuda* [no. 108: 123 pages]  
 48. *The Lion’s Roar of Shrimaladevi* [no. 109: 64 pages]  
 49. *Discourse Requested by the Seer Vyasa* [no. 110: 67 pages]

In total, this list names 49 texts, divided into 147 sections, containing 44,100 verses.

Among the remaining texts known as discourses, those that pertain most particularly to the final cycle of the great way instructions could be placed first in the list of contents of the canon as well as assorted discourses belonging to the middle cycle. However, scholars of former times did not differentiate between them when they made such lists. Therefore, following their custom, the remaining discourses are listed as follows: *Fortunate Eon*, twenty-six sections [no. 111: 852 pages]

*Vast Enjoyment*, eighteen sections and twenty-seven chapters [no. 112: 585 pages]

*Gentle Splendor’s Manifestations*, two sections [no. 113: 67 pages]

*Gentle Splendor’s Emanations*, one section and ninety-four verses [no. 114: 43 pages]

*Design of the Buddha’s Pure Land Blessed by All Transcendent Buddhas, from Which All Sentient Beings Are Seen* [no. 115: 56 pages]

*Increase of the Honored Buddha’s Wisdom*, twenty-five sections [no. 117: 724 pages]

*Ornament of Wisdom’s Illumination, Entry to the Domain of All Buddhas*, three volumes and fifty verses [no. 118: 82 pages]

*Complete Grasping of the Root of Virtue*, eighteen sections [no. 119: 579 pages]

*Discourses in Pairs*, four sections [no. 120: 26 pages]

*Doctrine Taught by the Inconceivable Achintyaprabhasa*, two hundred and seventy verses [no. 121: 31 pages]

*Expression of the Positive Qualities of the Transcendent Buddhas’ Pure Lands* [no. 122: 6 pages]

*Eight Sacred Circles* [no. 123: 7 pages]

*Definitive Commentary to the Buddha’s Intent*, ten volumes [no. 124: 138 pages]

*Journey to Langka*, nine sections [no. 125: 366 pages]

*Essence of All Buddhas’ Speech Taught in the Journey to Langka Discourse*, eight sections [no. 126: 241 pages]

*Mount Gayashirsha*, one hundred and eighty-eight stanzas [no. 127: 20 pages]  
*Richly Designed Ornament*, four sections [no. 128: 143 pages]  
*White Lotus of Great Compassion*, six sections [no. 129: 199 pages] *White Lotus of Compassion*, fifteen sections [no. 130: 333 pages]  
*White Lotus of the Sacred Doctrine*, thirteen sections [no. 131: 474 pages]  
*Sovereign Design of the Positive Qualities of All Phenomena* [no. 132: 39 pages]  
*Design of the Blissful Pure Land*, thirty verses [no. 133: 13 pages]  
*Design of the Container*, half a section [no. 134: 27 pages]  
*Container of the Jewels*, four sections [no. 135: 8 pages]  
*Limit of the Jewels*, two hundred and fifty stanzas [no. 136: 23 pages]  
*Great Transcendence of Sorrow*, fifty-six sections [no. 137: 868 pages]  
*Great Complete Transcendence of Sorrow* [no. 138: 374 pages]  
*Wisdom at Death*, ten stanzas [no. 140: 3 pages]  
*Words in the Treasury of the Buddha's Teaching*, four sections [no. 141: 166 pages]  
*Origin of the Jewels*, seven sections [no. 142: 25 pages]  
*Golden Discourse* [no. 143: 3 pages]  
*Discourse like Gold Powder*, eighty stanzas [no. 144: 9 pages]  
*Sovereign Meditative State, Originating in Evenness, the Nature of All Phenomena*, fifteen sections [no. 145: 443 pages]  
*Nature of Reality, Unmoving in Its Empty Essence, That Appears to All as Separate* [no. 146: 12 pages]  
*Meditative State of the Certain Miracle of Total Pacification*, three sections [no. 147: 4 pages]  
*Illusion-like Meditative State*, one and a half sections [no. 148: 54 pages]  
*Meditative State of the Transcendent Buddha's Wisdom Seal*, two volumes and sixty stanzas [no. 149: 64 pages]  
*Meditative State of Moving to Courage*, five sections [no. 150: 166 pages]  
*Meditative State of the Actual Presence of Present Buddhas*, seven sections [no. 151: 193 pages]  
*Meditative State of the Collection of All Goodness*, four sections [no. 152: 153 pages]  
*Vajra-like Meditative State*, two sections [no. 153: 8 pages]  
*Four Youths' Meditative State*, three sections [no. 154: 94 pages]  
*Sacred Supreme Meditative State*, one section [no. 155: 25 pages]  
*Crown Jewel Formula of the Supreme Gathering*, eight sections [no. 156: 159 pages]

*Vajra Essence Formula*, one section [no. 157: 32 pages]  
*Practice of the Infinite Gate Formula*, two hundred and ten stanzas [no. 158: 26 pages]  
*Six Gate Formula* [no. 159: 4 pages]  
*Entering No Thought Formula*, one hundred and twenty stanzas [no. 160: 14 pages]  
*Two Verse Formula* [no. 161: 3 pages]  
*Meditation on Faith in the Great Way*, two sections [no. 162: 74 pages]  
*Jeweled Lamp Formula* [no. 163: 136 pages]  
*Emanations in the Domains of Skillful Means, the Domain of Bodhisattvas*, five sections [no. 164: 157 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by the King, the Powerful Formula: Certain Demonstration of the Transcendent Buddhas' Great Compassion*, seven sections [no. 165: 259 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Gaganaganja*, eight sections [no. 166: 135 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Maitreya*, seventy stanzas [no. 167: 3 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Pratibhanamati*, one section [no. 169: 36 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Sagaramati*, ten sections [no. 170: 300 pages]  
*Long Discourse Requested by the Naga King Sagara*, seven sections [no. 171: 216 pages]  
*Middle Discourse Requested by the Naga King Sagara, Instruction in the Ten Ennobling Acts* [no. 172: 20 pages]  
*Short Discourse Requested by the Naga King Sagara*, twelve stanzas [no. 173: 3 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by the Naga King Anavatapta*, four sections [no. 174: 122 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by the Semihuman King Druma*, five sections [no. 175: 172 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Brahma*, two hundred stanzas [no. 176: 25 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Brahmadata* [no. 177: 35 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Brahmavishéshachinti*, six sections [no. 178: 208 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by the Young God Suvikrantachinta*, three sections [no. 179: 103 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Shrivasu*, one hundred and fifteen stanzas [no. 180: 14 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Ratnajali*, one section and sixty stanzas [no. 181: 45 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Ratnachandra*, two hundred and twenty-seven stanzas [no. 182: 22 pages]

*Discourse Requested by Kshémangkara*, eighty stanzas [no. 183: 13 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Rashtrapala*, seventy-three stanzas [no. 184: 12 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by King Vikurvanga*, three sections [no. 185: 96 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by the Goddess Vimalaprabha*, four sections [no. 186: 143 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by the Girl Ratna, Called the Great Way's Pith Instructions*, four sections [no. 187: 132 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by the Brahmin Woman Shrimati*, ninety stanzas [no. 188: 11 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Mahalalika*, one hundred and ten stanzas [no. 189: 15 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Manjushri*, ninety stanzas [no. 190: 11 pages]  
*Discourse Requested by Lokadhara*, four sections [no. 192: 185 pages]  
*Teaching of Akshayamati*, seven sections [no. 193: 251 pages]  
*Teaching of Vimalakirti*, six sections [no. 194: 177 pages]  
*Teaching of Manjushri*, fourteen and a half stanzas [no. 195: 4 pages]  
*Aspects of Awakening*, ninety-two stanzas [no. 196: 13 pages]  
*Relative and Ultimate Truths*, two sections [no. 197: 61 pages]  
*Sourcelessness of All Phenomena*, three sections [no. 198: 82 pages]  
*Five Transcendent Perfections*, six sections [no. 199: 200 pages]  
*Transcendent Perfection of Generosity*, two sections, said to have been taken from the tenth and eleventh chapters of *The Fluttering Design of the Mound of All Phenomena's Adornments Discourse* [no. 200: 54 pages]  
*Benefits of Generosity* [no. 201: 6 pages]  
*Conduct of Bodhisattvas*, twenty stanzas [no. 202: 26 pages]  
*Entry to the Domain of the Transcendent Buddhas' Positive Qualities and Wisdom*, three sections [no. 203: 98 pages] *Miracles Emanated through the Buddha's Development of Force*, one section and ten stanzas [no. 204: 39 pages]  
*The Buddha's Inconceivable Positive Qualities*, three sections [no. 205: 84 pages]  
*Prophecy by Dipangkara*, two hundred and ten stanzas [no. 206: 26 pages]  
*Prophecy Concerning Brahmashri*, forty stanzas [no. 207: 6 pages]  
*Prophecy Concerning the Girl Strivivarta*, two sections [no. 208: 65 pages]  
*Prophecy Concerning the Girl Chandrottara*, two sections [no. 209: 53 pages]



*Prophecy Concerning Kshémavati*, seventy stanzas [no. 210: 8 pages]  
*Prophecy Concerning Shrimahadévi*, one hundred stanzas [no. 211: 13 pages]  
*Jayamati*, eleven stanzas [no. 212: 3 pages]  
*All-Seeing Eyes*, one section and sixty stanzas [no. 213: 41 pages]  
*Residence of Manjushri*, one hundred and forty stanzas [no. 214: 15 pages]  
*Expression of Nectar*, eighty stanzas [no. 215: 6 pages]  
*Entering Love*, two sections [no. 216: 59 pages]  
*Maitreya Taking Birth in Joyful Heaven* [no. 217: 18 pages]  
*Conforming to Worldly Customs in Accord with the Dharma*, forty stanzas [no. 218: 14 pages]  
*Seal of Entering the Development of the Force of Faith*, five sections and seventy stanzas [no. 219: 157 pages]  
*Seal of Certain and Uncertain Movement*, one section [no. 220: 39 pages]  
*Seal of Phenomena*, eighty stanzas [no. 221: 11 pages]  
*Offering of Lamps*, one section [no. 222: 31 pages]  
*Livelihood from Villages*, one hundred stanzas [no. 223: 7 pages]  
*Pure Sustenance from Food*, thirty-eight stanzas [no. 224: 6 pages]  
*Elephant's Sport*, one section and sixty stanzas [no. 225: 39 pages]  
*Loud Sound*, sixty-four stanzas [no. 226: 9 pages]  
*Lion's Roar*, one hundred stanzas [no. 227: 12 pages]  
*Rice Province*, two hundred and twenty-six stanzas [no. 228: 22 pages]  
*First Interdependent Arising and Its Distinctions*, thirty stanzas [no. 229: 6 pages]  
*Interdependent Arising*, thirty stanzas [no. 230: 5 pages]  
*Discourse to Help Angulimala*, seven sections [no. 231: 193 pages]  
*Advice to King Bimbisara* [no. 232: 10 pages]  
*Advice to the Vaishala King, Udayana* [no. 233: 6 pages]  
*Comforting the Grief of Ajatashatru*, five sections [no. 234: 150 pages]  
*Shrigupta*, one section and sixty stanzas [no. 235: 44 pages]  
*Purification of Obscurations*, one section and forty stanzas [no. 236: 40 pages]  
*Ending the Flow of the Obscuration of Karma*, two hundred and thirty stanzas [no. 237: 29 pages]  
*Eradicating Faults in the Ethical Training in the Buddha's Collections of Teachings*, seven sections [no. 238: 204 pages]  
*Advice to King Prasanajit* [no. 239: 20 pages]  
*Great Drum*, five sections [no. 240: 116 pages]  
*The Thirty-Third Chapter*, three sections [no. 241: 100 pages]

*Stable Higher Intention*, one section [no. 242: 28 pages]  
*Taking Refuge in the Three*, thirty stanzas [no. 243: 6 pages]  
*Transmigration*, seventy stanzas [no. 244: 7 pages]  
*Gathering All That Has Been Ground*, one section and sixty stanzas [no. 245: 33 pages]  
*Discussion of the Buddha*, three sections [no. 246: 99 pages]  
*Discussion of the Transcendent Buddhas*, three sections and seventy-five stanzas [no. 247: 107 pages]  
*Splendid Bonds of the Transcendent Buddhas*, three sections [no. 248: 88 pages]  
*Cloud of Jewels*, seven sections [no. 249: 311 pages]  
*The Great Cloud*, ten sections [no. 250: 185 pages]  
*Play at the Supreme Festival of Gathering of Oceans of Bodhisattvas from the Ten Directions*, a chapter from *The Great Cloud Discourse*, three sections [no. 251: 84 pages]  
*Core of All Nagas*, from *The Configuration of Wind*, a chapter of *The Great Cloud Discourse*, one section [no. 252: 15 pages]  
*Rainfall*, the sixty-fourth chapter, including a ritual, from *The Great Cloud Discourse* [no. 253: 39 pages]  
*Great Crown on the Head of the Honored One, Manifest Cause of the Attainment of the Meaning of the Transcendent Buddhas' Secret Spiritual Practice, the Conduct of All Bodhisattvas, Movement to Courage*, the tenth chapter from the ten-thousand-chapter discourse, two sections [no. 254: 65 pages]  
*Demons*, a chapter from *Great Crown on the Head of the Honored One*, seventy-five stanzas [no. 255: 35 pages]  
*Correct Abridgement of the Teachings*, seven sections [no. 256: 248 pages]  
*Ten Wheels of Core of the Earth*, ten sections [no. 257: 374 pages]  
*Irreversible Wheel*, six sections [no. 258: 163 pages]  
*Wheel of Meditative States* [no. 259: 6 pages]  
*Wheel of Complete Dedication of Goodness* [no. 260: 11 pages]  
*Letter of the Sacred Doctrine's Sovereign*, one section [no. 261: 37 pages]  
*Way of the Teaching*, one section [no. 262: 33 pages]  
*Cluster of the Teachings* [no. 263: 16 pages]  
*Victory of the Ultimate Teachings*, two hundred and fifty stanzas [no. 264: 28 pages]  
*Differentiation between Phenomena and the Ultimate*, ninety stanzas [no. 265: 11 pages]  
*Presentation of Four Instructions*, thirteen stanzas [no. 266: 35 pages]

*Four Instructions*, ten stanzas [no. 267: 4 pages]  
*Four Instructions Not to Be Rejected* [no. 268: 3 pages]  
*Four Instructions to Practice*, two hundred and sixty stanzas [no. 270: 23 pages]  
*Three Instructions* [no. 271: 5 pages]  
*Doctrine's Victory Banner* [no. 272: 3 pages]  
*Ocean of the Doctrine*, eighty stanzas [no. 273: 10 pages]  
*Seal of the Doctrine*, two sections [no. 274: 49 pages]  
*Core of the Sun*, thirteen sections [no. 275: 16 pages]  
*Core of the Transcendent Buddhas*, one section [no. 276: 39 pages]  
*Wordless Container, Core of Illuminator*, one hundred stanzas [no. 277: 14 pages]  
*Core of the Sky*, one section [no. 278: 55 pages]  
*Skillful Means*, two sections [no. 279: 78 pages]  
*Five Thousand, Four Hundred Fifty-Three Names of the Buddha*, eight sections [no. 280: 218 pages]  
*Correct Way of Conduct, Patience in Training by Gaganavarna*, eleven sections [no. 281: 330 pages] *Flourishing of Great Liberation, Accomplishment of Enlightenment through Purification of Wrongdoing with Pure Regret*, two sections and one hundred and twelve stanzas [no. 282: 152 pages]  
*Full Flourishing of Great Realization* [no. 283: 67 pages]  
*A Collection of Flowers*, three sections [no. 284: 79 pages]  
*Hundred Homages Bearing Witness and Fulfillment* [no. 285: 10 pages]  
*Inconceivable Sovereign*, seventy-five stanzas [no. 286: 6 pages]  
*Dissipating Darkness in the Ten Directions*, fifty stanzas [no. 287: 18 pages]  
*Seven Buddhas*, one hundred and five stanzas [no. 288: 13 pages]  
*Eight Buddhas*, ninety stanzas [no. 289: 11 pages]  
*Ten Buddhas*, one hundred and forty stanzas [no. 290: 14 pages]  
*Twelve Buddhas*, seventy stanzas [no. 291: 11 pages]  
*Buddha's Crown*, two hundred stanzas [no. 292: 17 pages]  
*Levels of Enlightenment*, two hundred stanzas [no. 293: 24 pages]  
*Nonabandonment of the Buddha*, one hundred and twenty stanzas [no. 294: 16 pages]  
*Eight Sacred Circles*, seventy stanzas [no. 295: 9 pages]  
*Eight Auspicious Objects*, one hundred stanzas [no. 296: 7 pages]  
*Remembering the Three Jewels* [nos. 297, 298, 299: 6 pages total]  
*Three Trainings* [no. 300: 3 pages]

*Three Wisdom Bodies* [no. 301: 4 pages]  
*Three Aggregations*, five hundred and thirty stanzas [no. 302: 51 pages]  
*Dedication to Fulfill Every Wish*, fifty stanzas [no. 303: 8 pages]  
*Dedication to Protect Every Being*, forty stanzas [no. 304: 7 pages]

These total ninety large units. The later translation schools translated the following twenty-four discourses:

1. *Short Discourse on the Transcendence of Sorrow*, sixty stanzas [no. 139: 7 pages]
2. *Seven Doctrines Requested by All-Seeing Eyes* [no. 168: 4 pages]
3. *Discourse Requested by Nairatmya* [no. 191: 8 pages]
4. *Four Instructions in Bodhisattvas' Individual Liberation*, one section and one hundred stanzas [no. 269: 35 pages]

and these discourses that belong to the lesser way:

5. *Time of the Summoning Gong* [no. 317: 5 pages]
6. *Observations of Phenomena* [no. 319: 334 pages]
7. *Examination of the Results of Ennobling Acts and the Corrupting Acts of the Five Downfalls* [no. 374: 32 pages]
8. *Story of Sumagadha* [no. 366: 23 pages]
9. *Story of Chandraprabha* [no. 368: 29 pages]
10. *Story of Shrisena* [no. 369: 53 pages]
11. *Story of Shardulakarnga* [no. 378: 28 pages]

The following are not categorized according to great or lesser ways, and have not been checked to see if they are repeated within the original translations: 12. *Turning of the Wheel of the Doctrine* [no. 48: 10 pages]

13. *Introduction to the Buddha's Past Lives* [no. 49: 194 pages]
14. *Palace of Green Leaves* [no. 50: 29 pages]
15. *Great Gathering* [no. 51: 12 pages]
16. *Love* [no. 52: 21 pages]
17. *Meditation on Love* [no. 53: 5 pages]
18. *Benefits of the Five Trainings* [no. 54: 18 pages]
19. *Mount Ananda* [no. 55: 10 pages]
20. *Subjugation of the Naga King Nandopananda* [no. 56: 8 pages]
21. *Mahakashyapa* [no. 57: 5 pages]

- 22. *The Sun* [no. 58: 4 pages]
- 23. *The Moon* [no. 59: 4 pages]
- 24. *Great Auspiciousness* [no. 60: 5 pages]

The total of the collection of discourses gathered from all sources numbers three hundred and five texts.

There are forty treatises of commentary to the intention of the final doctrinal cycle and sixty-six treatises that principally teach the meaning of the final cycle according to the mind only school.

### ***An Explanation of Ultimate Truth [B]***

This section has four parts: (1) the nature of the enlightened heritage; (2) how the enlightened heritage is all-pervasive; (3) a complete classification of the enlightened heritage; and (4) proofs based on instruction in the enlightened heritage.

### ***The Nature of the Enlightened Heritage [1]***

**From the perspective of ultimate truth, the qualities of buddha nature's appearance aspect  
Manifest as enlightenment's bodies and pure lands;  
Its emptiness aspect's qualities include the ten forces and four forms of fearlessness.  
The primordial, ever-present, unchanging constituent of innate awareness  
Is veiled by incidental stains—the delusion of dualistic clinging, karma, and mental afflictions.  
When these veils are purified, stainless qualities unfold.**

The positive qualities of the appearance aspect of beings' innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature, manifest as wisdom bodies and as pure lands. The positive qualities of its emptiness aspect include the ten forces and four forms of fearlessness. This innate constituent enlightenment—primordial, ever present, eternally unchanging—dwells in all sentient beings, but is veiled by incidental stains—the delusions of dualistic clinging, karma, and mental afflictions. The way to dispel those veils—experiential cultivation along the stages of the spiritual path—purifies the two obscurations, along with their habitual patterns. When these are purified and positive qualities and wisdom blossom, enlightenment clearly manifests.

Mind's nature—the basic space of phenomena, innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature—is primordial, unchanging, and ever present. *The Highest Continuity* states: In this, nothing needs to be removed;

Nothing in the least needs to be added.  
Regard truly the truth itself—  
When it is truly seen, liberation is reached.

In the essence of this basic space of buddha nature, because it is naturally luminous and stainless, there was never any stain to be rejected. No previously lacking positive qualities need be newly added to it later, because its positive qualities are ever present. The same text states: Since it has karma and mental afflictions;

Since it is pure, without mental afflictions;  
Since its positive qualities are thoroughly inseparable;  
Since its activity is ever present and nonconceptual . . .

Concerning these lines, Asanga explains in his commentary that enlightenment's stainless positive qualities have wisdom that is inseparable from the state of an ordinary person who has mental afflictions. This point—that in the nature of reality, no difference exists between the former state (that is, ordinary) and the latter state (that is, enlightened)—is inconceivable.

The essence of that meaning itself is the correct view. When it is seen, liberation from the incidental stains of mental afflictions is gained, like from the womb at birth. At that moment, previously existent positive qualities manifest. Although this is termed “enlightenment,” these positive qualities have not been newly created. Therefore, from the perspective of the essence of basic space or buddha nature, separable material stains or faults, along with their defining characteristics, are empty; whereas its primordial, inherent positive qualities are not. The same text states: From the perspective of incidental phenomena that have separable traits,

Beings' innate constituent enlightenment is empty.  
From the perspective of unsurpassable phenomena that have no separable  
traits,  
It is not empty.

*A Commentary to “The Highest Continuity”* states:

What does this passage teach? It explains how it is that nothing, such as an underlying cause for mental afflictions, needs to be removed from the intrinsically, completely pure nature of this transcendent constituent enlightenment, because its nature is freedom from incidental stains. Nothing in the slightest needs to be added to it, such as an underlying cause of purification, since its nature is that of the inseparable pure phenomena of the nature of reality.

Therefore, you should understand that, from the perspective of all that has distinct characteristics that can be separated from it—the confines of mental afflictions—buddha nature is empty. Conversely, from the perspective of enlightenment’s inconceivable positive qualities, which surpass the numbers of the Ganges River’s sands, which have no distinct characteristics that can be separated from it, it is not empty.

How does the enlightened heritage possess the phenomena of the round of rebirth and those of transcendent states? The phenomena of the round of rebirth resemble clouds over the sun—the enlightened heritage possesses them as if it is an object covered and has that which covers it. The phenomena of transcendent states resemble rays of light—the enlightened heritage possesses them since they share a single essence. In the basic space of phenomena (the support), as soon as an antidote removes the phenomena of the round of rebirth, along with their impurities (the contents), the phenomena of transcendent states manifest. The phenomena of the round of rebirth are incidental; the positive qualities of enlightenment have primordial and noncomposite existence. *The Highest Continuity* states: It has faults that are incidental

And positive qualities that are intrinsic:

As it was in the past, so will it be.

This is the changeless nature of reality.

Within the basic space of phenomena, the deathless, changeless ongoing enlightened heritage, like space, we have coursed throughout the boundless round of rebirth during innumerable lifetimes, assuming and abandoning psychophysical aggregations (that is, bodies), based on karma and habitual patterns. The same text states: Just as all worlds

Come into being and disintegrate within the sphere of space,

The senses come into being and disintegrate

In noncomposite basic space

in noncomposite basic space.

Although the senses appear to come into being and to disintegrate due to karma and conditions, the innate constituent enlightenment has neither a point of origin nor a point of disintegration, just as the fire at the end of time consumes the world but does not burn space. The same text states: Just as any fire in the past

Has never burned space,  
This innate constituent enlightenment has never been burnt by the fires  
Of death, sickness, or aging.

All birth and death, happiness and suffering, arise from karma and mental afflictions; likewise, they in turn arise from faulty, conceptual ignorance. Ignorance itself is based within the mind's luminosity, just as the world rests in space.

The positive qualities of transcendent states are primordially coemergent with the innate constituent enlightenment or the enlightened heritage, like the sun and its rays. The positive qualities of the appearance aspect of transcendent states—wisdom bodies, radiance, pure lands, celestial palaces, and the like—and the positive qualities of awareness (the emptiness aspect of transcendent states)—the ten forces, four forms of fearlessness, and so on—are presented in a very extensive manner in *The Flower Ornament Discourse*. In brief, *A Commentary to "The Highest Continuity"* states: Enlightenment's stainless positive qualities have an identical, inseparable nature, even at the stage of an ordinary individual who has mental afflictions, with no difference before or after the attainment of enlightenment. How these positive qualities abide is inconceivable. How can they thus abide? Any sentient being not imbued with the entire wisdom of the transcendent buddhas cannot even be called any kind of sentient being. However, dualistic perception prevents a sentient being's wisdom of the transcendent buddhas from manifesting. Once freed from dualistic perception, the wisdom of omniscient nondual knowledge and self-arisen wisdom will fully and uninhibitedly arise.

*The Flower Ornament Discourse* states:

O children of the victors! It is like this: for example, imagine a large silk cloth equal in size to a great triple cosmos. On this cloth is written the information concerning all worlds of this great triple cosmos. It would be like this: on a measure equal to a great horizon, a great horizon would be written; on a measure equal to the great earth, the



great earth would be written; on a measure equal to a double cosmos, the worlds of such a universe would be written; on a measure equal to a simple cosmos, the worlds of such a universe; on a measure equal to the worlds of a four-continent world-system, the worlds of such a system; on the measure of a great ocean, the great ocean; on a measure equal to the Land of Jambu, the Land of Jambu; on a measure equal to the eastern continent, Noble Body, the eastern continent of Noble Body; on a measure equal to the western continent, Wealth of Cattle, the western continent Wealth of Cattle; on a measure equal to the northern continent, Unpleasant Sound, the northern continent Unpleasant Sound; on a measure equal to Supreme Mountain, Supreme Mountain; on a measure equal to a celestial palace of the gods who live on the ground, a celestial palace of the gods who live on the ground; on a measure equal to a celestial palace of the gods who live in the realm of desire, a celestial palace of the gods who live in the realm of desire; on a measure equal to a celestial palace of the gods who live in the realm of form, a celestial palace of the gods who live in the realm of form would be written.

That great silk cloth would have a depth equal to the measure of worlds of the great triple cosmos. Then further imagine that this great silk cloth is contained within a single of the finest atoms. Just as the great silk cloth is contained within a single fine atom, every fine atom without exception contains such a large cloth.

Imagine then that some wise and learned persons are born, endowed with clear minds and with the faculty to fully comprehend this. Their eyes become the eyes of the gods, able to see every thing in luminous purity. They gaze with such eyes and think, "Such a great silk cloth as this rests within such a tiny, fine atom, yet this does not help any sentient being in the least." Further, they reflect, "Alas! Whoever through great force and energetic application breaks open that fine atom to free this great silk cloth will provide great help for all beings." They then develop the force of that intense energetic application and break open the atom with a minute vajra and, as they had planned, help every being with the great cloth. As in that one case, they open every atom without exception.

O children of the victors! In the same way, the transcendent buddhas' wisdom, unlimited wisdom, wisdom that would prove useful for all sentient beings, exists complete in every regard within the minds of all sentient beings. Sentient beings' minds are, moreover, like

the transcendent buddhas' wisdom—immeasurable.

From the perspective of the enlightened heritage's own essence, its positive qualities are ever present, and faults never covered it. From the perspective of its appearance, it had mental afflictions and was subsequently purified. That the enlightened heritage is pure and that it is also impure, and that the two are not mutually exclusive, make it an inconceivable phenomenon. The same text (Asanga's *Commentary*) states: This transcendent nature, with stains, is at one and the same time, both completely pure and thoroughly afflicted. Therefore its state is inconceivable.

Further, in the same text,

This transcendent nature, without stains, was never thoroughly afflicted by stains and did not subsequently become pure. Therefore this state is inconceivable.

### ***How the Enlightened Heritage Is All-Pervasive [2]***

**Buddha nature pervades all sentient life.**

**The signs of this enlightened heritage having awakened are sight of existence's faults and of the qualities of perfect peace.**

**Its supreme qualities liberate us from the sea of existence.**

The way buddha nature pervades has three aspects: its natural way of pervading, the signs of the enlightened heritage, and its positive qualities. First, *The Lion's Roar of Shrimaladevi* states: Buddha nature pervades all beings.

*The Highest Continuity* states:

All embodied beings always possess buddha nature  
Because the body of perfect enlightenment is pervasive,  
Because the transcendent nature is inseparable,  
And because beings have an enlightened heritage.

Second, signs of the enlightened heritage have two parts. First, indications of its dormant presence are as the same text states: However, without enlightenment's innate constituent,

You could not become disenchanted with suffering,  
Nor could you desire to transcend sorrow.

Nor could you desire to transcend sorrow,  
Nor could you aspire to strive for that goal.

This describes some common persons. Second, the signs of the enlightened heritage having woken are stated in the same text: Sight of the faults of suffering in existence

And the positive qualities of happiness in transcendent states  
Comes to those who have this enlightened heritage. Why?  
It does not come to those without it.

Third, its positive qualities are stated in *The Ornament of the Discourses*:

That sublime enlightened heritage is like an excellent root  
Because its extremely extensive qualities nurture the tree of awakening,  
Because it produces happiness and the end of severe suffering,  
And because its fruit brings welfare and happiness to yourself and others.

### ***A Complete Classification of the Enlightened Heritage [3]***

This section has three parts: classification of the enlightened heritage based on its (1) support and content, (2) circumstances, and (3) metaphors and meaning.

### ***Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Its Support and Content [a]***

**The basic space of phenomena is the support; appearances, the content.**

If the previously mentioned pervasive luminosity is classified according to appearance and emptiness, it can be said to be twofold. The empty basic space of phenomena constitutes “what must be separated from delusion” to produce the body of ultimate enlightenment, the essence wisdom body (referred to as the “support”). Wisdom’s appearances—natural luminosity adorned with the marks and signs of enlightenment’s physical perfection—constitute “what must be separated from delusion” to produce enlightenment’s two bodies that have form (referred to as the “content”). *The Highest Continuity* states: Like a treasure and a fruit tree,

The enlightened heritage is known as twofold.  
The first is naturally present since time immemorial;  
The other is the sublime, fully cultivated enlightened heritage.

It is believed that these two aspects of the enlightened heritage  
Produce the attainment of the three wisdom bodies.  
The first produces the first body;  
The second, the latter two.

The exquisite essence wisdom body  
Can be understood to be like a statue of jewels,  
Because its precious stones are natural, not manufactured,  
And because its precious qualities constitute a treasure.

The wisdom body of perfect rapture resembles a universal monarch,  
Because it holds dominion over the kingdom of great qualities.  
The manifest body is like a gold statue  
Because its nature is a reflected image.

When the enlightened heritage is differentiated according to the contexts of the ground of our being and the spiritual path, it has two aspects—the naturally present enlightened heritage and the enlightened heritage fully cultivated on the spiritual path.

When the basic space of phenomena's nature dwells as the all-pervasive ground of being, the ground of being as the ground for anything to arise (the part which is the basic space of phenomena) can be likened to a treasure of precious jewels. It dwells as a ground for whatever is wished, without becoming materially localized in any way whatsoever. Likewise, the body of ultimate enlightenment, the basic space of the essence wisdom body, creates space for the arising of enlightenment's bodies and wisdom.

The appearance aspects of the wisdoms that arise in that space—awareness and wisdom bodies—are your innate positive qualities that surely manifest due to the force of your having become freed from obscurations based in passing conditions. Just this aspect is likened to a burgeoning fruit tree, a case of the cause (purity) being called by the name of the result. *The Ornament of the Discourses* describes these with the metaphors of a gold mountain and a supreme jewel.

Additionally, to explain this subject from the perspective of the period of training on the spiritual path, the natural, spontaneous presence of both aspects (that is, naturally present and fully cultivated) of the basic space of phenomena's enlightened heritage is termed the “natural enlightened heritage.” This acts as a support upon which any cultivation of the sources of ennobling acts, synthesized

as the dual cultivation of goodness and wisdom (from the initial uplift of the mind to awakening until culmination at awakening's tenth stage) is termed the "fully cultivated" or "unfolding" enlightened heritage. Such ennobling acts are an antidote, newly undertaken, employed to remove stains on the natural enlightened heritage. This process makes it appear as if positive qualities you already had were newly created.

These days, these two aspects of the enlightened heritage are not considered to be part of the ground of being. Rather, the ground of being is said to be the natural enlightened heritage; the path, the unfolding enlightened heritage. This construct seems to be due to a lack of comprehension of the basic space of phenomena, since it does not account for the spontaneous presence of both appearance and emptiness in the ground of being. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Not different before or after,

Yet the transcendent nature has been purified.

*The Highest Continuity* states:

Noncomposite, ever present,  
Not realized through extraneous conditions,  
Endowed with wisdom, love, and capability:  
This is enlightenment that fulfills the two goals.

Therefore, apart from the causes and results of freedom from extraneous obscurations, enlightenment is not accomplished in a process based on causes that produce an intended goal. Enlightenment is primordial, ever present. Therefore, the two enlightened heritages should be understood to be aspects of the three wisdom bodies that exist primordially.

The cultivation of goodness, such as uplift of the mind to awakening, removes stains that obscure the wisdom bodies that have form; the cultivation of wisdom, such as meditation on emptiness, removes stains that obscure the nature of reality, the essence wisdom body. At the level of enlightenment, the unfolding enlightened heritage is the appearance aspect, the wisdom body of rapture; the natural enlightened heritage is its emptiness aspect, the body of ultimate enlightenment. Through the blessing of their inseparability, the manifest wisdom body appears in beings' perception, according to the fortune of each, just as the image of a universal monarch in the sky appears reflected on the flank of a golden mountain.

## ***Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Its Circumstances [b]***

**The enlightened heritage can exist within impurity, purity, or extreme purity.**

Sentient beings' enlightened heritage exists within impurity; bodhisattvas' enlightened heritage, in the purification of impurity; and the transcendent buddhas' enlightened heritage or innate constituent enlightenment, in extreme purity. For example, containers made from such substances as clay, wood, or jewels each appear to have greater or lesser value, but the space they hold has no distinguishing value. *The Discourse of the Essence of Enlightenment* states: Partial realization, as opposed to total realization, can be explained in the following words. Ordinary beings, hearers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas do not see buddha nature exactly as it is. For example, if a person blind from birth asks someone the color of butter, the person might reply, "It's like that of a pillar." The blind man can touch the pillar and conclude butter's color to be cool. If the reply was "Like a swan's wings," the blind man can hear a wing's sound and think that the color makes a whooshing sound. If he asks, "What is the color of a swan's wings like?" and the reply is, "Like a conch shell," he can touch a shell and imagine the color to be smooth. Regardless of the reply, a person blind from birth cannot know colors exactly as they are. Likewise, to see enlightenment's nature is extremely difficult.

This buddha nature is difficult for an ordinary person to understand, as stated in the same text:

A king assembled a group of blind men, showed them an elephant, and ordered them to tell him the elephant's features. Those who touched the elephant's trunk said, "It's like a hook." Those who touched the eyes said, "It's like a cup." Those who touched the ears said, "It's like a basket." Those who touched the back said, "It's like a chair." Those who touched the tail said, "It's like a rope." Each blind man did not relate anything besides his own impression of the elephant, yet none had any realization of its totality. Likewise, the nature of enlightenment can be described in its separate features, such as emptiness, illusion-like, or luminosity, yet this is not the realization of its totality.

Exalted bodhisattvas realize a portion of this buddha nature yet do not realize it exactly as it is. *The Great Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states: Child of the enlightened heritage, it is like this: for example, imagine that a visually impaired person who wishes to be cured goes to a skilled doctor's office. The doctor takes a golden scalpel, removes the cataracts, then holds up a single finger. The patient says, "I can't see that." When the doctor holds up two or three fingers, the patient says, "I can vaguely see two or three fingers."

Child of the enlightened heritage, if I do not relate this *Discourse of the Complete Great Transcendence of Sorrow*, limitless bodhisattvas can complete the perfections and rest on the tenth stage of awakening, yet not see the nature of enlightenment, like that blind person. If the Transcendent Buddha speaks, they can vaguely see it.

*The Great Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* also states:

The Honored One addressed Kashyapa, "Child of the enlightened heritage, it's like this: Imagine that a king had an athlete who wore a jeweled vajra on his forehead. During a competition, he hit another athlete's head with his, and the jewel was forced beneath his skin, although the athlete did not know where it had gone. Since there was a scar, a doctor was called and ordered to cure him. The doctor was very skilled and knew that the scar was due to the jewel having penetrated the skin. He did not apply medicine but said, "Oh, strong man, I know where the jewel on your forehead has gone." The athlete replied, anxiously, "It would be better if that jewel on my forehead had not gone anywhere. Without it, I wonder whether life is an illusion, and I have become very sorrowful." Then the doctor tried to make the athlete happy by saying, "Don't be anxious! During your competition the jewel went under your skin. There's only a reflection of it showing. During the competition, you were angry and didn't feel the jewel go under your skin." The athlete did not believe him, "Doctor! Don't tell me lies! If the jewel went under my skin, it would have stirred up pus and blood. It's impossible for its reflection to appear outside." The doctor then placed a mirror in front of him: the athlete clearly saw the jewel, was awestruck, and filled with wonder.

Child of the enlightened heritage, all sentient beings are like that athlete. Even though they have an enlightened nature, they are unable to see it because they have not honored spiritual guides. Overcome by

obscurations due to desire, anger, and stupidity, beings in many different forms circle and suffer within the round of rebirth.

Further, the same text states:

However, child of the enlightened heritage, within the body of each sentient being there exist the ten forces, the thirty-two marks, and the eighty signs of the physical perfection of enlightenment.

*The Great Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* also states:

Child of the enlightened heritage! Further, it's like this: Imagine a woman whose infant was struck by a disease that infected his mouth. The woman, tormented by anxiety, found a doctor. The doctor told her to give the child a medicine mixed with butter, milk, and molasses, and gave her the following order: "While your child takes this medicine and until it's finished, you mustn't give your own milk." To prevent the child from wanting her milk, she rubbed bile on her breasts, thinking, "If I rub this poison on my breasts, my child won't want them." As she expected, when the child was thirsty and wanted to nurse, the taste of her breasts made the child immediately unable to drink. Once the child had finished the medicine, she washed her breasts and said, "Come here, come and nurse now." But even though the child was very thirsty, the child's memory of the taste made it impossible to accept. The mother then explained to the child, "Before, you were taking medicine and you were not allowed to drink my milk so I spread bile on my breasts. Now you've finished your medicine and you've washed your mouth; there's no more bad taste." Then, the child carefully, gradually approached and was able to nurse.

Child of the enlightened heritage, in order that all sentient beings be liberated, the Transcendent One emphasized the teaching on the lack of an existent self. Based on their intense practice of that teaching, beings will have no thought of self and will completely transcend sorrow. In order to remove the negative views of worldly nihilistic philosophy, you meditate on the lack of an existent self and thus your body becomes completely pure. Just as that woman rubbed bile on her breasts for the good of her child, the Transcendent One does the same: in order that beings meditate on emptiness, he teaches that all phenomena lack an existent self. Then, just as the woman washed her



breasts, called her child, and said, “Now you can nurse,” I now teach instructions on buddha nature.

Fully ordained ones! Don't be afraid! Just as the mother calls her child, who gradually nurses, you fully ordained individuals must discern the teachings. Buddha nature is not a negation. Within the discourses on the transcendent perfections that I related in the past, I taught emptiness; however, you should understand that I did so only with the thought to present the self's lack of an intrinsic nature. Apart from that, meditation on void emptiness cannot produce enlightenment's bodies and wisdom, just as a fruit corresponds to its seed.

Therefore, this teaching describes emptiness as the emptiness of appearing phenomena. From the moment of their appearance, they are empty of embellishments caused by clinging to them as single or as multiple, and they are empty from the perspective of each phenomenon's essence, like reflections in a mirror. It does not describe emptiness as a final void of nothing whatsoever or, in relation to the appearances of delusion, as the nonexistence of something that once existed in the beginning or in the present.

### ***Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Metaphors and Meaning [c]***

This section has three parts: (1) metaphors for the enlightened heritage and their meanings, (2) names for the enlightened heritage, and (3) how the essential nature is realized.

#### ***Metaphors for the Enlightened Heritage and Their Meanings [i]***

**Butter, a lamp, a jewel, gold, grain,  
And fruit: these six metaphors illustrate the basis, path, and result.  
A buddha within a lotus, bees and honey,  
Grain in a husk, gold in filth,  
A buried treasure, a sprout from a seed,  
A jeweled image in rags, a sovereign in the womb,  
Gold covered with earth: these are nine metaphors of the meaning.**

From among explanations in treatises that elucidate the correct, definitive meaning taught in the final cycle of the doctrine, *Praise of the Basic Space of*

*Phenomena* states: Butter's essence does not appear

When mixed in milk;  
Likewise, the basic space of phenomena is not seen  
When mixed with the mental afflictions.  
When milk is churned  
Butter's essence becomes pure;  
Likewise, when the mental afflictions are refined,  
The basic space of phenomena becomes extremely pure.

A lamp placed inside a vase  
Does not shine in the least;  
Likewise, when placed within the vase of the mental afflictions,  
The basic space of phenomena is not seen.  
Light will naturally shine  
From the exact point  
Where a hole is made  
In the vase;  
Likewise, at the moment the vajra of meditative states  
Pierces the vase of the mental afflictions,  
The bounds of space  
Are illuminated.

Precious lapis lazuli  
Always glows,  
But when covered by rocks  
Its radiance is not apparent; Likewise, the extremely pure basic space of  
phenomena,  
Obscured by the mental afflictions,  
Cannot shine within the round of rebirth,  
But when transcendence is reached, it radiates.

When gold lies within ore,  
Refinement of the ore will make it visible.  
Without the constituent of gold, you can refine ore  
But will produce mental afflictions, and nothing more.

When covered by a husk,  
Grain is invisible;  
Likewise, what is covered by the mental afflictions

Is not called “enlightenment.”  
When the husk is removed,  
Grain appears;  
Likewise, when the mental afflictions are removed,  
The ultimate body of enlightenment fully manifests.

Plantain is said to be hollow,  
A metaphor for the world.  
But its essence is the fruit,  
Which is first eaten.  
When the hollow round of rebirth  
Is separated from the husks of the mental afflictions,  
Its fruit is enlightenment itself,  
Nectar for all embodied beings.

Each of these six metaphors—butter, a lamp, a jewel, gold, grain, and fruit—symbolize the contexts of the basis, path, and result.

Among the following nine metaphors taught by Maitreya, four symbolize buddha nature that rests within the four impurities that obscure the mind of individuals in four circumstances: before having entered the path, having entered, on the path of cultivation, and on the path of application.

First, buddha nature that lies within the confines of the propensity toward desire can be likened to a buddha hidden in a lotus bud. *The Highest Continuity* states: A faded lotus

Can hold a transcendent buddha who shines with a thousand marks of  
physical perfection.  
A human being endowed with stainless, divine sight could see the buddha,  
And remove him from the lotus bud.  
Likewise, blissful buddhas, with the eyes of enlightenment, see their own  
nature  
Even in beings who live in the Hell of Uninterrupted Torment.  
Their unobscured nondual compassion that lasts until the very end of time  
Liberates us from obscurations.

Second, the enlightened heritage, innate constituent enlightenment, that dwells within the confines of the propensity toward anger can be likened to honey. The same text states: When intelligent persons looking for honey

See it surrounded by a mass of bees

See it surrounded by a mass of bees,  
They do what they can to use skillful means to separate that honey  
From the swarm of bees.  
Likewise, the Great Seer endowed with omniscience  
Sees the enlightened heritage, innate constituent enlightenment, like honey,  
Surrounded by obscurations, like bees,  
Which he forever renounces.

Third, buddha nature within the confines of the latent propensity toward stupidity can be likened to a fruit inside its peel. The same text states: The core of a fruit, when in its peel,

Cannot be enjoyed by anyone:  
Anyone who strives to eat it  
Must remove it from the peel.  
Likewise, as long as victors,  
Mixed with the stains of sentient beings' mental afflictions,  
Are not liberated from the mental afflictions' stains,  
They cannot perform victors' acts within the three planes of existence.

Fourth, buddha nature that dwells within the confines of the state of the actual arousal of intense desire, anger, and stupidity, the three poisons, is like gold in mud. The same text states: During a journey, a person's gold

Can drop into rotten mire  
And, since it is indestructible, remain there  
Unchanged for many hundreds of years.  
Gods with pure divine sight can see the gold  
And tell someone its location,  
That they might clean it and use this supreme wealth  
For their own purposes.  
Likewise, the Sage sees the positive qualities of sentient beings  
Sunk in the mud of mental afflictions, like filth.  
To purify the mire of mental afflictions,  
He causes the rain of the sacred doctrine to fall on beings.

Fifth, the innate constituent enlightenment that lies within the confines of the propensity toward ignorance of listener and solitary sage arhats is like a treasure buried in the earth. The same text states: An inexhaustible treasure

Can be buried under a pauper's home

Can be buried under a pauper's home  
But the family does not know it,  
Nor can the treasure announce its own presence.  
Likewise, the mind contains a treasure of jewels—  
The nature of reality, pure, to which nothing needs to be added or removed

—  
But without realization of that treasure,  
Beings experience continual, myriad forms of the suffering of poverty.

Sixth, the essence that lies within the confines of impurities renounced on the path of seeing is illustrated by the metaphor of a peel-covered seed that sprouts into a tree. The same text states: Fruit, such as a mango,

Contains an indestructible seed that will sprout  
And, if nourished by conditions, such as earth, cultivation, and water,  
Will gradually grow into the sovereign among trees.  
Within sentient beings' peel, including ignorance,  
Lies their nature, the ennobling innate constituent enlightenment.  
Likewise, by relying on ennobling circumstances,  
A being will gradually become an actual sovereign sage.

Seventh, the second metaphor of impurities renounced on the path of seeing is a jeweled image covered in rags. The same text states: The gods can see by the roadside

An image of the Victor made of jewels  
Covered in filthy, stinking rags,  
And indicate this to humans, to free the image.  
Likewise, those of unobstructed vision  
See even in animals the true blissful buddhas  
Covered in various ways by mental afflictions,  
And teach skillful means to free them.

Eighth, there are two metaphors for our nature, the ennobling innate constituent enlightenment that rests within the confines of the stains renounced on the path of meditation. The first is a ruler who gestates within the womb of a handicapped woman. The same text states: A handicapped woman who has no protector,

Who lives where any destitute person may stay,  
A fish held in her mouth, a bird in her hand,

might hold in her womb a glorious monarch,  
But remain unconscious that such a leader dwells within her own body.  
Likewise, those born into existence, a home for the destitute,  
Impure sentient beings, are like that pregnant woman:  
What they possess will become a protection—  
The pure innate constituent enlightenment inside them, as if in their own  
womb.

Ninth, the second metaphor for impurities renounced on the path of meditation is a golden image covered by its clay mold. The same text states: A splendid, peaceful molten gold image

Can lie covered with clay.  
Those who can see and know its presence  
Will remove the outer covering to clean the gold within.  
Likewise, those who have sublime awakening  
See the mind's nature of pure luminosity covered by incidental defilements  
And will purify the obscurations  
In beings, who are like a mine of jewels.

Here, four metaphors—a lotus, bees, a peel, and mud—illustrate the obscurations to innate constituent enlightenment present in sentient beings. The single metaphor of buried treasure illustrates its presence in the streams of being of arhats among hearers and solitary sages. The two metaphors of a husk and rags illustrate respectively impurities renounced on the great way path of seeing, present within the stream of being of ordinary individuals engaged in training, and impurities renounced on the path of meditation, present within exalted individuals' stream of being. The two metaphors of a womb and gold covered with clay illustrate respectively the impurities of those who rest on awakening's ten stages (or of those who rest on awakening's initial seven impure stages), and of those who rest on awakening's final three pure stages.

### ***Names for the Enlightened Heritage [ii]***

**The basic space of phenomena, enlightenment, buddha nature, innate  
constituent enlightenment, ultimate truth,  
Radiant wisdom, emptiness, perfection of sublime insight, true nature.**

We distinguish names for the enlightened heritage as follows. It is called *the basic space of phenomena*, since its realization is the basis for transcendent

states, whereas when it is not realized, the round of rebirth arises. It is called *natural, ever-present enlightenment*, since it is a natural attribute in beings, primordial and noncomposite. It is called *buddha nature*, since all qualities of enlightenment are present within it. It is called *innate constituent enlightenment* or *ultimate ground*, from the perspective of obscuring impurities. It is called *ultimate truth*, since it is the abiding nature. It is called *luminous wisdom*, since it is originally pure. It is called *profound emptiness, the nature of the middle way*, since it transcends the extremes of existence and nonexistence based in exaggeration or deprecation. It is called *perfection of sublime insight*, since it is free from all formulated extremes. It is called *inseparable truths*, since it is nondual clarity and emptiness. It is called *true nature*, since its characteristics are without change or transition.

### ***How the Essential Nature Is Realized [iii]***

**The innate constituent enlightenment can be believed in, partially seen, or manifest.**

Thus, that innate constituent enlightenment as described, the essence of awakening, is ever present in beings. Moreover, from the perspective of its intrinsic purity and its endowment with every quality, it is called the *nature of the body of ultimate enlightenment*. This is shown by the three metaphors of the Buddha in a lotus, honey, and grain.

From the perspective of its unchanging, noncomposite aspect, and to indicate its presence within us, it is called the *intrinsic true nature*, shown by the single metaphor of gold. From the perspective of the wisdom bodies' seeming development due to removal of impurities during training on the path, it is called the *nature of the enlightened heritage*, shown by the metaphors of treasure, a tree, a jeweled image, a universal monarch, and a golden image.

Concerning the innate constituent enlightenment's ultimate essence, persons on the paths of cultivation and application intellectually believe, "It definitely exists," but do not actually see it. Once they reach awakening's first stage, they partially see it. At the stage of enlightenment, whatever constitutes its nature becomes directly manifest, thus nondually seen. Since this basic space of phenomena is the ultimate truth, seeing its nature is called *sight of ultimate truth*. Nothingness (literally, "the emptiness of nothing whatsoever") is not the ultimate truth. Such subjects as the lack of an existent self are taught to beginners or to ordinary, spiritually immature individuals, as remedies for their attachment to a sense of self as existent. In fact, it should be understood that the

basic space of phenomena, noncomposite luminosity, is ever present.

### ***Proofs Based on Instruction in the Enlightened Heritage [4]***

**Empty of faults and formations, the enlightened heritage's qualities are complete.**

**Once the five mistakes are corrected, one works joyfully and energetically for the good of others.**

This section has two parts, questions asked to remove philosophical doubts concerning the enlightened heritage itself and replies to such doubts.

First, doubts could be formulated as follows: “The doctrine’s middle cycle teaches that all phenomena are impermanent, like clouds; unreal, like dreams; a collection of causes and conditions yet lacking an intrinsic nature, like a magic display, and so on. However, in this final cycle, they are described as primordial, eternally existent, thus permanent; abiding in their intrinsic nature, thus isolated; not produced by causes and conditions, thus noncomposite. Aren’t these two cycles’ views contradictory?”

Second, when doubts such as these arise for those of average intellect, the reply is as follows: This buddha nature is empty, since it is empty of faults and composite formations; but is not empty as if devoid of its own positive qualities. The correct conclusion is that the naturally pure innate constituent enlightenment is noncomposite, like space; whereas the contents that appear in such space—karma, mental afflictions, and the happiness and sufferings of the round of rebirth—appear like clouds.

Concerning this, it is taught that suffering produced by dysfunctional mental activity related to mental afflictions is like clouds; karma, appearances without an intrinsic nature, like forms in a dream; and the psychophysical aggregations created by karma and mental afflictions, like a magic display or an emanation. These teachings remedy clinging to the single extreme of manifest attachment to a sense of an existent self. Subsequently, five mistakes might arise, such as attachment due to an exaggerated clinging to the extreme of emptiness. To correct these faults, the ultimate, innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature, is taught.

What are the five mistakes? They are as follows. You do not see that you have the essence of awakening, and conclude, “Someone like me cannot attain enlightenment.” This defeatist attitude prevents you from uplifting your mind to awakening. Even though you have uplifted it, you conclude, “I am a bodhisattva; others are ordinary persons.” This contempt for sentient beings prevents your



access to higher paths. You cling to the extreme of emptiness and thereby do not comprehend the ultimate nature, the basic space of phenomena, and do not hold correct views. You fall into extreme views of eternalism or nihilism and disparage correct teaching. You do not see yourself and sentient beings as equals and thus cling to duality.

If you know that this innate constituent enlightenment is ever present in yourself and others, you can conclude that your own mind can attain freedom without difficulty, and you become joyful in that knowledge. With respect toward all sentient beings as toward the Buddha, not only are you not malicious or harmful, you help others. In the expanding circles of sublime insight born of the realization of the ultimate basic space, wisdom that sees the nature of mind, and immeasurable love, you become capable of acting to serve others.

Readers should note that I have presented this explanation of the enlightened heritage entirely from the perspective of the teachings' definitive meaning, without consideration of the provisional meaning. Since this subject is particularly crucial to the great way and is difficult to understand, I have presented it here in detail.

### ***An Explanation of Relative Truth [C]***

**Under the heading of relative truth, there is its essence, definition of the term, Characteristics, and two categories of its classification—genuine and misleading.**

The essence of relative truth is the mental domain created by the rational dualistic mind and the senses. The conceptual domain, senses, and mental activity are the relative, and are entirely perception within the confines of delusion.

The definition of the term *relative truth* is that which is without an intrinsic nature within appearances that are illusory, thus *relative*. In the face of momentary delusion, the individual traits of these appearances are seen to be reliable, and are called “truth.” This term includes all aspects of the attachment to the reality of what appears in the domain of the rational dualistic mind, as well as myriad appearances. Within the domain of appearances, no truth or falseness, delusion or lack of delusion whatsoever exists since it has no intrinsic nature. Should you think, “Yet, my rational dualistic mind perceives these appearances: my senses, my consciousness, and external phenomena exist,” in the circumstance of attachment to experience based in dualistic clinging, this

constitutes the aspect of subjective clinging, which we label “relative.”

The characteristic of relative truth is phenomena that do not surpass the rational dualistic mind’s domain and that cannot forbear examination. Its classification is an ancillary subject, based on the understanding of terminology within the range of designations in the context of the relative, such terms as are adapted to worldly judgments of truth or falseness. This has two categories: first, genuine relative truth corresponds to the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, sensations, and phenomena that appear in the domains of the unimpaired six senses. Second, misleading relative truth corresponds to disturbed appearances due to impaired senses—such as images of floating and melting forms.

I have presented this subject of relative truth here as it definitely contradicts ultimate truth.

## **THE DOCTRINE’S MIDDLE CYCLE, THE BUDDHA’S PAST LIVES, AND MENTAL TRAINING BY MEANS OF THE FOUR IMMEASURABLE ASPIRATIONS [II]**

This chapter has three parts: (1) the turning of the doctrine’s middle cycle and its compilation, (2) the Buddha’s past lives, and (3) mental training by means of the four immeasurable aspirations.

### ***The Turning of the Doctrine’s Middle Cycle and Its Compilation [A]***

**On Vulture Peak, Powerful Sage (Shakyamuni)**

**Turned the doctrine’s middle cycle, that of absence of characteristics,  
For those endowed with the great way’s enlightened heritage.**

**His teachings compiled by Gentle Melody (Manjugosha), explained by  
Nagarjuna and his spiritual heirs,**

**And expounded by Shantideva are the profound view tradition.**

**His teachings compiled by Loving Kindness (Maitreya), explained by  
Asanga and his brother,**

**And expounded by Lord Atisha are the vast activity tradition.**

**Lotus-Born’s personal tradition concurs with the profound view  
tradition.**

**The original translations have twenty-three discourses in this cycle,  
including *The Lengthy Perfection of Sublime Insight in One Hundred  
Thousand* and *Twenty-Five Thousand Stanzas*, *The Perfection of***

***Sublime Insight in Eighteen Thousand Stanzas, in Ten Thousand, Eight Thousand, Seven Hundred, Five Hundred, Three Hundred, and One Hundred Stanzas.***

**The original translations also include 197 treatises of commentary.**

On Vulture Peak, Honored Powerful Sage (Shakyamuni) turned the doctrine's middle cycle, that of absence of characteristics, for a circle of disciples endowed with the great way's enlightened heritage. His teachings compiled by Gentle Melody (Manjugosha), explained by Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, and expounded by Chandrakirti and Shantideva are known as the profound view tradition. His teachings compiled by Loving Kindness (Maitreya), explained by Asanga and his brother Vasubandhu, upheld by Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Chandragomi, and others, and expounded in Tibet by Lord Atisha are known as the vast activity tradition. The great master's (Guru Rinpoche's) personal tradition is that of the profound view, which concurs with Nagarjuna's tradition.

From the doctrine's middle cycle, that of the perfection of sublime insight, the original translations include twenty-three discourses: 1. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas*, the extensive version, describes 121 meditative states, 11 enumerations of the three gates, 120 questions and answers, 150 full enumerative sets, 74 subjects related to the thirty-seven facets of awakening, 70 characteristic qualities, 711 root subjects of enumerative sets, and 10,429 abbreviated enumerated sets added to the root subjects. In all, it contains 100,000 stanzas, 301 sections, and 72 chapters.<sup>27</sup> [no. 25: 9,601 pages]

2. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight*, [also known as] *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Twenty-Five Thousand Stanzas*. [This work contains] 76 chapters and 700 sections. [no. 26: 2,717 pages]
3. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eighteen Thousand Stanzas*, 60 chapters and 82 sections [no. 27: 2,058 pages]
4. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Ten Thousand Stanzas*, 34 sections and 33 chapters [no. 28: 996 pages]
5. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas*, the abridged version of the mother of sublime insight, 24 sections and 32 chapters [no. 29: 721 pages]

Various other versions of *The Perfection of Sublime Insight* include

6. *Discourse Requested by Suvikrantavikrami*, 7 sections and 60 stanzas in seven chapters [no. 31: 225 pages]
7. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight, the Abridged Version in Verse*, one section and 200 stanzas from the last chapter of *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas* [no. 30: 51 pages]
8. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Seven Hundred Stanzas*, from the forty-sixth chapter of *The Abridged Version of “The Cluster of Jewels Discourse”* [no. 41: 73 pages]
9. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Five Hundred Stanzas* [no. 32: 48 pages]
10. *The Vajra Cutter—The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Three Hundred Stanzas*, one section [no. 33: 37 pages]
11. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in One Hundred Fifty Modes* [no. 34: 20 pages]
12. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Fifty Stanzas* [no. 35: 8 pages]
13. *Twenty-Five Doors to the Perfection of Sublime Insight* [no. 37: 4 pages]
14. *Heart of the Perfection of Sublime Insight*, 25 stanzas [no. 38: 6 pages]
15. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in a Few Words* [no. 39: 6 pages]
16. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in One Word* [no. 40: 3 pages]
17. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight for Kaushika* [no. 36: 6 pages]
18. *One Hundred and Eight Names of the Perfection of Sublime Insight* [no. 42: 7 pages]
19. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight for Suryagarbha* [no. 43: 6 pages]
20. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight for Chandragarbha* [no. 44: 5 pages]
21. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight for Samantabhadra* [no. 45: 3 pages]
22. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight for Vajrapani* [no. 46: 3 pages]
23. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight for Vajraketu* [no. 47: 3 pages]

In this cycle of the doctrine, the original translations also include 197 treatises: 40 treatises of commentary pertain to Maitreya and Asanga’s *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* and its attendant texts, which present the hidden meaning of the perfection of sublime insight; and 157 treatises of commentary pertain to Nagarjuna’s *The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* and its attendant texts, which present the direct teaching of emptiness.

### ***The Buddha’s Past Lives [B]***

This section has three parts: (1) how the Buddha initially uplifted his mind to sublime awakening, (2) the general way he cultivated goodness and wisdom, and

(3) a specific description of thirty-four past lives (three sets of ten lives and one set of four).

### ***How the Buddha Initially Uplifted His Mind to Sublime Awakening [1]***

**In a past life, the Sage offered a parasol and seashells to the great Shakyamuni  
And in that buddha's presence uplifted his mind to supreme awakening for the first time.**

When our Teacher, sublime Shakyamuni in a previous lifetime, was a potter's son named Illuminator, he offered a parasol, a pair of shoes, and five hundred seashells arranged in the form of flowers to the great Buddha Shakyamuni and in his presence uplifted his mind to awakening for the first time. He vowed: Blissful Buddha, be it your wisdom body,

Be it your entourage, life span, pure land,  
Or sublime, excellent name:  
May I become exactly like you!

He was also known as he who, on meeting a buddha, offered a full bowl of smooth soup and five shells as a flower.

Likewise, when our Buddha in another life was the merchant Excellent Knowledge, he uplifted his mind in the presence of the Buddha Jewel Branch. When he was King Virtuous, he uplifted his mind in the presence of the Buddha Beautiful Light. *The Fortunate Eon Discourse* states: Before, when I was an inferior person,

I offered one full bowl of soup  
To the Transcendent Buddha Shakyamuni  
And for the first time uplifted my mind to awakening.

### ***The General Way the Buddha Cultivated Goodness and Wisdom [2]***

**He then traversed the paths of cultivation and application by honoring fifty-five thousand victors;  
He reached the seventh stage of awakening by honoring sixty-six thousand victors;  
And completed the tenth stage of awakening by honoring seventy-seven**

**thousand victors.**

**These three progressions lasted a total of three great incalculable eons.**

During the first great incalculable eon, the future Buddha Shakyamuni perfectly cultivated goodness and wisdom, such as honoring fifty-five thousand victors, including Guardian of the Region and Surroundings. He thus actualized the three levels of the path of cultivation and the four levels of the path of application. *The Basic Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct* states: During the first incalculable eon,

I honored  
Fifty-five thousand buddhas,  
From the guide Guardian of the Region and Surroundings  
To the sage Powerful Banner.  
I did so without any regret.

During the second incalculable eon, he honored sixty-six thousand victors, including Buddha Fine Deeds, and completely traversed the first to the seventh stages of awakening. The same text states: From Buddha Fine Deeds

Until the guide All-Seeing,  
I honored  
Sixty-six thousand buddhas.  
I did so without any regret.

During the third incalculable eon, he honored seventy-seven thousand victors, from Buddha Lamp Giver to Light Guardian. Due to this cultivation of the source of ennobling acts, he actualized awakening's three pure stages. The same text states: From the Buddha Lamp Giver

Until the victor Light Guardian,  
I honored  
Seventy-seven thousand buddhas.  
I did so without any regret.

### ***A Specific Description of Thirty-Four Past Lives [3]***

This section presents three sets of ten and one set of four:

#### ***The First Set of Ten***

## **Thirty-four lifetimes from among the past lives of the Buddha:**

**(1) Born into a brahmin family, he became a renunciant and kept a circle of disciples.**

**Then, out of compassion, he gave his body to a tigress.**

**(2) As king of Shibi, he gave whatever was wished:**

**To a brahmin he gave his eyes. By his declaration of truth, he gained divine sight.**

**(3) As king of Kosala,**

**He remembered a past life and recounted that his position was the consequence of a gift of warm food.**

**(4) As the merchant Courage in Giving, he crossed the fires of hell To offer alms to a solitary sage.**

**(5) As the merchant Invincible, although his wealth was exhausted, He offered his profits from selling grass: the god blessed him with endless and increasing wealth.**

**(6) As a rabbit, he gave spiritual teaching to an otter, a jackal, and a monkey.**

**He leapt into a fire: the gods gave him gifts and praise.**

**(7) As the brahmin Agastya, when staying in retreat, His food became depleted; he offered leaves to his guest, Shakra.**

**(8) As King Force of Love, by his gift of his own flesh and blood To five noxious spirits, they became the five excellent individuals.**

**(9) As the prince All-Liberating, he offered everything— An elephant; then sons, daughters, and wife.**

**(10) As King Maker of Gifts and Offerings, he skillfully Turned his subjects away from wrongdoing and led them to joy and happiness.**

### **(1) The First Past Life Recounted, the Gift of the Body**

Born into a brahmin family, the Bodhisattva (that is, the Buddha in a past life) learned such subjects as the eighteen arts and sciences, but became a renunciant. In a forest retreat, he gave many teachings to his circle of disciples. In the forest lived a starving tigress whom he witnessed eating her own cubs. Moved by immeasurable compassion, he gave his body to the tigress, to help persons of future generations develop courage when their energetic application and will for the instructions weaken. That gift caused the gods, nagas, and noxious spirits to shower him with a huge rain of offerings. The first tale of past lives states:<sup>28</sup>

May this help beings in every situation

may this help beings in every situation,  
Making them forever happy.  
When I am certain an act will aid others,  
I am thoroughly joyful, even if it costs me my life!

## **(2) The Gift of Eyes**

As king of the land of the Shibi, the Bodhisattva distributed gifts of whatever anyone wished, such as food, drink, bedding, furniture, clothes, ornaments, gold, and silver. While satisfying the people's wishes, he reflected that the gift of his own body would be more valuable than gifts of wealth. At that thought, the great earth trembled and the god Shakra (Indra) transformed himself into a blind brahmin. To test the king's motivation, he begged for the king's eyes. The king gave them; the beggar gained sight, and left. Again, to test the king's joy in giving, Shakra asked him questions. By the power of the king's declaration of the truth, the king regained his sight, the earth shook, and the gods presented him with offerings and praises. He attained divine sight and became able to see as far as the rocky mountains that lined the horizon at a distance of one hundred leagues.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to make known that true words are infallible. The second tale of past lives states: Brahmin, I will grant the hopes

You had in mind, which brought you here.  
You wished for one of my eyes,  
But I will give you both!

## **(3) The Gift of Warm Food**

As king of the region of Kosala, the Bodhisattva remembered that his position was due to the consequence of his gift of a handful of warm food during a past life. He remarked, In the past, I heard that even minor service offered to the joyful buddhas

Would not reap a small reward:  
Look at this majestic wealth of mine,  
The result of a handful of coarse, unsalted food!  
I have many chariots, horses, and swaggering elephants;  
My massive army, my wide dominion,  
Great splendors of wealth, my attractive queen—behold, so much!  
All the excellent effects accomplished by the gift of one handful of warm  
food!



The king related this to his officials, subjects, and queen, and she in turn recalled that she was born queen due to the gift of a handful of food she had made during a past lifetime as a servant.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to make known that a small offering to a sublime recipient produces a vast result.

#### **(4) To Cross the Fires of Hell to Make a Gift**

As the merchant Joy in Giving, the Bodhisattva made extensive gifts to the poor of whatever they wanted. While he was eating, a solitary sage came begging to his door. Demons obstructed his offering of fine food and drink by emanating intensely blazing hellfires between them. He refused to allow his gift to be prevented, crossed the fires, and made offerings to the solitary sage.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to make known that even though hellfire or other obstacles to the cultivation of goodness arise, you must develop courage to cultivate goodness. The fourth tale of past lives states: When the poor come to beg politely and confidently,

I would rather be burned in flames and fall up to my head  
In these unbearable fires of hell  
Than to scorn the opportunity to give and decide against it.

#### **(5) Giving the Profit of Selling Grass**

As the merchant Invincible, the Bodhisattva decided to make gifts without greed, since he concluded that to squander wealth meaninglessly increases attachment, the cause of rebirth in the miserable realms. When he gave gifts to satisfy the desires of beggars, Shakra tested his motivation by destroying his family's wealth, leaving only a scythe and a rope. The merchant used these to collect grass and made gifts with the profit from its sale. Shakra told him that if he stopped exerting himself in generosity, the family's fortune would grow, but he did not listen: his enjoyment in giving increased. Shakra returned the family's wealth he had hidden and caused it to become endless and ever-increasing.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to prevent fear that generosity might exhaust wealth and to teach that one must give without attachment to wealth. The fifth tale of past lives states: The source of happiness is generosity.

What good person treads the path of greed?

#### **(6) The Rabbit's Gift of His Body**

As a rabbit, the Bodhisattva gave spiritual teachings to an otter, a jackal, and a

monkey, and they thus refrained from harming living beings. The rabbit thought that if a guest came, there would be no food or gift in welcome. He then decided to offer his own body to a guest with the thought that his body would thereby be useful. At that thought, the earth shook. Shakra knew the reason for this and took the form of a brahmin who claimed to have lost his way and come into the forest, and to be afflicted by hunger and thirst. The rabbit told him, “Guest, I give you my body. Eat!” Shakra emanated a fire and the rabbit jumped into it. Shakra grabbed him and carried him to the gods’ realm and presented him to the gods. They used the rabbit’s image to ornament the excellent palace, Total Victory; the Hall of Excellent Instruction; and the circle of the moon.<sup>29</sup>

The Buddha’s intention in recounting this was to encourage exertion in generosity while a human being, since bodhisattvas even as animals feel inclined toward generosity and take joy in its positive qualities. The sixth tale of past lives states: A rabbit of the forest owns nothing whatsoever,

Not even beans, sesame, or grain.  
Take my body burned in the fire  
And stay today in the forest to engage in ascetic practice.

### **(7) The Gift of Leaves**

As Brahmin Agasti, the Bodhisattva studied the Vedas and related subjects, saw the householder life to be the source of many faults, and became a renunciant. He lived happily in a forest filled with flowers, leaves, and fruit. He served flowers, fruit, and other things to those who came to visit him. To test him, the sovereign god Shakra destroyed all edible roots and fruits in that region, in order that the Bodhisattva practice the asceticism of food. He then cooked and ate the fresh leaves of trees. Again Shakra destroyed all the tree leaves in that place. He had to gather a few remaining old leaves to eat; however, he did so without distaste, as if enjoying nectar. Shakra manifested in the form of a brahmin who visited him: he cooked the leaves he had collected and offered them to the brahmin. At this, the god extensively praised him and his supreme generosity.

The Buddha’s intention in recounting this was to encourage gifts of whatever food or wealth you have. The seventh tale of past lives states: An erudite person without arrogance,

A wealthy person without greed,  
A forest-dweller who has contentment:  
These are sublime ornaments of positive qualities!

### **(8) The Gift of Flesh and Blood**

As King Force of Love, the Bodhisattva ensured that his subjects lived in comfort and happiness. Five brothers, noxious spirits, came to his country and begged food from the king. He gave them food but they did not want it: they begged for the warm flesh and blood of a human being. The king gave his blood and cut a piece of his flesh as ransom: they ate this and were satisfied by his gift. The brothers promised not to harm human beings and aspired to become the first disciples of the king when he turned the wheel of the doctrine as a Buddha. The king promised it would be so; as a result, they later became the five excellent individuals, the first of Buddha Shakyamuni's circle of disciples.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to praise those who give to appease others' suffering without regard to their own. The eighth tale of past lives states: By this goodness, once I have attained the state of omniscience

And have subdued all my faults, which are my enemies,  
I wish to draw beings from the seas of life  
Tossed by waves of aging, sickness, and death.

### **(9) The Gifts of an Elephant, Children, and Wife**

As Prince All-Liberating, the Bodhisattva made extensive gifts to beggars of whatever they wished. Another king made a request for the kingdom's supreme, perfumed elephant, which he gave. According to the strict laws of the land, he was then exiled. On his way to Mount Vanka with his wife, son, and daughter, they traveled in a chariot. When a brahmin asked for the horse that pulled the chariot, he gave it and the chariot. While living on the mountain, he gave his son and daughter to an elderly brahmin. To test him, Shakra took the form of a brahmin who asked for his wife: he gave her. Shakra revealed his own form and returned the wife. The son and daughter were ransomed from the brahmin by their country's king, and the prince was invited back to the kingdom to rule.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that if you can take joy in giving what is difficult to give, you should develop joy in other forms of generosity. The ninth tale of past lives states: To a brahmin who visited, assailed by the suffering

Of aging and poverty,  
I gave our two children.  
Don't be distressed, be joyful!

### **(10) Skillful Leading of His Subjects to Happiness**

As King Maker of Gifts and Offerings, the Bodhisattva's land suffered from drought. His officials and subjects said that it was necessary to kill many animals to make offerings. This displeased the king, who decided to act skillfully. He said, "Now we must make an offering of one thousand human beings. Arrest all those who do corrupting acts and we'll offer them!" Everyone became afraid for their own lives and stopped corrupting wrongdoing and only acted vigorously in ennobling acts.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that the fault of killing livestock or other animals creates the experience of various sufferings without any happiness; instead you must make the fate of animals part of your concerns. The tenth tale of past lives states: Fortunate are those

To whom you give refuge.  
Even fathers surely  
Do not protect their children that well.

### ***The Second Set of Ten***

- (11) As Shakra, he was left behind by the gods' armies.  
To rescue a garuda, he turned around and scattered the demigods.**
- (12) As a brahmin, his preceptor wished to test him  
And asked him to steal: when he refused, the teacher was pleased.**
- (13) As a king, he desired an entrancing woman  
But he bore what was unbearable and perfected patience.**
- (14) As a traveler on an ocean ship blown off course,  
His declaration of truth returned it to home.**
- (15) As a fish, to save the lives of fish when a lake dried up,  
His declaration of truth brought rain, saving them.**
- (16) As a young pheasant, when the forest burned,  
His declaration of truth calmed the fire's spread.**
- (17) As Shakra, the force of his description of alcohol's faults  
Led the king, his court, and entourage to renounce alcohol and to apply  
themselves to ennobling acts.**
- (18) As a wealthy man, he gave everything away and became a  
renunciant;  
He did not heed pleading to reconsider, but spoke of the many  
shortcomings of home life.**
- (19) As a brahmin, his brothers, sisters, and servants all became  
renunciants.**

**The lotus roots were hidden by Shakra, who asked forgiveness.**

**(20) As a merchant chief, a minor event led him to retreat;**

**He skillfully led his family and friends to renunciation.**

### **(11) As Shakra, Protection of a Garuda's Nest**

When the Bodhisattva was Shakra, sovereign of the gods, the demigods raised a huge army. In response, the gods gathered an army of four divisions: cavalry, elephants, chariots, and foot soldiers. To lead them, Shakra mounted an excellent golden chariot drawn by one thousand horses. In battle, the gods' forces were defeated and fled, leaving Shakra behind. The chariot's driver realized this and tried to turn the chariot around quickly, but Shakra saw that the point of the chariot's yoke would strike a *shalmali* (silk cotton) tree trunk that held a garuda's nest, and risk killing the birds. He felt immense compassion and ordered the driver to not continue but to return. The driver replied, "If we don't continue, the birds will be saved but the demigods' army will defeat us. We must surely continue." Shakra said, "I prefer to be beaten to death by the demigods than to harm those sentient creatures. Turn around!" The chariot turned again toward the demigods' army: seeing this, the demigods became afraid, scattered, and ran. The gods' armies witnessed this. They returned, praised Shakra, and were victorious in battle.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was that it is improper to harm sentient beings even for your life or country. The eleventh tale of past lives states: It is easier for me to accept death by blows from demigods' weapons

Than to live under the blows of contemptuous gossip  
From having killed these terror-stricken beings:  
Turn the chariot around!

### **(12) To Not Steal Although Encouraged to Do So**

As a brahmin, the Bodhisattva studied the Vedas with a preceptor, whom he served respectfully. The preceptor wished to test the character of his students and complained to them that he was poor and decrepit. The students begged well for him but the preceptor told them this would not make him rich. He said, "I'm old and unable, but you're young" and he taught them how to steal when destitute. "Steal valuables when no one is looking," he advised. The other students promised to do so, but the Bodhisattva lowered his head and said nothing. The master said, "What's the matter? Don't you care about me?" He replied, "It's not that I don't care! How is it possible that it be right to act improperly when no one is looking? I don't wish to act wrongly. That's why I

was silent.” The master was pleased and said, “I was testing you. Wrongdoing is never acceptable.” The preceptor was very pleased and cared for the Bodhisattva.

The Buddha’s intention in recounting this was to show that shameful acts of corrupting wrongdoing are not right, whether done overtly or covertly. The twelfth tale of past lives states: It would be easier for me to take a clay pot, wear ragged clothes,

And go begging for wealth at the home of an enemy  
Than to abandon shame and commit acts that contradict the doctrine,  
Even if such acts led to gaining sovereignty over heaven.

### **(13) Forbearance of Desire**

When the Bodhisattva was king of the Shibi, one of his officials had a beautiful daughter, as attractive as a goddess. Whoever saw her became mad with desire. She was known as “the Intoxicator.” The official told the king he would offer her to the king if he wished to marry her. The king asked his soothsayers of physiognomy for their advice. When the soothsayers saw the woman, they too became intrigued and as if intoxicated. They thought, “If this woman is offered to the king, he will be beguiled and will ignore both religion and the kingdom. Therefore we should tell him the good omens are in fact unfavorable.” They related this to the king, who rejected the proposal of marriage. The woman then became the wife of another official.

Later, the king went to the town mounted on a chariot to see a Kaumudi festival.<sup>30</sup> On his way he saw on the roof of a house an entrancing woman, as beautiful as a goddess, and fell in love with her. He did not want the chariot to proceed, and continued gazing at her as it returned to the palace, where he asked the chariot driver about her. When he understood that she was another’s wife, he gave up hope. In anguish, he grew thin and pallid. When the official became aware of this, he said, “Lord, if your heart is inclined to my wife, I offer her to you as your queen.” The king did not accept, saying, “It is wrong for a king to steal his official’s wife.” Although the official requested in many ways, the king said, “Even though someone desires another’s spouse, if they take that person as their own, this is wrongful sexual activity. Therefore, I cannot accept her.” The official said, “If my wife becomes a prostitute who can be anyone’s partner, you could accept her and this will not contradict either religious or worldly customs. How about that?” The king replied, “My friend, however you separate from your wife, if I then accept her as my own, it is very wrong. There’s no way.” Even though his heart was full of desire for her, he refused.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that you have to develop supreme forbearance in relation to particular desires that prove practically irresistible. The thirteenth tale of past lives states: It is easier for me to cut myself with a sharp weapon

Or to throw myself onto a blazing fire  
Than to suppress my spiritual practice,  
Source of my present splendor.

#### **(14) Turning a Boat toward Home by a Declaration of Truth**

As a captain named Good Crossing, the Bodhisattva took many merchants in his boat on the great ocean. After they had set sail, turbulent winds made them fear the boat would break up and all were panicked, but he reassured them. The captain said, "We must try hard to leave this Razor Crest Sea!" but then a violent wind from the west arose and they were unable to change course. They were equally unable to steer out of the Yogurt Crest Sea and were pushed by the wind to the sea of red water, called Fire Crest Sea. They traveled onward to the Kusha Grass Crest Sea and from there to the Reed Crest Sea. There, it was as if the ocean was turning itself upside down; the roar was like a heavy hailstorm or like a bamboo forest in flames; the water rushed about them as if it had fallen from a cliff or down a ravine. In fear, they asked the captain, who with great compassion made a declaration of truth: "I have never killed another being. By this truth, may our boat return." By the force of his declaration, the ship changed course. The captain told the merchants to haul as much sand and stones as they could onto the ship, to fill it, which they did. The ship returned to their homeland that evening and they found their ship was filled with gems.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was that words of truth accomplish significant acts and that their result is inconceivable. The fourteenth tale of past lives states: I cannot recall ever having killed

Any living being.  
By the force of these true words  
And my goodness,  
May our boat return to safety  
Before erring into the ocean's abyss.

#### **(15) Saving Fish by a Declaration of Truth**

As king of fish, the Bodhisattva taught the Buddhist doctrine to the fish of his lake, so that they stopped harming one another. The sun at the end of springtime

was extremely hot, and dried the lake. The fish were hunted as food by many birds. With intense compassion, the Bodhisattva made a declaration of truth: the gods made the rain fall and the lake filled. Shakra became aware of this, went there, lauded the fish and said, “I will ensure that from now on this place will never experience calamities.”

The Buddha’s intention in recounting this was to show that for persons endowed with ethical conduct, this life will be happy and the series of their other lifetimes will definitely be happy. The fifteenth tale of past lives states: I do not recall ever intentionally killing another living being,

Even when my situation was desperate.  
By this truth, may the sovereign gods  
Make rain fall to fill this lake.

### **(16) Truth Extinguishes a Fire**

As a young pheasant, since the Bodhisattva ate no insects but only fruit, his strength did not develop. When a forest fire approached, others were able to fly away but he was unable to follow. He made a declaration of the truth and the fire was calmed.

The Buddha’s intention in recounting this was to show that you should be diligent in the truth since even fire does not surpass the power of words when the ennobling conduct of true words is practiced. The sixteenth tale of past lives states: My legs’ name has no meaning; I have no wings.

In fear of you, my father and mother have fled.  
I have nothing suitable to offer you, my guest,  
Therefore, fire, you should turn back.

### **(17) Leading Others to Ennobling Acts by Relating the Faults of Alcohol**

When the Bodhisattva was Shakra, a king named Everyone’s Friend and his court drank uninhibitedly. The Bodhisattva emanated near them in Brahma’s form holding a vase filled with alcohol. He sat in the sky before them; they were amazed and moved to faith. Brahma said, “Buy this vase!” “What’s in it?” they asked.

He replied,

This vase is filled with the essence of wrongdoing. Listen to its qualities:  
Those who drink this will walk in a stupor, without self-control.  
They will wander, stumbling on even level ground, their memory impaired.  
Inattentive to what can be eaten or not, they will eat anything.



Buy this vilest of vases filled with such things!

The king understood that these words described the faults of alcohol. Freed of attachment to alcohol, he offered his entire kingdom to Brahma, who refused it and disappeared. Then the king, his officials and subjects stopped drinking alcohol.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was that it be known that alcohol, the basis of many faults, must be renounced. The seventeenth tale of past lives states: The complete ripening of drinking even a little alcohol

Is that, even if born a human, you will have defective ethical conduct and views.

Wherever you go later, the fires of the Hell of Uninterrupted Torment will burn you,

You will be born in the land of starving spirits or of lowly animals.

Your morality will be impaired, you will hear others' low opinions of you.

You will be shameless, your mind defiled.

### **(18) Renunciation Even after a Delay**

As a wealthy man of the aristocracy with many possessions, the Bodhisattva gave his fortune of food and wealth to the poor and lived a life of correct meditative stability in a forest sanctuary. In reply to his father's friends, who praised the qualities of home life, he listed the many faults of such a life. Those friends all developed faith.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to demonstrate the faults of home life and the positive qualities of retreat. The eighteenth tale of past lives states: Home life is like prison:

Never think of it as happy.

Whether for a rich person or the poor,

Life at home is a great malady.

### **(19) Forbearance Even When without Food**

As a brahmin, the Bodhisattva had six brothers and one sister. After their parents died, the older brother saw the faults of home life and considered becoming a renunciant. His younger brothers tried various ways to discourage him, but in the end they were unsuccessful: the seven brothers, the sister, their friends, and male and female servants became renunciants together and lived in retreat, each in a hut made of leaves, on the bank of a lake. They ate lotus roots and every five

days gathered to listen to the Bodhisattva's teachings.

They divided and shared the lotus roots, and took their portion each day. To test the eldest brother, Shakra hid his share. Although he thought that someone else had taken his share, he said nothing, and lived without mental agitation. His body deteriorated and he grew thin. His siblings and the others saw this, asked him about his health, and swore that they had not taken his food. When Shakra showed his form, the Bodhisattva told him of the shortcomings of desire. Shakra was moved to faith, praised him, admitted his fault, returned the lotus roots, and asked forgiveness.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that you should not be angry if someone takes your food, even if you only have meager food for a life of spiritual austerity. The nineteenth tale of past lives states: Due to desire, you are bound to the world, killed,

Tormented in anguish, and assailed by many fears.

### **(20) To Enter Spiritual Life due to Minor Events**

During the Bodhisattva's lifetime as a king's merchant chief, his mother-in-law was talking casually to her daughter, didn't hear the words spoken to her, and understood that her son-in-law would become a renunciant. She wailed. Her crying was heard by everyone, who joined her in exclamations of sadness and regret. The merchant chief's hearing this incited him to ask the king's permission to become a renunciant. His family tried various ways to prevent him, but he paid them no heed. He told them of the positive qualities of renunciation and the many faults of home life, then left to engage in ascetic practice in the forest.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that you should enter spiritual life even due to a minor event. The twentieth tale of past lives states: The cause of suffering in the next life and this

Is desire, in all its forms. Those who do not wish to renounce it  
Oppose ascetic practice in the forest  
And today reject me—what folly!

### ***The Third Set of Ten***

**(21) As Crown Ornament Awakening, he and his wife became renunciants.**

**He was not angry at the king, who became his servant.**

**(22) As the king of geese, after he was caught in a trap,  
He gave spiritual teachings to the king and his officials, who offered him  
gifts and praise.**

**(23) As Great Awakening, he skillfully led the king and officials  
Away from negative views to the excellent path.**

**(24) As an ape, he led someone who had fallen down a cliff to safety.  
When the man tried to kill him, he compassionately showed the path  
home.**

**(25) As a *sharabha*, he led a killer, a king who had fallen down a cliff,  
To safety and had him enter the spiritual path.**

**(26) As a spotted deer, a person he saved from being carried away by a  
torrent**

**Recounted the event. The king's army surrounded him but was tamed by  
his teaching.**

**(27) As a monkey, he made a path with his body on the treetops,  
Thus rescuing the pack of monkeys from danger and inspiring faith in the  
kingdom's people.**

**(28) As Patient Speech, a king**

**Provoked by desire and anger cut off his limbs. The earth opened and the  
king fell.**

**(29) As Brahma, he taught the truth to a king who held wrong views:  
He was moved to faith and led his subjects to ennobling acts.**

**(30) As an elephant, he showed the path to seven hundred persons who  
had been exiled to the wilderness;**

**To feed them he jumped into a ravine, thus saving their lives.**

### **(21) To Not Be Angry at Harm Done**

As the brahmin Crown Ornament Awakening, the Bodhisattva abandoned the enjoyments of home life, became a renunciant, and went into retreat. His wife also shaved her head, changed her clothing from that of a householder, and became a renunciant. He told her that life in the wilderness was arduous and that she should not go. However, she followed him and they arrived in a pleasant forest where they dwelt. Before long, their daughter became a renunciant and stayed with them.

The local king came to the forest and met the Bodhisattva. He was entranced by the sight of the beautiful young woman renunciant and thought of kidnapping her. He talked with her at length and finally led the renunciant young woman away, where she was abducted and kept in his palace. The king thought to see whether or not the true renunciant was angry at his daughter's kidnapping. On

asking him, he found that he was not angry in the least: the Bodhisattva gave him many teachings. The king was moved to faith, promised to serve him, and released the young woman.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that subduing your own anger also subdues your enemies. The twenty-first tale of past lives states: Sharp pains of anger torment the mind

And you ignore your own best interests.

Anger's intensity leads you along the path of wretchedness.

It spoils your fame and success.

## **(22) Pleasant Words Help You and Others**

As the king of geese, Guardian of the Land and Its Surroundings, the Bodhisattva had a large court, including an official, Excellent Face. They lived together on a lake decorated with various flowers. The court lived in accord with the doctrine and was praised by gods and seers. The human king Brahmadata heard about this and wished to see for himself. He commanded his court, saying that in his city they should construct a beautiful lake decorated by various flowers. Other geese saw it and told their king: the king of geese went to the lake with his officials and court. Brahmadata was told of this and said that the birds should be captured by any means. A trapper set many traps and caught the king of geese. He said, "This lake of mine has become a dangerous place!" and the other birds flew away, yet his official did not flee. When the king saw that the official remained, he told him to escape, but still he stayed. The trapper asked Excellent Face why he had not fled and he replied in a truthful and pleasant manner. The trapper had faith and respectfully brought him to the king. When the king asked the trapper why he had done so, the king was pleased and placed the birds on a golden throne. The king of geese, his official, and the king talked of many things among themselves, then the birds left for their flock. Later, the birds came to give many teachings to the king. The king had faith and respectfully made many offerings to the birds.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that pleasant words are beneficial for yourself and others. The twenty-second tale of past lives states: The glories of the lord of gods depends on his positive qualities.

With positive qualities, your lineage increases.

Renown also comes from positive qualities.

Even the force of great persons rests in their positive qualities.

### **(23) Skillfully Changing Negative Views**

As the wandering ascetic Great Awakening, the Bodhisattva became a renunciant and, to benefit the world, traveled to every city, town, village, and countryside. A king, Qualities of Beings, heard of him and offered him a residence in a garden. The king served him in the finest fashion and listened to his teachings. Jealous government officials sowed dissension between the two and the king's service diminished. The Bodhisattva left that place for an isolated retreat where he attained in meditation the five forms of clairvoyance and miraculous powers. He thought to guide the king and his officials, and manifested as a person wearing a monkey's skin. He approached the king and his officials, who expressed negative opinions. The Bodhisattva related the faults of the nature of the wrong views held by each of them, then transformed himself back to his original appearance. The king, his officials, and the court thus entered spiritual practice.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that it is wrong to forget helpful deeds and that you must repay them with helpfulness. The twenty-third tale of past lives states: Train in ethical behavior and further the renown of generosity;

Show the same love to strangers as toward family.

Preserve your dominion with justice and renounce carelessness.

By doing so, you will gain fame and a higher rebirth.

### **(24) To Return Harm Done with Kindness**

When the Bodhisattva was an ape, a lost man wandered in many directions, and when hungry climbed a tree that bore ripe fruit. He ventured on a branch overhanging a cliff; the branch broke and the man fell down the cliff.

This was seen by the ape, who felt intense compassion. He lifted small stones to place as a stair, then carried the man out of the ravine. Afterward the ape said, "I'm tired and need to sleep a little. Watch over me until I awake." While he slept, the man thought, "I'll kill the monkey, eat him, then be on my way." He threw a rock at the ape, missed his mark, and the animal awoke. He looked around, knew it had been the man, and felt compassion for his folly. He led him to the route and accompanied him to the village. The man's fault caused him to contract leprosy and to suffer intensely.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that in the face of harm you must develop even greater compassion. The twenty-fourth tale of past lives states: O evil acts, what good are you?

In ignorance, without noble intentions

in ignorance, without noble intentions,  
Beings who wish for happiness  
Fall tumbling into misery.

### **(25) To Help Even a Killer**

When the Bodhisattva was the wild animal *sharabha* [a lionlike animal with eight legs], a king and his army went to hunt wild animals. The king alone had a fast horse so he arrived first and saw the beautiful *sharabha*. He drew his arrow but shot high, alerting the animal, who fled. The king pursued him but when they arrived at a ravine, the *sharabha* was able to jump across; the king's horse hesitated and fell into the ravine. The *sharabha* soon realized the king had not followed and wondered what misfortune had occurred. He returned to the cliff and saw that his pursuer had fallen. In compassion, he carried the king out of the ravine to a safe place, found his horse, and led them to the edge of the forest. The king felt extreme faith and requested the *sharabha* to visit his kingdom. The animal refused but told the king to practice ennobling acts, such as to not kill any animal in the kingdom, and to lead his subjects to happiness. These teachings made the king enter spiritual life.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that even animals can have compassion for their killers and that human beings are never right to kill living beings. The twenty-fifth tale of past lives states: Therefore, it is wrong to do to others

What you do not wish for yourself.  
Once you understand that wrongdoing results in suffering,  
In loss of reputation, and in criticism by holy persons,  
You will treat such acts as your enemies and forsake them.

### **(26) When Help Is Repaid with Harm, to Not Harm in Return**

As a golden, spotted deer, the Bodhisattva lived happily in a beautiful forest. One day he saw a man carried away by a torrent and out of compassion pulled him from the river. The deer asked the man to not divulge to anyone the kindness he had done. At that time, the queen of that region's ruler was a person whose dreams were accurately perceptive. In a dream, she saw all of the spotted deer's positive qualities and related them to the king. The king asked the people if there was any among them who knew of the deer, with the promise of a large reward. The man thought, "The deer was very kind to me, but since I will reap a handsome reward, I should speak up." Thus he told the king and led him and his army to the forest, which they surrounded with soldiers. The moment the man showed the deer to the king, his hand was severed. When the king drew his bow

to shoot, the deer saw he had no escape and asked, “King! Who told you I was here?” “It was this man.” “Could it be he I helped who repays me with this harm?” the deer asked. The king asked the man if this was true; the man replied that it was. The king aimed his arrow at the man but the deer intervened. The deer gave spiritual teachings and the king was moved to faith. He invited him to the palace where he gave many teachings. The king, his officials, and subjects all lived according to the doctrine.

The Buddha’s intention in recounting this was to show that even though your help is repaid by harm, you must not harm in return. The twenty-sixth tale of past lives states: Compassionate persons’ deep calm even affects others’ minds.

People trust compassionate persons like close relatives.

A heart ruled by compassion is never troubled by conflict.

A mind steeped in the water of compassion cannot blaze with the fire of turmoil.

### **(27) Using His Body to Make a Path to Protect Others’ Lives**

As the king of monkeys, the Bodhisattva called the monkeys to enjoy the delicious odor and taste of the fruit of a banyan tree. A fruit fell into the water and was found by the local ruler, who had come to enjoy the forest with his queen and was bathing in the river. Attached to the fruit’s taste, he went with his army to search everywhere in the forest. They found the tree, then surrounded it. When they saw the monkeys eating the fruit, the king told the soldiers to kill the monkeys. The noise of arrows and weapons made the monkeys panic and flee through the treetops. The king of monkeys jumped from the treetop to a hill, tied a bamboo branch to his leg, then leaped back, held a tree branch and allowed the monkeys to flee, saving them all.

Two arrows taken from the king’s cotton sheath quiver cut both branches at once. The call went out, “Catch the monkey!” When he was captured, he fainted for a moment. When the monkey revived, the king asked him why he acted as he had. He replied, “I’m the king of the monkeys and must lead my subjects to happiness without paying attention to my own life.” After he had said this and given many other teachings, the king reflected, “If an animal king can help his subjects like that, I must help my own people to live happily.” Thus he acted in accord with the teachings.

The Buddha’s intention in recounting this was to show that you must protect your entourage and people as more precious than your own life. The twenty-seventh tale of past lives states: It is right for a ruler to care like a parent would

For armies of the young, farmers, officials

For armies of the young, farmers, officials,  
The helpless, his subjects, and brahmins practicing ennobling acts,  
Helping them all to live in happiness.

### **(28) To Cultivate Karma in Relation to Sublime Persons Reaps Immediate Rewards**

As a seer named Patient Speech, the Bodhisattva stayed in retreat on a mountainside. The king with his wives came to the forest, visited all the beautiful sites, then rested. While the king slept, the queens decided to look at various flowers and birds, and wandered through the forest. Finally they came upon the seer's home and listened to his teaching. The king awoke, asked where the queens had gone and furiously went looking for them. Finding them in front of the seer he became enraged and said, "If you're Patient Speech, can you be patient at this?" and he cut off the seer's right arm. Then he cut off his ears, left arm, and legs, but the Bodhisattva remained unperturbed and meditated on patience. The king left right away and the earth opened up, fire blazed, and he plummeted directly to hell.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that even though you are tormented by another for no reason, you must patiently refrain from anger. The twenty-eighth tale of past lives states: Patience is holy persons' armor

That repels evil persons' arrows of wicked words,  
Turning most of them into flowers of praise,  
Facets of their renown.  
Patience quells influences harmful to spiritual life  
And wins the happiness of perfect freedom.

### **(29) Wrong Views Are Purified by Correct Views**

As Brahma, the Bodhisattva manifested in the form of a radiant seer of the gods. He appeared before Partial Giving, king of the land Noble Body, who held wrong views. The king respectfully asked why he had appeared. "Because you must reject your wrong views, such as that there are no past or future lives." The king did not believe him so he showed him many sufferings, such as those in the hells. The king, afraid, was led to correct views and in turn guided his subjects to the teachings.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that those with no attachment to their wrong views should definitely train in correct views. The twenty-ninth tale of past lives states: A mind settled in evenness overcomes the haughty enemies



Of desire and anger, as if defeating them in battle.

**(30) Showing the Path to Those in Distress and Giving His Body**

When the Bodhisattva was an elephant, a king punished one thousand people, then banished them to an empty wilderness, where they had no food or drink. Three hundred people perished, leaving seven hundred, for whom the elephant felt compassion. He showed them the route to a place where there was water and where they would find the carcass of a dead elephant. They could eat the animal's flesh and use its stomach and intestines for water containers. The elephant told them that if they continued on the road he showed, they would meet people from a city. He then jumped from a mountaintop into a ravine so the people could eat his dead body, thus ensuring their survival.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that it is necessary to be unconcerned about your own life when helping others. The thirtieth tale of past lives states: If my act of liberating these individuals

Who wandered miserably in the wilderness has any goodness,  
May I become able to liberate the worldly  
Who wander in the wilderness of the round of rebirth.

***A Set of Four***

**(31) As Prince Moon, he persuaded Sudasa's son to stop eating human flesh,**

**Thus making everyone secure.**

**(32) As a prince in an iron house**

**He became disillusioned with life while at a festival and stayed in retreat.**

**(33) As a water buffalo, when bullied in many ways by a monkey,**

**A noxious spirit asked him questions and he expressed patience. The spirit developed faith.**

**(34) As a woodpecker,**

**He relieved a lion's pain. The lion forgot his kindness but the bird was praised by the gods.**

**(31) To Lead Evil Persons to Ennobling Acts**

When the Bodhisattva was Prince Moon, the queens, officials, and subjects went to a forest to enjoy entertainment with various kinds of song and music. During that time, an eloquent and learned brahmin came to see Prince Moon. The court and the others became afraid and returned to see Prince Moon, telling him, "Prince, Sudasa's son, the man-eater Kalmashapada, is coming! What should we

do?” The prince was pleased with the news, but the queens and their retinue all fled. Now that the prince was alone, Sudasa’s son approached and the prince called him forward. He carried the prince on his back to his home, which was filled with his human victims’ flesh and blood.

The Bodhisattva thought of the brahmin’s suffering of being left behind alone and shed tears of compassion. The prince said why he was crying but his captor did not believe him. The prince explained his reasons, then asked, “Let me go for a while, to take care of the brahmin, then I’ll definitely come back.” The kidnapper thought to test whether this was falsehood or the truth and let him go. The prince returned to the palace, listened to four verses from the brahmin, served him, and then returned. The captor was amazed and, on listening to the prince’s teaching, he rejected wrongdoing. He released the prince and those he had kept in his prison. All were invited to the palace and released to their own homelands.

The Buddha’s intention in recounting this was to show that if even wild, evil persons meet holy individuals, they can become noble. Therefore, it is necessary to rely on holy individuals and to listen to their teaching.

As a recompense for the brahmin’s four verses of teaching, Prince Moon offered four thousand ounces of gold and whatever the brahmin wished, and then spoke these words: If the price of eloquent words

Could be determined,  
I would even give my kingdom to meet it.  
How could you speak of it with regret?

When what you hear moves you to faith,  
Brings perfect joy and stability,  
Nurtures sublime insight and ends stupidity,  
Why, it would be right to sell your own flesh for it!

Learning is a lamp that dispels the darkness of folly.  
It is supreme wealth, safe from such dangers as thieves.  
It is the weapon to defeat the enemy, dullness.  
It is a supreme friend who provides skillful advice.

It is a friend who remains faithful, even when you are poor.  
It is a harmless medicine to cure the sickness of sorrow.  
It is the supreme army that crushes a horde of serious faults.  
It is a supreme treasure of fame and splendor.

When meeting good persons, it is the finest gift.  
In gatherings, it pleases the wise.  
Toward contentious persons, it is like a blinding sun  
That dispels the fame and pride of the opposition.

With learning, you become a friend to all and make them truly joyful,  
Bringing a glow to their eyes and face.  
They snap their fingers in pleasure  
And praise learning's special, magnificent qualities.

You can lucidly present the meaning of logical proofs,  
Or teach various subjects, as do the Buddhist scriptures.  
Attractive in dexterity and thorough training,  
Learning is like a garland of still-fresh flowers.

Learning nurtures discipline and very clear self-confidence.  
It makes you immediately renowned.  
Become eloquent, the cause of special qualities.  
Familiarity with learning's splendor leads to realization of the clear  
meaning.

Endowed with learning, you will not live in disharmony,  
And stay firmly on the path of the three pure spheres (of act, agent, and  
recipient).  
After you have studied, devote yourself to spiritual practice,  
And with little difficulty you will become free from the fortress of rebirth.

Further,

Truth is more exalted than a beautiful garland necklace.  
It is exalted, more delicious than any flavor.  
It accomplishes goodness and positive qualities without the hardships of  
asceticism  
Or the tribulations of unbelievers' journeys.

Truth spreads your fame among all beings.  
Truth is the path that transcends the three worlds  
And the door that opens to the gods' realms.  
It is the bridge that leads from the fortress of the round of rebirth to  
freedom.

Further,

Sit on the lowest seat;  
Develop the form of splendid discipline.  
Look with joy in your eyes  
And drink in the words of teaching as if they were nectar.

In respect, single-mindedly bow.  
In perfect faith, with a pure mind,  
Listen as a sick person heeds a doctor's words.  
Develop the attitude of service, and listen to the teaching.

### **(32) Staying in Retreat due to Disillusionment Inspired by a Festival**

As a member of the aristocracy born in an iron house, the Bodhisattva watched people gather for a jasmine flower festival. Reflecting that they were all subject to impermanence, he became disenchanted. He insistently asked permission from the king to become a renunciant, then stayed in retreat. He accomplished states of meditative stability and immeasurable aspirations, and led others to that path.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that the thought of impermanence can make you unattached even to the rule of a kingdom and can make you able to practice the teachings. The thirty-second tale of past lives states: We have these powerful, unstoppable enemies

Who will harm us—sickness, aging, and death—  
And we must inevitably go to the fearful world beyond:  
How can anyone who knows these facts take pleasure in this?

### **(33) Patience toward Harm**

When the Bodhisattva was a water buffalo, a monkey rode his back and bullied him in many ways, such as beating him with an iron rod. A noxious spirit questioned him, "You're very strong. Why don't you kill the monkey?" When he answered by saying that you must meditate on patience, the spirit developed faith, and left.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that harmful circumstances should be relied upon to foster patience. The thirty-third tale of past lives states: Toward the weak's foolishness,

The strong should show patience.

### **(34) To Not Be Angry toward Kindness Forgotten**

As a woodpecker, the Bodhisattva removed a bone stuck in a lion's throat and made him comfortable. Yet the lion forgot this kindness and later scorned him. The god of the forest saw this and asked, "You could hurt the lion with your beak, but you haven't. Why not?" The bird replied, "Whether others are aware of my acts or not, it's not right to harm him." The god had faith and vanished.

The Buddha's intention in recounting this was to show that you must not become angry, even if your kindness is forgotten. The thirty-fourth tale of past lives states: Toward those in distress,

Engage in ennobling acts out of compassion, not for profit.

What wise person cares

Whether or not others acknowledge the good they have done?

### ***Mental Training by Means of the Four Immeasurable Aspirations*** **[C]**

This section has five parts: (1) immeasurable equanimity, (2) immeasurable love, (3) immeasurable compassion, (4) immeasurable sympathetic joy, and (5) renunciation of worldly love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

#### ***Immeasurable Equanimity [1]***

This section has two parts: (1) its domain and (2) how to meditate on equanimity.

#### ***The Domain of Immeasurable Equanimity [a]***

**The domain of equanimity is enemies, friends, and those you regard as neither.**

The domain of equanimity is harmful enemies, demons, and the like; beneficial persons, such as your children, spouse, and citizens of your country; and beings who are neither beneficial nor harmful.

#### ***How to Meditate on Equanimity [b]***

**While wandering in the round of rebirth without beginning or end,  
Enemies have been friends and your friends  
Have been enemies who caused you incalculable harm.**

**If you treat enemies as friends, they will prove helpful.  
Help to friends is most often repaid with harm:  
Rest in equanimity toward others—those toward whom you feel  
attraction, aversion, or neither.**

During lifetimes spent wandering in the round of rebirth without beginning or end, your present enemies were once extremely beneficial friends and your present friends were once harmful enemies. Moreover, if you do not consider present enemies as such, but treat them helpfully as friends, it is possible that they will prove even more helpful than friends.

Physical, verbal, and mental effort in aid to friends makes you commit acts that create suffering in this and in future lives, and produce no opportunity for you to be helpful. Therefore, rest in equanimity toward others: give up attachment to friends and reject hatred toward enemies, as if they were both indistinguishable from those toward whom you feel neutral. Start with one being, then progressively include sentient beings of the four continents, of the cosmos, and of the entire universe, equal to the limits of space. Regard them all with equanimity. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Twenty-Five Thousand Stanzas* states: Subhuti! Settle your mind in equanimity toward all sentient beings, equally toward one and all!

### ***Immeasurable Love [2]***

This section has two parts: (1) its domain and (2) how to meditate on love.

#### ***The Domain of Immeasurable Love [a]***

**There is no being who has not been your parent;  
At that time, they helpfully protected you with incalculable kindness.  
To return that aid, repay them with helpfulness.**

Consider that there is not even one among the infinite beings you can see, hear, or think of who has not, from time immemorial, been your father or mother. When your parent, each of them protected you with incalculable kindness. Therefore, do whatever you can to help them, both temporarily and ultimately.

#### ***How to Meditate on Love [b]***

**Endeavor to lead others to temporary and permanent happiness  
And to the causes of such happiness.**

Think repeatedly that you will endeavor to lead these beings to positive, ennobling acts consistent with goodness or with liberation. These acts cause temporary happiness within the round of rebirth, and the permanent happiness of transcendent states. Further, think repeatedly that you will apply yourself only to the means for others to be comfortable and happy in body, speech, and mind, both temporarily and permanently. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas* states: Concerted meditation on a loving attitude, and stability within it, make you see any being as attractive and to feel no anger.

*The Discourse of Great Liberation* states:

Compared to someone in a pure, jeweled place  
Who guards pure ethical conduct  
For the period of one eon,  
One instant of a person's joy  
That leads to loving acts is better.  
Whoever in this worldly realm  
Commits wrongdoing in body, speech, and mind  
Will surely fall to the three miserable realms,  
Yet such love will immediately purify those acts.

### ***Immeasurable Compassion [3]***

This section has two parts: (1) its domain and (2) how to meditate on compassion.

#### ***The Domain of Immeasurable Compassion [a]***

**Any place that space reaches is filled with beings;  
Beings' lives are filled with the sufferings of ignorance, karma, and  
mental afflictions;  
Thus they experience the causes and effects of suffering.**

Any existence within the bounds of infinite space is filled with sentient beings. Those beings are infected by the sicknesses of ignorance and the eighty thousand mental afflictions. Since they always perform with body, speech, and mind such acts as the ten corrupting deeds, they experience continual torment from their acts' results—the round of rebirth and, in particular, the unbearable sufferings of the three miserable realms.

## ***How to Meditate on Compassion [b]***

**Beings, our venerable mothers, are tormented**

**By the causes and effects of suffering, and will never become free from  
the prison of existence.**

**Consideration of their condition induces unbearable compassion.**

Corrupting acts—the causes of suffering—and their effects—the sufferings of the round of rebirth and miserable realms—ensure that sentient beings, our venerable mothers, have never and will never become free from torment within the frightful prison pit of existence. Consideration of their condition induces intense compassion, like that of a mother who sees her child killed. Develop such immeasurable compassion. *The Discourse That Gathers the True Qualities* states: The Honored One said that bodhisattvas should not learn many instructions. The Honored One said that if bodhisattvas firmly upheld one teaching and realized it, they would find all teachings of the Buddha in their hands. What is that one teaching? It is this: supreme compassion. The Honored One said that in supreme compassion, all the Buddha’s teachings are as if placed in the palm of the bodhisattvas’ hands.

## ***Immeasurable Sympathetic Joy [4]***

This section has two parts: (1) its domain and (2) how to meditate on sympathetic joy.

### ***The Domain of Immeasurable Sympathetic Joy [a]***

**When seeing beings who act nobly and enjoy happiness,**

The domain of sympathetic joy is any being who performs a major, middle, or lesser ennobling act or who enjoys the result of ennobling acts, such as long life, freedom from sickness, perfect power, strength, or increase in fortune.

### ***How to Meditate on Sympathetic Joy [b]***

**Feel more joy than if these things were your own:**

**This will increase your joy until it becomes immeasurable.**

When beings act nobly—the cause of happiness—or experience the result of such acts—happiness of the higher realms or of liberation—think, “May they



always be nourished by the sacred happiness of omniscience!” Develop this thought to include all sentient beings. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Twenty-Five Thousand Stanzas* states: Whenever you see any sentient beings gain happiness, think this, “May they never be separated from this happiness. May they have the happiness of omniscience that surpasses the joys of gods and humanity.”

### ***Renunciation of Worldly Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity [5]***

**Biased meditation on those to whom you are related, your immediate circle**

**Of relatives and fellow citizens, amounts to worldly love, compassion, joy, and equanimity.**

Biased meditation on love, and so on, toward beings related to you—such as your children, family, servants, and close fellow citizens—amounts to worldly love, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Meditation on the infinite numbers of all sentient beings makes these four aspirations immeasurable.

## **THE ACTUAL UPLIFTING OF THE MIND TO SUBLIME AWAKENING [III]**

This chapter has four parts: (1) what is to be known, the nature of uplifting the mind to awakening; (2) the benefits of uplifting the mind to awakening; (3) the stages of the preliminary preparation to uplift the mind to awakening; and (4) the main ritual to uplift the mind to awakening.

### ***The Nature of Uplifting the Mind to Awakening [A]***

**The support for uplifting the mind to awakening can be a person who has taken one of the seven kinds of individual liberation vows; Or, it is taught that even such beings as gods, nagas, or noxious spirits can do so.**

**Classification by nature yields two, three, four, five, or six categories. The levels can be illustrated by twenty-two metaphors.**

First, concerning the life that constitutes the support for uplifting the mind to awakening according to the mind only tradition, a candidate’s physical support is to have received any of the seven kinds of individual liberation vows. *Lamp on*

*the Path to Awakening* states: Persons continually restrained

By the seven kinds of individual liberation vows Have the fortune to  
receive the bodhisattva vows;  
Others do not have such fortune.

According to the middle way tradition, uplift of the mind to awakening can arise in even such beings as gods or nagas, if they are devoted to the great way and wish to attain enlightenment. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas* states: At that time, twenty thousand young gods uplifted their minds to unsurpassable awakening.

*The Discourse Requested by the Naga King Sagara* states:

Twenty-two thousand nagas uplifted their minds to awakening.

*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

At that time, innumerable gods, nagas, demigods, garudas, semihumans, and mahoragas [earth spirits] uplifted their minds to unsurpassable awakening.

The life that constitutes the support for sustaining the vows once they have arisen is life as any of the five kinds of beings. *The Fortunate Eon Discourse* states: When the Victor Wishing to Help in a past life was a town leader,

He took the vow from the Transcendent One Light of Goodness  
To not kill during one day  
And for the first time uplifted his mind to unsurpassable awakening.

The mental support for sustaining the vows is to have such special, meritorious attitudes as faith.

Second, classification of awakened mind's nature yields two to six categories. Concerning its two categories, *The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states: There are two categories of awakened mind— Relative and ultimate.

Or, *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

In brief, this awakened mind  
Can be known in two categories:  
The aspiration to awaken

THE ASPIRATION TO AWAKEN

And the application to the process of awakening.

The three categories of awakened mind are its three forms related to the three trainings: training that purifies, the ethical conduct of ennobling acts; training that creates tranquility, meditative stability; and training that liberates, sublime insight.

The four categories of awakened mind are as follows: those on the paths of cultivation and application have that mental uplift expressed as conduct motivated by interest; those on awakening's first to seventh stages have that mental uplift expressed as higher pure motivation; those on awakening's three pure stages have that mental uplift at the level of spiritual maturity; and those at the stage of enlightenment have that mental uplift expressed as abandonment of obscurations.

The five categories of awakened mind are mental uplift on each of the five paths.

The six categories of awakened mind are those related to the six transcendent perfections. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states: Those who have the six forms of mental uplift related to the six transcendent perfections . . .

Classification by levels is illustrated by twenty-two metaphors. *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states: These are the twenty-two:

Earth, gold, the moon, fire,  
Treasure, a mine, a lake,  
A vajra, a mountain, medicine, a spiritual guide,  
A wish-fulfilling jewel, the sun, song,  
A monarch, a treasury, a highway,  
A vehicle, a reservoir,  
An echo, a river, and a cloud.

The respective meaning of all the above categories is as follows: To define aspiration and application, the aspiration aspect of mental uplift is to aspire to apply yourself to others' welfare, like having the wish to travel; the aspect of application is to undertake such conduct, like the actual travel.

To define the three trainings, training in ethical conduct is to restrain your stream of being from corrupting acts. Training in meditation is to increase such ennobling acts as meditative states. The training in sublime insight is, as you work for your own and others' welfare, to discern the nature of phenomena.

To define the stages of awakening, at the stage of conduct motivated by interest, the individual is interested in a conceptual image of the enlightened heritage. At the stage of higher pure motivation, the individual partially sees the enlightened heritage. When the individual has such powers as that of purifying realms, this marks the stage of spiritual maturity. When sight of the true nature of reality is free from all obscurations, this is called mental uplift in which obscurations have been abandoned.

To define the five paths, the path of cultivation, the stage for beginners, consists of emphasis on hearing the doctrine, reflection upon it, and the cultivation of goodness. The path of application consists of application to the path of seeing's nonconceptual wisdom. The path of seeing consists of natural sight of the nature of reality. The path of meditation consists of meditation on what has been seen. The path of no further training consists of no meditation once the training has reached its culmination.

To define the meaning of the six transcendent perfections, generosity is the ennobling thought to give things to others without greed. Ethical conduct is to protect the mind from wrongdoing. Patience is to forbear harm. Diligence is enthusiasm toward ennobling acts. Meditative stability is to settle single-mindedly on one focus. Sublime insight is to know the nature of phenomena.

The meaning of the metaphors of the levels is stated in *A Commentary to "The Ornament of Manifest Realization"*:<sup>31</sup>

The uplift of the mind to awakening endowed with the quality [in column one] is like the metaphor [in column two]:

1. directed intent	earth
2. motivation	gold
3. higher motivation	the moon
4. application	fire
5. generosity	treasure
6. ethical conduct	a mine
7. patience	a lake
8. diligence	a vajra
9. meditative stability	a mountain
10. sublime insight	medicine
11. skillful means	a spiritual guide
12. aspiration	a wish-fulfilling jewel
13. strength	the sun

14. wisdom	song
15. clairvoyance	a monarch
16. goodness and wisdom	a treasury
17. qualities consistent with the facets of awakening	a highway
18. compassion and insight	a vehicle
19. a retentive memory and confidence	a reservoir
20. the festival of instructions	a pleasant sound
21. the single path to be traversed	a river
22. the body of ultimate enlightenment and its related factors	a cloud

The first three relate to the three levels of the path of cultivation. The fourth, application, relates to the path of application. The next ten, from generosity to wisdom, relate to awakening's ten stages, respectively. The next five, from clairvoyance to confidence, relate to awakening's three pure stages. The last three relate to the preparation, main part, and conclusion of awakening's tenth stage.

The uplift of the mind gained through formal promises is present on the path of training but not at the stage of enlightenment. At the level of enlightenment, the uplift of the mind is undefiled supreme nondual compassion and its acts for others' benefit.

### ***The Benefits of Uplifting the Mind to Awakening [B]***

**The benefits of uplifting the mind to awakening are elimination of all fear and suffering.**

**You become a recipient for the veneration of all beings, including the gods.**

**Your cultivation of ennobling acts becomes endless and ever increasing.**

**That uplift forms the root or seed of spiritual life.**

**It cures the sickness of suffering; it induces the dawn of wisdom.**

**Your qualities increase and you quickly attain supreme enlightenment.**

The first benefit of uplifting the mind is that it draws you from existence to perfect peace. *The Pattern of the Stem* states: O child of the enlightened heritage! Awakened mind is like a mighty ship that crosses the river of existence.

That it is like a guide is stated in *The Complete Liberation of Maitreya*

*Discourse:*

Child of the enlightened heritage, it's like this: when you rely on a warrior, you have no fear of enemies. Likewise, when you rely on a warrior—uplift of the mind to the omniscience of bodhisattvas—you have no fear of all your enemies, evil conduct.

That it removes entirely all anxiety and wrongdoing is stated in *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas*:

If you wish to leave behind the hundreds of sufferings in existence,  
To relieve sentient beings' sorrow,  
And to enjoy myriad of forms of pleasure,  
Never abandon the awakened mind itself.

*The Discourse of Pith Instructions* states:

Those who enter the unsurpassable immaterial domain of awakening  
End the descending path to the miserable realms and the eight restless  
states.  
They discern and fully train in the path to life among gods and humans.  
Neither blind nor deaf, they will have all senses intact.

Further in the same text:

Through this, serious wrongdoing  
Will surely be consumed instantly, as if by the fire at the end of time.

The second benefit, that you will become a worthy recipient of gods' and humans' veneration, is stated in *The Pattern of the Stem Discourse*: The person who has an uplifted mind becomes a supreme recipient for the world's veneration, including that of the gods.

*Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

Once that mind is truly embraced,  
From that time forth, even in sleep  
Or carelessness, the force of its goodness  
Will continually, in many ways,  
Fill the limits of space.

The third benefit, that ennobling acts increase, is stated in *The Discourse Requested by Maitreya*:

Maitreya, it's like this: for example, all the waters of the great oceans will not run dry until the eon's end. Maitreya, likewise, the ennobling acts guided by the mind uplifted to awakening will not dissipate until the unsurpassable awakening of enlightenment is reached.

Further, Maitreya, it's like this: any seed from an excellent source will grow and thrive; likewise, the ennobling acts guided by awakened mind will vastly increase.

*Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

Other ennobling acts are spent once they bear fruit,  
Like a plantain tree.  
The eternal tree of awakened mind  
Is not exhausted in bearing fruit, but flourishes.

*The Design of the Basket Discourse* states:

Manjushri, it's like this: various kinds of plants and trees grow when nourished by the four elements. Manjushri, likewise, the source of ennobling acts grows when guided by awakened mind and when dedicated to omniscience.

The fourth benefit, that it is the foundation of spiritual life, is stated in *The Discourse Requested by Brahma*:

Brahma! This higher motivation, awakened mind, constitutes the foundation of spiritual life, like a seed. Why is that? From a seed grow shoots, leaves, flowers, and fruit. Likewise, higher motivation creates various experiences of happiness within the realms of gods and humans, and will also produce omniscience.

*The Discourse of Advice to the King* states:

Your majesty! The complete ripening of the ennobling act of your unsurpassable, genuine, perfect awakened mind will be many births within the gods' realms and the experience of happiness there; many births among humans and the experience of happiness there; and you

will rule all gods and human beings. Nevertheless, your majesty, awakened mind's source of ennobling acts will neither appear to decrease nor increase.

The fifth benefit, that it cures the sickness of suffering and generates the light of wisdom, is stated in *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas*: This is the supreme ambrosia

That conquers beings' Lord of Death,  
The inexhaustible treasure  
That relieves beings' poverty.

This is the finest medicine  
That completely cures beings' sickness,  
The sheltering tree of rest for beings  
Who wander, spent, throughout existence.

This is the common bridge that frees all beings  
From the miserable realms.  
This mind is the moon that rises  
To relieve the heartache of beings' mental afflictions.

This is the great sun that dissipates  
The mist of beings' ignorance.

The sixth benefit, the supreme one, is stated in *The Discourse Showing the Transcendent Buddhas' Inconceivable Mysteries*: If awakened mind's goodness

Had form,  
It would fill the realm of space  
And still exceed its bounds!

*The Innumerable Ways of Purification Discourse* states:

Brahma! Three things constitute limitless goodness and the highest offering and service to the Transcendent Buddha! What are the three? They are any uplift of the mind to genuine, perfect, unsurpassable awakening; to preserve the transcendent buddhas' sacred doctrine; and to put the teachings you have heard into practice. Brahma, these three represent the highest form of offering and service to the Transcendent



Buddha.

Nevertheless, Brahma, if the Transcendent Buddha's life span lasted for one eon, during which he explained the ripening of the goodness of having made material offerings, he could finish by the eon's close. However, he could not finish a description of the mound of goodness of the benefits of awakened mind.

*A Commentary to Awakened Mind* states:

Until you uplift your mind to awakening,  
You will never reach enlightenment.  
In the round of rebirth there is no other way  
To accomplish your own and others' benefit.

### ***Stages of the Preliminary Preparation to Uplift the Mind to Awakening [C]***

This section has two parts: (1) preliminary arrangements and (2) offering of the seven-part service.

#### ***Preliminary Arrangements [1]***

**To prepare, arrange sacred representations and many offerings.  
“I invite the host of transcendent victors and the victors’ spiritual heirs  
To witness the uplift of my mind to sublime awakening:  
Please be seated on this throne and supreme seat in this fine, beautiful  
place.”**

In a clean place, prepare for the ceremony of uplift of your mind to awakening by arranging sacred representations of wisdom body, speech, and mind and by placing before them a vast collection of offerings. Further, as mentioned in *Opening the Precious Basket: Oral Counsel of the Middle Way*, the preliminary events comprise three parts: cultivation of goodness and wisdom, purification of your stream of being, and special refuge. Goodness and wisdom are cultivated through such activities as recitation of the seven-part service at three junctures during the day and three junctures during the night; recitation and reading of the profound texts of *The Perfection of Sublime Insight*, and recitation of its retention mantra; and presentation of copious offerings to the three jewels, a celebration of offering and donation to the members of the spiritual community, a festival for children, extensive gifts to the poor, and vast *torma* offerings for

spirits who wander at night.

### ***Offering of the Seven-Part Service [2]***

This section has seven parts: (1) homage, (2) offering, (3) admission of wrongdoing, (4) rejoicing in others' ennobling acts, (5) request to turn the wheel of the doctrine, (6) prayer to the buddhas to not transcend suffering, and (7) dedication of ennobling acts to awakening.

### ***Homage [a]***

**“With body, speech, and mind multiplied to equal the atoms of all realms,  
I bow in homage to the spiritual master, and to the victors and their  
heirs.”**

*The Discourse of Great Liberation* states:

Join the palms of your hands, like a blossoming lotus bud,  
At the crown of your head,  
And with clouds of infinite forms of yourself,  
Render homage to the buddhas of the ten directions.

The benefits of homage are mentioned in *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct*:

O fully ordained ones! The result of your homage in faith toward religious monuments containing the Transcendent Buddha's hair and nails is that, for as long as you do not have anger toward those whose pure conduct is akin to Brahma's, you will experience the happiness of a universal monarch and live among gods or humans for as many lifetimes as there are atoms that lie between you and the powerful golden foundation of this world.

### ***Offering [b]***

**“To the supreme host of recipients of offerings,  
I offer both real and imagined offerings—the seven offerings of common  
use, the pleasures of the five senses,  
The auspicious signs and substances, the seven precious possessions of a  
monarch,**

**The three realms, the triple cosmos, and the splendor of realms filling space.”**

You offer both real and imagined offerings—the seven offerings of common use; the pleasures of the five senses; the eight auspicious signs; the eight auspicious substances; the seven possessions of a monarch (wheel, jewel, queen, official, elephant, supreme horse, and general); the seven semiprecious possessions (boots, seat, mount, bedding, mansion, sword, and snake-skin); and the entire wealth and splendor of the environments and beings who fill the limits of space in the three realms—the desire realm (Mount Meru, the four continents, the subcontinents, the sun, the moon, the encircling iron mountains, and the residences of the desire realm’s gods), the form realm (the seventeen regions), and the formless realm (the four states of composure). These realms, up to the residence of Brahma, are offered, multiplied one thousand times—a simple cosmos; that multiplied one thousand times, a double cosmos; and that multiplied one thousand times, a triple cosmos. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: I mentally collect all that is not owned by anyone

Within the bounds of infinite space,  
And offer it fully  
To Powerful Sage, the supreme individual, and to his spiritual heirs.

***Admission of Wrongdoing [c]***

**“I admit with regret any evil acts I have accumulated  
By the force of karma and mental afflictions throughout lifetimes without  
beginning or end.”**

During the course of a series of lifetimes since time immemorial, the three poisons’ mental afflictions have led to wrongdoing, such as the ten corrupting acts, acts you committed, and acts committed by others with your encouragement or with your approbation, and so on. These acts become like poison that has entered your body. Admission of such wrongdoing must be accompanied by four forces: the force of thorough revulsion, the development of extreme regret; the force of remedial conduct, the vigorous practice of ennobling acts; the force of reparation, to take vows and to not repeat corrupting wrongdoing; and the force of reliance, to exhaust wrongdoing by reliance on the three jewels. *The Discourse That Presents Subjects in Fours* states: Maitreya! If bodhisattvas have four positive qualities, they will overpower the wrongdoing

they have done and accumulated. What are these four? The conduct of thorough revulsion, remedial conduct, the force of reparation, and the force of reliance.

Further, the master explains the shortcomings of wrongdoing; the disciples render homage, make offerings, cover the left shoulder with their upper robe, and request, “Please purify my wrongdoing!” Then they take refuge, uplift their minds, and repeat the following words while focusing their minds on the words they recite: I consider with intense regret any wrongdoing I have done out of desire, anger, or stupidity, in relation to the three jewels, my preceptor, my spiritual master, my parents, or any other sentient being. With regret, I admit such acts in the presence of the buddhas and bodhisattvas in the ten directions, in order to fully adopt the awakened mind and to attain the awakening of enlightenment. From now on, I will keep this vow to not repeat such acts.

They repeat these words three times, after which they meditate on emptiness for a moment. Then they imagine that white light radiates from the hearts of the sacred representations of enlightenment, purifying their body, speech, and mind. Afterward, the master asks whether the disciples have received the vows, the disciples affirm that they have, and the disciples make thanksgiving offerings.

### ***Rejoicing in Others’ Ennobling Acts [d]***

**“I wholeheartedly rejoice in the cultivation of ennobling acts  
And the positive karma of every being, ordinary or exalted.”**

If you sincerely rejoice in others’ ennobling acts, you attain roots of ennobling acts exactly equal to them, as well as measureless goodness. *The Concise Discourse of the Perfection of Sublime Insight* states: It is possible to weigh on a scale the countless Supreme Mountains within the cosmos,

But the ennobling act of rejoicing in others’ goodness cannot be measured.

### ***Request to Turn the Wheel of the Doctrine [e]***

**“For the sake of deluded beings, I request you to forever turn the  
supreme wheel of the doctrine,  
Which guides beings according to their needs.”**

The request to suitable spiritual teachers, such as the spiritual master, to turn the wheel of the doctrine purifies obscurations due to past rejection of the teachings

and ensures that in all future lifetimes you will always keep the sacred doctrine in your mind and never be separated from it.

### ***Prayer to the Buddhas to Not Transcend Sorrow [f]***

**“I request you to not transcend sorrow but to remain  
Until the round of rebirth’s seas run dry.”**

The request to those who guide beings to not transcend suffering but to remain in the world purifies your short life span, untimely death, and the wrongdoing of harming others’ lives; you thereby gain immeasurable longevity.

### ***Dedication of Ennobling Acts to Awakening [g]***

**“In order that all beings be liberated, I dedicate to sublime awakening  
This vast ennobling act generated by the twofold cultivation of goodness  
and wisdom.”**

*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

Subhuti! Dedicate this source of ennobling acts only to enlightenment. Do not dedicate it to the attainment of the states of hearer, solitary sage, or any other. Dedicate it for the welfare of all sentient beings. Do not dedicate it for what you alone can attain, since to do so is to fall into the attitudes of the hearers and solitary sages.

*The Discourse Requested by Bhadra* states:

With no concept  
Of giver, recipient, or gift  
In that evenness of generosity,  
May it be completely perfected in Bhadra.

### ***The Main Ritual to Uplift the Mind to Awakening [D]***

This section has three parts: (1) the difference between aspiration and application, (2) how to uplift the mind to awakening, and (3) meditation on joy.

### ***The Difference between Aspiration and Application [1]***

**The main ritual concerns the sublime mind of both aspiration and**

**application:**  
**Aspiration is the wish to attain the state of enlightenment**  
**For the benefit of beings;**  
**Application is to undertake spiritual practice, the cause of that attainment.**

Aspiration is the wish to attain the state of enlightenment for the benefit of all beings; application is to undertake spiritual practice, the cause of the attainment of enlightenment. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: Just as you know the difference

Between the wish to move and actual movement,  
The wise should know  
The differences and order in these two.

*The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

Uplift of the mind  
Is to wish for true, complete awakening for others' good.

### ***How to Uplift the Mind to Awakening [2]***

**On bended knee, with hands joined in prayer, with intense faith and humility, repeat:**

**“Until I reach the heart of awakening, I take refuge  
In the Buddha, the doctrine, and the sublime gathering of the spiritual community.**

**Victors of the ten directions and your spiritual heirs, heed me!  
Just as the blissful buddhas of the past and their spiritual heirs  
Uplifted their minds to sublime awakening and engaged in its training,  
I uplift my mind to sublime awakening  
And will engage in its training  
For the sake of all beings.**

**“I will liberate listener and solitary sage arhats  
Who are not free from cognitive obscurations and states of static peace;  
I will liberate ordinary individuals and exalted ones  
Who are not free from the two obscurations;  
I will give supreme release to those who are bound,**

**Beings assailed by extreme torment in the three miserable existences;  
And I will place all beings in the transcendent state free of abiding,  
Beyond life's wheel of interdependent arising."**

Repeat the following three times:

From this moment until I reach the heart of awakening, I, \_\_\_\_\_, take refuge in the Honored Buddha, supreme among human beings; I take refuge in the sacred doctrine, sublime among states free from desire; I take refuge in the supreme gathering, the spiritual community of exalted, nonreturning bodhisattvas.

Then the following lines are repeated three times:

Honored buddhas who abide in the ten directions, heed me!  
Bodhisattvas, great beings who rest on awakening's ten stages, heed me!  
Spiritual masters, great holders of the scepter, heed me!

Just as honored buddhas of the past and great beings, bodhisattvas, uplifted their minds to sublime awakening, from this moment until I reach the heart of awakening, I, \_\_\_\_\_, uplift my mind to sublime awakening. I will liberate all sentient beings who are not yet liberated; free those not yet freed; give release to those who are still bound; and place in the transcendent state those who have not fully passed beyond sorrow.

The first repetition corresponds to aspiration; the second, to application; and the third, to the extreme stability of both.

### ***Meditation on Joy [3]***

**"Today I have become a child of the victors;  
A recipient of honor by gods and humans; a supreme guide for beings;  
And one who has obtained the crowning name *bodhisattva*:  
In rapturous joy, I will aid beings."**

**The goodness of this is such that victors as numerous as the sands of the  
Ganges  
Could not completely express it during eons as numerous as sands of the  
Ganges.**

“In the past, during lifetimes since time immemorial, because I did what was in my own interest, I circled within the round of rebirth and experienced continual suffering within existence. From now on, considering others’ good, I enter the ranks of bodhisattvas and become a fitting recipient for beings’ homage, including that of the gods. I become a leader to guide beings: this is extremely wonderful.”

Joyfully contemplate that you have made your human life meaningful. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: Thereby, those endowed with such an outlook,

Who have adopted the very pure awakened mind, Laud this mind in these words

To apply and to increase it:

“Now, I have gained my life’s goal:  
I have fully attained a human life  
And today been born within the enlightened heritage,  
A child of the enlightened ones.

“Whatever I do now  
Will be in accord with this heritage,  
That this faultless, noble heritage  
Should remain flawless.

“Like a blind person who finds  
A jewel in a dustheap,  
By the same good chance,  
Awakened mind is born in me.”

*Complete Grasping of the Root of Ennobling Acts Discourse* states:

Sharadvatiputra, the aggregation of goodness gained from the initial uplift of the mind to awakening is neither poor nor very slight, yet a description of it could not be completed during one hundred eons, a thousand eons, or even one hundred thousand eons. Therefore, how can the extent of the goodness of the bodhisattvas’ uplift of their minds to awakening be known?

*The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas* states:



Compared to the cultivation of the source of ennobling acts by a person with a specific goal in mind during eons as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, another's uplift of their mind to awakening during one day, a half a day, or even for as much time as it takes to snap the fingers, has more goodness.

*The Reunion of Father and Child Discourse* states:

O fully ordained ones! The mass of positive qualities of the omniscient Buddha's uplift of the mind to awakening cannot be fully described even by transcendent buddhas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River speaking during eons as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River. Why is that? In the past, when the Transcendent Buddha performed the acts of a bodhisattva, he included in his attitude any sentient being that could be included and never once gave rise to an attitude that was not helpful to any sentient being among them. The realms of sentient beings are beyond measure. Yet while the Transcendent Buddha performed the acts of a bodhisattva, he uplifted his mind toward as many realms of sentient beings as exist and gave rise to the same number of collections of goodness. How is that? O fully ordained ones! The realms of sentient beings are endless. Just as the realms of sentient beings are endless, while the Transcendent Buddha performed the acts of a bodhisattva, he uplifted his mind toward each, and thus gave rise to endless stores of goodness.

*The Pattern of the Stem Discourse* states:

Child of the enlightened heritage, it's like this: a lamp placed within any house or room instantly banishes the darkness accumulated there during a hundred or a thousand years, and the place is illuminated. Likewise, when the lamp of the mental uplift to omniscience is placed within the gloomy room of any mind's dark ignorance, it instantly banishes inexpressible hundreds or thousands of eons of dark veils of accumulated karma and mental afflictions, and that lamp produces wisdom's illumination.

Child of the enlightened heritage, it's like this: great naga kings who wear a crown of royal wish-fulfilling gems have no fear of others' harm. Likewise, bodhisattvas who wear the crown of royal wish-fulfilling gems of awakened mind's supreme compassion have no fear

of the lower realms or harm from miserable existences.

Child of the enlightened heritage, it's like this: all the wealth, grain, jewels, gold, silver, flowers, perfumes, garlands, ointments, clothes, and possessions of beings in worlds reached by the light of the circles of the sun and moon do not equal the value of the sovereign precious jewel. Likewise, during the past, present, and future, in the domain of the basic space of phenomena illuminated by omniscient wisdom, all sources of ennobling acts, contaminated or uncontaminated, of gods, human beings, hearers, and solitary sages do not equal the supreme sovereign, very precious jewel of the uplift of the mind to awakening.

## CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS

The wondrous enlightened heritage, innate constituent of enlightenment, buddha nature: how supremely wonderful!

Wondrous great skillful means, uplift of the mind to awakening: how supremely wonderful!

Wondrous profound sublime insight, emptiness: how supremely wonderful!

Wondrous perfect awakening: how supremely wonderful!

The essence of uplift of the mind is the inconceivable altruistic mind alone.  
The domain of uplift of the mind is the inconceivable realms of beings, our mothers.

The benefits of uplift of the mind are vast, endless, and inconceivable.

The result of uplift of the mind is the inconceivable state of enlightenment.

What is essential is to include uplift of the mind in any essential ennobling act.

What is essential is to develop exclusively the essential altruistic attitude.

What is essential is to work for others' welfare with essential immeasurable compassion.

What is essential is to assume the essential responsibility to increase help and happiness for Buddhism and for beings.

This concludes a commentary to the words of "The Foundation of the Middle Way," Book 8 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. This has been written by Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje because it is necessary to understand that to uplift your mind to supreme, sacred awakening for the benefit of sentient beings

and to grasp every source of ennobling acts with that attitude have benefits as boundless as the number of sentient beings.

Fortune!

This text has been printed for the benefit of the doctrine and of beings by one who emphasizes the practice of the root of the great way—compassion and the two forms of awakened mind—a fully ordained monk of Shakyamuni’s order, a reincarnation of the great scholar Shantarakshita, the son of the Victor, the omniscient Tenpé Nyima Pal-zangpo.

**BOOK 9**  
**THE PATH OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

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- I. Bodhisattvas' Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
  - A. A Concise Presentation of Bodhisattvas' Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
  - B. The Extensive Explanation of Bodhisattvas' Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct

## **1. How to Maintain Ethical Conduct**

- a. A General Presentation of the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
- b. A Detailed Explanation of the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
  - i. The Two Traditions of the Ethical Conduct of Restraint from Faulty Conduct
    - A) Nagarjuna's Tradition of the Ethical Conduct of Restraint from Faulty Conduct
    - B) Asanga's Tradition—Training in Aspiration and Application
  - ii. The Ethical Conduct of Gathering Ennobling Qualities
  - iii. The Ethical Conduct of Altruistic Acts
    - A) The Actual Ethical Conduct of Altruistic Acts
    - B) Training and Conduct Related to All Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct

## **2. How to Repair Violations of Ethical Conduct**

- a. The Downfalls—the Four Parameters
- b. How to Engage in Training Conscious of the Permissions and Prohibitions
- c. Explanation of Effective Restoration of the Training
  - i. Nagarjuna's Tradition of Restoration of Bodhisattva Training
  - ii. Asanga's Tradition of Restoration of Bodhisattva Training
    - A) Identification of the Causes of Abandoning the Training

## B) How to Repair Faults and Downfalls

### II. The Six Transcendent Perfections

A. A Brief Presentation of Equalizing and Exchanging Self and Others

B. The Extensive Explanation of the Six Transcendent Perfections

1. The Three Kinds of Generosity

2. The Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct

## 3. Patience

a. A General Presentation of the Three Kinds of Patience

b. How to Cultivate Patience

c. The Need to Discipline Your Mind Rather Than to Control What Is Causing You Harm

d. How Harmful Circumstances Perfect Patience

e. The Reflection That Causes of Anger Arise from Yourself

f. The Reflection on Whether or Not What Is Undesirable Can Be Changed

g. Presentation of the Nature of Anger as Emptiness

## 4. Diligence

a. The Three Kinds of Diligence

b. Renunciation of the Three Forms of Laziness

c. The Measure of the Qualities of Diligence

d. Instruction in the Necessity of Diligence through a Presentation of Its Benefits

## 5. Meditative Stability

a. Requisites for the Practice of Meditative Stability

b. What Is Detrimental to Meditative Stability

c. The Faults of Companionship

d. The Need to Always Stay in Retreat

e. The Arising of Experience and Realization in Retreat, and Its Benefits

f. How to Meditate and Its Qualities

## 6. Sublime Insight

- a. A Brief Presentation of Sublime Insight
- b. The Extensive Explanation of Sublime Insight
  - i. Sublime Insight Gained from Hearing the Doctrine
    - A) Explanation of the Precious Keys to Analysis
      - 1) Explanation of Definitive and Inductive Meanings
      - 2) Explanation of Intention and Indirect Intention, to Clarify the Two Levels of Meaning and to Understand the Nature of Correct Intention
        - a) The Four Intentions
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    - B) The Treasury of Sacred Doctrine Analyzed
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        - a) The Interdependent Origination of the Basic Character of Being
        - b) The Interdependent Origination of the Round of Rebirth
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  - iii. Sublime Insight Gained from Meditation—How the Eight Extremes and Metaphors for Illusion Are Taught
    - A) Like a Dream
    - B) Like a Magical Display
    - C) Like an Optical Illusion
    - D) Like a Mirage
    - E) Like the Reflection of the Moon on Water
    - F) Like an Echo
    - G) Like a City of Spirits
    - H) Like an Emanation

### III. The Thirty-Seven Facets and Ten Stages of Awakening on the Four Paths of Training

- A. The Path of Cultivation
- B. The Path of Application
- C. The Path of Seeing
- D. The Path of Meditation
  - 1. A Concise Presentation of the Path of Meditation

2. The Extensive Explanation of the Path of Meditation
  - a. Levels of the Path of Meditation
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    - i. Antidotes on the Path of Meditation
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    - iv. Qualities on the Path of Meditation
    - v. Assumed Forms on the Path of Meditation
  - c. The Eightfold Exalted Path
  - d. Culmination of the Path of Meditation

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All the beauty of existence and of perfect peace  
Is as if concentrated in your single form:  
Bodhisattvas Ever Excellent and Goddess of Lamps,  
At your feet I bow my head in homage.

BOOK 9, “The Path of the Middle Way,” has three chapters:

1. A General Explanation of Bodhisattvas’ Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
2. A Detailed Presentation of the Six Transcendent Perfections
3. A Specific Presentation of the Thirty-Seven Facets and Ten Stages of Awakening on the Four Paths of Training

These chapters contain a total of eighty-six headings.

### **BODHISATTVAS’ TRAINING—THE THREE KINDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT [I]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) a concise presentation and (2) the extensive explanation of the three kinds of ethical conduct.

#### ***A Concise Presentation of Bodhisattvas’ Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct [A]***

**After you uplift your mind to sublime awakening as described, you engage in all facets of the training:  
Renew your commitment to awakened mind during the six periods of day and night.**

**Employ various means to gradually remove  
Every stain that obscures your innate constituent enlightenment, buddha  
nature.**

After you uplift your mind to sublime awakening as described, you engage in every facet of bodhisattvas' training. To do so, at the six junctures of day and night, renew the vows of awakened mind and repeat a number of times the prayers of dedication. These and all other techniques to foster the uplift of your mind merely constitute "causes that separate"—they gradually purify every stain that obscures your innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature, and make manifest its self-arisen positive qualities. *The Discourse of Ten Qualities* states:  
A precious jewel

Naturally provides a source of resplendent light.  
Once polished,  
It becomes even twice as bright and beautiful.

Likewise, although we are endowed with the enlightened heritage,  
Effort in the awakened mind  
Purifies the two extremes,  
Ensuring that no noxious influences arise in our experiential domain.

### ***The Extensive Explanation of Bodhisattvas' Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct [B]***

This section has two parts: (1) how to maintain ethical conduct and (2) how to repair violations of ethical conduct.

#### ***How to Maintain Ethical Conduct [1]***

This section has two parts: (1) a general presentation of the three kinds of ethical conduct and (2) a detailed explanation of the three kinds of ethical conduct.

#### ***A General Presentation of the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct [a]***

**The three kinds of ethical conduct are restraint from faulty conduct,  
Gathering ennobling qualities, and altruistic acts.  
Renounce the seven things that undermine these forms of ethical conduct;  
rely on the three things that preserve its integrity  
And the nine things that enhance it. The classification and standard**



### **enumeration are as three.**

Bodhisattvas' ethical conduct takes three forms: restraint from faulty conduct, the gathering of ennobling qualities, and altruistic acts.

Seven things undermine these forms of ethical conduct. Of these, three impede sublime insight: disinterest in hearing the teachings, forgetfulness in reflection, and apathy in meditation. Avoid them. Four are faults in altruistic acts: extreme laziness in application, conduct that causes others to lose faith, lack of compassionate motivation, and counterproductive conduct.

Three things preserve the integrity of the bodhisattvas' training. First, three recollections preserve its integrity during this life: recollection of the benefits of uplifting the mind, the disadvantages of having that uplift deteriorate, and the difficulty of attaining such mental uplift. Bring these repeatedly to mind.

Second, three things ensure the integrity of the bodhisattvas' training during future lives so it becomes irreversible: performance of the seven-part service three times a day, supplications to the victors and their spiritual heirs, and renunciation of negative acts contrary to spiritual life.

Third, five things to cherish sustain the integrity of the bodhisattvas' training both now and later: to cherish the domain of spiritual practice, sentient beings, more than yourself; to cherish what is to be practiced, the doctrine, more than wealth; to cherish the main point, awakened mind, more than your heart; to cherish the principal contributing factor to this path, your spiritual guide, more than your parents; and to cherish what is to be attained, enlightenment, more than possessions.

Among nine things that enhance awakened mind, five recollections involve remembering the following: the instability of composite phenomena, the inevitability of suffering, the benefits of spiritual life, the outstanding positive qualities of the teacher who reveals the meaning, and the benefits of the awakened mind. Four acts complete the nine: looking with eyes of mindfulness, movement by the supreme horse of diligence, encouragement by the riding crop of disengagement, and a mind turned toward the city of freedom.

The classification includes three kinds of ethical conduct. *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse* states:

Kashyapa! Bodhisattvas' ethical conduct has three facets: the ethical conduct of restraint, the gathering of ennobling qualities, and the gathering of altruistic acts.

These three are essentially one thing differentiated according to its different

aspects, like a single gem that can dispel darkness, gather various forms of wealth, and help stop epidemics.

Ethical conduct's standard enumeration is as three. Bodhisattvas' acts definitely help both the doer and others: altruistic acts bring others' streams of being to spiritual maturity; restraint from negative acts and the gathering of positive qualities bring your own stream of being to spiritual maturity. Therefore, the standard enumeration is as three.

### ***A Detailed Explanation of the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct [b]***

This section has three parts: (1) the two traditions of the ethical conduct of restraint from faulty conduct, (2) the ethical conduct of gathering ennobling qualities, and (3) the ethical conduct of altruistic acts.

### ***The Two Traditions of the Ethical Conduct of Restraint from Faulty Conduct [i]***

This section has two parts: (1) Nagarjuna's tradition of the ethical conduct of restraint from faulty conduct and (2) Asanga's tradition—training in aspiration and application.

### ***Nagarjuna's Tradition of the Ethical Conduct of Restraint from Faulty Conduct [A]***

**Two traditions present the vows of restraint from faulty conduct.  
The tradition of Nagarjuna follows *The Discourse of the Bodhisattva Sky  
Essence and The Discourse of Skillful Means*,  
And is delineated in *The Compendium of Training*.**

**Twenty fundamental downfalls and eighty reprehensible acts are as follows:**

**Five definitely apply to rulers—to confiscate offerings to the three jewels,  
to renounce Buddhism,**

**To punish ennobling practice, to commit any act of immediate fruition,  
and to hold wrong views.**

**Five definitely apply to government officials—to destroy villages,  
provinces,**

**Cities, towns, or surrounding areas.**

**Eight definitely apply to ordinary persons—to speak of emptiness to those**

**who are mentally unprepared;**  
**To lead someone to the lesser way; to induce abandonment of the lesser way and adherence to the great way;**  
**To claim that the lesser way does not prevent mental afflictions in encouraging another to adhere to your own beliefs;**  
**To criticize others and to praise yourself, driven by jealousy; to lie, for gain or glory;**  
**To cause a fully ordained individual to be punished and to accept a bribe;**  
**To disrupt a renunciant's mental tranquility by confiscating their possessions to give to a reciter of texts.**  
**The last two are to relinquish the aspiration to awaken or the application to awakening. Thus, there are twenty in all.**

**Of the reprehensible acts, twenty-four concern disregard of happiness and suffering;**  
**Sixteen, disregard of spiritual practice—**  
**A total of forty. These, differentiated by temporary**  
**Or permanent disregard, give a total of eighty.**

Nagarjuna's tradition of the bodhisattva vows is modeled on *The Discourse of the Bodhisattva Sky Essence* and *The Discourse of Skillful Means*, and is delineated by Shantideva in *The Compendium of Training*.

According to these sources, there are twenty fundamental downfalls and eighty reprehensible acts. Five definite fundamental downfalls apply to rulers: to confiscate the wealth of the religious community, such as articles dedicated to the Buddha, doctrine, or spiritual community; to renounce the scriptural doctrine's three collections of texts or the doctrine of realization's three trainings; to punish an ordained person with imprisonment, whether or not they maintain correct ethical conduct; to commit one of the five acts of immediate fruition—to kill your father, mother, or an arhat, to create dissension within the spiritual community, or with malicious intent to cause the Buddha to bleed; and to hold wrong views, such as the denial of the relation among acts, karma, and consequence. *The Compendium of Training* states: To steal offerings given to the three jewels

Is considered to be a defeating downfall.

To renounce the sacred doctrine

Was declared by the Sage to be the second.

Further downfalls are, even if a fully ordained person has failed in ethical conduct

CONDUCT,

To confiscate their saffron robes, to beat them,  
To put them in jail,  
Or to cause them to give up renunciant life;  
To commit one of the acts of immediate fruition;  
And to hold wrong views.

Five definite downfalls apply to government officials: In anger, to destroy by fire or other means villages—a settlement that consists of one clan or more; provinces—an area where persons of the four castes live; cities—an area where the eighteen kinds of artisans live; towns—where many merchants gather; and surrounding areas—large areas, such as Champaka. The previous text states: The Victor declared that such acts as destroying villages

Constitute downfalls.

Eight definite downfalls apply to ordinary persons: to teach emptiness to those who are mentally unprepared, making them apprehensive; to induce a person who has entered the great way to change course and to adhere to the lesser way; to cause another to abandon the individual liberation vows—the lesser way—to adhere to the great way; to maintain that the lesser way does not overcome mental afflictions and to encourage others in that belief; to criticize another and to praise yourself, driven by jealousy toward another bodhisattva; in order to receive gain and honor, to commit the highest form of lying, such as to claim, “I have direct realization of the profound instructions of emptiness!” although you do not have such realization; to create through slander a breach between a person in power, such as a king, and a practitioner of these teachings, then to cause the powerful person to punish the fully ordained individual with a fine. If the practitioner then misappropriates offerings to the three jewels to give as a bribe to the slanderer, the fault is incurred when the slanderer accepts the bribe, whether they keep it themselves or give it to the powerful person. The last is to confiscate the possessions of a renunciant meditator and to give them to a reciter of texts or to induce another to give up contemplative practice, such as tranquility. The previous text states: The downfalls are to speak of emptiness

To a sentient being who has no previous mental training;  
To cause someone who has entered the path to enlightenment  
To turn away from perfect awakening;  
To cause someone to completely forsake individual liberation  
To enter the great way;

To believe that the paths of training do not result  
In the abandonment of attachment and other mental afflictions  
And to induce another to accept this view;  
To speak of your positive qualities  
For gain or honor,  
Or to criticize another in verse;  
To claim that you have gained forbearance in relation to profound  
emptiness,  
Which is the most misleading statement;  
To cause a noble practitioner to be punished,  
Causing the misuse of offerings  
Given to the three jewels;  
To induce another to give up mental tranquility,  
Or to transfer possessions of those who settle in evenness correctly  
To someone who recites texts.  
These are the fundamental downfalls  
That cause sentient beings to be reborn in the great hells.

In addition to these eighteen fundamental downfalls, relinquishment of the aspiration to awaken is the nineteenth and, according to *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse*, relinquishment of the application to awakening, such as to not apply yourself to ennobling acts, constitutes the twentieth.

Further, three levels of training correspond to degrees of bodhisattvas' spiritual acumen—highest, middle, and average. For the highest, eighteen downfalls are presented in *The Discourse of the Bodhisattva Sky Essence* and *The Compendium of Training*. For those of a middle degree of spiritual acumen, there are four downfalls, taught in *The Compendium of Training*, the text that elucidates the meaning of *The Discourse of Skillful Means*. It states: The four downfalls are to completely relinquish the awakened mind;

In endless attachment and greed,  
To not give to a beggar;  
To have no patience toward sentient beings  
But to strike them in anger,  
Even though they earnestly try to please you;  
To teach as Buddhist doctrine teachings you have concocted  
From what is in harmony with the mental afflictions.

Those of the lowest degree of spiritual acumen must not relinquish the aspiration

to awaken. *The Discourse of Advice to the King* states:

Your majesty! You are very busy and have much to do: you are unable to train in every aspect of the transcendent perfections, from generosity to sublime insight. Therefore, your majesty, continually and mindfully recall your intent toward, faith in, and aspiration to strive for authentic, complete awakening. This can be done whether you walk, sit, lie down, wake up, eat, or drink. Always recall this, keep it in mind, and meditate on it. Rejoice in the ennobling acts done by others. Having rejoiced, make offerings to all buddhas, bodhisattvas, hearers, and solitary sages. Together with all sentient beings, present offerings to them. Then, until all sentient beings completely perfect the positive qualities of enlightenment, dedicate such acts each day to unsurpassable awakening.

Your majesty! You can thus rule your kingdom, your duties as ruler will not be negatively affected, and your cultivation of awakening will become complete.

Moreover, *The Concise Discourse of the Perfection of Sublime Insight* states:

However, if bodhisattvas engage in the path of the ten ennobling acts during a million eons

With the wish to become a solitary sage arhat,

Their ethical conduct is flawed, and correct conduct thereby violated.

That intention is far more serious than a defeating act for a monk.

Eighty supplementary errors are as follows: twenty-four concern disregard of happiness and suffering; sixteen, disregard of spiritual practice—a total of forty; when each is applied to two circumstances, this gives the total of eighty.

First, the twenty-four forms of disregard of happiness and suffering are as follows. The basis is twofold—to not alleviate others' suffering or mental distress, even though you are able; and to not foster others' comfort and mental happiness even though you are able. These two, applied to either a physical or mental basis for the suffering or happiness, produce four. Those four, applied to the present or future, produce eight. Those eight, applied to three subsequent considerations—lack of diligence in body, speech, or mind in relation to that being; to not search for helpful causes or conditions; or to not apply yourself to corrective antidotes—produce twenty-four.

Second, the sixteen forms of disregard toward spiritual practice are as follows:

The basis is twofold—to be unwilling to do something minor to alleviate another’s severe suffering or mental distress. These two, applied to present or future lifetimes, produce four; and applied to your own or other’s minds, produce four. Further, the second basis is to be unwilling to do something minor to prevent the deterioration of others’ significant comfort or mental happiness. As in the former case, when this is applied to present or future lifetimes and to your own or another’s mind, it produces the total of eight.

Each of these forty can be differentiated by temporary disregard or lasting disregard, to produce the total of eighty.

### ***Asanga’s Tradition—Training in Aspiration and Application [B]***

**Training in aspiration includes to not mentally abandon any being, to recall the benefits of awakened mind,**

**To cultivate stores of goodness and wisdom, and to be diligent in training in awakened mind.**

**Renounce these four negative acts: to deceive those worthy of veneration, to provoke regret,**

**To criticize holy persons, and to deceive anyone.**

**Practice their opposite, the four positive acts.**

**The training in application includes renunciation of four fundamental downfalls:**

**To criticize another and to praise yourself for gain or honor;**

**To not give objects or spiritual instruction out of greed;**

**To remain angry and abusive even though another has acknowledged a mistake;**

**To present a false impression of yourself as a spiritual person after having renounced the great way.**

**There are thirty-four and twelve reprehensible acts—forty-six in all.**

In Asanga’s tradition, the principal training consists of techniques to not mentally relinquish sentient beings: never mentally abandon a sentient being. The thought based in annoyance toward any sentient being, “When an opportunity occurs to help you, I will not help you; when an opportunity occurs to prevent harm befalling you, I will not prevent it,” constitutes mental abandonment of that sentient being. Instead, when your help to someone is repaid with harm, to again reply with compassion is to not mentally abandon a sentient being.

To always recall the benefits of awakened mind, you should carefully examine and recall the two hundred and thirty metaphors taught in *The Pattern of the Stem* and reflect on the teachings given above. To integrate the cultivation of the twofold store of goodness and wisdom, accompany meritorious acts (such as generosity) with the cultivation of wisdom—lack of conceptualization in relation to the three spheres (of act, agent, and recipient). This twofold cultivation nourishes the awakened mind.

The technique to increase the awakened mind is diligence in repeatedly training in it. Train your stream of being by meditating on love and compassion. Train in the actual awakened mind by uplifting your mind to awakening at the six junctures of the day and night. Train in “taking and sending” by dedicating your happiness and ennobling acts to sentient beings and by taking on their wrongdoing and suffering.

Four negative acts must be renounced, such as to use lies to deceive the spiritual master, preceptor, or teacher. *The Discourse Requested by Kashyapa*, a chapter of *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse*, states: Kashyapa! Four acts make you forget the awakened mind. What are they? To deceive a spiritual master or a venerable person, to make someone regret an act that need not be regretted, to speak in anger of the faults of a bodhisattva who has uplifted their mind to awakening, and to deceive or cheat a sentient being.

Their opposites, the four positive acts, must be practiced. The same text states:

Kashyapa! Four acts ensure that you will not forget the awakened mind. What are they? To never knowingly tell a lie, to develop the perception of bodhisattvas as the Teacher, to remain steadfast in higher motivation without deceiving sentient beings, and to correctly lead all sentient beings to the great way.

Training in application to awakening includes to not commit the four fundamental downfalls, distinguished by their respective motivations of attachment, greed, anger, and stupidity: tightly bound by acute attachment for gain (such as offerings) or for honor (such as a specified seat), to praise yourself in order to receive that gain or honor or to criticize others who already enjoy such gain and honor. When any other person has understood your words, this first downfall, which for a bodhisattva is similar to a defeating act for a monk or nun, has been incurred.

Out of greed, to not give material wealth or spiritual instruction to those who are suffering, poor, or destitute incurs the second downfall. In anger, to not be



satisfied with the belligerent words you say, but to inflict harm with beating or physical abuse incurs the third downfall. Tightly bound by stupidity, to voice such criticisms as, “The collection of bodhisattva teachings are not the Buddha’s doctrine!” and to give up that collection of teachings incurs the fourth downfall. This can also be incurred if you delight in your own or others’ unwholesome acts and present them falsely as the sacred doctrine. *The Twenty Commitments* states: In attachment to gain and honor,

To praise yourself and to criticize others; In greed, to not give material  
wealth or spiritual instruction  
To those who are suffering or destitute;  
To not accept another’s apology,  
But to strike in anger;  
To present false teachings as sacred  
Although you have abandoned the great way.

Atisha considered that each of these four can be further divided into two, giving a total of eight.

The forty-six reprehensible acts are divided into two categories—thirty-four that contradict gathering ennobling qualities and twelve that contradict altruistic acts. The first has six categories: Seven acts contradict generosity. *The Twenty Commitments* states:

To not offer the three (that is, your body, speech, and mind) to the three  
jewels,  
To indulge your mind’s desires,  
To not respect your elders,  
To not reply to questions,  
To refuse invitations,  
To not accept gifts, such as gold,  
To not give spiritual instruction to those who seek it.

Nine acts contradict ethical conduct. The same text states:

To reject those who have violated the lesser way’s ethical conduct,  
To not train in order to inspire others,  
To do little to help sentient beings,  
To not commit a corrupting act out of compassion even though this is  
permitted,  
To undertake wrong livelihood,  
To act carelessly such as being very wild

To act carelessly, such as being very wild,  
To consider crossing over the round of rebirth alone,  
To not give up unrespectable acts,  
To not practice the doctrine even though you still have mental afflictions.

Four acts contradict patience. The same text states:

To return criticism with criticism, and so on,  
To reject angry persons,  
To not accept another's honest apology,  
To indulge in your mind's anger.

Three acts contradict diligence. The same text states:

To gather a circle of persons around yourself, with the wish for gain or honor,  
To not overcome laziness, and so on,  
To continue meaningless conversations due to attachment.

Three acts contradict meditative stability. The same text states:

To not strive for the goal of meditative states,  
To not renounce whatever obscures meditative stability,  
To regard the flavor of meditative stability as a positive quality.

Eight acts contradict sublime insight. The same text states:

To reject the hearers' way,  
To be diligent in their way although you have your own (bodhisattva) path,  
Without diligence in the great way, to apply yourself to non-Buddhist writings,  
To be diligent in and to enjoy non-Buddhist writings,  
To reject the great way,  
To praise yourself and to disparage others,  
To not go to listen to the doctrine,  
To criticize the teacher and to adhere to just the words, rather than the meaning.

Second, the twelve reprehensible acts that contradict altruism have three categories. Four faults that violate serving others are listed in the same text:

To not go as a needed companion,  
To abandon taking care of the sick,  
To not relieve suffering,  
To not teach the careless what is correct.

Six faults of not helping others are listed in the same text:

To not repay kindness shown,  
To not relieve others' anguish,  
To not give to those who seek material wealth,  
To not serve your entourage,  
To not conform to others' attitudes,  
To not praise others' positive qualities.

Two faults of not correcting what is negative are listed in the same text:

To not correct what is negative in suitable circumstances  
And to not intimidate, and so on, with miraculous powers.

The commentary states:

However, when faults are committed through disrespect, apathy, or laziness, they are committed under the mental afflictions' influence. However, if they are committed through forgetfulness, they are not committed under the mental afflictions' influence. If a person has done such acts while mentally deranged, no fault is incurred.

If those who have the spiritual support of having taken renunciant vows commit these acts, the four defeating acts of the monastic vows correspond in this context to the fundamental downfalls. Other faults and downfalls, apart from those listed here, constitute supplementary violations within the bodhisattva training.

### ***The Ethical Conduct of Gathering Ennobling Qualities [ii]***

**The ethical conduct of gathering ennobling qualities includes the six transcendent perfections,  
Their characteristics, literal meaning, classification, enumeration,  
Order, ways of practice, and benefits.**

This section has eight parts: the six transcendent perfections; and their characteristics, literal meaning, classification, standard enumeration, order, ways of practice, and benefits.

First, the six transcendent perfections are generosity, ethical conduct, patience, diligence, meditative stability, and sublime insight.

Second, these six can be defined as follows: The ethical conduct of gathering ennobling qualities is any training in the spiritual practice of bodhisattvas, done with the intention (and related factors) to accomplish any ennobling act, synthesized as the six transcendent perfections that have four unique characteristics. These four are the following: the six transcendent perfections are free from what is inconsistent with each; they are guided by nonconceptual sublime insight in relation to the three spheres (of agent, act, and recipient); they have the function of fulfilling others' wishes; and having done that, they teach the doctrine that brings disciples, according to their karmic connections, to spiritual maturity within the three states of awakening.

What is inconsistent with each transcendent perfection is stated in sequence in *The Ornament of the Discourses*:

Greed, lapses in ethical conduct, anger,  
Laziness, distraction, and lapses in sublime insight.

The functions are listed in the same text:

Gifts, such as of material objects, maintaining a lucid mind,  
Patience toward others' harm, diligence in aid and friendliness,  
Miraculous powers, and discernment in what to accept or reject:  
These completely fulfill others' wishes.

Third, the literal meaning of the term *paramita* in Sanskrit is as follows: *para* means "other side"; *mita* means "to have gone." "Transcendent perfection" is to go to the superb far shore beyond the ennobling qualities of worldly persons, hearers, or solitary sages.

Fourth, the classification is as follows: there are six transcendent perfections, such as generosity, as stated by the great omniscient master, Longchenpa:

The spiritual training of the victors' spiritual heirs  
Consists mainly of training in the six transcendent perfections.

Each of the six transcendent perfections, such as generosity, can be further

classified into six. For example, when each transcendent perfection is accompanied by generosity, this produces the generosity of each, such as the generosity of generosity. Likewise, when the conduct of each is performed without inconsistencies, this produces the ethical conduct of each. When each is undertaken with tolerance of hardship, this is the patience of each. When each is undertaken accompanied with joyful enthusiasm, this is its diligence. When this diligence guides an undistracted mind, this is its meditative stability. When the six transcendent perfections are guided by nonconceptual sublime insight in relation to the three spheres of agent, act, and recipient, this produces the sublime insight of each. Thus there are thirty-six aspects in all.

Fifth, the standard enumeration of the transcendent perfections is as follows: All spiritual practice of bodhisattvas can be gathered into the three trainings (in higher ethical conduct, meditative states, and sublime insight). From this perspective, the transcendent perfections' enumeration as six is as follows. Superb ethical conduct arises from generosity's freedom from attachment to possessions. In turn, ethical conduct accompanied by the four guidelines of ennobling training produces patience.<sup>32</sup> These three, by virtue of their cause, essence, and unique features, are subsumed under the category of training in higher ethical conduct. Meditative stability is subsumed under training in higher meditative states; sublime insight, under training in higher sublime insight. Diligence is their common companion. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: The Victor correctly taught

The six transcendent perfections  
In relation to the three trainings:  
The first three; the last two in two categories;  
And one that belongs to all three categories.

Sixth, the order of the transcendent perfections has been determined according to cause and effect—the former produce the latter; and the latter are comparatively higher and more subtle than the former.

Seventh, how the transcendent perfections become part of spiritual practice is as follows. Generosity is given without expectation of reward or positive fruition. Ethical conduct is honored without a wish for a pleasant rebirth in happy existences. Patience is meditated upon without the thought of any sentient being as an adversary. Diligence is undertaken in natural delight toward the gathering of all your own and others' ennobling qualities. Meditative stability is settling in evenness within meditative stability that rids you of self-absorbed states which characterize the divine realms of meditative stability and

formlessness. Sublime insight is practiced without separation from the skillful means of supreme compassion.

The experience of all six transcendent perfections must be cultivated accompanied by six sacred aspects: their sacred support—the presence of awakened mind; their sacred substance—impartial, all-inclusive generosity, and the rest; their sacred purposeful activity—application to that which aids sentient beings; their sacred skillful means—acts guided by nonconceptual sublime insight in relation to the three spheres (of agent, act, and recipient); their sacred dedication—to unsurpassable awakening; and their sacred purity—conduct that effectively counteracts the two obscurations.

Eighth, the benefits of the transcendent perfections have two parts: the positive qualities of each of the six transcendent perfections and the results of their experiential cultivation. First, the positive qualities of the six transcendent perfections have four facets: they are vast, since their common underlying intention is the attainment of complete awakening in order to serve others; nonmaterial, since each is free from inconsistencies, such as expectation of reward or positive fruition; very meaningful, since they place all beings in a state of spiritual uplift or certain fortune (that is, the three states of awakening); and inexhaustible, since they continually increase as each is guided by the skillful means of the union of emptiness and compassion, and by dedication of goodness of positive acts. The same text (*The Ornament of the Discourses*) states: Know the four positive qualities

Of all the transcendent perfections, including generosity, to be these:  
They are vast, nonmaterial,  
Very meaningful, and inexhaustible.

Second, the transcendent perfections' results has two parts: first, their temporary results are as stated in *The Garland of Jewels*:

Through generosity, wealth is gained; through ethical conduct, happiness;  
Patience, splendor; diligence, brilliance;  
Meditative stability, peace; and the outlook of sublime insight, liberation.

Second, their ultimate result is that, gathered within the context of the six perfections, the cultivation of goodness becomes the cause of the wisdom bodies that have form; and the cultivation of wisdom, the cause of the body of ultimate enlightenment. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Generosity and ethical conduct

Constitute the cultivation of goodness; sublime insight, that of wisdom.  
Three belong to both goodness and wisdom.  
If done with sublime insight, all five become the cultivation of wisdom.

### ***The Ethical Conduct of Altruistic Acts [iii]***

This section has two parts: (1) the actual ethical conduct of altruistic acts and (2) training and conduct related to all three kinds of ethical conduct.

### ***The Actual Ethical Conduct of Altruistic Acts [A]***

**The ethical conduct of altruistic acts is the four means to gather disciples**

—  
**To summon disciples by means of the signal of generosity;**

**To draw their attention by pleasant speech;**

**To have them practice, according to their interests, the meaning of ways  
of spiritual development;**

**And to conform to that meaning, thus putting them at ease.**

The presentation of the ethical conduct of altruistic acts has four parts: its definition, classification, standard enumeration, and how altruistic acts can be summarized.

First, the definition of altruistic acts is as follows. The ethical conduct of altruistic acts is any training in the spiritual practice of bodhisattvas, done with the attitude (and related factors) of wishing to devote yourself to the skillful service of others, to bring sentient beings to full spiritual maturity.

Second, the classification is fourfold: generosity, pleasant speech, meaningful conduct, and conformity with beings' needs. First, to attract to your circle those disciples not yet gathered around you, begin by pleasing them with material gifts. *The Lotus Mound* states: Send well the signal of generosity.

Second, once disciples have gathered, lead them with conversation in pleasant speech according to their respective degree of acumen. By teaching the sacred doctrine, have them develop strong inclination and enthusiasm to undertake its spiritual practice. The same text states: Greet them with pleasantly spoken words.

Third, just as we nourish infants with food of gradually increasing solidity, a single teaching will not permit persons of differing degrees of acumen to mature. Therefore, have disciples engage in Buddhist practice suitable to their respective

level. Be skillful in means to aid and bring happiness to sentient beings, leading them directly or indirectly through the stages of the lesser, middle, and great ways of spiritual development. The same text states: Be determined to act for their welfare.

Fourth, to lead those sentient beings within the sacred doctrine and ennobling conduct, you must train yourself to conform to them as well. If you have not done this, disciples will not wish to heed you, just as they would not be inclined to listen to a leper who teaches the meditation practice of Garuda, said to cure leprosy. The same text states: By conforming to the teachings, put them at ease.

Third, the standard enumeration of altruistic acts is as four. The first, material generosity, helps disciples temporarily, whereas the last three create the causes of disciples' ultimate welfare—to have them grasp the teachings, comprehend their meaning, and continually follow them.

Fourth, altruistic acts can be summarized as follows: all altruistic acts are guided by the uplift of the mind that directly or indirectly aids and creates happiness for sentient beings. In brief, altruistic acts can be synthesized as four as above, or as two: to attract into your circle those who have not yet gathered around you, and to lead those gathered to spiritual maturity.

Another source summarizes the ways to serve others as twelve. *The Bodhisattvas' Stages of Awakening* states:

To befriend those who are engaged in meaningful acts; to relieve the suffering of sentient beings in misery; to teach skills to those who do not know how to do something; to be sensitive to kindness you've been shown and to repay it; to protect others from danger; to relieve the anguish of those who suffer; to give gifts to those without material fortune; to attract perfectly a circle of followers through spiritual teachings; to conform to others' expectations; to inspire joy by your true positive qualities; to fully eradicate evil; to use magic to instill fear and to inspire inclination.

### ***Training and Conduct Related to All Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct [B]***

**During the four forms of activity—walking, sitting, eating, and sleeping—  
Be circumspect, exercising vigilance and mindfulness,  
As described in the collection of *The Discourse of Perfectly Pure Conduct*.**



**Recite with pure motivation prayers of aspiration that relate to your circumstances.**

When walking, place your eyes' sight at the length of one yoke's breadth in front of you. When meeting others, smile brightly and greet them with, "Welcome!" Make others happy with pleasant speech.

Sitting, take a straight-backed, cross-legged posture and undertake any of the ten forms of spiritual conduct, such as teaching, listening, or meditation.

When eating, rid yourself of craving and attachment and offer the first portion of your food and *tormas* accompanied by recitation of *Remembering the Three Jewels Discourse*. With the intention to nourish your body and to help its inner parasites, eat as much as is helpful for your well-being and meditation, and dedicate the leftover food to other beings.

At night, when going to bed, sleep on your right side (for males), your head pointing north; remember death and imagine the three jewels to be present at your pillow. With the perception that ennobling acts will arise and appear, fall asleep with the mind at rest within the nature of reality.

On waking the next morning, rise remembering the three jewels and the awakened mind. Spend your time in ennobling practice that will help others and yourself. Always keep three things in mind: vigilant recollection in guarding your mind; mindful attention toward whether or not faults have arisen in your stream of being; and careful, rigorous attention in relation to what must be engaged in or what must be turned away from.

In particular, as stated in *The Flower Ornament Discourse of Perfectly Pure Conduct*,

When bodhisattvas enter a building, they uplift their mind with the thought,  
"May all sentient beings reach the city of liberation!"

Likewise, when sleeping, "May they attain the Buddha's ultimate body of enlightenment!"

When dreaming, "May they realize all phenomena as a dream!"

When waking, "May they awake from ignorance!"

When rising, "May they attain enlightenment's form bodies!"

When dressing, "May they be clothed in modesty and carefulness!"

When fastening a belt, "May they be connected to the sources of ennobling acts!"

When sitting on a seat, "May they reach the Vajra Seat!"

When leaning back "May they find the tree of awakening!"

When reading books, “May they find the use of awakening.”

When making a fire, “May they burn the kindling of their mental afflictions!”

When the fire takes light, “May the fire of their wisdom blaze!”

When the food is cooked, “May they come to gain wisdom nectar!”

When eating, “May they obtain the food of meditative stability!”

When going out, “May they become free from the city of the round of rebirth!”

When walking down stairs, “May I enter the round of rebirth to serve sentient beings!”

When opening a door, “May the gate to the city of freedom be opened!”

When closing a door, “May the gate to the lower realms be closed!”

When entering a path, “May they enter the path of exalted beings!”

When climbing, “May I place all sentient beings in the happiness of the higher realms!”

When descending, “May the continuity of the three miserable existences be ended!”

When meeting a sentient being, “I am meeting the Buddha!”

With each step, “I am walking to serve all sentient beings!”

With each raising of the foot, “May they rise from the round of rebirth!”

On seeing a person wearing jewelry, “May they attain the marks and signs of enlightenment’s physical perfection!”

On seeing a person without jewelry, “May they attain the positive qualities of spiritual training!”

On seeing a full vessel, “May they be full of positive qualities!”

On seeing an empty vessel, “May they be empty of faults!”

On seeing a joyful sentient being, “May they be joyful in spiritual life!”

On seeing a sad being, “May they be unhappy with composite phenomena.”

On seeing a happy sentient being, “May they attain the happiness of enlightenment!”

On seeing suffering, “May the sufferings of sentient beings be pacified!”

On seeing sickness, “May they be liberated from sickness!”

On seeing kindness done, “May they return the kindness of all buddhas and bodhisattvas!”

On seeing kindness not reciprocated, “May they not return the ‘kindness’ of

On seeing kindness not reciprocated, “May they not return the kindness of wrong views!”

On seeing an argument, “May they be able to eradicate all attacks from wrong views!”

On seeing praise, “May they praise all buddhas and bodhisattvas!”

On seeing conversations concerning Buddhism, “May they attain the self-confidence of the Buddha!”

On seeing sacred images, “May they have no obscuration in their sight of all buddhas!”

On seeing a religious monument (literally, “a support for offerings”), “May all beings become supports for offerings!”

On seeing commerce, “May they gain the seven treasures of the exalted!”

On seeing prostrations done, “May all worldly beings, including the gods, attain the invisible crown of enlightenment!”

With such thoughts, uplift your mind.

## ***How to Repair Violations of Ethical Conduct [2]***

This section has three parts: (1) the presentation of the downfalls—the four parameters; (2) how to engage in training conscious of the permissions and prohibitions; and (3) the explanation of effective restoration of the training.

### ***The Downfalls—the Four Parameters [a]***

**The four parameters are actual downfalls, apparent downfalls, Nondownfalls, and apparent nondownfalls.**

Four parameters can be applied to each of the three kinds of ethical conduct: First, in relation to the ethical conduct of restraint from negative activity, to take life out of anger, for example, is a downfall. To kill out of altruism is an apparent downfall, which is not in fact a downfall. To not kill out of compassion is a nondownfall. To not kill even though such an act would help others is an apparent nondownfall, which is in fact a downfall.

Second, these four can be applied to the ethical conduct of gathering ennobling qualities: To not give out of greed is a downfall. To not give out of altruism is an apparent downfall. To give with a pure intention is a nondownfall. To give out of a wish to harm others is an apparent nondownfall.

Third, these four can be applied to the ethical conduct of altruistic acts: to not

attend to the sick is a downfall. To not attend to the sick in order to accomplish something very meaningful is an apparent downfall. To attend to the sick out of love is a nondownfall. To attend to the sick by preventing others who are available for the task to do so or in abandoning other very meaningful work, such as your hearing the doctrine or renunciation (that is, engaging in meditation practice), is an apparent nondownfall.

### ***How to Engage in Training Conscious of the Permissions and Prohibitions [b]***

**The seven corrupting acts of body and voice are permitted  
If they will surely help another. In that case, they are ennobling.**

If a specific act can be a means to help others, it is permitted to commit the seven physical and verbal acts from among the ten corrupting acts rejected when you take vows to restrain from corrupting activity. As is said, Great bodhisattvas have permission to commit the seven corrupting acts if examination reveals that a situation has three aspects—that the act helps others, knowledge that it will become helpful, and that those bodhisattvas’ ennobling acts will increase rather than be obscured by that specific act.

For example, it is permitted to kill a murderer to save the lives of many. For example, when a ship’s captain saw that a dark man with a short spear wished to kill many persons for his own ends, the captain killed him out of great compassion, to free him from the endless round of rebirth.

Or, for example, although some do not share their wealth due to greed, during a famine when many beings’ lives are endangered, for the welfare of both rich and poor, it is permitted to steal from the rich to give to the poor.

In another example, a brahmin’s son named Joy in Stars was confronted with a woman who desired him. To prevent her certain death, he engaged in wrongful sexual conduct with her.

Likewise, it is permitted to lie to save those who will certainly be killed; or to speak divisively to separate persons from evil companions, to prevent those persons from being deceptively led to miserable existences; or to engage in meaningless speech, such as relating stories from any source or whatever will make a person laugh, to cheer up those who are depressed; or to use rough speech, to prevent someone who will surely undertake wrongdoing.

Permission is given for such acts since in fact they constitute ennobling acts. On the other hand, permission is never granted for the three corrupting mental

acts since they are always corrupting. *Purification of the Mind's Obscurations* states: A monk encouraged his elderly father

By saying, "Hurry up!"  
In hurrying, the man died,  
But this was not for the monk an act of immediate fruition.

With a pure intention, one person placed a shoe  
On the head of a statue of Buddha Shakyamuni  
And with a similar intention, another removed it:  
Both acts resulted in their reaching the realm of enlightenment.

Therefore, whether an act has goodness or is wrongdoing  
Is found in the root of its intention.

*The Twenty Commitments* states:

With compassion, out of love,  
And in a noble mind, there is no fault.

### ***Effective Restoration of the Training [c]***

This section has two parts: (1) Nagarjuna's tradition and (2) Asanga's tradition.

#### ***Nagarjuna's Tradition of Restoration of Bodhisattva Training [i]***

**In Nagarjuna's tradition, the means to acknowledge downfalls is as follows: if a fault has exceeded the period, It can be repaired by praying at dawn to the bodhisattva Sky Essence. Additional downfalls can be purified by recitation of *The Discourse of the Three Aggregations* at the six junctures of the day.**

In general, the causes of giving up the commitments of awakened mind can be synthesized into three categories: rejection of the aspiration to awaken, the supporting basis; contradiction of the training by committing a root downfall; and abandonment, by offering back the vows.

On the subject of disadvantages of violating the training, there are three general disadvantages of downfalls. First, in breaking a promise, you become the object of criticism. By committing a downfall, you deceive the Teacher, the Buddha, and thereby displease the buddhas; you deceive the domain of your

concern, sentient beings, and displease them; and you deceive yourself and undermine your own goals, thereby becoming the object of everyone's disdain.

Second, when your words lose their meaning, this draws to you all that is unwished for. It is said that, like a ruler who loses their kingdom, life will then be inauspicious and your death will be accompanied by intense anguish.

Third, since a downfall represents a fault of serious consequence, you later fall to the miserable existences from which liberation is difficult. *The Compendium of Training* states: Those root downfalls

Are the cause of beings' great hells.

On the subject of offering back the vows, although permission is granted to give back the training in the individual liberation vows if you are unable to keep the vows, to offer back the bodhisattva commitments is a fault of dire consequences. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: To destroy the happiness

Of even one sentient being harms yourself.

Thus why mention the harm in destroying

The happiness of embodied beings whose numbers fill the infinity of space!

If you have incurred a downfall due to any of four causes—ignorance, carelessness, mental afflictions, or disrespect—you can rise from this fault by repairing it.

On that subject, what is called “exceeding a period” is explained as follows: The day is divided into six periods—daytime has three junctures and the night has three. If you apply the remedy to an act by the end of one of those periods, your ethical conduct's continuity remains unbroken and pure. For instance, if a downfall occurs during one of the morning periods—the initial, middle, or later—it can be repaired if you admit it without separation from awakened mind during any of the three periods—initial, middle, or later—of that same afternoon. If such a time period has not elapsed, although a light fundamental downfall might again occur, another admission can repair and restore the commitments. However, when the time period for admission has elapsed, your ethical conduct is affected and you cannot restore the commitments with simple reparation. In that case, you must begin with admission and a vow to not repeat the act, followed by retaking the commitments according to that ritual, performed an undetermined number of times.

Among the three specific methods to restore commitments, given in relation to degrees of practitioners' acumen, persons of a middle degree of acumen can, if

they wish, admit a downfall in the presence of the deity of general awareness mantras, the exalted Bodhisattva Sky Essence. They must admit the downfall continually, day and night: As soon as they incur a downfall, they bathe, keep clean, and light incense. They call the exalted Bodhisattva Sky Essence by name, pay homage to him, and pray intently: “Exalted one, show yourself to me! Purify my wrongdoing, I pray!” As a result of such prayers, the bodhisattva will appear, either directly or in a dream, in his own form or as any being from human to bird, according to the individual’s fortune, and teach them how to raise themselves from the downfall.

However, if the bodhisattva does not present himself, the individual must rise before dawn, keep clean, and make offerings of incense while looking toward the east, then recite, “Morning! Morning! Great compassionate one! Great excellent one! As soon as you arrive in the east of this world, embrace me with your compassion! May my words inspire Sky Essence, who is imbued with great compassion, to act quickly! Please show me in my dreams how I can quickly undo this downfall and a way to attain the skillful means and sublime insight of the exalted great way.”

Then the person sleeps: as dawn approaches, Sky Essence will show himself in a dream, in a form according to the individual’s connection, and will reveal how to begin undoing the downfall.

Those of average (i.e., lowest) degree of acumen rely on the four forces: the force of the support, the object to whom admission is made; revulsion, intense regret toward the negative act or downfall; remedial activity, for example, to construct sacred representations of wisdom body, speech, or mind, to recite mantras or prayers, or to say words of admission, and the like; and restoration, the determination to not repeat the act in the future, even at the cost of your life.

Further, restoration can depend upon the persons to whom admission is made. If the downfall was committed with two cases of intense involvement—to harm sentient beings out of anger or to harm Buddhism out of stupidity—or with a level of involvement due to simple attachment or anger, admit the downfall to a group of ten persons who keep the great way commitments; a group of five such persons; or one or two such individuals. However, if no such opportunity exists, any downfall can be admitted in the presence of the three jewels.

In particular, at the six junctures of the day and night, recite *The Discourse of the Three Aggregations*. The three aggregations referred to in the title are homage to an assembly of thirty-five buddhas, admission of faults, and dedication of goodness. Apart from fundamental downfalls, such recitation will purify and restore other downfalls or those unrestored by other means because

they have been forgotten or were committed unconsciously.

Those of the most acute degree of acumen first admit their fault, as in a magic display or a dream, in the presence of the victors and their spiritual heirs filling space. Then they examine the essence of the fault itself. In the recognition that it is without a reference point, like the nature of space, they settle in evenness. This liberates them from all faults and downfalls. *The Discourse of Great Liberation* states: Those who wish to purify acts they regret

Should sit straight and gaze correctly,  
Gaze correctly at the true nature of the act.  
Liberation is to see that nature,  
The supreme purification of regretted acts.

### ***Asanga's Tradition of Restoration of Bodhisattva Training [ii]***

This section has two parts: (1) identification of the causes of abandoning the training and (2) how to repair faults and downfalls.

#### ***Identification of the Causes of Abandoning the Training [A]***

**In Asanga's tradition, the fundamental downfall is to abandon another being;**

**Auxiliary downfalls, to commit one of the four negative acts or to damage your aspiration or application.**

**One defeating act can be motivated by great, medium, or lesser degrees of involvement.**

**These relate to varying degrees—to commit the act continually, without shame or embarrassment,**

**To be pleased by it, and to consider it positive.**

To mentally abandon a sentient being (a root downfall) or to commit one of the four negative acts (auxiliary downfalls) constitutes relinquishment of the aspiration to awaken, the underlying support of the bodhisattva path. This in turn causes the relinquishment of that which it supports, the application to awaken.

If a defeating act—to criticize others and to praise yourself for gain or glory, for example—is committed with full involvement and the following four aspects, it constitutes a downfall of serious involvement: to commit the act regularly, to do so without the slightest quiver of shame or embarrassment, to take joyful pleasure in it, and to consider it as positive. Since this destroys the vows, it is called “a defeating act.”



Medium involvement is similar in every respect, except for the presence of slight shame and embarrassment: you will stop if encouraged by others to do so. Slight involvement is characterized by similar aspects and more intense shame and embarrassment, so that even without others' encouragement, you will soon take the initiative to stop the act. Acts done with the latter two degrees of involvement do not constitute relinquishment of the vows.

### ***How to Repair Faults and Downfalls [B]***

**If a defeating act has been committed, the vows must be taken again.**

**Acts done with a medium degree of involvement must be admitted before three persons.**

**Acts done with a lesser degree of involvement must be formally admitted before one person.**

**If this is not possible, admit the act mentally in the presence of the victors.**

If the aspiration to awaken is relinquished or if a fundamental downfall (comparable to a defeating act for a monk or nun) has been committed with a serious degree of involvement, the commitments have been relinquished. In that case, after admission, commitment, cultivation of goodness and wisdom, and purification have been practiced assiduously, the vows can be taken again. According to the great omniscient master Longchenpa, *The Bodhisattvas' Stages of Awakening* states that this retaking of the vows can be repeated no more than three times.

Acts comparable to a defeating act, done with a medium degree of involvement, must be admitted before three or more persons. It is even possible that, depending on the motivation, acts such as fundamental downfalls done with a lesser degree of involvement (or, apart from them, the forty-six infractions) can be done with or without mental afflictions, and do not constitute downfalls. Those that do constitute downfalls can be purified by admission and commitments taken before one or more persons.

In any of these cases, if no suitable persons are available to receive your admission, the act can be admitted and vows taken in the imagined presence of the victors and their spiritual heirs.

## **THE SIX TRANSCENDENT PERFECTIONS [II]**

This chapter has two parts: (1) a brief presentation of equalizing and exchanging self and others and (2) the extensive explanation of the six transcendent

perfections.

### ***Equalizing and Exchanging Self and Others [A]***

**At the outset of training in the six transcendent perfections for the sake of beings,**

**Recognize that all beings have been your mother and recall their kindness.**

**Decide to repay their kindness and help them reach happiness.**

**You have the opportunity to guide them.**

**Do what you can. Have compassion. Uplift your mind to awakening. See them as the focus of your spiritual practice.**

**Helping others will accomplish your own goals, please the buddhas,**

**Provide aid, and do so without difficulty. Marshal the four forces.**

**See yourself and others as equals and exchange yourself for others.**

Thirteen considerations make spiritual practice for the welfare of sentient beings imperative. What are they?

All sentient beings equally have been my mother and father, again and again. At those times, all they did was to lovingly help me; to repay their kindness, I must serve sentient beings. *The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* states: This whole earth can be rolled into balls the size of a pea. The number of times a single sentient being has been your mother or father will exceed the number of such balls of earth; the number of times each sentient being has been your mother or father is incalculable.

If I disregard the help given me by sentient beings, I will be crushed by the enormous weight of my ingratitude. To prevent this, I must do what helps sentient beings.

If sentient beings lived in comfort and happiness, it could be said that my help was not needed. However, on my behalf, they committed wrongdoing and are now oppressed by the round of rebirth's sufferings and miserable realms. Therefore, to alleviate the karma of faults done on my behalf, I must serve sentient beings.

Sentient beings wish for happiness; none wishes for suffering. However, in ignorance of the means to reach happiness and to avoid suffering, they live only tormented by suffering. To change this, I must do what helps sentient beings.

Countless numbers of beings were neither guided nor trained by buddhas of

the past. If I do not lead these beings, the great way's enlightened heritage will come to an end and sentient beings will be left without a sanctuary and protector. Therefore, I must do what helps.

Through the force of clinging to this "I" and sense of self, the winds of my mental afflictions rage and mislead me. However, since it has been said that I can energetically formulate the aspiration to guide beings, I will do whatever I can to help and serve sentient beings.

Since all phenomena are empty and there is no existent self, I must guide with compassion dreamlike sentient beings who have not realized this. If I do not guide them, this undermines compassion: I must serve in whatever ways help others.

I have uplifted my mind to awakening in order to serve sentient beings. If I do not serve them, this contradicts my training: I must do what helps.

My wandering throughout the round of rebirth is the consequence of my having had hatred and other mental afflictions toward beings. Since those beings now constitute the supreme domain for my accomplishment of awakening, I must do what helps them.

If I actually help others, I naturally accomplish my own welfare; thus I must do what helps, since I will thereby naturally accomplish my own goals.

If I aid sentient beings, this pleases the buddhas: I must do what helps. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

Apart from making sentient beings happy,  
There is no other way to delight the victors.

Further, after I have uplifted my mind to awakening, if I do not accomplish the welfare of sentient beings, I fall into the ways of hearers and solitary sages: I must serve sentient beings.

Ultimately, sentient beings and I have no reference points of separateness, like space. Within that ongoing state, I can work for magic-like sentient beings on a relative level without discouragement: I must do what helps them.

In brief, for even a single sentient being, I will remain within the round of rebirth in their service until they become free. Day and night in diligence, without fatigue or disillusionment, I will work for millions of eons for the knowledge that for one instant an ennobling thought has arisen in just one sentient being's stream of being. With such a strong intention, I must be diligent. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: The victors and their spiritual heirs rely on supreme diligence

To fully ripen the mass of sentient beings:

To fully ripen the mass of sentient beings.  
They work for a million eons without dejection  
For a single ennobling thought to develop in a being's mind.

There are four marshaled forces. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

Interest, stability, joy, and rejection.

First, the force of interest: with interest toward the benefits of the awakened mind, undertake ennobling acts and renounce corrupting acts. The same text states:

The fear of suffering  
And reflection on the benefits of the awakened mind foster interest.

Second, the marshaled force of stability: Think, "Aside from not having uplifted my mind to awakening, to have uplifted it then set it aside will prove detrimental to me in every way." Thereby, you do not relinquish perseverance.

Third, the marshaled force of rejection: You occasionally accept the permission granted to disregard the letter of some minor aspects of the training, if these acts do not harm sentient beings. The same text states: If you are unable to maintain the discipline due to involvement in such situations as danger or celebration,

You can do what is convenient.

Fourth, the marshaled force of joy—be joyfully enthusiastic in helping sentient beings and in accomplishing your training. *Letter to a Disciple* states:

Someone who is about to have their head cut off for others' sake  
Looks with open, joyful eyes, like lotus flowers,  
And thinks of the sharpened sword raised above their head  
To be like a white parasol opened for their own good.

Meditation on yourself and others as equals is as follows: First develop the perception of someone, such as an enemy, as your mother. Just as you feel joy in attaining temporary happiness and ultimate well-being, this other person is no different from you. You should think, "I must do whatever I can to help this person!" Meditate in this way, extending your range of concern from one being until your concern embraces all sentient beings equal in numbers to the limits of

space.

Exchanging yourself and others is as follows. After having trained your mind as above, think, “May I mentally release whatever happiness and ennobling acts are mine, and give them to this sentient being. May that goodness cause them to temporarily reach the higher realms and, ultimately, enlightenment. May their wrongdoing come to me, like an exchange of clothing that I accept. As these acts ripen within my experience, I will feel many sufferings in their place, such as those of the miserable existences.” You develop this exchange from the bottom of your heart and in your bones. Once you have done this with one sentient being, continue until you include all sentient beings.

This practice purifies powerful wrongdoing you’ve accumulated since time immemorial. You thereby exhaust many forms of karma that would have ripened later in lifetimes in the miserable existences, for instance, and you gain many forms of happiness. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: If I don’t completely exchange

My own happiness for others’ sufferings,  
I can’t accomplish enlightenment  
And even the round of rebirth won’t hold any happiness for me.

### ***The Six Transcendent Perfections [B]***

This section has six parts: (1) the three kinds of generosity, (2) the three kinds of ethical conduct, (3) patience, (4) diligence, (5) meditative stability, and (6) sublime insight.

### ***The Three Kinds of Generosity [1]***

**Generosity can be expressed to needy beings through material gifts, the gift of spiritual teaching, and the gift of refuge from fear.**

**Material generosity can be expressed through giving any wealth desired;**

**Great giving—your child, spouse, or other loved ones;**

**Or extreme giving—your head or limbs.**

**Lesser spiritual generosity is expressed through gifts of paper, ink, or books;**

**Great spiritual generosity is given by teaching appropriate ways of spiritual development.**

**Generosity of refuge from fear is to provide freedom from danger.**

Three kinds of generosity can be offered to the poor or other beings in need—

gifts of material objects, spiritual teaching, and refuge from fear.

Material generosity can be expressed in three ways: simple giving is any gift of food, clothing, horses, elephants, home, bed, or any necessary objects desired. Those incapable of such generosity should begin training in generosity by having the right hand place gifts of food or money in the left. Then, to train the mind further, they should give to others insignificant things, such as a vegetable. Gradually, when you encounter a prospective recipient for your generosity, you will give gladly without greed, in the thought, “How wonderful! A friend has come to help me complete the transcendent perfection of generosity for the welfare of beings!” After familiarity in this is gained, you can proceed to great giving—the gift of those dear to you, such as your beloved son, daughter, or spouse. Extreme giving includes such gifts as your head, arm, or leg.

Lesser spiritual generosity can be expressed by such gifts as pens, ink, paper, or books; great spiritual generosity, by graded guidance in Buddhist ways of spiritual development—lesser or great—appropriate to your degree of spiritual acumen. Lay bodhisattvas mainly practice material generosity; those who have renounced home life, spiritual generosity. *The Exalted Discourse of Prophecy in Answer to the Questions of Lokadhara* states: On this subject, material gifts complete the cultivation of goodness whereas spiritual gifts complete the cultivation of wisdom. Together they accomplish the state of total omniscience.

What is material generosity? It consists of these: simple giving, great giving, and extreme giving. What is called “simple giving” is gifts to others of food, clothing, vehicles, or elephants. What is called “great giving” is gifts of your son, daughter, or spouse. What is called “extreme giving” is difficult to do—to give such gifts as your head, eyes, arms, legs.

What is spiritual generosity? Minor spiritual generosity is gifts of pens, ink, and books. Major spiritual generosity is to convey, according to the spiritual fortune of the recipient, the instructions of hearers, solitary sages, or the unsurpassable path. Extremely great spiritual generosity is to have a person grasp unsurpassable awakening and to convey teaching that is inconceivable, like space.

*The Discourse Requested by Upali* states that those who rest in forbearance toward the unborn nature of phenomena can practice simple giving, great giving, and superb giving.

Generosity of refuge from fear is to offer refuge and protection, such as you can, from immediate danger, such as that due to sickness, demons, thieves, wild

animals, or rulers; or from ultimate danger—that of the round of rebirth and its miserable realms. The eight or sixteen dangers are these: fire, water, poisonous snakes, carnivorous animals, elephants, prison, thieves, lions, rulers' punishments, enemies, demons, leprosy, separation from loved ones, poverty, lightning, and failure.

What constitutes inappropriate gifts is stated in *The Discourse Requested by the Great Seer Vasya*:

Gifts of poison, weapons, the meat of animals you killed, or alcohol to those who are reckless constitute impure gifts. To give with doubt concerning a gift's effect or with intense regret once the gift is given are also impure. To give with the thought, "May I enjoy the ripening of the goodness of this gift; may such goodness not be enjoyed by others!" is also impure. When a sick or dying person feels no joy in or faith toward the Buddha, but the family forces them to distribute their possessions to the three jewels, this is impure. To reject giving to the poor and to instead give to the wealthy is also impure.

Great Seer! What will the ripened effect of these acts be?

Like seeds planted on salty ground, while it could be said that they will sprout, they will not bear fruit.

The essence of generosity is lack of greed; its cause, the ennobling mind of giving; its result, the accomplishment of a magnificent body and wealth; and its function, the care of both yourself and others, and the completion of the two stores of goodness and wisdom. Its special qualities are stated in *The Ornament of the Discourses*: If you meet the Victor's spiritual heirs begging, always give, even if the gift be that of your own life.

Do so with compassion to benefit others; do not expect rewards or strive for desired results.

Such generosity will place all persons in the three states of awakening.

Generosity fully guided by wisdom is inexhaustible within every world.

### ***The Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct [2]***

**The three kinds of ethical conduct are restraint from faulty conduct, Gathering ennobling qualities, and altruistic acts.**

The first of the three kinds of ethical conduct is restraint from faulty conduct. In presenting the seven kinds of individual liberation vows, *The Bodhisattva's*

*Stages of Awakening* explains that restraint from faulty conduct within your own stream of being consists of uplifting the mind to awakening in aspiration and application, based on any of those seven ordinations. Nevertheless, in the context of the bodhisattva commitments, whether or not an individual has previously taken one of the seven kinds of individual liberation vows, the renunciation of harming others, along with its basis, constitutes individual liberation vows. Moreover, renunciation of faulty conduct in order to work for others' welfare constitutes the bodhisattva vows.

Second, the ethical conduct of gathering ennobling qualities is defined as the intention to renounce any corrupting act and its basis, in order to give rise in your stream of being to ennobling qualities (summarized as the two stores of goodness and wisdom, and the six transcendent perfections) that have not yet arisen and to increase those that have.

Third, the ethical conduct of altruistic acts is defined as the intention to renounce and guard against any thought or its basis that is inconsistent with the intention that all thoughts and acts be directly or indirectly skillful means to serve sentient beings, in order to accomplish altruistic acts. Moreover, if an act can serve others, it is permitted, even if it appears to contradict the ethical conduct of restraint of vows or that of gathering ennobling qualities. The stories of Captain Great Compassion and the brahmin youth Joy in Stars [mentioned above in the section "How to Engage in Training Conscious of the Permissions and Prohibitions"] provide examples of this.

The essence of ethical conduct has six aspects, as taught in *The Stages of the Hearers*: to remain within the bounds of ethical conduct, to be restrained by the vows of individual liberation, to have a perfect ritual, to sustain the excellent domain of conduct, to regard any degree of faulty conduct with apprehension, and to engage correctly in the bases of training.

The substance of ethical conduct is acts that lead to the transcendence of sorrow. Its result is life within happy existences. Its function is to provide a basis for all positive qualities. Moreover, it pacifies mental afflictions and frees you and others from fear. Its quality is its endowment with the cultivation of goodness.

Ethical conduct has two categories: that which is correctly undertaken and arises through symbols, and that which arises through the nature of reality. The first refers to the individual liberation vows. The second, ethical conduct that arises through the nature of reality, is twofold—that which arises from meditative stability and that which arises from states without contamination by corrupting influences. The ethical conduct that arises from meditative stability is attained in the main practice of mental training. The ethical conduct that arises



from states without contamination, such as the path of seeing, are attained on the stages of exalted bodhisattvas. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states: Ethical conduct refers to the vows of individual liberation,

And, likewise, to that which arises from meditative stability and lack of contamination.

Ethical conduct to be developed becomes the support for positive qualities when it has these four aspects: it is unimpaired, it is not mingled with the hearers' and solitary sages' attitudes, it is unpolluted with faults or downfalls, and it is blameless since it belongs to the great way. *Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states: You must anchor ethical conduct so that it remains unimpaired, blameless,

Unadulterated, and unpolluted.

Such conduct is said to be the basis for all positive qualities,

Like the earth for the animate and the inanimate.

The positive qualities of ethical conduct are stated in *The Ornament of the Discourses*:

Always undertake the three kinds of ethical conduct that have the nature of the vows and diligence of the victors' spiritual heirs:

Even without a conscious wish for the higher realms, you will fully attain them and not develop attachment to them.

Such ethical conduct itself will place all beings in the three states of awakening.

Ethical conduct guided by wisdom is inexhaustible within any world.

### ***Patience [3]***

This section has seven parts: (1) a general presentation of the three kinds of patience, (2) how to cultivate patience, (3) the need to discipline your mind rather than to control what is causing you harm, (4) how harmful circumstances perfect patience, (5) the reflection that causes of anger arise from yourself, (6) the reflection on whether or not what is undesirable can be changed, and (7) the presentation of the nature of anger as emptiness.

### ***The Three Kinds of Patience [a]***

**The three kinds of patience are to accept suffering, to not dwell on harm**

**done,  
And definite realization of the teachings.**

The first of the three kinds of patience is patient acceptance of suffering: This is to accept without regret the immediate suffering of hardship in spiritual practice in order to gain long-term, unsurpassable happiness. This resembles acceptance of medical treatment in order to end the pain of sickness. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: Isn't it better for a person condemned to death

To have a hand cut off and then be freed?  
Isn't it better for human beings to experience suffering during this life  
If this frees them from hell?

The second is to not dwell on harm done. Just as a small spark can ignite a huge pile of straw, when you or those whom you hold dear are abused physically or verbally, one moment of anger can dissipate the excellent acts you accumulated over a thousand eons. Conscious of this drawback of anger, be patient: do not get upset, do not take revenge, and do not hang on to resentment. The same text states: No negative act equals anger;

No ascetic practice equals patience.  
Therefore, meditate assiduously on various ways  
To be patient.

The third is definite realization of the teachings: This is to not be disheartened by compassionate, altruistic acts and to not be anxious toward profound emptiness understood through sublime insight.

The essence of patience is to not be angry toward others and to tolerate hardships. Its substance is compassion. Its result has five benefits, as a discourse states:

To have little anger; to have little discord; to enjoy much comfort and mental happiness; to have no regrets at death; and once this body passes away, to be reborn in the worlds of higher, happy existences.

The function of patience is ennobling acts that serve both you and others. *The Collection of Sayings* states:

When you know that another is in turmoil,  
If you thoroughly calm yourself,

This helps both  
You and the other.

The positive qualities of patience are stated in *The Ornament of the Discourses*:

Such patience places all persons in the three states of awakening.

### ***How to Cultivate Patience [b]***

**Patience constitutes supreme goodness, the most exemplary ascetic practice.**

**Anger causes rebirth in the hells: you should avoid it.**

Patience constitutes the most exalted goodness, the cause of the accomplishment of enlightenment, and the most exemplary ascetic practice: you should meditate upon it. Anger causes rebirth in the hells: avoid it in any way possible. *Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states: Thus, since no ascetic practice equals patience,

Don't give anger an opportunity to arise.

By renouncing anger, you will gain the state of no-return:

This is the Buddha's promise.

### ***The Need to Discipline Your Mind Rather Than to Control What Is Causing You Harm [c]***

**Things that cause harm are numerous: it is difficult to neutralize them all.**

**If you only discipline your mind, you will neutralize all negative circumstances.**

*Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

Savage sentient beings are so numerous that they can fill all space:

It's impossible to defeat them all.

However, when you control this single angry mind of yours,

It is as if you subdue all those foes.

### ***How Harmful Circumstances Perfect Patience [d]***

**By using harmful circumstances, you perfect patience.**

**Think of the kindness of enemies; feel gratitude toward them.**

Patience, the cause of attaining enlightenment, must be cultivated based on your enemies; you should consider that any harmful being is very kind. Since the slight suffering, such as mental distress, you feel when harmed can become the catalyst for the arising of compassion or disillusionment with the round of rebirth, you should be patient. The same text states: Moreover, suffering has positive qualities:

Disillusionment rids you of arrogance,  
You develop compassion for beings within the round of rebirth,  
You avoid wrongdoing, and you delight in ennobling acts.

Further, cultivation of patience in the face of hatred yields tremendous goodness: feel inclined and respectful toward your enemies as if they were the Teacher. *The Highest Continuity* states: Feel as inclined and respectful toward harmful persons as you do toward the Teacher.

### ***The Reflection That Causes of Anger Arise from Yourself [e]***

**Harm, disturbance, and suffering arise from your karma:  
To discipline karma's source, your mind, is vital.**

All harm and suffering arise from doing evil deeds: what harm you do to others now will return to you. The source of present harm or suffering can be found in yourself; therefore, be patient with others. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: If I had not harmed others in the past,

Nothing would harm me now.  
The same text states:  
In the past, I did these same harmful things  
To sentient beings,  
Therefore, when sentient beings injure me,  
It is right that such things occur.

If something harmful incites your anger, you should direct that anger toward your own mental afflictions. The same text states:

Summoned by things I've done,  
This harm now befalls me.

If actual harm incites your anger, you should direct your anger at inert forms, such as rocks or clubs, or unpleasant words. The same text states:

If someone actually uses clubs or other weapons against me,  
Should I be angry at the weapons' wielder,  
Who is driven by anger?  
It is better to be angry at anger.

If your possessions are harmed, don't be angry. If you have done good deeds, wealth is inexhaustible; without having done good deeds, anything at all can exhaust your possessions. The faults of wealth are endless, don't foster attachment to it. If your reputation is slandered, reputation is nothing but words; words are inert and not of the slightest use. If you become angry at unpleasant words, since they are the aggressor's words, why be angry? Even their wish to speak came from their pride: it is unnecessary to be angry. However, if you become miserable and angry, it makes sense to be angry at your own mind. Whatever unhappiness you have comes from yourself: the other's words haven't shifted to you and can't cause you pain; yet when you accept them, they do. If you don't become unhappy, words themselves create neither help nor harm.

Thus, instants of any previous pleasure or pain have ceased, like yesterday's events or like last night's dreams: they cannot return, they are intangible, and they are equal in their lack of intrinsic nature. Anger is groundless. Likewise, today's events are like those of tonight's dreams: it is not right to be attached to the reality of pleasure or pain.

### ***The Reflection on Whether or Not What Is Undesirable Can Be Changed [f]***

**If the situation can be changed, why be unhappy?**

**If no change is possible, of what use is sadness?**

If what is undesirable can be changed, you can apply yourself to the means to effect that change, in which case unhappiness is of no use at all. If a situation definitely cannot be changed, there is no point to sadness, since sadness is incapable of changing the situation. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: However, if the situation can be changed,

What need is there for unhappiness?  
However, if the situation cannot be changed,  
What use is sadness?

Therefore, don't become angry, even for the sake of those close to you, such as your parents or entourage. Don't even become angry toward others for the sake of such as your teacher, preceptor, spiritual master, or the three jewels. If you get angry, not only will this not help them, this will cause very significant harm to you and others now and in the future. When others harm you in minor or major ways, such as with unpleasant words, stealing your wealth, or beating you, anger does not help the situation. Therefore, think that now and in the future, to apply yourself to patience for your own and others' happiness constitutes the supreme cultivation of goodness.

### ***The Nature of Anger as Emptiness [g]***

**The object of anger and the angry individual lack an intrinsic nature and are naturally empty.**

**If there is no intrinsic self, what self is there to cling to? What cannot be tolerated?**

The forms of anger's objects and the angry individual have not even the slightest tangible substance: the harmer and the one harmed do not exist. Their minds cannot be located anywhere outside or inside: the harmer and the harmed do not exist. If examined, the other's words do not exist in essence: the harmer, the harm, and the harmed share the same nature of emptiness. Within this nature, there is neither pleasure nor sadness, neither good nor evil, neither gain nor loss. Despite the seeming appearance of harm, its essence does not exist. Thus, such appearances are like relative truth's eight metaphors for illusion, such as an emanation or an optical illusion. Ultimately, appearances are like space: cultivate patience. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: Once I recognize this, I cannot become angry

At material objects that are like an emanation.

Meditation in these various ways produces effortless patience. The same text states:

There is nothing that is not easy  
Once you become familiar with it.

As described here, cultivation of patience will create happiness even during this life: you will live in harmony with everyone and others will find you

attractive. In later lives, you will take a special rebirth in higher realms and accomplish awakening. The same text states: My future accomplishment of enlightenment

Comes from pleasing sentient beings, but apart from that,  
Why can't I also see that during this life,  
Great glory, fame, and happiness also come from the same source?

While in the round of rebirth, patience brings me beauty and other qualities,  
Renown, and freedom from sickness.  
These in turn help me live long  
And attain the happy reign of a universal monarch.

### ***Diligence [4]***

This section has four parts: (1) the three kinds of diligence, (2) renunciation of the three forms of laziness, (3) the measure of the qualities of diligence, and (4) instruction in the necessity of diligence through a presentation of its benefits.

### ***The Three Kinds of Diligence [a]***

**The three forms of diligence to be undertaken are the armor of intention,  
application to acts,  
And joyful service to sentient beings.**

The first of the three kinds of diligence is the armor of intention, which frees you from being overcome by negative influences. It is the thought, "Until all sentient beings are placed in perfect awakening, I will not abandon diligence," and to then undertake diligent activity, undeterred by fluctuations in negative or positive circumstances.

The second is the diligence of practical application, which causes the completion of awakening's five paths and ten stages. This diligence is to undertake the gathering of ennobling acts with enthusiastic dedication to gaining the positive qualities of renunciation and realization. Once begun, you practice courageously and, even if the slightest positive quality fails to show itself, you firmly apply yourself to ennobling acts in body, speech, and mind, with ever-increasing diligence.

The third is the diligence of joyfully serving sentient beings, the cause of the achievement of your own and others' goals. Joyously undertake working for others with diligence in body, speech, and mind, using a variety of means to

ensure sentient beings' immediate welfare and their ultimate happiness. *The Compendium of Training* states: Fully joyous in armor, practical application, not transgressing the vows, not turning back, and not being complacently satisfied.

*The Journey to Langka Discourse* states:

Diligence is energetic application during the first and last parts of the day to stem discursive thoughts, by those who see this as conducive to their contemplative practice: such effort constitutes the transcendent perfection of diligence.

*The Ornament of the Discourses* states:

These seven facets  
Are what the wise fully know to be diligence  
That they correctly practice:  
True joy in ennobling acts,  
Stability in faith and positive intention,  
Increase of such positive qualities as mindfulness,  
The antidote to pervasive mental afflictions,  
Nonattachment, and other noble qualities.

Nagarjuna states:

If your hair or clothing suddenly catch fire,  
You drop what you were doing to put it out.  
Likewise, you must strive to end future rebirths,  
Since nothing is more urgent than that.

### ***Renunciation of the Three Forms of Laziness [b]***

**Three kinds of laziness must be rejected: attachment to negative acts that should be renounced, Inertia, and underestimating yourself.**

Laziness increases all faults and clouds all ennobling acts, ensuring failure. Any of the endless, negative activity related to this life we're familiar with—business, farming, divinations, astrology, various kinds of building, gambling, song, dance, games, tending animals, meetings, entertainment, and so on—become habitual occupations to which we increasingly apply ourselves and



which we find impossible to give up. It seems to us that we have no spare time to apply ourselves to our spiritual lives. This interruption to our spiritual practice constitutes the laziness of attachment to negative acts.

When we see the difficulty of spiritual practice we think, “I can’t accomplish that!” and we give up our application—this is the laziness of inertia.

The fainthearted conclusion, “That kind of spiritual practice is beyond someone like me!” constitutes the laziness of underestimating yourself. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: Laziness is attachment to what is negative,

Inertia, and lack of self-confidence.

### ***The Measure of the Qualities of Diligence [c]***

**Diligence attracts praise from worldly people and leads to achieving goals,**

**The increase of every quality, and the quick attainment of enlightenment.**

The benefits of being endowed with diligence are limitless; in brief, diligence attracts the praise of worldly persons and leads to achieving wished-for goals, the increase of positive qualities, and the attainment of enlightenment.

### ***Instruction in the Necessity of Diligence through a Presentation of Its Benefits [d]***

**All worldly and transcendent fortune and excellence**

**Are achieved through energetic diligence: develop enduring and enthusiastic diligence.**

All worldly and transcendent fortune and excellence are achieved through the force of physical energy, verbal effort, and mental diligence: develop diligence that is enduringly strong and wholly joyful. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states: What is diligence? It is joy in ennobling acts.

The essence of diligence is joy in ennobling acts. Faith and positive intention are its substance. Increase in mindfulness and meditative states, and so on, are its results. A noble mind free from the three poisons is its quality. Diligence has seven categories: continual physical application to the three trainings, and physical respect for them; continual verbal application to the three trainings, and verbal respect for them; continual mental application to the three trainings, and mental respect for them; thus two for each, plus the diligence of armor. *The*

*Ornament of the Discourses* states: The victors' spiritual heirs have the incomparable diligence of armor and of application.

Diligence subdues your own and others' mental afflictions and causes the attainment of true awakening.

Such diligence places all persons in the three states of awakening.

Diligence guided by wisdom is inexhaustible within any world.

You might think that you cannot possibly be as diligent as the victors' heirs in their conduct, such as cultivating of stores of goodness and wisdom during three incalculable eons or sacrificing your head or limbs, but such an attitude is due to not having examined your own situation. In answer to the first point, during the three incalculable eons that you cultivate stores of goodness and wisdom, sentient beings will continue, as before, to experience the unbearable sufferings of the round of rebirth in general and those of the miserable existences in particular. For the second point, in any event, in one lifetime or another in the future, you will certainly have to experience uncountable sufferings, such as having your head or limbs cut off.

### ***Meditative Stability [5]***

This section has six parts: (1) requisites for the practice of meditative stability, (2) what is detrimental to meditative stability, (3) the faults of companionship, (4) the need to always stay in retreat, (5) the arising of experience and realization in retreat and its benefits, and (6) how to meditate and its qualities.

### ***Requisites for the Practice of Meditative Stability [a]***

**Renunciation of distraction and busyness are requisites for the practice of meditative stability.**

**Sensual pleasures and possessions are impermanent: remain in isolated places.**

All composite phenomena are impermanent, all wealth is unstable, and life is impermanent and pointless; therefore, you should devote yourself to meditation alone in a peaceful forest. *The Discourse of Individual Liberation* states: The learned find within forests

A happy residence for those whose youth has elapsed.

## ***What Is Detrimental to Meditative Stability [b]***

**To accumulate, guard, and search for possessions causes suffering;  
Vanity, craving, and greed lead to the miserable existences.**

Outer material objects provide the source for many corrupting acts: you must search for them, guard them, and be aggressive; they create such things as mental misery, craving, vanity, and deceit. Since they make you plummet to the ground of the miserable existences, you should renounce them. Nagarjuna states: Accumulating, guarding, and searching for wealth entails suffering:

Know it to cause endless trouble.

Those with few desires are praised by all; those without wealth do not have to guard against thieves; those without many preoccupations and whose bodies and minds are relaxed naturally accomplish meditative states and have many positive qualities, such as little deceit. On the other hand, the extent of your wealth equals the extent of your suffering, just as nagas suffer in the measure of their heads. *Letter from a Spiritual Friend* states: Therefore, just as those with many possessions suffer,

Those with few desires do not.  
The supreme nagas' number of heads  
Equals the extent of their suffering.

*The Garland of Jewels* states:

In general, attachment to a man or woman  
Arises from the thought that the body is clean.  
In fact, however,  
There is nothing clean about the body:  
To begin with, in the mouth, spit is rotten, and . . .

## ***The Faults of Companionship [c]***

**Companionship with spiritually immature persons increases wrongdoing  
and clouds your ennobling acts.  
Such persons are difficult to please, have many plans, and foster  
arguments—such friendships are like poisonous snakes.**

Because sentient beings have different minds, it is impossible to please others, no matter what you do. *Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

Sentient beings have various interests,  
Not even the Victor could please them all:  
What can be said about an evil person like me?

The same text states:

If I act in the same way as the spiritually immature,  
I will certainly go to the miserable existences.  
If their examples lead to such misfortune,  
Why should I stay with such persons?

In an instant, they become friends  
And in another moment, foes.  
They're angry at what should make them happy:  
Ordinary individuals are difficult to please!

They become angry at helpful words  
And discourage me from what is useful.  
If I do not listen to them,  
Their anger at me sends them to miserable existences.

Jealous of the higher, competitive with equals,  
Arrogant toward those lower, swollen when praised,  
And incensed when one unpleasant word is spoken:  
When will relationships with the spiritually immature ever be helpful?

### ***The Need to Always Stay in Retreat [d]***

**Until you gain stability, life in your homeland is deceptive.  
Always remain in retreat on a pleasant mountainside.**

Until you gain stability from having your mind and the profound teachings merge in a single flavor, busyness is harmful. Therefore, beginners should live in retreat. *The Jewel Basket Discourse* states: Beginners should stay in retreat, to fully pacify and thoroughly subdue their minds.

*Advice on Retreat* states:

Until I am carried from here  
On a bier lifted by four persons,  
I will remain here in the wilderness,  
Engaged in spiritual practice, absorbed in peace.

*Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* states:

In the forest,  
Birds, deer, and trees don't say unpleasant things.  
When will I ever be able to dwell  
With such pleasant company?

The same text states:

Therefore, in splendidly bright and joyful forests,  
All distraction stilled,  
Happy, carefree,  
And alone shall I dwell.

### ***The Arising of Experience and Realization in Retreat and Its Benefits [e]***

**In retreat, various experiences and realizations naturally arise.  
Seven steps toward retreat surpass an eon of offering to the victors.**

By staying in retreat, various positive qualities of spiritual experience and realization, such as impermanence and disillusionment with the round of rebirth, naturally arise and ennobling spiritual practice increases. *The Discourse Requested by Purna* states: Interest in staying in the mountains or in forests

Increases the source of positive qualities.  
Live in retreat, stay there,  
And thereby completely relinquish attachment to the pleasures of the five senses.  
Thus freed from busyness,  
Conditions that nurture ennobling qualities will not deteriorate.

*The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* states:

Compared to having made during an eon offerings of flowers, incense,

food, and pleasing objects to all buddhas, to take seven steps in the direction of an isolated hermitage with an attitude of complete disillusionment constitutes an infinitely greater collection of goodness: Completely relinquish concern with your life and well-being:

Meditate on the sublime peace of emptiness.  
In diligence, with a thoroughly enthusiastic mind,  
Live in the wilderness like a deer.

### ***How to Meditate and Its Qualities [f]***

**In the main practice of meditative stability, assume the seven-point posture**

**And rest the mind focused on an object, such as the form of the Buddha.**

**Practice the meditative stability of the spiritually immature—**

**The four levels of mental stability and the four formless levels;**

**Full discernment of the meaning; and the sacred noble meditative stability of the blissful buddhas.**

**Know the differences between these three meditative states—**

**For those who have not entered the path, for those who have entered it, and the meditative state of exalted bodhisattvas.**

**The nine ways of placing the mind, the ten discordant influences,**

**The six impediments, the eight remedial mental formations,**

**And three meditative states—magic, warrior's movement, and vajra-like**

—

**Result in the qualities of divine sight, clairvoyance, and miraculous powers.**

On a comfortable seat, assume the seven-point posture of the Buddha Illuminator: your legs in vajra posture; hands in the gesture of settling in evenness; body kept straight; shoulders held neither high nor low; eyes' gaze on the tip of the nose; lips and teeth not touching, and the tip of the tongue joined to the palate; and the chin slightly drawn in toward the neck.

When you take this posture, the movement of your breath is neither loud, nor panting, nor wild: your inhalation and exhalation are even. Focus the mind for a long time, one-pointedly without distraction to other subjects, on any support for meditative stability, such as the Buddha's form. *The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* states: Place the mind fully on the body, of a gold-like color,

Of the Lord of the World.

Those who settle their minds on that focus  
Are called bodhisattvas settled in evenness.

Tranquility meditation is to restrain yourself with the cord of mindfulness within that ongoing state, immersed in constant focus, your attention not stolen by such influences as depression or elation. The definition of insight meditation is complete knowledge of the nature of that ongoing state. *The Cloud of Jewels Discourse* states: Tranquility is the one-pointed mind;

Insight is correct discernment.

Worldly meditative stability practiced by the spiritually immature encompasses the four levels of meditative stability and the states of composure of the four formless realms as experienced by individuals who have not entered the Buddhist path. The presence of both thoughts (and related factors) and examination (and related factors) constitutes the preliminary to the first level of meditative stability. When desire's craving and negative acts' attributes have been surpassed, and when there is thought, examination, joy, and exaltation, this is called "the first level of meditative stability." When there is no thought, just the presence of examination, this is called "the special mind of the first level of meditative stability."

When there is neither thought nor examination, but there is freedom from attachment to the first level of meditative stability and the presence of joy, exaltation, and inner complete lucidity, this is called "the second level of meditative stability." When there is freedom from craving for the second level of meditative stability and the presence of exaltation, equanimity, recollection, and mindfulness, this is called "the third level of meditative stability." When there is freedom from craving for the third level of meditative stability and when there is neither suffering nor exaltation, but there is the presence of equanimity and recollection, this is called "the fourth level of meditative stability." Each of these levels of meditative stability serves as the preliminary for the next.

In the same manner, tranquility meditation on the four states of composure of the formless heavens leads to ordinary existences.

Transcendent meditation has two forms: First, meditative stability that fully discerns the meaning actualizes the path of liberation after you enter the Buddhist path and while you tread the paths of cultivation and application. Second, the noble meditative stability of the blissful buddhas is the uncontaminated meditative stability of exalted bodhisattvas who have reached or

surpassed the first stage of awakening.

The essence of meditation is one-pointed resting within the mind. Its accomplishment depends on the conducive condition of diligence in continual mindfulness. This is the only thing that must be done. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Meditation depends upon inner poise,

Upon mindfulness, and upon diligence.

The nine ways of placing the mind are listed in texts of *The Transcendent Perfection of Sublime Insight* collection:

To place the mind as the Buddha taught, continual placing, repeated placing, firm placing, disciplined placing, calming, complete calming, one-pointed placement, and placement in evenness.

The meaning of these nine terms is as follows: first, to place the mind on a focal point; second, to place it there continually; third, to relinquish distraction when you are aware of it; fourth, once distraction is relinquished, to repeatedly place the mind on the focal point; fifth, to develop joy; sixth, to see the shortcomings of distraction and thus to fully calm unhappiness; seventh, to rid yourself of such things as torpor and sleepiness; eighth, to have no engagement in concepts since you have no obvious intentional effort; and ninth, the mind settles when you make it even.

The ten discordant influences are listed in *The Mindfulness Discourse*:

Child of enlightened heritage! Ten influences hinder the meditative stability and the recitation practice of bodhisattvas. What are they? To listen to news of mundane affairs; to draw pictures; to write poetry; to consider the planets and stars' conjunctions (that is, astrology); ownership of food and possessions; to think of creating wealth, like a female cannibal spirit; to petition a ruler; to not ask questions of the wise; to be invited as a guest to parties; and to associate and live with others.

The six impediments are the following: laziness, forgetting the focus of the meditation, depression, elation, lack of effort, and effort.

The remedies for these, eight mental formations of renunciation, are the following. The first four counteract laziness: faith, directed intent, effort, and becoming well trained. These refer to fully confident faith in the positive



qualities of meditative states; and undertaking heartfelt diligent action. The force of these makes the mind pliable, which in turn leads to attainment of the happiness of a well-trained body and mind, which counteract laziness. Likewise, recollection is the remedy to forgetting the focus of the meditation, mindfulness is the remedy to depression and elation, conscientiousness is the remedy for lack of effort, and equanimity is the remedy for effort. These eight mental formations of renunciation produce effective meditative states and permit the accomplishment of all the positive qualities of miraculous powers. A discourse states: Meditate on the supports of miraculous powers endowed with the eight mental formations of renunciation.

Further, the differences between the magic-like meditative state, the warrior's movement meditative state, and the vajra-like meditative state are described as follows. The first is to gain a perfect meditative state by the sight of and familiarization with all relative phenomena as the eight metaphors for illusion.<sup>33</sup> Thereby, all composite phenomena in general, the five psychophysical aggregations, the stages of the production of existence, and, in particular, the aggregation of consciousness, creator of everything, are seen to resemble a magical illusion in that they lack a source or a fixed location. You integrate into your meditative experience settling in evenness in the sight of phenomena as magic-like appearances. After you master that experience, the meditative state of that sight becomes uninterrupted in postmeditative experience. This completely purifies the obscurations of manifestation: you attain mastery of manifestation at will, like a magician; thus, the name "magic-like meditative state."

Second, the warrior's movement meditative state: when bodhisattvas rest on awakening's tenth stage, the sublime insight of the uncontaminated meditative state's postmeditative state features conduct with acts as prodigious as those of transcendent buddhas. However, since such bodhisattvas neither need to descend into transcendence of sorrow without remainder nor need to rise from a state of cessation, their stage is special and their acts are outstanding compared with bodhisattvas on awakening's lower stages. Further, since their enlightenment produces acts of demonstrating wisdom forms, theirs is the warrior's movement meditative state. For example, when warriors enter battle, an army's four divisions accompany them; wherever a universal monarch goes, seven possessions accompany him. This term (that is, "the warrior's movement meditative state") and its definition relate to a brave warrior who conquers others; thus, wherever bodhisattvas who have reached this meditative state go, awakening's positive qualities follow. Therefore it is called, "the warrior's movement meditative state." The culmination of this meditative state's full

power occurs at awakening's eighth stage. There is also a way to train in this for those on the path of application, as merely conduct based on intention.

Third, the vajra-like meditative state occurs on the path without interruption of renunciation on awakening's ninth stage once you have renounced the worldly meditation of the peak of existence. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states: The path without interruption on awakening's ninth stage Is the vajra-like meditative state.

A vajra can crush all material substance; likewise, this meditative state can crush all subtle or wide-ranging phenomena. Thus it is called "the vajra-like meditative state." *The Compendium of Observed Phenomena* states: Why is this called the vajra-like meditative state? Because it encompasses the path of application [here referring to a set of experiences at awakening's ninth stage] and encompasses the path without interruption. It encompasses the path of application—after it, no obscurations can divide it; all obscurations are destroyed. It encompasses the path without interruption—the knowledge that whatever precedes it is exhausted and the knowledge that those things will not again arise.

From the lesser way's perspective, the meaning of "cannot divide it" (in the last quotation) refers to the recession of the smallest among the faint obscurations of mental afflictions; from the great way perspective, to the recession of the most subtle among the subtle cognitive obscurations. The same text states: Why is this called "the path of application"? Through it mental afflictions are renounced.

On the path of application, once the path's essence has been attained, all obscurations do not return to divide it; rather, it destroys all external obscurations. The vajra-like meditative state that encompasses the path without interruption represents the culmination of wisdom since in the next instant, the path of no further training arises.

The relative proportion of meditative states and sublime insight is stated in *The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse*:

Hearers do not see the transcendent buddhas' enlightened heritage (that is, their buddha nature) due to the disproportionate greatness of their meditative states and the relative faintness of their sublime insight. Although it could be said that the bodhisattvas see it, their sight is indistinct, due to the disproportionate greatness of their sublime insight and the faintness of their meditative states. The

transcendent buddhas see everything since their tranquility and insight are balanced.

The results of meditative stability are stated in *The Concise Discourse of the Perfection of Sublime Insight*:

Through meditative stability, the sense pleasures are disdained and rejected;  
And awareness, clairvoyance, and meditative states are actualized.

Meditative stability's essence is inner containment of the mind. Continual vigilance and diligence cause it. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states:

Quickly realize you are distracted,  
And return again to meditation.

Meditative stability's function is to induce happiness and to provide the basis for the accomplishment of miraculous powers. Its positive qualities are to turn the mind away from sensual pleasures, to pacify the mental afflictions within themselves, to stimulate experience of various gateways to meditative states of joy in staying only in retreat, and to accomplish others' welfare through the dawning of clairvoyance. The six forms of clairvoyance are stated in *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena*: Miracles; hearing; to know others' thoughts;

Knowledge of past lives; death, transmigration, and rebirth;  
And knowledge of cessation—these are preliminary to . . .

These can be explained as knowledge of the domain of miracles; knowledge of divine hearing; knowledge of others' thoughts; knowledge of recollection of past lives; knowledge of death, transmigration, and rebirth; and knowledge of the cessation of contamination. *A Commentary to the Certain Intention* states: Maitreya! Know that the worldly and transcendent ennobling qualities of the hearers, bodhisattvas, and all transcendent buddhas are the result of tranquility and insight meditations.

## ***Sublime Insight [6]***

This section has two parts: (1) a brief presentation of sublime insight and (2) the extensive explanation.

### ***A Brief Presentation of Sublime Insight [a]***

**The view is the self's lack of intrinsic nature, the meaning free from formulation.**

**Sublime insight gained in hearing the doctrine, and in reflection and meditation upon it**

**Establishes that view, overcomes accumulated mental afflictions, and leads to transcendence of existence.**

Hearing the doctrine provides knowledge of the exact nature or abiding state of phenomena. After reflection confirms this knowledge, meditation brings liberation from the ocean of existence. These three stages are considered to be the nature of sublime insight. *The Short Commentary* (by Haribhadra on *The Perfection of Sublime Insight*) states: Sublime insight that has arisen from hearing the doctrine, and from reflection and meditation upon it, or from the preparatory stages, main practice, and conclusion of meditative states . . .

Sublime insight is referred to as insight (literally, “higher vision”): it is considerably higher than the other transcendent perfections. At the stage of ordinary individuals, sublime insight that arises from hearing the doctrine is important, since without such hearing, you are incapable of reflection and meditation. *The Highest Continuity* states: Acts of generosity bring wealth;

Ethical conduct, higher existences; and meditation, relinquishment of mental afflictions.

Sublime insight accomplishes the relinquishment of all obscurations of mental afflictions and cognitive obscurations;

Thus it is supreme. Its primary cause is hearing the doctrine.

The same text states:

Sublime insight is supreme.

Its foundation is hearing the doctrine, thus such hearing is supreme.

### ***The Extensive Explanation of Sublime Insight [b]***

This section has three parts: (1) sublime insight gained from hearing the doctrine, (2) sublime insight gained from reflection, and (3) sublime insight gained from meditation.

### ***Sublime Insight Gained from Hearing the Doctrine [i]***

This section has two parts: (1) explanation of the precious keys to analysis and (2) the treasury of sacred doctrine analyzed.

### ***The Precious Keys to Analysis [A]***

This section also has two parts: (1) explanation of definitive and inductive meanings and (2) explanation of intention and indirect intention, to clarify the two levels of meaning and to understand the nature of correct intention.

### ***Definitive and Inductive Meanings [1]***

**Hearing concerns analysis and what is analyzed.**

**Analysis that reveals the true state is definitive meaning;**

**Analysis that reveals the means to enter the basic character of being is inductive meaning.**

The definitive meaning is this: the nature of all phenomena, the basic space of suchness, is naturally pure. Further, the nondual realization of the luminous nature of mind is naturally pure, without change and transition, beyond coming-into-being, abiding, or cessation—the essence of space. Every part of the canon and treatises that presents this is gathered into the category of texts that present the definitive meaning.

The inductive meaning is that the extent of objective phenomena’s appearances—such as the stages of their coming-into-being, cessation, coming, going, purity, impurity, psychophysical aggregations, sense elements, and sense bases—appear in myriad forms, as in a dream, and are analyzed, elaborated, and taught through systematic reflection and verbalization. The parts of the canon and treatises that teach this are gathered into the category of texts that present the inductive meaning. For example, to proudly reflect upon and to express “The nature of mind is like space” is relative truth; the actual, ultimate basic character of being is the correct, definitive meaning. *The Middle Way Praise of the Inconceivable* states: “Phenomena are empty”:

This is the teaching called the definitive meaning.

What teaches arising, cessation, and so on,  
And the lives of sentient beings, and so on,  
Is inductive meaning; it is relative truth.

*The Discourse Requested by Inexhaustible Intellect* states:

What are the discourses of definitive meaning? What are the discourses of inductive meaning? Discourses taught to induce entry into the path are those of inductive meaning. Discourses taught to induce entry into the result are those of definitive meaning.

In brief, the abiding state of the basic character of being and the discourses that present it are called the definitive meaning and its category of discourses. Instruction to provide means to enter that basic character of being, teachings of the many means to draw sentient beings' minds to it, such as impure delusion and its categories, is called inductive meaning and inductive teaching.

This is called “the mirror to view the teachings” and “the first key to open the teachings.”

### ***Intention and Indirect Intention [2]***

This section has two parts: (1) the four intentions and (2) the four indirect intentions.

#### ***The Four Intentions [a]***

**Intention and indirect intention elucidate these two meanings.**

**Intention comprises intention directed toward evenness, other meanings, Other times, and individuals' attitudes.**

The teachings of four intentions are slightly elaborated, when for specific reasons, the teachings are not expressed explicitly. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: These are known as the four intentions:

Teaching given in consideration of evenness,  
Other meanings, other times,  
And specific individuals.

Of these four categories, the first is intention directed toward evenness. This is illustrated by the statement, “At that time, I was the Transcendent One All-Seeing,” said from the perspective of evenness within the formless body of ultimate enlightenment.

Second, intention directed toward other meanings is illustrated by the statement, “All phenomena lack an essential nature.” Such a statement can be made from the three perspectives of the lack of essential nature (conceptual, relational, and absolute). These three are explained as follows: From the

perspective of the conceptual lack of essential nature, the meaning of the statement is that attributes lack an essential nature, in that ultimately they have no definite existence.

From the perspective of the relational lack of essential nature, the meaning of the statement is that coming-into-being lacks an essential nature. Four propositions (or “four limits”) prove that coming-into-being does not exist: Coming-into-being does not arise of itself, since coming-into-being and a moment of coming-into-being contradict substance. Coming-into-being does not arise from an other, since examination of a distinct, separate other shows that it does not exist. That coming-into-being arises from both contradicts substance; thus, it does not exist. That coming-into-being arises without a cause is impossible.

The extent to which coming-into-being, and so on, (in other words, abiding and cessation) appear, reflects the appearances due to interdependent causation, as in a dream or a magical display—appearances within nonexistence.

From the perspective of the absolute lack of essential nature, the meaning of the statement is that the ultimate lacks an essential nature. This is the ultimate, since it indicates the lack of essence of such formulations as impurity within that which personifies the ultimate. *A Commentary to the Certain Intention* states: I stated that all phenomena lack an essential nature with a threefold intention: attributes lack an essential nature, coming-into-being lacks an essential nature, and the ultimate lacks an essential nature.

Third, intention directed toward other times can be illustrated by the statement, “You will attain enlightenment by just remembering the name Buddha Stainless Moonlight.” Although that alone will not bring enlightenment, based on that significant preliminary accumulation, you can attain enlightenment at another time.

Fourth, intention directed toward individuals’ attitudes is illustrated by the teaching that disparages ethical conduct and praises generosity, directed toward certain individuals who hold the view that values ethical conduct above all.

### ***The Four Indirect Intentions [b]***

**Indirect intention comprises indirect intention in respect to entry into the teaching, characteristics, Antidotes, and interpretation.**

To have another person comprehend the correct path or meaning based on that

individual's personal preferences, a teaching can employ some terms or synonyms consistent with common usage but inconsistent with their true meaning. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: The four indirect intentions—  
In respect to entry,

In respect to attributes,  
In respect to antidotes,

And in respect to interpretation—  
Are used in relation to the hearers, for the essential nature,  
To subdue faults,  
And to express the profound.

Thus, four are mentioned. First, indirect intention in respect to entry is employed for some persons of the lesser way's hearer propensity who do not enter the great way due to anxiety concerning the subject of emptiness. For them, it can be said, "Form exists." The auditor then enters the great way having understood that form ultimately exists, whereas the speaker's consideration was that appearances exist like appearances in a dream.

Second, indirect intention in respect to attributes is illustrated by the statement, "All phenomena lack an essential nature," made to foster understanding of the abiding state of the lack of an essential nature. The three perspectives on the lack of essential nature—conceptual, relational, and absolute—have been presented above.

Third, indirect intention in respect to antidotes is illustrated by the occasion when the Buddha understood that a person thought Shakyamuni's body small, or his life span short, and so on, and thus inferior to other teachers. He said, "At that time, I was the Transcendent Buddha Illuminator." The person hearing this understood that enlightenment's form bodies were equal, whereas the speaker's intention was that he and other buddhas have equal cultivation of goodness and wisdom, attainment of the body of ultimate enlightenment, and service to beings. *The Treasury of Observed Phenomena* states: All buddhas have equal cultivation of goodness and wisdom,

Equal attainment of the body of ultimate enlightenment, and equal activity  
to serve beings,  
But not equal life span,  
Family, or physical size.



Fourth, indirect intention in respect to interpretation is illustrated by the example of statements that are extremely difficult to understand, made to correct the fault of those who think, “This teaching is inferior because it’s easy to understand.” For example, *The Collection of Sayings* states: Who kills his or her father and mother;

And destroys the ruler, the two pure ones,  
And the whole surrounding land—  
That person becomes purity itself.

This statement uses parents as a metaphor for the mental formations of craving and grasping toward the round of rebirth. “Ruler” is a metaphor for the storehouse of all dualistic experience, the support or foundation for various habitual tendencies. “The two pure ones” is a metaphor for brahmins, whose view contends that the collection of impermanent phenomena is a self; and monastic practitioners, whose view values ethical conduct and discipline above all else. “The whole surrounding land” is a metaphor for the eight bands of consciousness, including the inner sense bases and dualistic clinging. “To destroy them and thus become pure” is used as a metaphor for enlightenment.

These cases of intention and indirect intention constitute the second key to viewing the Buddha’s excellent speech. Since there are various circumstances—grammar, meaning, intention, and purpose—to be taken into consideration for a complete analysis of any specific statement, it is extremely important to know how to analyze discourses and tantras with these analytic methods.

### ***The Treasury of Sacred Doctrine Analyzed [B]***

This section has two parts: (1) the two truths and (2) a presentation of the nature of all phenomena as interdependent arising.

#### ***The Two Truths [1]***

This section also has two parts: (1) a presentation of relative truth and (2) a presentation of ultimate truth.

#### ***Relative Truth [a]***

**What is analyzed—phenomena—reflects either relative or ultimate truth.**

**Relative truth, the appearing state, is inaccurate or accurate.**

**Inaccurate grasping of inaccurate appearances is misleading relative truth.**

**Correct relative truth does not deviate from the result: it is the wisdom of the path's basis.**

**It does not deviate from the attainment of the result, the form bodies of enlightenment, with their wisdoms.**

*The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* states:

The instructions taught by the buddhas  
Are correctly founded on the two truths—  
Worldly, relative truth;  
And sacred, ultimate truth.

If what are called “phenomena” are classified only based on their nature, they have two categories: the way they appear, relative truth; and the way they are, ultimate truth. Moreover, within the category of the relative way things appear, there are two categories: in delusion and without delusion.

First, relative truth in delusion can be defined as follows: While you are an ordinary sentient being, the nature of language, concepts, and expression arises in its totality as appearances within delusion, grasping within delusion, and consciousness within delusion. Everything within this framework is deceptive, unreal, transitory, and suffering, and appears as the objective domain of a deluded person's rational dualistic mind. Since it is a framework of language, concepts, and expression, even the Buddha conceived or expressed by sentient beings' rational dualistic mind reflects only a construct designated by that outlook. Because such experience is not based in the ultimate, it is called deluded.

In those circumstances, since appearances and awareness can sometimes appear as either truth or falsehood, the terms “correct relative truth” and “misleading relative truth” are used. Correct relative truth has these characteristics: since it corresponds to appearances, it is functional; it has arisen through causes; if examined, it dwells apart from true existence; and it is collectively perceived. It can be subsumed as earth, water, fire, air, space, and personal indwelling consciousness.

Misleading relative truth is not functional, such as an apparition of two moons. *The Two Truths* states:

Although their appearances resemble one another,  
The distinction between correct And incorrect relative truth

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CORRECT AND INCORRECT RELATIVE TRUTH  
Is made according to whether or not they are functional.

Second, relative truth without delusion has two parts: The first does not deviate from the result of the spiritual path—it is the wisdom of the spiritual path’s foundation, along with its positive qualities. Although progress on this path is in itself impermanent, it is called “without delusion” since such progress leads to the ground of the basic character of being. *A Commentary to “The Highest Continuity”* states: All truths of the spiritual path are composite;

All composite phenomena are deceptive.

This statement is made from the perspective of the necessary change and progress on the spiritual path, however such truth is different from other composite phenomena and kinds of deception.

The second aspect of relative truth without delusion is attainment without delusion of the spiritual path’s result, enlightenment’s form bodies, with their wisdoms, that abide in Highest Pure Land. These are without change or transition, permanent, and ever-present treasures of precious qualities, the entire range of the forms of perfect mastery gained from such prodigious appearances as sacred circles of wisdom deities. Although from the perspective of appearances this is called relative, since it is inseparable from the body of ultimate enlightenment, it remains without change or transition, like space.

Enlightenment’s manifest wisdom bodies appear spontaneously in the experience of beings to be guided due to their stores of positive karma and due to the buddhas’ nondual compassion. Nevertheless, although in the outlook of those to be guided, such manifestations seem to change, ultimately no such change transpires. The reflection of the image of the moon on water can seem to change due to conditions within the container, yet that image of the moon has no existent intrinsic attributes and, for this vital reason, does not change. Likewise, the wisdom bodies that guide beings appear, yet have no existent intrinsic attributes. The three wisdom bodies share the same essence without having been separated from nor joined to it, and the first among these, the body of ultimate enlightenment, is without change or transition.

### ***Ultimate Truth [b]***

**Ultimate truth is the true state of the basic character of being,**

Ultimate truth is the abiding nature of the basic character of being: from the

beginning, all phenomena of the round of rebirth and transcendent states lack an essential nature; they exceed the domain of thought and expression. Realized or not, that nature cannot be elucidated by the rational dualistic mind and cannot be affirmed to be either unified or separate. Appearing existence—all the round of rebirth and transcendent states—can be labeled as separate phenomena with such qualities as good or bad, yet everything has the primordial nature of space, purity. Thus, this transcends the domains of intellectual categorization, such as “pure, impure, both, neither, or very pure.” *The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* states: Everything is pure, impure,

Both pure and impure,  
Neither pure nor impure: That all such categories are impure  
Is what the Buddha taught.

The outlook of the basic character of being surpasses all philosophical tenets, since within recognition of the essence of being, there is nothing that ever existed. Even if a tenet, such as “It is like this!” were proposed, it would fall into the extremes of eternalism or nihilism, such as the view of an existent self. *The Sixty Reasons* states: With a tenet that substance exists,

One holds a fearful and untenable view,  
Source of desire and anger,  
And which leads to dispute.

It is said that no fault accrues in not holding a formal tenet in relation to the basic character of being, as within such a position there is no domain for tenets, no holder of them, nor anything to be grasped. *The Refutation of Dispute* states: However, when I claim to have some tenet

I have that fault,  
Whereas when I hold no tenet,  
I am entirely faultless.

Therefore, all phenomena are pure in their abiding state or in their naturally pure essence: deep and calm, free from all formulations of philosophical tenets, devoid of premises. This is known as “the originally pure basic space.”

To sum up in brief, impure phenomena within delusion are relative truth, like those in a dream. They are merely untrue, deceptive, experienced by the spiritually immature, beguiling, and disordered, without an essence or graspable

facet. The pure nature of reality is the abiding state of luminous wisdom—profound, peaceful, free from formulations, changeless, ever present—the inconceivable nature of reality.

Relative truth provides the context for the cultivation of goodness, accumulated as in a dream or a magical display. Ultimate truth provides the context for the cultivation of wisdom, meditation on the meaning of the nature of reality, like space. These two truths and cultivations actualize the results of the spiritual path, the wisdom bodies that have form and the body of ultimate enlightenment.

This concludes instruction that presents the two truths, the first treasury of the Buddha's doctrine.

### ***The Nature of All Phenomena as Interdependent Arising [2]***

This section has three parts: (1) the interdependent origination of the basic character of being, (2) the interdependent origination of the round of rebirth, and (3) the interdependent origination of transcendence of sorrow.

#### ***The Interdependent Origination of the Basic Character of Being [a]***

**Subjective experience, the nature of reality, and the basic character of being arise interdependently.**

*The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* states:

There are no phenomena  
That do not arise through interdependent origination.  
Thus, there are no phenomena  
That are not empty.

The nature of reality, or the nature of appearing phenomena of the round of rebirth and of transcendent states, has not come from anywhere, does not go anywhere, and does not abide anywhere. Since subjective experience as well is based in this true nature, even at moments when subjective experience seems to arise or cease, it is free from all extremes that can be formulated concerning arising, abiding, or ceasing—this is the nature of the middle way, so it is said. *The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* states: Whatever has arisen through interdependent origination

Is said to be empty.  
Teachings based on that fact  
Constitute the path of the middle way.

Therefore, all facets of impure appearances and the consciousness that grasps them are like strands of hair that seem to appear to the blurred vision of those who have a phlegm ailment: from that very moment of their appearance, they do not exist. Like a dream's deluded perceptions that do not exist while falling asleep or while waking up, but only in between, the present deluded perception experienced by the six kinds of beings does not exist in the original nature of mind's innate constituent enlightenment, a primordially pure essence; nor do they exist at the moment of the original total purification of delusion, enlightenment. However, in this state in between, these appearances are nonexistent apparitions; their coming-into-being, abiding, and cessation do not exist. Therefore, since the essence of the nature of reality has neither coming-into-being nor destruction, from the past to the present, and into the future, it does not change. "Deluded perception" is nothing but a name or a label, like "flowers in space" or "a barren woman's child"—such perceptions do not exist in the basic character of being and once you realize their nature, you gain liberation.

Any and all phenomena at any time arise interdependently—they do not come into being, cease, come, or go; they are not single, separate, finite, or permanent. Realize phenomena as having the nature of the complete pacification of all formulation. *The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* states: Whoever expresses the doctrine of peace,

Interdependent origination—  
Unceasing, not coming into being,  
Not finite, not permanent,  
Not coming, not going,  
Not single, not separate,  
The total pacification of formulation  
As taught by the perfect Buddha—  
To that holy one, I pay homage.

In brief, the primordial purity of the nature of all phenomena is what is called "the interdependent origination of the basic character of being," or "the interdependent origination of the ground of being."

## ***The Interdependent Origination of the Round of Rebirth [b]***

**The outer and inner phenomena of the round of rebirth arise interdependently.**

The outer semblance of appearances appears in the domain of the mind with the forms of mountains, walls, earth, water, fire, air, and space. We can also consider the example of what are known as creations of the elements or elements' forms: such things as cotton, the manufacture of threads, weaving, and coarse cloth are material appearances created in similar or dissimilar forms through the interplay of causes and conditions. All such coming into being is called "outer interdependent origination," since produced substances arise based on one another and because they appear outwardly as inert form.

The arising in the cycle of the twelve links of causation from ignorance to formations, and so on until aging and death, is referred to as inner interdependent origination. *The Journey to Langka Discourse* states: Akshayamati! A pot emerges from lumps of clay, a blanket from thick threads, coarse cloth from thread, sprouts from seeds, and butter from milk and human effort, such as churning. Likewise, Akshayamati, in outer interdependent origination, a latter event arises from a former one. Inner interdependent origination is as follows: The production of these phenomena and others from ignorance and craving are what is given the name "inner interdependent origination."

Among the twelve links of interdependent origination (or "causation"), the first is ignorance, to not know correctly the abiding nature—the primordially pure nature of reality, the essence of the basic character of being—and the phenomena that represent it. This ignorance starts the chain of the cause and effect of the round of rebirth; thus it is related to formations. Further, formations are three kinds of acts, by the body, voice, and mind obscured by ignorance—ennobling acts consistent with goodness, the ten corrupting acts, and acts of neutral value. Ennobling acts lead to higher realms; corrupting acts to miserable existences; neutral acts, which have traits similar to corrupting acts, accompany them both.

Consciousness is the knowing aspect of mind that develops within any kind of sentient being into which a being's formative karma has entered, whose appearing aspect corresponds to those acts. When consciousness entered that new life as a being, it entered at the conjoining of the parents' white and red essences, and the being's energy and mind. Together they create the four name-

based psychophysical aggregations—sensation, perception, formative factors, and consciousness. Form arises from the creation of the aggregation of form. Together, these five are called “name and form.” Further, name and form are created when consciousness enters the mother’s womb.

Form gradually develops in embryonic stages (such as the *mer-mer* period) to a complete body. During that period, the six sense bases arise—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mental faculty. From the meeting of sense objects, senses, and mental activity, contact arises. For example, just as contact arises when form, the eyes’ senses, and visual consciousness meet at the eyes, three things—name, form, and consciousness—in the mother’s womb create contact; and contact, sensation. From contact with pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral objects, sensations of pleasure, pain, or indifference arise.

Sensation induces craving: sensation of the sweet taste of sugar induces craving for the pleasure of its delicious taste; unpleasant sensations create the desire to avoid them and create the craving for pleasure; neutral sensations create craving in equanimity. Craving has four aspects: concordant, discordant, neutral, and appropriation to yourself—grasping. Grasping leads to existence: the five psychophysical aggregations—form, sensation, perception, formative factors, and consciousness—arise. These aggregations are existence and give rise to it. In existence, taking birth comes first and, in the future, rebirth. Birth leads to youth, aging, and the cessation of life, death.

From the perspective that among these links of causation the former leads to the latter, they are called “arising from causes.” From the perspective of development of the collection of the six elements—inner earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness—they are called “arising from inner conditions.” This explanation has been given from the perspective of the great way.

### **The Links of Interdependent Origination according to the Hearers’ Way**

According to the hearers’ way, the links of interdependent origination are explained as follows: Ignorance is the psychophysical aggregations that arise due to the previous life’s engagement in the mental afflictions. Formations are the five aggregations due to the previous lifetime’s accumulation of karma. Consciousness is the five aggregations at the moment of the ensuing entry into the womb. Name and form are the five aggregations during the embryonic stages, such as the *mer-mer* period, until the five sense organs protrude on the embryo’s body. The six senses are the stage between the time the sense organs form and the time they can experience sense objects. Contact is the five aggregations from the time sensorial awareness functions until pleasure and pain are distinguished. Sensation is the five aggregations from the time pleasure and



pain are distinguished until you are capable of sexual intercourse. Craving is the five aggregations from the time you are capable of sexual intercourse until you strive for the object of your desire. Grasping is the five aggregations at the time that object is striven for. Existence is the five aggregations when karma is accumulated. Birth is the five aggregations when the next life begins with the exit from a mother's womb. Aging and death are four stages—name and form, grasping, craving, and sensation—related to that new life.

### **Completion of the Twelve Links**

These twelve links of interdependent origination are completed in two ways: instantaneously and continually. From the perspective of instantaneous completion, the following example can be used: at the time of killing based on yourself and another, ignorance is to perform that act of wrongdoing due to lack of knowledge of the time of death. Formation is to begin the act based on that ignorance. Consciousness is your dualistic awareness during the act. You and the other being possess name and form and the six senses. Contact is to strike the other with a weapon, to produce your own happiness and the other's suffering. The happiness and suffering that then arise constitute sensation. Craving is to extend the duration of your enjoyment beyond the completion of the act. Grasping is to engage with the next sensation that arises. Existence is the five aggregations at that point. Birth is the present and future that arise from it. The aging and death of those aspects constitute the completion of the action. Thus all twelve links are complete in one instant.

There are three instants: the culminant instant, when consciousness clearly apprehends an object; an instant made up of one hundred and twenty moments of such a consciousness; and the instant of the completion of an act, the time from the act's beginning until its completion.

Second, from the perspective of their continual completion, the twelve links of interdependent origination are explained as follows: Those of the mind only school believe that one cycle of cause and effect is completed over two lifetimes. During the past life, six causes are completed, after which during this lifetime six results arise. This process continues to the next life, and so on. The six causes are ignorance, formations, consciousness, craving, grasping, and existence. Their six results are the remaining six of the twelve.

According to the hearers, one cycle of cause and effect is completed over three lifetimes: Based on the causes of ignorance and formations during the past life, the results of the next five links—consciousness and the others—arise during this life. Craving, grasping, and existence during this life produce, through cause and effect, the two results of birth, and aging and death, in a future

life.

## ***The Interdependent Origination of the Transcendence of Sorrow [c]***

**To guide beings, the buddhas demonstrated the interdependent origination of the transcendence of sorrow.**

This section has two parts: the spiritual path and the result. In relation to the path, ignorance is the source of the twelve links of interdependent origination that unfold in sequence to produce the round of rebirth. The wisdom of awareness counteracts ignorance. Once your stream of being has become familiar with sublime insight born from hearing the teachings, reflection, and meditation, this counteracts the primal source, ignorance. Based on this reversal of ignorance, the other links based on it are gradually reversed. Once the cause of entering existence is thus exhausted, you pass beyond the confines of the round of rebirth. *The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* states: If ignorance ceases,

Formations will not arise.  
To make ignorance cease,  
Meditate on the nature of reality with this knowledge.  
If a link of causation ceases,  
It will not manifest.  
That which is only a heap of misery  
Will thus completely cease.

Practitioners who yearn for freedom do not accumulate acts and karma that create the round of rebirth. By not so accumulating those acts and causes, the result is that they will no longer be reborn within the round of rebirth, since formations cease.

Second, the result of the Buddhist path is enlightenment and service for sentient beings, performed as in a dream or a magical display.

Thus, know that all phenomena can be synthesized within interdependent origination. Once you thus gain comprehension of the sacred meaning of this truth, you will transcend suffering. *The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* states: Those who see interdependent origination

See the truth of suffering, origination,  
Cessation.

And the path.

This concludes instruction that presents the second treasury of the Buddha's supreme excellent speech, since all instructions are gathered within it. Among subjects to understand, these instructions are extremely precious.

### ***Sublime Insight Gained from Reflection [ii]***

**To accept and nurture fortunate disciples, reflect upon the words and meanings taught.**

**Examine the scripture and reasoning used in debate to stem misleading belief systems.**

**Examine your experience in reading the composition of extensive or brief clear and profound texts.**

**Use thorough analysis to arrive at certainty in any subject.**

To be able to accept and nurture fortunate disciples, reflect assiduously upon each word and meaning taught in any text until they become easy for you to understand. Become acutely accomplished in the scripture and reasoning used in debates to stem challenges based upon misleading belief systems. Examine purely every form of challenge and thus become free of any anxiety in relation to your understanding. In relation to written composition, whatever its form—the magnificent linguistic form of an extensive presentation or a brief summary—repeatedly examine and do not discard from your mind their depth and utter clarity, and your experience of them based on such facets as their subject, body, or literary embellishments. If you consistently do so and learn from their examples, you will surely be able to succeed at any project you consider, be it spiritual or secular. *The Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* states: After having become adorned with sacred hearing of the teachings,

Definitely develop the sublime insight gained from reflection.

### ***Sublime Insight Gained from Meditation [iii]***

This section has eight parts: (1) like a dream, (2) like a magical display, (3) like an optical illusion, (4) like a mirage, (5) like the reflection of the moon on water, (6) like an echo, (7) like a city of spirits, and (8) like an emanation.

#### ***Like a Dream [A]***

**As in a dream, phenomena have not come into being:  
In the sleep of ignorance, dreams of deluded perceptions arise.  
Without clinging to the myriad objects, subjects, and collections of  
thoughts that appear,  
Meditate that they are like dreams.**

Like the appearances in a dream, all phenomena of the round of rebirth and transcendent states have never come into being. Oppressed by the sleep of ignorance, the six kinds of beings, in the dreams of their deluded perceptions, experience the arising of myriad forms of happiness or suffering. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states: Subhuti! All phenomena are like dreams or a magical display. The transcendence of sorrow is also like a dream or a magical display. If there are any phenomena superior to the transcendence of sorrow, they too are like a dream or a magical display.

*The Discourse of the Wise and the Foolish* states:

Beings are like a dream;  
Likewise, karma is like a dream;  
Those who undertake acts  
Are all like a dream.

*The Discourse Requested by Achintyaprabhasa* states:

At any time, all myriad phenomena  
Have, in their nature, never come into being.  
Like an immaterial dream,  
They are insubstantial.

Therefore, what you experience as outer (synthesized as the objects of the five senses, including mountains, valleys, towns, and sentient beings) and as inner (your body, senses, sensorial consciousnesses, and discursive recollection and awareness) are all the appearances of dreams. Like dreams, apart from their appearance, they at no point exist; they are not real. Think this from the bottom of your heart and meditate on this without a moment's distraction. Wherever you go, wherever you stay, whoever your companions are, whatever you eat, whatever you say, whatever thoughts arise, whatever you do, whatever appearances arise, think at that very moment, "This is really a dream; the essence of a dream is unreal." Meditate until even in dreams all phenomena arise

as a dream. *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states: Even in dream, to see all phenomena

As a dream  
Is a sign of arriving at the peak.

*The Ornament of the Appearance of Wisdom Discourse* states:

Manjushri! In dreams, appearances do not exist. Likewise, all phenomena appear but do not exist.

A discourse states:

Even the source of ennobling qualities is like a dream or like a magical display. Even awakening's thirty-seven facets are like a dream or a magical display. Even the wisdom of complete omniscience is like a dream or a magical display.

### ***Like a Magical Display [B]***

**As in a magical display, phenomena do not cease.  
There are four modes of magic—natural magic,  
Impure magic, skillful magic, and wisdom magic.  
Meditate having reached definite understanding through the examples of  
magic.**

As in a magical display, all phenomena are naturally unceasing. To purify the deluded perceptions of dualistic experience—the six kinds of beings' solidified attachment to the reality of their magical cities—you must know the four modes of magic. First, natural magic is the basic space of the basis of purification—buddha nature itself. At the time of experience of yourself as a sentient being, this is the experience of your innate constituent enlightenment as impure; at the time of experience of yourself as a bodhisattva, the experience of it as impure and pure; and at the time of enlightenment, the experience of it as very pure. Thus three designations are given to this constituent, yet in its essence there is no change, either positive or negative. *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse* states: Kashyapa! That naturally pure basic space is neither the round of rebirth nor is it transcendence, since it is insubstantial.

Second, impure magic refers to the stains to be purified. These are the round

of rebirth's deluded perceptions that arise in the forms of beings and their worlds; and as the results—various forms of suffering—of deluded thought, karma, and mental afflictions.

Third, skillful magic that purifies refers to the remedial path, the completion of the twofold cultivation on four spiritual paths of attainment—three stages of the path of cultivation (higher, middle, and lesser), four stages of the path of application, the path of seeing, and the path of meditation.

Fourth, ultimate wisdom magic refers to the culminant path of no further training, the attainment of the victors' three wisdom bodies endowed with enlightenment's five wisdoms and spontaneous enlightened activity.

In the metaphor of magic, horses, oxen, and so on appear from the primary cause of the basis of delusion—wood and stones—transformed by a secondary cause, awareness mantras that obscure the visual consciousness of onlookers.<sup>34</sup> The deluded perceptions, the forms of horses or oxen seen, arise self-manifest from a collection of interdependent conditions. This resembles deluded perceptions within the round of rebirth. *The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* states: In the midst of many persons,

A magician manifests forms—  
Horses, oxen, carts, and various birds—  
Which, although unreal, appear in various ways:  
Likewise, know all phenomena to be like that!

*The Discourse Requested by the Good Magician* states:

Karma's magical emanation  
Is the six kinds of beings.  
The magical emanation of conditions  
Is a reflection in a mirror and other examples.  
The magical emanation of Buddhism  
Is the circle of monks around me.  
I am perfect magic,  
The noncomposite body of ultimate enlightenment.

Meditation that whatever you see or hear, and all you recall or think, is a self-manifest magical display constitutes a state without discursive thought. All appearances of anger or desire, friends or foes, happiness or suffering, outer objective appearances or inner subjective perceptions arise from conditions and are therefore magical. They are unreal and deceptive, thus magical. They appear

without existing, thus magical. Thinking this, know magic to be the natural radiance of emptiness. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states: All phenomena are like a magical display: they naturally do not come into being, they are unceasing, and they do not draw near.

*The Irreversible Wheel Discourse* states:

All phenomena are like a magical display;  
Even awakening is like a magical display.

### ***Like an Optical Illusion [C]***

**As in an optical illusion, phenomena do not draw near.  
As in an optical illusion, form, sound, smell, taste, touch, thoughts, and  
phenomena  
Are completely devoid of reality.  
Develop skill in this and settle free from discursive thought or  
recollection.**

All phenomena—the six sensory objects, such as form; the six sensory organs, such as the eyes; the six collections of consciousness, such as visual consciousness; and labeled appearances—are like an optical illusion, without reality. Within that ongoing state, settle without discursive thought or recollection. A discourse states: Any mental activity is a corrupting act; lack of mental activity is an ennobling act. When nothing is recollected and you bring nothing to mind, this is the recollection of enlightenment.

*The Ornament of the Appearance of Wisdom Discourse* states:

Manjushri! In an optical illusion, appearances lack an intrinsic nature.  
Likewise, all phenomena appear but lack an intrinsic nature.

*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

The essence of the optical illusion of all phenomena lacks an intrinsic nature; from the start, phenomena are essentially empty.

The same text states:

Subhuti! As in an optical illusion, all phenomena naturally do not draw

near.

### ***Like a Mirage [D]***

**As in a mirage, phenomena do not go:**

**They don't arise, cease, or remain, like a mirage.**

**Regard joy or pain, affirmation or denial, and dualistic clinging to be like a mirage.**

**Settle free from hope or fear, and from the mind's outward or inward movement.**

At the very moment various forms appear, their essence does not exist. This applies to all that seems to come into being, such as worlds forming in the outer universe; flowers and other growing things; and sentient beings and all their discursive thoughts. From the very moment they appear to come into being, they do not. The domain of their coming into being and the awareness in which they appear to have come into being are in essence nonexistent.

Thus, likewise, at the very moment that things appear to abide, vividly and solidly existent, that which abides and the experiencer of that abiding do not exist. At the very moment when worlds seem to be destroyed and become empty, or when sentient beings seem to leave their mass of discursive thought (i.e., when they die), there is neither cessation nor going. Know that appearances have no intrinsic nature, like water seen in a mirage. *The Ornament of the Appearance of Wisdom Discourse* states: Manjushri! A mirage is an appearance devoid of an intrinsic nature. Likewise, all phenomena are appearances that lack an intrinsic nature.

*The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* states:

Just as in the half-light of evening,  
Travelers parched with thirst  
See a body of water in a mirage,  
Know all phenomena to be like that!

*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

Subhuti! As in a mirage, all phenomena primordially do not go.

With the thought, "These appearances are a mirage; they have no intrinsic nature at all," do not let the mind move outward in interest or turn inward within



one-pointed self-absorption. Relax within your ongoing state and repeatedly sustain recognition of the natural radiance of awareness.

### ***Like the Reflection of the Moon on Water [E]***

**Like the reflection of the moon on water, phenomena are free from nonexistence:**

**While they appear, they are empty; while they are empty, they appear.**

**Know all clinging to the reality of phenomena—appearances, sound, thought, clinging, existence, nonexistence—**

**To be just the empty appearance of a reflection.**

The image of the moon on water has no substantiality nor characteristics that are proper to itself. It transcends any extreme of existence or nonexistence, yet it appears unimpededly to the eyes. Likewise, this pure nature of mind has neither substantiality nor attributes, and it transcends any extreme formulation of being or nonbeing. All forms that appear, sounds that reverberate, and thoughts and recollection that gather or disperse are like the moon on water, appearances without an existent intrinsic nature. Settle in evenness within the meaning of this. *The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* states: At night, images of the moon naturally appear

On the surface of untroubled water.

That reflection is an empty collection of conditions: it has no core.

Likewise, know all phenomena to be like this.

*The Ornament of the Appearance of Wisdom Discourse* states:

Manjushri! The reflection of the moon on water is an appearance devoid of an intrinsic nature. Likewise, all phenomena are appearances without an intrinsic nature.

*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

Subhuti! Like the reflection of the moon on water, all phenomena appear yet do not subsequently end.

### ***Like an Echo [F]***

**As in an echo, phenomena are free of permanence:**

**All sounds, of praise or of blame, pleasant or unpleasant,  
Have neither basis nor source, and not the slightest intrinsic  
nature.**

**Meditate that whatever appears is like an echo.**

All phenomena, like an echo, have no permanence. The melody of an echo can have seeming existence due to conditions, although there is nothing whatsoever between a cliff and a person hearing the echo. Likewise, you can examine in detail coarse outer objective phenomena and inner recollection and thought: you can try to examine an identifiable essence, shape, or color in subtle phenomena, yet you will not find any, not even the slightest. They are like space, ineffable and inconceivable.

All sounds, of praise or of blame, pleasant or unpleasant, have no basis or source, and not the least intrinsic nature. Meditate that whatever appears is like an echo. *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse* states: Kashyapa! Any bodhisattva who realizes that all phenomena are like an echo attains forbearance related to sound. That is to say, those who do not take pleasure in their own sound, have no aversion to others' sounds, and have no fright toward hearing the sound of instructions on emptiness have attained the first forbearance related to sound.

*The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* states:

People sitting in front of cliffs  
Sing, talk, laugh, and cry,  
Creating the conditions for echoes to arise,  
Yet the sounds of their echoes never move from the melody of the sounds  
that create them.  
Likewise, know all phenomena to be like that.

*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

Subhuti! All phenomena, like an echo, naturally do not last.

***Like a City of Spirits [G]***

**As in an ephemeral city of spirits, phenomena are not multiple.  
From the moment such a city appears on the plain at twilight, it has no  
intrinsic nature.**

**Likewise, delusion's perceptions within the round of rebirth are unreal.  
Familiarize yourself with the meaning of that.**

As in an ephemeral city of spirits, all phenomena are not separate from one another: on a plain at twilight, a city filled with people appears but from the moment they are seen, the city and the people within it do not exist. Although beings appear based on that environment, from the moment they appear, they lack an intrinsic nature. Since apart from the mind's deluded perceptions, appearances do not in fact exist, they are liberated, since the mind has no intrinsic nature. Since the nature of deluded perceptions is empty, there is no need to deliberately renounce those perceptions. Settle without effort in supreme evenness. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states: Subhuti! Since all phenomena do not abide, have no foundation, and naturally have not come into being, they are like an ephemeral city of spirits.

A discourse states:

Composite phenomena are like an ephemeral city of spirits.

*The Ornament of the Appearance of Wisdom Discourse* states:

Manjushri! An ephemeral city of spirits appears without having any existence. Likewise, all phenomena appear without existing.

*The Journey to Langka Discourse* states:

These three planes of existence are like an ephemeral city of spirits  
Or a body of water in a mirage:  
Know the sight of them to be mistaken and settle without discursive  
thought.

### ***Like an Emanation [H]***

**As in an emanation, phenomena are not singular:  
Meditate that what arises—the environment, beings, karma,  
Mental afflictions, suffering, the stages and paths of awakening, and any  
appearance—  
Has in itself no inherent existence.**

As in an emanation, all phenomena are not singular: from the moment of their appearance, they are empty and transcend the extremes of existence or nonexistence. Thus all appearances—the totality of worlds and beings that are synthesized into the five elements, karma, mental afflictions, suffering, as well

as awakening's paths and stages—have in themselves not an iota's worth of inherent existence. Therefore, settle in evenness without grasping on to them. *The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states: Subhuti! Since all phenomena are not dual, nor singular, they are like an emanation.

*The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eighty Thousand Stanzas* states:

Child of the gods! Since all phenomena neither draw near nor go, they are like an emanation.

*The Ornament of the Appearance of Wisdom Discourse* states:

Manjushri! An emanation has an appearance without it existing. Likewise, all phenomena have an appearance without existing.

Further, to achieve the positive qualities of the Buddhist path, it is not sufficient to think of doing something or to know something. You must meditate. The faults of not meditating are stated in *The Flower Ornament Discourse*: Not meditating on the instructions

Is like a skilled boatman  
Who frees many persons,  
But drowns.

Not meditating on the instructions  
Is like a deaf musician  
Who delights many persons,  
But cannot hear.

Not meditating on the instructions  
Is like thirsty persons  
Who see or hear water,  
Yet do nothing to relieve their thirst.

As described, there are three kinds of sublime insight. The essence of sublime insight is the realization of what must be known. The primary cause of sublime insight is based on meditative states. Its result is liberation from mental afflictions. Its function is the eradication of doubt through a pure lifestyle and correct spiritual instruction. Its quality is that it has you reach the city of freedom. Its categories are threefold: sublime insight gained through hearing the

teachings, reflection, and meditation, or sublime insight gained through the introduction, main practice, and conclusion of meditative states.

Those endowed with sublime insight will quickly reach liberation. *The Exalted Discourse That Presents the Design of Armor* states:

Those who completely accomplish with supreme application and diligence this instruction of no coming-into-being, no ceasing, and very profound emptiness will rapidly become skilled in the basic space of phenomena of the bodhisattvas. They will gain excellent memory and confidence, will attain the complete collection of the unsurpassable instructions, will be praised by the honored buddhas, and will dwell in pure ethical conduct. They will attain pure patience, unsurpassable diligence, nonreferential meditative stability, and supreme sublime insight, and will quickly reach manifest complete enlightenment. Once they sit at Heart of Awakening (that is, Bodhgaya), the four great divine kings will raise a parasol and request from them the turning of the wheel of the doctrine. In great illumination manifest for gods and humanity, they will fully place those beings in unsurpassable awakening.

### **THE THIRTY-SEVEN FACETS AND TEN STAGES OF AWAKENING ON THE FOUR PATHS OF TRAINING [III]**

This chapter has four parts: (1) the path of cultivation, (2) the path of application, (3) the path of seeing, and (4) the path of meditation.

#### ***The Path of Cultivation [A]***

**On the subject of meditation, the path of cultivation includes the support, nature,**

**Cause, result, and four points to describe the essence—**

**Characteristics, example, classification, and special attributes.**

**The duration of the path can be thirty-three, seven, or three incalculable eons.**

**The special attributes are antidotes, renunciation, realization,**

**Qualities, and meditation, both general and specific.**

**On the lesser path of cultivation you meditate on the four recollections—**

**Recollection of body, sensation, mind, and phenomena.**

**On the middle path of cultivation, you meditate on the four genuine renunciations—**

**To not develop corrupting qualities that have not yet arisen, to stem those which have,**

**To develop ennobling qualities that have not yet arisen, to increase those which have.**

**On the higher path of cultivation, you meditate on the four supports for miraculous powers—**

**The supports of the meditative states of aspiration, diligence, mind, and conduct.**

This section has two parts: the support for the path of cultivation and the nature of that path. The support for the path of cultivation refers to the physical body of anyone who has first uplifted their mind to awakening in the great way. The lesser path of cultivation can be entered after that initial uplift of the mind to awakening.

Second, the nature of the path of cultivation has three aspects: cause, result, and essence. Of these, the cause of the path of cultivation is the naturally existent enlightened heritage, awakened by hearing the teachings of the great way and reflection upon them. The path of cultivation leads to four results: the three paths of application, seeing, and meditation; and the path of no further training.

A description of the essence of the path of cultivation has four points: its defining characteristic, example, levels, and special attributes. First, the path of cultivation's characteristic is the ennobling act of remaining inseparable with the great way's uplift of the mind to awakening from the time you enter the great way until the arising of the heat stage of the great way's path of application. That example can be appropriately designated as the great way path of cultivation. Among the ennobling acts that cause attainment of enlightenment, this path involves beginners' collection of acts that induce the arising in their conscious stream of being of the first instant of the distinct phases of the path of application that border the path of seeing, such as the great way's heat stage of the path of application.

Second, the example of the path of cultivation is any act performed after the initial entry into the great way until the path of application arises, when such acts are motivated by the desire for complete awakening. Acts that can induce the arising of the path of application include ethical conduct; control of the senses; conscientious eating of food in proper measure; diligence in contemplative practice during the first and last parts of the day, instead of sleeping; joyful

mindful living within the bounds of correct conduct; to not regret ennobling acts; enthusiasm, faith, devotion, and other ennobling acts that lead to freedom; and sublime insight gained from hearing teachings, reflection, and meditation.

Third, the path of cultivation has three levels: the lesser path of cultivation, the middle path of cultivation, and the higher path of cultivation.

The lesser path marks the beginning to the three incalculable eons of spiritual practice, which cause the attainment of enlightenment. The lesser path is the period of meditation on the four forms of mindfulness; on this level of the path, the time the path of application will arise is indefinite. The middle path is the period of meditation on the four genuine renunciations; the time the path of application will arise is definite—during or after the next lifetime. The higher path is the period of meditation on the four supports for miraculous powers; the time the path of application will arise is definite—in that same lifetime.

The path of cultivation's duration depends upon the uplift of the mind to awakening: "The inspiration of the very eager bodhisattva" refers to the wish to first attain enlightenment, then to later liberate beings, similar to the wish to gain the dominion of a ruler, and then to bring happiness to your subjects. A number of discourses call this "the inspiration like the exalted Bodhisattva Loving Kindness." For such bodhisattvas of an inferior degree of acumen, the attainment of enlightenment requires thirty-three incalculable eons—three eons for the paths of cultivation and application; and three each for each of awakening's ten stages.

The wish to become liberated at the same time as beings is called "the inspiration of sacred wisdom." This can be likened to the wish of a ferryboat captain to cross a river together with passengers. For these bodhisattvas of middle degree of spiritual acumen, enlightenment requires seven incalculable eons—two for each of the paths of cultivation and application, one for the path of seeing, and two for the path of meditation.

The wish to liberate sentient beings first, before your own primordial self-liberation, is known as "the incomparable inspiration." This attitude, like that of shepherds of goats, sheep, or cattle, who watch for dangerous places, such as ravines, and who allow other beings to precede them as they go, without letting any fall behind, is uplift of the mind to awakening like that of Bodhisattva Gentle Splendor and Buddha Shakyamuni. For such bodhisattvas of an acute degree of acumen, enlightenment requires three incalculable eons. *The Major Commentary to "The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas"* states: The first incalculable eon begins at the path of cultivation and is completed at awakening's first stage. The second extends from Immaculate (the second stage) until the seventh stage. The third extends from Unmoving (the

eighth stage) until the stage of enlightenment.

However, once bodhisattvas reach the path of seeing, they can accomplish awakening in seven days if they so wish. *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Twenty-Five Thousand Stanzas* states: If they so wish, great bodhisattvas who have gained pure spiritual eyes to see all phenomena can attain in seven days the manifest, complete enlightenment of unsurpassable awakening.

Fourth, the path of cultivation has five special attributes: antidote, renunciation, realization, positive qualities, and meditation instructions. The special antidote, that of revulsion, develops from sight of the shortcomings of contaminated composite formations. The special renunciation, that of manifest attachment, develops from sight of the faults of contaminated composite formations. The special realization develops from the sublime insight gained from hearing of and reflection upon the two aspects of the nonexistence of a self: this mainly results from an abstract understanding, although at this stage realization can also be produced by meditation. *The Compendium of Training* states: It is also possible for there to be sublime insight gained from meditation.

Once the mind becomes proficient on this path, its special positive qualities include reaching the path of awakening and the ability of the intellect to rest in meditative states of tranquility and insight. It is said that these positive qualities lead to such attainments as spiritual sight and clairvoyance, and to hearing profound instruction from the manifest body of Buddha.

The special meditation instructions of the path of cultivation have two parts, general and specific. First, general meditations for all three levels of the path of cultivation include ethical conduct, focused on physical and verbal acts to be undertaken or abjured; sublime insight gained in hearing the meaning of the words of the Buddha's supreme speech, and reflection and meditation upon it; the four seals of the doctrine; the five powers concordant with freedom; and recollection of the Buddha, the doctrine, the spiritual community, ethical conduct, giving, the body, death, birth, and the inward and outward movement of the breath.

Meditation on the four seals that characterize the doctrine is explained as follows: Once you uplift your mind to awakening, you meditate on the impermanence of all composite phenomena, the sufferings of the round of rebirth that have the nature of contamination, the absence of an identity in all phenomena, and the peace of transcendence of sorrow. These meditations are concluded with a dedication of the goodness of the act of meditation.



The five powers concordant with freedom are exceptional faith, diligence, mindfulness, meditative states, and sublime insight. However, at this stage, the true essence of these five does not arise. Likewise, the general meditations also include meditation on recollection of death and impermanence as the nature of life; on the nine perceptions of the body's impurity, eight thoughts of great persons, and completely pure conduct.

The nine perceptions of impurity are meditations on the perception of a corpse's inert form, its destruction by insects, its red color, blue color, black color, consumption by animals, scattering, burning, and rotting.

The eight thoughts of great persons are as follows: At some time, may I have the capability to relieve sentient beings' sufferings! At some time, may I be able to give great wealth to those beings threatened by poverty! At some time, may I have the ability to serve sentient beings with my body's flesh and blood! At some time, may I serve sentient beings even though to do so I must long remain in hell! At some time, may I be able to fulfill sentient beings' wishes with great mundane and spiritual wealth! At some time, when I have reached enlightenment, may I surely separate sentient beings from their suffering! In all my lifetimes, may I never wish to not help sentient beings; may I not wish to only enjoy the flavor of the ultimate; may I not say words that do not satisfy all persons; may I not have a livelihood, a body, knowledge, wealth, or power that are not helpful to others; and may I not enjoy acts that harm others! May the results of sentient beings' wrongdoing ripen in me and may the results of my ennobling acts ripen in them!

This explanation has been taken from commentaries to the source texts.

Completely pure conduct is as stated in *The Ornament of the Discourses*:

When the Victor's heirs act in any way,  
They speak suitable words that relate to sentient beings' myriad sensory  
perceptions  
Exactly as they are  
And thus actualize sentient beings' welfare.

Cultivate your experience in the meaning of what has been explained above.

Second, specific meditation instructions have three parts. On the lesser path of cultivation, you meditate on the four recollections. That is, during recollection of the body, in periods of settling in evenness, you meditate on the body like space; and in your postmeditative state, on the body as impure, or like a magical display, and so on. During recollection of sensation, in periods of settling in evenness, you meditate on sensation as not coming into being; and in your

postmeditative state, on any sensation as suffering and without a solid core, like a plantain plant. During recollection of mind, in periods of settling in evenness, you meditate on the mind as intrinsically empty; and in your postmeditative state, as unceasing and not abiding. During recollection of phenomena, in periods of settling in evenness, you meditate on their equanimity; and in your postmeditative state, on the eight metaphors for illusion, and so on.

On the lesser path of cultivation, meditation on these four recollections leads to entering the path's four truths. With knowledge of the body as suffering through the first recollection, you enter knowledge of suffering. With knowledge of sensation of suffering through the second recollection, you enter renunciation of the source of suffering. Through meditation on the impermanence of mind, grasping on to permanence ceases and you enter manifest cessation. Through meditation on the nonexistence of an autonomous identity within phenomena, you turn from attachment to a self and enter meditation on the path.

Second, on the middle path of cultivation, you meditate on the four genuine renunciations: to not develop corrupting qualities that have not yet arisen, to stem those that have, to develop ennobling qualities that have not yet arisen, and to increase those that have. These are effected by diligence and meditation on such antidotes as the nonexistence of an intrinsic self, illusion, or dream.

Third, on the higher path of cultivation, you meditate on the four supports for miraculous power. Through meditation on single-minded meditative states that integrate tranquility and insight, you accomplish your desired goals, such as spiritual sight, clairvoyance, and miraculous powers. In this case, since miraculous powers and so on are accomplished through the strength of your mind's pliability gained in meditative stability, these meditative states—intent, diligence, mind, and examination—are called the four supports for miraculous powers. In these meditations, you first gather your attention on a single focus and rest in clarity. At that time, if discursive thoughts appear, you immediately prevent their spread, and gather your attention single-mindedly on the support that provides a focus for the meditation. You meditate repeatedly in this manner.

### ***The Path of Application [B]***

**The explanation of the path of application describes its support and nature.**

**Its nature has cause, result, and essence; its essence, characteristics, definition,**

**And a classification—heat, peak, forbearance, and supreme qualities—and special attributes.**

**You meditate on heat and peak with the five powers—  
Faith, diligence, mindfulness, meditative states, and sublime insight.  
You meditate on forbearance and supreme qualities with the five forces.  
The path of application's special attributes are its antidotes, renunciation,  
Realization, qualities, and superiority when compared to the path of  
cultivation.**

The explanation of the path of application has two parts: the path of application's support and its nature. The support (that is, the kind of being who can enter this path) can be either a physical support—any being of the five realms—or a mental support—any being of the six states of meditative stability in the heavens.

The nature of the path of application has three parts: its cause, result, and essence. The path of application's cause is the great way path of cultivation; its three results are the paths of seeing, meditation, and no further training. The path of application's essence has four parts: characteristic, example, levels, and special attributes.

The path of application's characteristic is ennobling acts that belong to the great way performed after completion of the path of cultivation and until the path of seeing.

The path of application's example that can be appropriately designated as the great way path of application is any act belonging to the great way, done after completion of the path of cultivation, that causes the first instant of the path of seeing to arise in an individual's conscious stream of being.

The path of application has four levels: heat, peak, forbearance, and sublime qualities. At the levels of heat and peak, you meditate on the five powers; at the levels of forbearance and sublime qualities, on the five forces. The five powers are faith, diligence, mindfulness, meditative states, and sublime insight.

You meditate on them as follows: after having uplifted the mind to awakening, you meditate with faithful trust on the meaning of the four truths (impermanence and so on) or on the knowledge that all phenomena of the round of rebirth and transcendent states constitute the two truths. You meditate with the enthusiasm of diligence; mindfully not forgetting your understanding; single-minded in meditative states; and with comprehension of the intrinsic nature of reality through sublime insight. Since these five produce complete awakening, they are called powers.

The five forces are the force of faith, and so on, meditated upon in the same fashion as the powers. Since they overcome influences detrimental to awakening, they are called forces. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Since

they weaken detrimental influences,

They are called “forces.”

The essence of wisdom on the path of application’s four levels is, during settling in evenness, nonconceptual wisdom. Upon arising from this, your postmeditative state can be conceptual or not, as appropriate. However, is what is called “the support endowed with four concepts” conceptual or not? If being endowed with concepts means becoming conceptual, persons wearing hats would become their hats, as they could be said to be endowed with them. Further, the four concepts are called “the support for this path” rather than its content. Results conform precisely to their own causes.

These four wisdoms applied respectively to the lesser, middle, and higher levels of the path of application are called “the twelve distinct phases that border the path of seeing.” *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states: The distinct phases that border the path of seeing

Have lesser, middle, and higher levels.

The stages of wisdom on the path of application are as follows. In the stage of heat, the attainment of light, phenomena are seen to be merely mind’s manifest appearance. This is wisdom produced by mundane meditation. A slight attainment of this stage, “light,” corrects clinging to phenomena as real. Second, at the peak stage of the path of application, the spread of light, in order to increase the appearance of these positive qualities, you diligently meditate on the nonexistence of the self, which leads to the attainment of a middle level of “light” produced through mundane meditation. Third, in the forbearance stage, to have entered only one facet of suchness is the attainment of the highest degree of “light” produced through mundane meditation focused in the mind alone. This corrects attachment to external phenomena as real. Fourth, the stage of sublime qualities (immediately followed by the path of seeing) is fullness of “light” produced through mundane meditation, without the distraction of clinging to external phenomena. At this point, nothing interrupts the attainment of the great way’s path of seeing.

Of these four stages, heat and peak constitute the lesser path of application; on these levels, the time the path of seeing will arise is indefinite. Forbearance is the middle level—at this point on the path of application, the path of seeing will definitely arise, during your next life. Sublime qualities is the higher level—at this point on the path of application, the path of seeing will arise during this very

lifetime.

Fourth, the path of application has five special attributes: antidote, renunciation, realization, positive qualities, and superiority to the path of cultivation. The antidote is renunciation by suppression. In general there are four antidotes: revulsion, renunciation, support, and distance. The special renunciation is decline of the seeds of the obscurations and their manifestations, and liberation from the spiritual poverty and decline of ordinary individuals. The special realization is that of the two facets of the nonexistence of a self, attained through wisdom arisen in meditation. The special qualities are possession of various positive qualities, such as meditative states, spiritual sight, clairvoyance, and miraculous power. This path's superiority to the path of cultivation is that, although this path resembles the higher path of cultivation in regard to the wisdom produced in meditation, it is superior to the path of cultivation due to its proximity to the path of seeing and the comparatively stable intensity of its wisdom.

### ***The Path of Seeing [C]***

**An explanation of the path of seeing describes its support and nature; Its nature has cause, result, and essence; its essence, characteristics, example,**

**Classification, and special attributes. Its classification has the sixteen instants and the seven aspects of awakening—**

**Mindfulness, analysis of phenomena,**

**Diligence, joy, extreme skill, meditative states, and equanimity.**

**Its special attributes are the antidote, renunciation, time, realization, and qualities.**

**The enumeration has characteristics, classification, and the way of renunciation.**

**Classified according to essence, there are six; according to misunderstanding, ten;**

**Or according to what is renounced on the path of seeing, one hundred and twelve.**

**The special qualities are that in one instant,**

**You see one hundred buddhas, you receive one hundred buddhas' blessings,**

**You go to one hundred pure lands and receive instruction for one hundred eons,**

**Your wisdom comprehends one hundred lifetimes, such as those in the past or future,  
You enter into one hundred meditative states and bring one hundred beings to spiritual maturity,  
You move one hundred realms, illuminate one hundred realms,  
Open one hundred doors to spiritual instruction, and teach in one hundred forms,  
Each form surrounded by one hundred disciples.**

**The fault of greed is purified and the transcendent perfection of generosity is completed.  
On the stage of Intense Joy, you take the form of the ruler of this world, the Land of Jambu.**

The explanation of the path of seeing has two parts, its support and its nature.

The support of the path of seeing (that is, the kind of being who can enter this path) can be either physical or mental. The physical support is any being among the five classes of beings. *The Discourse Requested by Stable Intellect* states: Among children of the gods living in the desire and form realms, ninety-six million have dustless, pure, immaculate spiritual eyes that see the nature of reality.

Here, the term “dustless spiritual eyes” indicates attainment of the path of seeing; “very pure,” the wisdom of awakening’s eighth stage. The mental support is any being living in the heavens of the four levels of meditative stability.

The path of seeing’s nature has three parts: cause, result, and essence. The causes of the path of seeing are the great way paths of cultivation and application; its results are the path of meditation and the path of no further training.

The path of seeing’s essence has four parts: characteristics, examples, classifications, and special attributes. The great way path of seeing’s characteristics are forbearance of phenomena, knowledge of them, subsequent forbearance, and subsequent knowledge (along with subjects attendant to each). Acts that can be appropriately designated as the great way path of seeing are illustrated by any ennobling act of the great way, done after the path of application has been completed, that causes the first instant of the transcendent path of meditation to arise in an individual’s conscious stream of being.

The example of the path of seeing is the sixteen instants and related subjects.

Each of the four truths—suffering, the source of suffering, cessation, and the spiritual path—has four instants: forbearance of the knowledge of phenomena, knowledge of phenomena, forbearance of subsequent knowledge, and subsequent knowledge.

Alternatively, if the example is given in relation to awakening's stages, the path of seeing corresponds to the first, Intense Joy. *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states: For each of the truths, such as that of suffering,

There are four instants—forbearance of the knowledge of phenomena,  
knowledge,  
Forbearance of subsequent knowledge, and subsequent knowledge—a total  
of sixteen.

The moment of the initial attainment of transcendent wisdom is accompanied by exceptional, wide-ranging joy, more exalted than any the bodhisattva has ever experienced; thus it is called Intense Joy. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Because it is close to awakening,

And accompanied by the birth of intense joy  
In seeing the accomplishment of sentient beings' welfare,  
It is called Intense Joy.

The path of seeing's classification follows the order of the four truths, thus it has the nature of the sixteen instants. Meditation along the path of seeing is on the seven aspects of awakening: correct mindfulness, correct thorough discernment of phenomena, correct diligence, correct joy, correct extreme purity, correct meditative states, and correct equanimity. What are these seven like? *The Discourse That Presents the Facets of Awakening* states: Manjushri, when there is no conscious recollection nor any mental effort, the insubstantiality of all phenomena is seen; this is the aspect of awakening of correct mindfulness. Manjushri, when ennobling acts, corrupting acts, and neutral acts are entirely unproduced, all phenomena dwell apart from notions of an existent self, with nothing to focus upon; this is the aspect of awakening of correct discernment of phenomena. Manjushri, when perception of the body is destroyed, and you neither adopt nor reject the three realms, this is the aspect of awakening of correct diligence. Manjushri, when joy and its opposite are destroyed, and joy is not engendered toward any mental formation, this is the aspect of awakening of correct joy. Manjushri, when no focus is brought to a material substance of focus, the mind becomes well trained in all phenomena, the aspect of awakening

of correct thorough training. Manjushri, when the complete destruction of phenomena is subsequently examined, this nonconceptual mind is the aspect of awakening of the correct meditative state. Manjushri, when you do not abide in, reinforce, attach yourself to, or cling to phenomena, you are endowed with the equanimity of correct nonsight of phenomena, and thus gain joy; this is the aspect of awakening of correct equanimity.

Fourth, the path of seeing has five special attributes: antidote, renunciation, time, realization, and positive qualities. First, the special antidotes: the four forbearances of phenomena comprise the antidote of renunciation, called the path without interruption, which completely uproots the seeds of what is renounced on the path of seeing. The four knowledges of phenomena comprise the antidote of the support, called the path of complete liberation. The four subsequent forbearances and the four subsequent knowledges comprise the indirect antidote, called the special path.

The four knowledges of phenomena—knowledge of the phenomena of suffering, of their origin, of their cessation, and of the spiritual path—concern the essence of a single mental substance, divided into four in relation to the four truths. The subsequent forbearances and subsequent knowledges follow a similar pattern.

The special renunciation on the path of seeing has two parts: the essence of that renunciation and its enumeration. First, the essence of the special renunciation on the path of seeing is liberation from your personal degree of the two obscurations renounced on the path of seeing—the obscuration of mental afflictions and cognitive obscurations. *Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes* states: The two obscurations are taught to be

The obscuration due to mental afflictions and cognitive obscurations.  
Within them, all obscurations are gathered;  
Their exhaustion is considered to be liberation.

*The Highest Continuity* states:

Discursive thoughts of greed and so on  
Are considered to be an obscuration due to mental afflictions.  
Discursive thoughts in relation to the three spheres of agent, act, and  
recipient  
Are considered to be a cognitive obscuration.



The obscuration of mental afflictions, such as greed, can be defined as the essence of corrupting acts that intensely disturb the mind or as the essence of obscuring acts of undetermined value. Cognitive obscurations, the subject-object experience of dualistic thoughts, can be defined as the essence of contaminated ennobling acts or of nonobscuring acts of undetermined value performed with continual clinging to the reality of the three spheres of agent, act, and recipient. Among these, conceptual obscurations of mental afflictions are renounced on the path of seeing; those which are innate are renounced on the path of meditation. Coarse dualistic thoughts related to cognitive obscurations are renounced on the path of seeing; subtle ones, on the path of meditation.

Second, the enumeration of the obscurations renounced on the path of seeing has three parts: characteristics, classifications, and ways of renunciation. First, these obscurations' characteristic is any conceptualization that impedes the path of seeing.

Second, the classification of these obscurations has three parts: according to essence, misunderstandings, and realms and misleading influences. If classified according to their essence, six obscurations are renounced on the path of seeing: desire, anger, pride, ignorance, views, and doubt. If classified according to misleading influence, ten obscurations are renounced on the path of seeing: five views—the view that considers impermanent collections of phenomena to constitute a self, the view that clings to extremes, wrong views, the view that clings to any view as supreme, the view that clings to ethical conduct and discipline as supreme—and five nonviews—desire, anger, pride, ignorance, and doubt. If classified according to specific realms and misleading influences, one hundred and twelve aspects of obscurations are renounced on the path of seeing: When the five views are applied to the four truths (such as the truth of suffering, and the others, in the desire realm) and the five nonviews are likewise applied to each of the four truths, each truth has ten, a total of forty. Likewise, when they are applied to the four truths in the two higher realms of form and formlessness, nine aspects of obscurations (anger is excluded) are renounced in each realm. Thus, for the four heavens of meditative stability, there is a total of thirty-six. The five views and four nonviews applied to the formless heavens' four truths give another thirty-six, a total of one hundred and twelve.

Third, how those obscurations are renounced on the path of seeing is as follows. On the distinct levels of the path of application that border the path of seeing, the seeds of obscurations are suppressed, whereas at the instants of forbearance of knowledge of phenomena, and so on (that is, on the path of seeing itself), they are uprooted.

Forbearance produced by knowledge of phenomena of the four truths (the

actual cause), converges with the seeds of what is renounced on the path of seeing (the perpetuating cause). The actual cause acts as a coincident condition that stems the continuity of the seeds at the same time as forbearance of phenomena arises. Since the seeds of what is renounced are destroyed in the first instant, no further destroying factor is necessary. Therefore, in the second instant, at the knowledge of phenomena, you attain direct liberation from the seeds of what is renounced on the path of seeing.

The four subsequent forbearances and four subsequent knowledges arise after the path of seeing's two previous wisdoms, which are antidotes for the extremely subtle obscurations renounced at each stage; these two wisdoms that liberate from the seeds of what is renounced are distant antidotes. From the perspective of the instants of each of the four truths and what is renounced at each, they act as antidotes that progressively exhaust the defilements. From the perspective of the arising of wisdom, when the forbearance of phenomena appears at the path without interruption and the path of complete liberation, what was not seen is seen; thus, it is called the path of seeing.

When powerful obscurations to be renounced on these stages encounter wisdom's ongoing cause, they are suppressed; when those which are not powerful meet wisdom's actual cause, they decline. At the same moment actual wisdom arises, what is renounced ceases along with its seeds. Additional wisdom distances you from what is to be renounced, and thus acts as the antidote that sets in motion the path of complete liberation.

Third, the special time is explained as follows. At the beginning, the four forbearances of phenomena related to the four truths arise simultaneously. Then, the four knowledges of phenomena arise simultaneously. Then, the four subsequent forbearances arise simultaneously, followed by the four subsequent knowledges, which arise simultaneously. Thus, the four instants of completed action arise as an essence, the four divisions (that is, the four truths) that have sixteen aspects, since the four truths are realized together, whereas the four forbearances and knowledges arise sequentially.

Fourth, the path of seeing's special realization is transcendent sublime insight that directly realizes the two aspects of the nonexistence of a self. Moreover, since the basic space of phenomena pervades self and other equally, this special realization leads to the realization of awakened mind in which self and other are equal.

Fifth, the path of seeing's special qualities are that, in one instant, you have the capability to display twelve positive qualities, each to the power of one hundred, and you have such inconceivable positive qualities as spiritual sight, clairvoyance, and miraculous power. These include the following: in one instant,

you see one hundred buddhas; you receive one hundred buddhas' blessings; you go to one hundred pure lands; you can make one instant last one hundred eons; your wisdom can span one hundred lifetimes, those of past or future; you enter into and arise from one hundred meditative states; you bring one hundred beings to spiritual maturity; you move one hundred realms; you illuminate one hundred realms; you open one hundred gates to spiritual instruction; you show one hundred of your own forms; and each of your forms teaches a magnificent entourage of one hundred disciples.

Among the mental afflictions, the fault of greed is purified on this path and the transcendent perfection of generosity is completed. At the first stage of awakening, Intense Joy, you can take rebirth as ruler of this world, the Land of Jambu.

### ***The Path of Meditation [D]***

This section has two parts: (1) a concise presentation and (2) the extensive explanation.

#### ***A Concise Presentation of the Path of Meditation [1]***

**The explanation of the path of meditation describes its support and nature;**

**Its nature, cause, result, and essence; its essence, characteristics and example.**

This presentation of the path of meditation has two parts: the path of meditation's support and its nature. The physical support for the arising of the path of meditation (that is, the kind of being who can enter this path) is mainly birth as a man or woman of the three of the four human continents, or as a male or female god of the desire or form realms. However, it is possible for it to arise in others, as stated in *The Ornament of the Discourses*: To take rebirth intentionally and . . .

The mental support is the four levels of meditative stability.

The path of meditation's nature has three parts: its cause, result, and essence. The path of meditation's cause is the great way's first three paths; its result is the path of no further training. The path of meditation's essence has two parts: its characteristic and its example. The path of meditation's characteristic is the example of the great way path that runs from awakening's second stage to the stage of culmination. Acts called the great way path of meditation are illustrated

by any ennobling act done after the completion of the path of seeing, which causes the first instant of the path of no further training to arise in an individual's conscious stream of being. The example is ennobling acts that belong to the nature of awakening's ten stages.

### ***The Extensive Explanation of the Path of Meditation [2]***

Second, this section has four parts: (1) levels, (2) special attributes, (3) the eightfold exalted path, and (4) culmination.

#### ***Levels of the Path of Meditation [a]***

**On the levels of the path of meditation, its lesser, middle, and higher stages**

**Are each divided into three—the path of meditation's nine stages:**

**Immaculate, Illuminating, Radiant, Difficult to Refine, Manifest, Far Reaching, Unmoving, Excellent Intelligence.**

**The path of meditation's ninth stage is the tenth stage of awakening, Cloud of the Doctrine.**

**The ten stages of awakening correspond to the ten transcendent perfections: generosity, ethical conduct,**

**Patience, diligence, meditative stability, sublime insight, skillful means, force,**

**Aspiration, and wisdom. The ten things renounced**

**Are greed, lapsed ethical conduct, anger, laziness,**

**Distraction, wrong understanding, unskillful acts,**

**Obscured force, unfulfilled aspirations, and cognitive obscurations.**

The path of meditation's lesser, middle, and highest stages are each divided into three, thus this path yields nine stages. The lower lesser stage corresponds to the second stage of awakening, Immaculate, and to the supreme transcendent perfection of ethical conduct. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Since it is free from the stains of lapsed ethical conduct,

It is called Immaculate.

The mid-level lesser stage corresponds to awakening's third stage, Illuminating, and to the transcendent perfection of patience. The same text states:

Since it brings supreme illumination of phenomena,

It is called Illuminating.

The upper lesser stage corresponds to awakening's fourth stage, Radiant, and to the transcendent perfection of diligence. The same text states:

Since this stage of awakening  
Possesses an intensely burning light  
Of positive qualities concordant with awakening  
That consume duality, it is Radiant.

The lower middle stage corresponds to awakening's fifth stage, Difficult to Refine, and to the transcendent perfection of meditative stability. The same text states: To bring sentient beings to full maturity

And to guard your own mind  
Are difficult tasks for wise persons;  
Thus this stage is called Difficult to Refine.

The mid-level middle stage corresponds to awakening's sixth stage, Manifest, and to the transcendent perfection of sublime insight. The same text states:

Based on the transcendent perfection of sublime insight,  
Both the round of rebirth and transcendent states  
Become manifest at this stage of awakening;  
Thus it is called Manifest.

The upper middle stage corresponds to awakening's seventh stage, Far Reaching, and to the transcendent perfection of skillful means. The same text states:

Since it is related to traversing the single path,  
It is called the Far Reaching stage of awakening.  
Further, *Praise of the Basic Space of Phenomena* states:  
As it crosses the mire of the sea of existence,  
It is called Far Reaching.

The lower highest stage corresponds to awakening's eighth stage, Unmoving, and to the transcendent perfection of force. The same text states:

Since it is unmoved by the two perceptions,  
It is called the Unmoving stage of awakening.

The mid-level highest stage corresponds to awakening's ninth stage, Excellent Intelligence, and to the full completion of the transcendent perfection of aspiration. The same text states: The excellent intellect of perfect discerning awareness

Is the Excellent Intelligence stage of awakening.

The upper highest stage corresponds to awakening's tenth stage, Cloud of the Doctrine, and to the transcendent perfection of wisdom. The same text states:

Since, like clouds, the two pervade space,  
It is Cloud of the Doctrine.

The two clouds alluded to in this quote are meditative states and recollection mantras that pervade the space of disciples and serve them with a rain of the doctrine, like that produced by the transcendent buddhas. *The Highest Continuity* states: This way of bodhisattvas

In their postmeditative state  
Equals the pure liberation of sentient beings within the world  
Performed by the transcendent buddhas.

Although this statement has been made in relation to the similarity between buddhas and bodhisattvas in styles of enlightened activity, the buddhas are superior in both acts and activity. The same text states: Nevertheless, the difference

Between the whole earth and a dust mote  
Or the ocean and water in a cow's hoofprint  
Is comparable to the difference between a buddha and a bodhisattva.

Therefore, the nine stages of the path of meditation are divided in relation to the nine ways in which positive qualities arise due to nine higher, middle, or lesser antidotes to their respective obscurations.

What is renounced on this path are unethical conduct, anger, laziness, distraction, incorrect understanding, unskillful acts, obscured force, unfulfilled aspirations, and cognitive obscurations.

## ***Special Attributes of the Path of Meditation [b]***

Second, this section has five parts: (1) antidotes, (2) renunciation, (3) realization, (4) qualities, and (5) assumed forms.

### ***Antidotes on the Path of Meditation [i]***

**At the nine stages, the path of application and the path without interruption are antidotes of renunciation;**

**In the main part of a stage, the path of complete liberation is the antidote of the support;**

**And at the end of a stage, the special path is the antidote of distance.**

The special antidotes on the path of meditation are explained as follows. From the perspective of renunciation of defilements on awakening's nine stages, the path of meditation's path of application and its path without interruption are antidotes based on renunciation; its path of complete liberation is the antidote based on support; and its special path is the antidote based on distance.

To explain this, before a stage of awakening is reached, the path of meditation's path of application entails the renunciation of coarse obscurations in order to hinder what must be renounced at a specific stage. At the initial arising of a stage of awakening, the path without interruption entails the actual renunciation of seeds of defilements related to that specific stage. The path of complete liberation begins from the second instant of a stage of awakening and continues during its main part. At the conclusion of a stage, after its special qualities are attained, the special path is the continuing movement toward a higher stage.

### ***Renunciation on the Path of Meditation [ii]***

**Four hundred and forty aspects of the mental afflictions and cognitive obscurations are renounced.**

The path of meditation's special renunciations are the thorough rejection of what is renounced on the path of seeing; and, among what is renounced specifically on the path of meditation, the rejection of the coarse obscurations and the beginning of rejection of subtle obscurations. In essence, what is renounced on the path of meditation are the innate aspects of the obscurations of mental afflictions and the cognitive obscurations.

The classification of these renunciations has four parts: classification by

essence, realm, stages, and levels. Classified by essence, the obscurations to be renounced have six aspects—desire, anger, pride, ignorance, the view of impermanent phenomena as a self, and the view that clings to extremes. Classified by realm, six obscurations are renounced in the desire realm and five each (anger is the missing one of the six) in the upper two realms, a total of sixteen. Classified by stages, in the desire realm there are six; on the four levels of meditative stability, four groups of five; on the four levels of formlessness, four groups of five—a total of forty-six.

If classified by levels and categories of greater and middle obscurations, on nine levels (a number that refers in this case to the desire realm; the first, second, third, and fourth levels of meditative stability; and the four levels of the formless realm—infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothing whatsoever, and pinnacle of existence), each of the nine kinds of greater and middle desire yields eighty-one. Likewise, nine sets of nine kinds of pride, nine kinds of ignorance, nine kinds of view of impermanent phenomena as a self, and nine kinds of extreme views—five times eighty-one—a total of four hundred and five, to which the medium anger of the desire realm must be added, a grand total of four hundred and fourteen. These are renounced on each of the path of meditation's four levels—application, without interruption, complete liberation, and special.

### ***Realization on the Path of Meditation [iii]***

**At awakening's first stage, the mind's luminous nature is realized in evenness.**

**At the second, what you have realized is realized to be supreme, and you clear away impurities.**

**At the third, you are diligent in hearing the doctrine to realize the basic space of phenomena.**

**At the fourth, you renounce attachment without clinging to the self.**

**At the fifth, you realize that the innate constituent enlightenment in your own and others' minds is not separate.**

**At the sixth, through realization of the natural purity of the innate constituent, you rest without clinging.**

**At the seventh, you overcome clinging to traits through nonseparateness.**

**At the eighth, through realization of the unaltered essence, you gain forbearance of the unborn nature of phenomena.**

**At the ninth, you realize that the innate constituent inherently has individual awareness.**

**At the tenth, you realize the innate constituent to be a source of**



## **enlightened activity and you master the four powers.**

The special realizations are as follows. At awakening's first stage, the essence of the mind's nature, luminosity, is realized to pervade all beings. This marks the realization of awakened mind's evenness of self and others. At the second stage, that essence is understood as supreme among realizations: you develop diligence in cleansing the impurities that cover your innate constituent enlightenment. At the third stage, with the realization that hearing the doctrine is of a similar substance to the basic space of phenomena, to listen to the doctrine you would cross the cosmos even if it were one solid mass of fire. At the fourth stage, you realize that in basic space there is no clinging to a sense of self, and you relinquish attachment to phenomena.

At the fifth stage, you realize that the innate constituent enlightenment present within the mind of yourself and others is not separate and thus realize evenness in the ten pure thoughts of all buddhas. The ten pure thoughts are positive qualities (counted as three), training (counted as three), the spiritual path, knowledge of what is not the path, the thirty-seven facets of awakening, and spiritual maturation of sentient beings (three each—with body, speech, and mind—are counted for the first two).

At the sixth stage, you realize the natural purity of the innate constituent enlightenment: you entirely reverse clinging to acceptance or rejection of the round of rebirth and transcendent states. At the seventh stage, you realize the nonseparateness of the innate constituent enlightenment: you reverse all clinging to traits of phenomena as existent. At the eighth stage, you realize that the faults or positive qualities of that very essence neither diminish nor increase: your supreme forbearance toward the unborn nature of phenomena becomes extremely pure. At the ninth stage, you realize that the innate constituent enlightenment inherently possesses four aspects of awareness: you gain mastery of wisdom. At the tenth stage, you realize that the innate constituent enlightenment is itself a source of magnificent enlightened activity: you attain mastery of the four powers. *Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes* states: These are the categories of the four powers:

All-pervasive aid for beings, the best purpose,  
Supreme accomplishment concordant with the cause of liberation;  
Accomplishment without any clinging whatsoever;  
Accomplishment without separateness;  
And accomplishment that does not diminish or increase:

At the eighth stage of awakening, you attain mastery of nondiscursiveness, due to the transformation of the afflictive mind, as well as control of the pure lands, due to the transformation of the clinging consciousness of the five sense gates. At the ninth stage of awakening, due to the transformation of mental consciousness, you gain mastery of the four individual genuine awarenesses and mastery of magnificent enlightened activity through which you bring sentient beings to spiritual maturity. At the tenth stage of awakening, mastery of wisdom like a mirror is attained, due to the immediate transformation of the storehouse consciousness (ground for the arising of discursive thought and mental consciousness). The supreme enlightened activity performed by bodhisattvas at this stage can be said to be similar to that of the buddhas.

### ***Qualities on the Path of Meditation [iv]***

**The qualities at the first stage of awakening are twelve times one hundred.**

**Increasing, at the second, to twelve times one thousand.**

**At the third, twelve times one hundred thousand.**

**At the fourth, twelve times ten million.**

**At the fifth, twelve times one thousand ten million.**

**At the sixth, twelve times one hundred thousand ten million.**

**At the seventh, twelve times one hundred thousand million times ten million.**

**At the eighth, twelve times the atoms in one hundred thousand cosmos.**

**At the ninth, twelve times the atoms in one hundred thousand incalculable cosmos.**

**At the tenth, qualities will appear equal to twelve times the atoms of inexpressibly numerous realms.**

The path of meditation's special qualities are explained as follows. At awakening's second stage, the positive qualities of awakening's first stage (mentioned above as the path of seeing's special qualities, the twelve positive qualities times one hundred) are the same twelve positive qualities times one thousand; at the third stage, twelve times one hundred thousand; at the fourth stage, twelve times ten million; at the fifth stage, twelve times one thousand ten million; at the sixth stage, twelve times one hundred thousand ten million; at the seventh stage, twelve times one hundred thousand million times ten million; at the eighth stage, twelve times a number equal to the atoms in one hundred thousand cosmos; at the ninth stage, twelve times a number equal to the atoms in

one hundred thousand incalculable cosmos; and at the tenth stage, you have the power to make manifest in each instant the twelve positive qualities, such as seeing buddhas, equal to the number of infinitesimal particles of inexpressibly numerous atoms of inexpressibly numerous pure lands of the buddhas. In each of your hair pores dwell distinct pure lands of the buddhas. In each of these at the same time, you serve sentient beings through such acts as the Buddha's twelve deeds.

These positive qualities arise from the force of the gradual separation of obscurations from your innate constituent enlightenment. Although you see them as new, they are not newly attained nor do they arise where they were previously nonexistent. These positive qualities and infinite others are primordially ever-present. They appear through purification due to the fresh sight of your own innate constituent enlightenment.

### ***Assumed Forms on the Path of Meditation [v]***

**At the second stage, you take birth as the wheel-monarch of the four continents;**

**At the third, as Shakra; at the fourth, as the ruler of the Sumaya gods;**

**At the fifth, as the ruler of Joyful Heaven; at the sixth, as the ruler of the Heaven of Joy in Creation;**

**At the seventh, as the ruler of the Heaven of Control of Others' Creations;**

**At the eighth, as Brahma, general chief of a simple cosmos;**

**At the ninth, as Great Brahma, chief of a double cosmos;**

**At the tenth, as Great Vishnu, chief of a triple cosmos.**

The special assumed forms are as follows: at the second stage of awakening, you take birth as the universal monarch of the four continents; at the third, as Shakra; at the fourth, as the ruler of the Sumaya gods; at the fifth, as the ruler of Joyful Heaven; at the sixth, as ruler of the Heaven of Joy in Creation; at the seventh, as ruler of the Heaven of Control of Others' Creations; at the eighth, as Brahma, the general chief of a simple cosmos; at the ninth, as Great Brahma, chief of a double cosmos; and at the tenth, as Great Vishnu, chief of a triple cosmos. *The Flower Ornament Discourse* states: Those who rest here at this stage of awakening become lords of the three realms.

Although these bodhisattvas have the capability to take rebirth as rulers, not all take such rebirth; nor are all such rulers persons who rest on stages of a

bodhisattva's awakening. Some are ordinary beings who have accumulated a prodigious measure of goodness, whereas in some cases, it is said that manifestations of transcendent buddhas appear as those individuals to serve sentient beings.

### ***The Eightfold Exalted Path [c]***

**At the tenth stage, the eightfold exalted path entails correct view, thought, speech, action, Livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and meditative states.**

On these stages of awakening, you meditate on the eightfold exalted path as stated in *The Discourse That Presents the Facets of Awakening*:

Manjushri, those who see all phenomena as nondual, without unevenness among them, have the correct view. Manjushri, those who, by “not seeing” phenomena, see them without analysis, complete lack of analysis, and total lack of analysis, have correct thought. Manjushri, those who see the inexpressible nature of all phenomena have correct speech. Manjushri, those who see the lack of function and the inactive nature of all phenomena have correct action. Manjushri, those who see all phenomena to be without increase or diminishment have correct livelihood. Manjushri, those who completely accomplish all phenomena by seeing all phenomena to be without effort and accomplishment have correct effort. Manjushri, those who see all phenomena to be without mental activity and without recollection have correct mindfulness. Manjushri, since phenomena are without reference points, those who see no reference point and settle in evenness naturally unperturbed have correct meditative states.

### ***Culmination of the Path of Meditation [d]***

**Bodhisattvas at the point of culmination make offerings  
To all victors of the ten directions. From all the victors' foreheads  
The supreme luminosity empowerment dissolves into the crowns of the  
bodhisattvas' heads.  
They attain vajra-like and other meditative states,  
Numbering incalculable hundred thousands. These end their cognitive  
obscurations:  
The qualities of their innate constituent are actualized and they attain**

## **enlightenment.**

From awakening's first stage upward, bodhisattvas gain control over longevity. Therefore, for them, birth and death do not actually exist in themselves, yet for the welfare of sentient beings they demonstrate such events. At the eighth stage, bodhisattvas gain mastery of the wisdoms of evenness and discernment; at the ninth, of all-accomplishing wisdom; and at the tenth, of mirrorlike wisdom—four wisdoms in all. At the point of culmination, as soon as the general basis for various habitual tendencies has been transformed within itself, bodhisattvas gain mastery of the wisdom of the basic space of phenomena and reach buddhahood.

At the culmination of awakening's tenth stage, the empowerment of supreme luminosity is bestowed. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states:

When you reach the end of the path of meditation,  
The empowerment of supreme luminosity is bestowed.  
You realize the vajra-like meditative state  
And attain indestructibility:  
You are transformed; this is the consummate conclusion—  
You have no stain of any obscuration.

Once resting there, you fully accomplish  
Aid to all sentient beings;  
You attain the unsurpassable state  
Of complete omniscience.

As soon as tenth-stage bodhisattvas have made prodigious offerings to all victors of the ten directions, a mass of light emerges from every victor's forehead and dissolves into the crown of the bodhisattvas' heads. Bodhisattvas thus attain vajra-like and countless millions of other meditative states they had not previously attained. These purify even subtle cognitive obscurations, and the bodhisattvas attain enlightenment.

## **CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS**

Generosity is an inexhaustible vast ocean;  
Ethical conduct, a harmless foundation of good earth;  
Patience, secure, supreme armor;  
Diligence, a quick, untiring horse;  
Meditative stability, an unchanging inviolable state;

Sublime insight, an unstoppable diamond weapon.

The gift of necessary things is the best hook to attract a circle of disciples.

Pleasant speech is the captivating music of a tambura.

Teaching according to the disciples' levels causes a rain of various wished-for things.

Conduct that conforms to the teachings sounds the divine drum to summon a great assembly.

The thirty-seven facets of awakening are the great constellations.

The activity of purification and crossing the paths of spiritual development cause the lotus garden to blossom.

This concludes the commentary to "The Path of the Middle Way," Book 9 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all ways of spiritual development. This has been written by Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje. Since temporary welfare and ultimate happiness solely depend on the cultivation of the stores of goodness and wisdom, you must always diligently amass wealth in goodness and wisdom.

Fortune!

This text has been printed for the spread and increase of the Victor Lord of the Shakya's doctrine and that sentient beings might gain the glory of joy and happiness. The sponsor is the omniscient Tenpé Nyima Chokpa Tamché-lé Nampar Gyalwa Pal-zangpo, a reincarnation of the great scholar Shantarakshita.

**BOOK 10**  
**THE RESULT OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

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- I. The Support and Nature of the Path of No Further Training
- II. The Path of No Further Training
  - A. The Support, the Bodies of Enlightenment

### **1. The Body of Ultimate Enlightenment**

- 2. The Body of the Perfect Rapture of Enlightenment

### **3. The Manifest Body of Enlightenment**

- B. The Content of the Path of No Further Training—Wisdom
  - 1. A General Classification of Wisdom

### **2. The Nature of Each Wisdom**

- 3. Wisdom, and How It Knows Objects of Knowledge
    - a. Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom
      - i. Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Middle Way Tradition
      - ii. Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Mind Only Tradition
      - iii. Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Materialist Tradition
    - b. The Correct Explanation of Wisdom
      - i. How Wisdom Sees Objects of Knowledge
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  - C. The Deeds, Enlightened Activity
- III. The Special Characteristics of the Path of No Further Training
    - A. The Special Renunciation of the Path of No Further Training
    - B. The Special Realization of the Path of No Further Training

B. THE SPECIAL REALIZATION OF THE PATH OF NO FURTHER TRAINING  
C. The Special Qualities of the Path of No Further Training

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Mirror of wisdom, Goddess of Perfume;  
And the excellent one of supreme, sublime insight (Gentle Splendor)—  
All victors find it difficult to rival your wisdom—  
Supreme gods, at your feet I pay homage.

BOOK 10, “The Result of the Middle Way,” has three chapters:

1. A Brief Presentation of the Support and Nature of the Path of No Further Training
2. An Extensive Explanation of the Path of No Further Training
3. A Detailed Presentation of Special Characteristics of the Path of No Further Training **THE SUPPORT AND NATURE OF THE PATH OF NO FURTHER TRAINING [I]**

**Upon reaching the end of training in and traversing the paths and stages of awakening, and the twofold cultivation, as described, The path of no further training is reached. It is explained through a description of its support and nature.**

**Its nature has cause, result, and essence; its essence, characteristics and examples.**

This presentation of the path of no further training has two parts: its support and nature. There are two supports (that is, the kind of being who can enter this path). The common Buddhist perspective is a belief that the physical support that leads to enlightenment is life as a human being among royalty or the brahmin caste in the Land of Jambu. Nevertheless, the special perspective is a belief that the physical support for this path is life as any being who attains enlightenment in the Highest Pure Land, after which an emanation of that individual appears in the realms of beings, in whatever support is appropriate to lead them to enlightenment. The mental support for this path is the fourth level of meditative stability.

Second, the nature of the path of no further training has three parts: cause, result, and essence. The cause of the path of no further training is completion of the twofold cultivation of goodness and wisdom along the four paths of training. Its result is the magnificent activity of enlightenment, which places all beings in the three states of awakening.



The essence of the path of no further training has two parts: its characteristics and examples. The characteristics of the path of no further training are the ennobling acts of perfect renunciation and realization as defined by the great way; for example, it is correct to designate the three bodies of enlightenment with their wisdoms as the great way's path of no further training. Examples include the body of ultimate enlightenment's ten positive qualities of no further training, five uncontaminated psychophysical aggregations, and six transcendent perfections.

## **THE PATH OF NO FURTHER TRAINING [II]**

This chapter has three parts: (1) the support, the bodies of enlightenment, (2) the content of the path of no further learning, wisdom, and (3) the deeds, enlightened activity.

### ***The Support, the Bodies of Enlightenment [A]***

This section has three parts: (1) the body of ultimate enlightenment, (2) the body of the perfect rapture of enlightenment, and (3) the manifest body of enlightenment.

### ***The Body of Ultimate Enlightenment [1]***

**The essential wisdom body abides in the nature of reality, supreme purity and evenness.**

**The body of ultimate enlightenment, the qualities of the innate constituent enlightenment fully manifest, Has twenty-one groups of wisdom's qualities:**

- (1) Thirty-seven facets of awakening—four foundations for mindfulness, Four correct renunciations, four supports for miraculous powers, Five powers, five forces, seven aspects of awakening, And the eightfold exalted path. (2) Four immeasurable aspirations—Love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.**
- (3) Eight forms of freedom—of an embodied being, formless being, Beauty, the four stages of arising and development, and cessation.**
- (4) Nine states of meditative composure—four levels of mental stability, four levels of formlessness, and cessation.**
- (5) Ten unlimited spheres of meditative control—earth, water, fire, air, blue, yellow, red, White, space, and consciousness.**

**(6) Eight overpowering spheres of meditative control—by those with personal form over small external form; Personal form over large external form;**

**Formless over small or large; formless, by perception;**

**Over blue, yellow, red, and white.**

**(7) To relieve mental afflictions from others' minds. (8) To know former aspirations.**

**(9) Six forms of clairvoyance—miraculous powers, divine hearing, Knowledge of others' thoughts, recollection of past existences, Divine sight, and the cessation of contamination.**

**(10) Four modes of correct discerning awareness—of phenomena, meaning,**

**Definitions, and confidence.**

**(11) Four purities—of the support, intention, wisdom mind, and wisdom.**

**(12) Ten powers—over longevity, mind, necessities, action, birth, Intent, aspiration, miracles, wisdom, and instruction.**

**(13) Ten forces—knowledge of positive or negative fields of action, maturation of deeds, Interests, faculties, acumen, the paths to every destination,**

**Purification, recollection, death and birth, and the cessation of contamination.**

**(14) Four kinds of fearlessness—toward realization, impediments, the path, and renunciation.**

**(15) Unguarded pure conduct of body, speech, and mind.**

**(16) Three kinds of mindfulness—without attachment, anger, or indifference.**

**(17) No lapse in helping beings. (18) To have overcome all habitual patterns. (19) Supreme nondual compassion.**

**(20) Eighteen unique qualities—the first six are no mistakes, no faulty speech, perfect memory, No gap in settling in evenness, no dualistic perception, no nondiscerning equanimity.**

**The second six are consistent intention, diligence, recollection, meditative states, sublime insight, And complete liberation.**

**The third six are that the acts of body, speech, and mind are preceded and followed by wisdom; And perception of the three times (past, present, and future) is without attachment and impediment.**

**(21) Three forms of knowledge—knowledge of everything, knowledge of the path, and knowledge of every basis.**

The aspect of the pure, even, empty basic space of phenomena, which forms the basic nature of enlightenment's bodies, is called "the essential wisdom body." The essence of awareness, the wisdom of culminant renunciation and realization, is endowed with twenty-one groups of positive qualities: this is called "realization of wisdom, the body of ultimate enlightenment." This is because anything affirmed as enlightenment's wisdom consists of the manifest presence of the ultimate basic space of awareness.

These twenty-one groups of positive qualities are as follows: (1) The thirty-seven facets of awakening are four foundations for mindfulness, four correct renunciations, four supports for miraculous powers, five powers, five forces, seven aspects of awakening, and the eightfold exalted path.

(2) The four immeasurable aspirations are love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

(3) The eight forms of complete freedom are as follows. The freedom of an embodied being seeing form occurs when a being's personal appearance of form has not stopped, outer form is seen as the magical display of nondual appearance and emptiness, and attachment to the reality of appearances is thereby counteracted. The freedom of a formless being seeing form occurs when a being has no reference to personal form; the sight of outer form is free from attachment to the reality of outer and inner appearances. Freedom of removal of hindrances of beauty is freedom from all grasping due to seeing the single flavor of all phenomena in emptiness. Freedom of formless composure within the sphere of boundless space is sight of the meaning of the space-like nature of mind. Freedom of formless composure within the sphere of boundless consciousness is the realization that everything is the display of mind and wisdom. Freedom of formless composure within the sphere of nothingness is to be without dualistic clinging in relation to any external or internal phenomena. Freedom of formless composure within the sphere in which there is neither perception nor the absence of perception is the stilling of the domains of formulation and defining traits. Freedom of cessation is the state that can never be disturbed by focus upon or attachment to any phenomena, such as those of the round of rebirth or transcendent states.

(4) The nine states of meditative composure are to enter composure in the four levels of meditative stability, the four levels of formlessness, and cessation.

(5) The ten unlimited spheres of meditative control are as follows: earth, water, fire, air, blue, yellow, red, white, space, and consciousness.

(6) The eight overpowering spheres of meditative control are as follows. Those who have a personal form can, with a small appearance, see small external forms and overpower them. Those who have a personal form can see

large external forms and overpower them. Likewise, those without form can see small or large forms and overpower them. Those constitute four; the next four are the overpowering of shapes: those without a personal form can, through perception alone, overpower then see blue, yellow, red, and white. Thus, there are eight in all.

(7) To destroy mental afflictions is to destroy mental afflictions by relieving them from others' stream of being. (8) To know former aspirations is to have whatever is done be produced spontaneously, thus to know your former aspirations.

(9) The six forms of clairvoyance are as follows. The clairvoyance of miraculous powers are such feats as causing earthquakes, transformation of many into one, or multiplication of one into many. The clairvoyance of divine hearing is to realize precisely the extent of every sound, large or small, in the worldly realm. The clairvoyance of knowledge of others' thoughts is to have definitive manifest knowledge of others' minds, such as whether or not they are free from mental afflictions. The clairvoyance of recollection of past existences is knowledge of hundreds or thousands or more of your own or others' past lives. The clairvoyance of divine sight is direct realization of all form, large or small, regardless of distance. The clairvoyance of the cessation of contamination is knowledge of the means to renounce the two obscurations and clairvoyance after they have been relinquished.

(10) The four modes of correct discerning awareness are as follows. Correct discerning awareness of phenomena is easy understanding of the constituents of the phenomena of utterly obscuring mental afflictions, their complete purification, and the enumeration of terms. Correct discerning awareness of meaning is unhesitant and unobstructed understanding based on unmistaken, undeluded knowledge of the specific and general characteristics of those phenomena. Correct discerning awareness of definitions is speech that is useful in every circumstance, spoken in relation to the domain of beings to be spiritually guided. Correct discerning awareness of confidence is understanding without impediment gained from knowledge of the essence of your own being itself and all appearing aspects of phenomena.

(11) The four purities are complete purity of the support, intention, wisdom mind, and wisdom.

(12) The ten powers are power over longevity, since you have the ability to live until the end of the eon, if you wish; power over mind, gained from control of countless gates to meditative states; power over necessities, gained from mastery of the inexhaustible nature of the treasury of space; power over activity, gained from mastery of showing the results of activity, such as those in the arts

of construction and artistic skills; power over birth, gained from the capability to be born in any form and wherever wished; power over intent, gained from such capabilities as being able to show all worldly realms as full of enlightenment's wisdom forms; power over aspiration, gained from the ability to spread manifestations of supreme awakening; power over miracles, gained from the ability to show many different miracles to various kinds of disciples simultaneously; power over wisdom, gained from the unobstructed knowledge of all phenomena; and power over instruction, gained from erudition in all words and meanings of the teachings.

(13) The ten forces are as follows. Knowledge of positive or negative fields of action is knowledge without impediment of the results (happiness, suffering, or neutral) that arise from causes (ennobling, corrupting, or mixed conduct) and, likewise, knowledge of that which is not deceptive (correct conduct) and whatever is its opposite (incorrect conduct). Knowledge of deeds and of their maturation is thorough knowledge of the ripening of deeds that produce the substance of the three times and knowledge of those deeds—wished for, unwished for, or neither of the two; and the state of exhaustion of mental afflictions, uncontaminated deeds. Knowledge of various interests is precise sight of the interests of ordinary individuals and those of the exalted assembly of the past, present, and future, including such individuals as those who have various mental afflictions, such as desire; others, who are on an intermediate level; and the particularly sublime assembly. Knowledge of various faculties is simultaneous knowledge of the distinct, separate sensory bases—the five sense organs that have form, such as the eyes; the five without form, such as the senses' consciousnesses; the five sense pleasures, the connection between the senses and their pleasures as subject and object; the sixteen emptinesses of the nature of phenomena—and the entire range of existent phenomena in the three times. Knowledge of supreme and nonsupreme acumen is sight of the twenty-two facets of the senses, such as the eyes, along with their results; and of every grade of their specific degrees of acumen—acute, intermediate, or dull. Knowledge of the paths to every destination is knowledge of the form of every path—the correct paths, such as those of the six kinds of beings, the hearers, the solitary sages, and enlightened beings; and the paths that lead in the wrong direction. Knowledge of completely obscuring mental afflictions and their purification is the knowledge, within infinite realms of worlds throughout past, present, and future, of the distinct, separate qualities of complete purification and states of intense mental afflictions, such as the four levels of meditative stability, the eight complete freedoms, and the nine culminant states of meditative composure. Knowledge of recollection of previous places and times is direct

sight of and impeccable recollection of your own and others' previous forms and circumstances. Knowledge of death and birth is, like the sight of previous places, impeccable sight of every circumstance of your own and others' death, transmigration, and rebirth. Knowledge of the cessation of contamination is the impeccable sight of all circumstances of relinquishment related to the three states of awakening (that of hearers, solitary sages, and unsurpassable); and to the circumstance of contamination's cessation.

(14) The four forms of fearlessness are as follows. Fearlessness toward magnificent realization is the Buddha's affirmation of impeccable knowledge of the nature of all phenomena: "I have attained manifest, complete enlightenment," a statement that cannot be contradicted with valid arguments. Fearlessness toward the teaching concerning what impedes enlightenment: it cannot be contradicted with seemingly valid arguments, such as this spurious objection, "You have not relinquished that which must be renounced, which hinders freedom and omniscience, subsumed in the obscurations of mental afflictions and cognitive obscurations." Fearlessness toward teaching the path of certain arising is that, in teaching the path of the certain arising of freedom and omniscience (such as knowledge of the basis and knowledge of the path), the teaching cannot be contradicted by seemingly valid arguments such as, "Although you teach this path, it cannot lead to certain arising." Fearlessness toward magnificent renunciation is the affirmation, "I have exhausted every impurity," that cannot be contradicted by seemingly valid arguments, such as "This impurity is not exhausted."

(15) The three kinds of unguardedness are no thought to conceal wrongdoing, due to holy conduct of wisdom body, speech, and mind. (16) The three kinds of mindfulness are to remain in equanimity, detached from attachment, anger, or indifference toward, respectively, those who want to listen to the doctrine, those who do not, and those who have both feelings. (17) No lapse means no lapse in service to sentient beings. (18) To have overcome habitual patterns is to have defeated all defiled habitual patterns. (19) Supreme nondual compassion is the motivation of supreme, altruistic nondual compassion toward all beings.

(20) The Buddha's eighteen unique qualities are in three groups of six. The first six are the following: buddhas do not make mistakes in physical conduct, they have no faults in speech, no lapses in memory, no gap in settling in evenness, no perception of duality, and no nondiscerning equanimity. The second six are the following: buddhas are not subject to failure in intention, diligence, recollection, meditative states, sublime insight, or complete liberation. The third six are the following: buddhas' acts of wisdom body, speech, mind are preceded and followed by wisdom. Their wisdom without impediment

comprehends the three times—past, present, and future.

(21) The three forms of knowledge are omniscience itself, knowledge of the path, and knowledge of every basis.

These twenty-one groups of positive qualities comprise the body of ultimate enlightenment. *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states: These are what is known as the body of ultimate enlightenment:

The thirty-seven facets that accord with awakening; the four immeasurable aspirations;  
Eight forms of freedom;  
The epitome of the nine forms of culminant meditative composure;  
The epitome of the ten unlimited spheres of meditative control;  
The overpowering spheres of meditative control  
Differentiated in eight forms;  
Absence of mental afflictions; knowledge of aspirations;  
Clairvoyance; perfect understanding;  
Four purities;  
Ten powers; ten forces;  
Four forms of fearlessness;  
Three kinds of unguardedness;  
Three kinds of mindfulness;  
No lapse in the nature of reality;  
To have overcome all habitual patterns;  
Supreme nondual compassion for beings;  
Eighteen qualities unique  
To Shakyamuni alone, as taught;  
And three aspects of omniscience.

### ***The Body of the Perfect Rapture of Enlightenment [2]***

**In the Highest Pure Land of Dense Array, bodies of enlightenment's perfect rapture, five chiefs of the wisdom clans, Such as the Buddha Illuminator, display the beauty of the marks and signs of physical perfection.**

**The thirty-two excellent signs are the following: (1) wheel designs on the soles and palms, (2) Flat soles, (3) webbed fingers and toes, (4) Long and narrow fingers, (5) round heels, (6) Supple hands and feet, (7) inconspicuous ankles, (8) Antelope-like calves, (9) retracted genitals,**

(10) Long arms that reach the knees, (11) golden color,  
(12) Body hair curls upward, (13) the hair curls clockwise,  
(14) Soft skin with no smell of perspiration, (15) fullness in seven places,  
(16) Well-rounded forearms and biceps, (17) lionlike torso,  
(18) Large and straight body, (19) symmetry like a banyan tree,  
(20) Lionlike jaw, (21) white teeth,  
(22) Even teeth equal in size, (23) complete set of forty teeth,  
(24) A long, wide tongue, (25) tongue that finds everything delicious,  
(26) An even collarbone, (27) radiance that extends one arm span,  
(28) Deep blue eyes, (29) eyelashes like the finest cow,  
(30) The melodic voice of Brahma, (31) a protuberance on the crown,  
And (32) a curl of hair between the eyebrows.

The eighty excellent marks are the following: (1) fingernails copper-colored, (2) shiny, and (3) high in the middle; (4) Round fingers, (5) broad in span, (6) and tapered;  
(7) Inconspicuous veins, (8) that have no knots;  
(9) Ankles that do not protrude; (10) feet that are even;  
(11) A lion's gait, (12) an elephant's gait, (13) a swan's gait, (14) a buffalo's gait, (15) A gait tending to the right, (16) an elegant gait, (17) an erect gait, (18) a graceful gait; (19) Body is as if polished, (20) well-proportioned,  
(21) Clean, (22) soft, (23) pure; (24) fully developed genitals; (25) an expansive bearing; (26) Even step; (27) clear eyes; (28) youthful, (29) not stooped; (30) full-bodied, (31) Solid; (32) limbs well defined; (33) clear vision;  
(34) Tapered waist; (35) belly not long, (36) not bulging or uneven;  
(37) A deep navel (38) that swirls clockwise; (39) an attractive demeanor; (40) pure in conduct; (41) No moles on skin; (42) soft hands; (43) lines on the palm that are clear,  
(44) Deep, and (45) long; (46) a face that is not too long; (47) red lips;  
(48) A tongue that is long, (49) fine, and (50) red;  
(51) A voice that is thunderous, (52) pleasing, and (53) gentle; (54) teeth that are rounded, (55) sharp, (56) white, (57) even, and (58) Tapering;  
(59) high nose; (60) wide eyes,  
(61) Thick eyelashes, (62) eyes like lotus petals; (63) eyebrows that are long, (64) soft, and (65) shiny; (66) Eyebrows' hair of even length; (67) long arms; (68) symmetrical ears,  
(69) No deficiency in hearing; (70) a forehead that is well-formed and



**(71) Broad; (72) large head; (73) hair that is black, (74) thick, (75) soft, (76) untangled, (77) Not unkempt, (78) and fragrant; (79) a body marked with knot of eternity and (80) auspicious emblems.**

**The five certainties of the wisdom body of perfect rapture also include an entourage of bodhisattvas of the tenth stage of awakening, The doctrine of the great way; and permanent, continual time.**

The certain abode is the Highest Pure Land of Dense Array, the place where buddhas first reach manifest awakening. *The Ornament of Dense Array Discourse* states: Dense Array's sacred circle lies beyond the realms

Of formlessness, desire, form,  
And, likewise, that of no perception.  
There, enlightenment occurs and buddhas dwell.

Beyond the three realms lies the place Dense Array where enlightenment occurs. In which direction can this place be found? Dreams arise wherever you sleep, a fact that renders impossible such affirmations as, "Dreams only occur here!" Likewise, this place is located wherever you become entirely free from obscurations, where the basic space of phenomena and wisdom become inseparably merged. *Praise of the Basic Space of Phenomena* states: The residence of great Vishnu,

And that one, the Highest Pure Land, are beautiful.  
There, the three consciousnesses  
Merge as one: this I proclaim!

If we take Shakyamuni as an example, from time immemorial, he attained enlightenment in Highest Pure Land and then served sentient beings in four ways. Thus, after this realm of Endurance formed, he appeared in relation to the specific perceptions and interests of sentient beings. He first appeared to attain enlightenment in the Highest Heaven of the form realm and had the gods assemble. Then he demonstrated the attainment of enlightenment in this world, the Land of Jambu, at Vajra Seat. *The Journey to Langka Discourse* states: After he left the pure heavens,

The authentic Buddha attained enlightenment  
In the pleasant place called "Highest."  
An emanation of that buddha attained enlightenment here.

The certain teachers are the five chiefs of the wisdom clans—for example, the buddhas Illuminator, Unmoving, Source of Jewels, Infinite Light, and Accomplisher of Aims—wisdom bodies of perfect rapture beautifully adorned with the thirty-two signs and eighty marks of physical perfection.

The thirty-two signs of physical perfection are listed in *Returning the Buddha's Kindness Discourse*: They are (1) flat and full soles; (2) a thousand-spoked wheel design on the soles; (3) long and narrow fingers; (4) round and full heels; (5) connective webs between the fingers; (6) soft and supple hands and feet; (7) calves round and tapered, like those of the sovereign among deer, the *inaya* antelope; (8) inconspicuous ankles; (9) long arms, that his fingertips reach the knees; (10) genitals retracted that they do not appear, like those of the king of horses; (11) limbs complete, like those of a banyan tree; (12) body hair lies flat, curling upward; (13) each hair curls clockwise; (14) body color, like molten gold, is beautiful to behold; (15) continual radiance that extends one arm span; (16) soft skin with no perspiration or unpleasant odor; (17) full in seven places; (18) a lionlike torso; (19) well-tapered forearms and biceps; (20) even and full collarbone; (21) a well-defined demarcation between the upper and lower body; (22) a complete set of forty teeth; (23) even teeth equal in size; (24) white teeth; (25) a full jaw like a lion, king of beasts; (26) a tongue that finds everything delicious; (27) a protuberance of flesh on the crown of the head; (28) a long, wide tongue; (29) the melodic voice of Brahma; (30) beautiful eyes as if deep blue in color; (31) beautiful eyelashes, like those of the finest cow; (32) and a curl of white hair between the eyebrows.

The “seven places” mentioned [in number 17 above] are listed in *The Flower Ornament Discourse*: His two insteps are extremely high, very well rounded and wide; his joints do not show; they are very attractive; and they are beautiful to behold.

These attributes apply to his two insteps, the backs of his two hands, his two shoulders, and the nape of the neck—the seven places.

Thus, the seven places—the four backs of the hands and the insteps, the two shoulders, and the nape—have six features, such as fullness and height.

*The Ornament of Manifest Realization* provides another list of the thirty-two signs: These are the Buddha's thirty-two signs of physical perfection:

- (1) His hands and feet are marked by wheel designs, (2) his feet are like those of a tortoise, (3) His fingers and toes are joined by connective webs

vees,

- (4) His arms and his legs are soft and youthful,
- (5) His body's seven places are elevated,
- (6) His fingers are long, (7) his heels are wide, (8) his body is large and straight,
- (9) His ankles do not protrude, (10) his hair curls upward,
- (11) His calves are like those of a black *inaya* antelope, (12) his arms are long and beautiful, (13) His genitals are retracted, thus well concealed,
- (14) His skin is golden, (15) his skin is fine,
- (16) Each strand of his body's hair curls clockwise,
- (17) A hair curls on his forehead, (18) his torso is lionlike,
- (19) His shoulders are rounded, (20) his shoulders are broad,
- (21) Even bad-tasting food seems most delicious to his tongue,
- (22) His body is like a banyan tree, as wide in arm span as it is tall,
- (23) His crown has a protuberance, (24) his tongue is long and beautiful,
- (25) He has the voice of Brahma, (26) his jaw is lionlike,
- (27) His teeth are very white, (28) there are no gaps between his teeth, (29) his teeth are even, (30) And complete—forty in number,
- (31) His eyes are dark blue, (32) with lashes like those of the finest cow.

The Buddha's eighty excellent marks of physical perfection are as follows. (1) His fingernails are copper-colored, pink; (2) their color is lustrous; (3) they are high in the middle, (4) without depressions; (5) his fingers are round, (6) broad in span and tapered; (7) his body's veins are inconspicuous, (8) and without knots; (9) his ankles do not protrude; (10) his feet are even, not of different sizes; (11) he moves with a gait like a lion, skilled in overpowering human beings with his brilliance; (12) his gait is like an elephant, skilled in overpowering nagas with his brilliance; (13) his gait is like a swan, skilled in moving through space; (14) his gait is like a buffalo, skilled in leading sentient beings; (15) his gait tends to the right, in accord with instructions for circumambulation; (16) his gait is elegant, beautiful to behold; (17) he has an unmoving, erect gait, (18) a graceful gait, since his body is full and charming; (19) he is proper and pure, as if his body's skin was polished; (20) well-proportioned, with no obvious flaws, such as in height or breadth; (21) what could disturb his body has been calmed, so his skin is clean, (22) soft, (23) pure; (24) his genitals are fully developed; (25) his body is wide, thus his body and limbs have an excellent, expansive bearing; (26) his step is even, neither too fast nor too slow; (27) his two pure eyes have no spots or flaws; (28) his body is youthful and vigorous, (29) not stooped, (30) full-bodied, (31) solid; (32) his limbs, fingers, and toes are well

defined; (33) his vision is clear without transitory defilements; (34) his waist is round, (35) tapering and proportioned, (36) not too long and without folds; (37) his belly does not bulge and is not uneven; (38) his navel is deep and swirls clockwise; (39) his behavior is attractive to see; (40) he is pure in physical, verbal, and mental conduct; (41) he has no moles or discolorations on his skin; (42) his hands are soft like cotton; (43) the lines on his palms are bright and clear, (44) distinct and deep, visible from a distance, (45) and long; (46) his face is not too long; (47) forms appear reflected in his mouth and his lips are red like a *bimba* fruit; (48) his tongue is long, soft, (49) fine, (50) and red; (51) his voice is thunderous, (52) pleasing and gentle; (53) his teeth are rounded, (54) sharp, (55) white, (56) even, (57) and gradually tapering; (58) his nose is high, (59) pure, clean, and does not leak; (60) he has wide eyes, (61) and thick eyelashes; (62) the white and black of his eyes are distinct, like lotus petals; (63) his eyebrows are long, (64) soft, (65) shiny, (66) and their hair is of even length; (67) his arms are long and broad; (68) his ears are symmetrical, (69) and their hearing is not deficient; (70) from his hairline, his face has an open forehead; (71) he has a broad forehead; (72) he has a large head, like a parasol; (73) his hair is black like bees, (74) thick, without bald spots, (75) soft, (76) untangled, (77) not unkempt, (78) and fragrant; (79) a knot of eternity marks his heart; (80) auspicious square lines mark his palms and soles, and seven lines circling clockwise at the base of the ring finger, and other fingers.

*The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states:

- The Sage's nails are (1) copper-colored,  
(2) Shiny, and (3) high in the middle.  
(4) His fingers are round, (5) wide, and (6) tapered.  
(7) His veins are inconspicuous and (8) have no knots.  
(9) His ankles do not protrude; (10) his feet are even.  
(11) He moves with a lion's gait,  
(12) An elephant's, (13) a bird's, (14) a buffalo's.  
(15) His gait tends to the right and (16) is elegant.  
(17) His posture is straight; (18) his body, well-rounded.  
(19) He seems polished. (20) He is well-proportioned.  
His body is (21) clean, (22) soft, (23) and pure.  
(24) His genitals are fully developed.  
(25) His body's bearing is expansive and excellent.  
(26) His step is even.  
(27) His two eyes are pure. (28) He is youthful.  
(29) He is not stooped. (30) He is full-bodied (31) and very solid.

(32) His limbs are well defined.  
His sight is (33) pure and not blurred.  
His waist is (34) round and (35) smooth.  
(36) His belly is not indented (37) and is long.  
(38) His navel is deep and (39) swirls clockwise.  
(40) He is beautiful to behold from any perspective.  
(41) His behavior is pure.  
(42) He has no moles or discolorations on his skin.  
(43) His hands are as soft as cotton.  
The lines on his palms are (44) deep, (45) long, and (46) bright.  
(47) His face is not too long.  
(48) His lips are red like a *bimba* fruit.  
His tongue is (49) soft, (50) fine, (51) and red.  
He has a (52) thunderous voice, (53) a pleasing and gentle voice.  
His teeth are (54) round, (55) sharp, (56) white, (57) even, (58) and tapered.  
His nose is (59) high, (60) and very pure.  
(61) His eyes are wide; (62) his eyelashes are thick;  
(63) His eyes are like lotus petals;  
His eyebrows are (64) long, (65) soft,  
(66) Shiny, and (67) their hairs of even length.  
(68) His arms are long and broad; (69) his ears, symmetrical.  
(70) His hearing has no impairment.  
(71) His forehead is well-formed (72) and broad.  
(73) His head is large.  
(74) His hair is black as a bee,  
(75) Thick, (76) soft, (77) untangled,  
(78) Not unkempt, and (79) fragrant, capturing others' attention.  
(80) He is marked by a swirling mark of stability,  
An auspicious emblem, like the knot of eternity.  
These are considered to be the eighty excellent marks of the Buddha's  
body.

The certain entourage is composed of bodhisattvas of awakening's ten stages: bodhisattvas from the first to the tenth stages surround the buddhas. *The Ornament of the Appearance of Wisdom Discourse* states: An inconceivable number of supreme bodhisattvas who have reached awakening's tenth stage completely surround the Honored One, the supreme body of perfect rapture.

The certain doctrine is the turning of the wheel of the teaching, exclusively

that of the great way. The same text states: . . . fully turns the limitless, inconceivable wheel of unsurpassable teachings.

*The Aspirations of the Bodhisattva Loving Kindness* states:

Great Illuminator, the transcendent buddha,  
Emits light, like the rising sun.  
From his mouth pours the nectar of speech,  
To cure the sick throughout the three worlds.

The body of perfect rapture is eternally present, thus the time of its apparition is inconceivable. *Entering the Middle Way* states: To remain forever within the world until beings are liberated,

The serene body, bright as a wish-fulfilling tree,  
Without thought, like a wish-fulfilling jewel—  
This wisdom body's appearance is free from embellishments.

The reason for this eternal presence is that the body of perfect rapture is itself inseparable from the body of ultimate enlightenment and shares its essence. Thus, the body of perfect rapture is permanent because the body of ultimate enlightenment does not move or change and is naturally present and noncomposite, and because beings to be spiritually guided can thereby produce limitless goodness until the end of the round of rebirth. *The Highest Continuity* states: Since the lord of the doctrine has defeated the demons of death

And has no intrinsic essence, the Lord of the World is eternal.

### ***The Manifest Body of Enlightenment [3]***

**Created manifest forms of enlightenment include statues and texts.**

**Incarnate forms of enlightenment manifest in various forms to guide others.**

**Supreme manifest bodies of enlightenment display the twelve acts of buddhas:**

- (1) Descent from Joyous Heaven, (2) entering the womb, (3) birth,**
- (4) Education in skills, (5) life with a circle of queens, (6) disenchantment,**
- (7) Ascetic practices, (8) travel to the place of awakening, (9) defeat of the demons' armies, (10) Enlightenment, (11) turning the wheel of the doctrine, and (12) transcendence of sorrow.**

There are three wisdom bodies of manifest enlightenment. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Enlightenment's manifest bodies

Provide significant means for complete liberation  
As artistic creations, as corporeal beings or things, and, likewise,  
As emanations of sublime awakening.

Therefore, manifest wisdom bodies that are artistic creations include crafted statues, painting's designs, sacred texts, and religious monuments, all of which manifestly increase positive influence among beings. Corporeal manifest wisdom bodies appear to guide beings in appropriate ways, such as kings, government officials, men, women, jewels, mansions, supreme medicines, and paths. Supreme manifest bodies demonstrate the twelve acts of buddhas in the world, as follows.

First, descent from Joyous Heaven: On completion of three incalculable eons of goodness and wisdom's cultivation, the Bodhisattva, the future Buddha, took birth in Joyous Heaven as the god Sacred White Crown. There, the gods' music made this sound: You are endowed with the power of recollection and have gathered abundant stores of goodness.

Your infinite intellect radiates with sublime insight.  
Your mastery of power is incomparable; your creativity, vast:  
Please consider the prophecy of the previous Buddha Light Giver!

With this encouragement, he saw five visions concerning his future rebirth: the continent—that of the place of his activity, Land of Jambu; the time—when human longevity extends to one hundred years; the caste of his birth—that of the aristocracy; his father—King Shuddhodana; and his mother—Mayadevi. These two are the parents of the thousand buddhas of this eon.

He then taught one hundred and eight gateways to the truth called “Complete Purification of Death and Transmigration,” and the gods developed faith in him. He taught such instructions as “Faith is the gateway that illuminates truth, to clarify minds that have been sullied.”

Second, entering the womb: He manifested as a silver-colored six-tusked elephant, covered by a golden net. On the full moon of the third spring month, under the constellation Saga, during his mother's purification practice, he entered her womb. There, he emanated a celestial palace and performed acts to aid infinite numbers of beings.

Third, birth: In Lumbini Garden, after ten months of gestation, he appeared

naturally from under his mother's right ribcage. The gods and the king of nagas washed him; Brahma and Indra picked him up with a white silk cloth. He took seven steps in each of the four directions, saying, "In this world, I am supreme!" A brahmin asked to name him foretold, "If he does not renounce home life, he will become a universal monarch; if he does, he will become a buddha." He then offered him the name Prince Sarvatasiddha (Accomplisher of All Aims). When he demonstrated mastery over the Shakya youths, he was also called Mighty One of the Shakyas (Shakyamuni).

Fourth, education in skills: In the presence of such teachers as the grammarian Vishvamitra and Krmivarman, he perfected his skill in writing, archery, and gymnastics. During that time, the Shakya youths held a competition. Devadatta killed an elephant with a blow from his palm and Nanda took the corpse outside the town by its tail. The Bodhisattva raised the corpse with one of his toes and flung it beyond seven city ramparts, seven trenches, and seven lines of trees, to a pit that became known as Elephant Pit. Likewise, in the archery competition, for the targets of seven iron drums, a line of seven trees, and seven iron lattices, Devadatta hit one; Nanda, five; and the Bodhisattva, all of them. From the arrow's point of impact sprung forth water of eight qualities, which became known as the Arrow Spring.

Fifth, life with a circle of queens: He took residence in the palace with an entourage of sixty thousand queens—twenty thousand with the Shakya maiden Gopa, twenty thousand with Mrigaga, and twenty thousand with Yasodhara. At that time, he was encouraged by words that rang from the gods' cymbals, such as, "When you have seen sentient beings filled with suffering, you will become for beings a lord defender and sanctuary of refuge!"

Sixth, disenchantment: Then at the city's four corners, he witnessed the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness, and death. He considered the positive qualities of liberation and decided to renounce home life. Soldiers guarded the four gates of the palace to prevent his departure. However when he mounted the horse named Kantaka, the four great divine kings lifted the horse by its hooves over the walls, and the Bodhisattva reached the religious monument called the Pure, where he cut his hair and renounced home life. Following this, in Rajgir under the guidance of Udraka Ramaputra, he demonstrated the actualization of the meditative composure of nothingness; and in Vaishali, under the guidance of Arada Kamala, the meditative states below the pinnacle of existence.

Seventh, ascetic practice: He traveled to the banks of the Nairanjana River, where he engaged in ascetic practice for six years. During the first two years he ate a grain of rice each day; during the middle two years, a grain of sesame; and during the last two, a drop of water. Having arisen from meditation, he



journeyed to search for the place where he could enter the vajra-like meditative state. On his path he met Sujata, a merchant's daughter, who served him milk from five hundred cows, boiled eight times. On drinking this, his body glowed with a golden hue and he recited a prayer of dedication of the goodness of her gift of food.

Eighth, travel to Heart of Awakening: On his way, the Bodhisattva met the grass-seller Sottiya, who offered him kusha grass the color of a peacock's neck. He accepted the gift and proceeded to the Vajra Seat and the tree of awakening, which were given limitless decorations by the gods who surrounded Heart of Awakening. He took his seat and made a firm vow, On this seat, this body may dry up,

My skin and collection of bones may break,  
Yet until I reach awakening, difficult to attain in many eons,  
I will not move my body from this seat!

Ninth, defeat of malevolent forces: From the circle between his eyebrows, the Bodhisattva emanated a light called "complete defeat of the demons" that filled every abode of demons. In dreams, the demons' king saw one hundred and eight omens, such as a falling auspicious vase and a broken victory banner. The demon realized that the Bodhisattva was going to attain enlightenment. He went to Vajra Seat and declared, "The time has not yet come for you to reach enlightenment!" to which the Bodhisattva replied, "Because I have completed my cultivation of the two stores of goodness and wisdom during three incalculable eons, the time for me to attain enlightenment has come. You, however, have become king of the demons by having made just a single gift or offering." The demon said, "I can bear witness to my gifts and offerings! You, however, you have no witness at all!" The Bodhisattva replied, "Today, may the earth be my witness!" Earth Goddess appeared immediately and said, "This child of enlightened heritage has indeed completed many stores of goodness and wisdom. I can count the number of dust motes in the circle of the Earth, yet I am unable to calculate the number of his own heads and limbs he has sacrificed for sentient beings!"

The demon, shamed, left for his residence and returned, leading a hundred million soldiers. Their great torrent of weapons fell toward the Bodhisattva; however, his settling in evenness within the meditative state of love caused the weapons to turn into a rain of flowers and their horrendous noise to become sweet songs. The daughters of the demons who tried to seduce the Bodhisattva turned into crones, then begged his forgiveness.

Tenth, manifest awakening: He then settled in evenness within the vajra-like meditative state. Just before the drum beat at dawn, he actualized the meditative states of knowledge of dissipation of the mental afflictions and knowledge of nonarising of suffering and thereby attained three states of awareness: enlightenment, awakening, and realization. At that moment, the ground in the ten directions shook. Seven days thereafter he spoke his first auspicious words to the merchant Trapusha and to Bhallika.

Eleventh, turning the wheel of the doctrine: The god Brahma offered the Buddha a gold, thousand-spoked wheel; and the god Shakra offered him a white conch that swirled clockwise, with the request that he turn the wheel of the doctrine, a request he accepted. The Buddha traveled to the region of Varanasi where one thousand jeweled thrones appeared. He circumambulated the first three and took his seat upon the fourth. He taught the five excellent individuals and eighty thousand gods by turning the wheel of the sacred doctrine of the four noble truths. Once the five excellent individuals directly realized the truth, they gained the result of arhat.

Then at Vulture Peak, the Buddha taught bodhisattvas, great hearers, and others, by turning the wheel of the absence of self-existent characteristics. Then, in such locations as the lands of gods and nagas, he turned the final wheel, that of the ultimate, definitive meaning.

In the first enunciation of the doctrine, he taught in relation to the levels of understanding of beginners, mainly through renunciation and antidotes, to encourage disengagement from the round of rebirth. The middle enunciation was given in order to prevent attachment to spiritual practices, such as the renunciation of the round of rebirth on the path of antidotes. The final enunciation expressed directly the basic character of phenomena. The Buddha also taught the three collections, the three trainings, and the three ways of spiritual development.

Twelfth, demonstration of the transcendence of sorrow: Finally, at the age of eighty or eighty-two, at the village of Kushinagar, by a pair of *sal* trees, the Buddha passed beyond sorrow.

Until the age of twenty-nine, the Buddha lived at the king's palace; he finished his six years of ascetic practice at thirty-five; from the age of thirty-six until forty-two, he taught the doctrine of the four noble truths; from forty-three until seventy-two, he taught the doctrine of the absence of self-existent characteristics; and from seventy-two until eighty-two, he taught the ultimate doctrine of definitive meaning.

After the age of thirty-five, the Buddha spent one year in each of the following locations: the place of the wheel of the doctrine, Vaishali,

Pandubhumi, the heavens of the gods, the wilderness, Uchirayici, Venuvana, Vairata, Balaghna, Kaushambi, and Kapilavastu—a total of eleven years. Then he spent two years in Indrachailaguha, three years in Bhaishajyavana, five years in the town of Rajgir, and twenty-four years in Kosala, so it is said. According to this account, the Buddha lived a total of eighty years. On the fifteenth lunar day of the last spring month of the Buddha's eightieth year, he passed completely beyond sorrow.

The Buddha's cremation pyre ignited by itself. His relics were divided into eight portions and distributed. One portion was given to each of the following groups: the Mallas of Kushinagar, the Mallas of Papa, the aristocratic clan Mahapuluka of Calakalpa, the brahmins of Vaishnavadvipa, the Shakyas of Kapilavastu, the Lichavis of Vaishali, the brahmin clan Bheda of Magadha, and the vase that had contained the relics, to the brahmins Drona and Sama.

The ashes from the cremation were collected by the brahmin Nayagrodhaja, who took them and built a large monument to contain them.

The Buddha's fourth canine tooth was taken by the nagas of the town Ravana to their homeland. The third tooth was offered to the ogre king of Kalinga. The second was given as the share of Ajatashatru, King of Magadha. He put that tooth, along with all the small relics that had multiplied from it, into the Lotus Garlanded Religious Monument. It is said that those relics were brought to Tibet, where they now rest in the White Religious Monument at Samyé Monastery. Lord of gods Shakra took the first tooth to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. *The Highest Continuity* states: The great compassionate one knows the world

And sees all worlds:

Without moving from the body of ultimate enlightenment,

Various natural manifestations

Take manifest rebirth as incarnate beings,

Move from the Joyous Heaven,

Enter the womb, are born,

Become skilled in arts,

Enjoy pleasure with an entourage of queens,

Become disenchanted, practice asceticism,

Travel to Heart of Awakening,

Defeat hordes of demons, reach complete awakening,

Turn the wheel of the doctrine, And transcend suffering.

They demonstrate these acts in impure realms

Until the end of existence.

## ***The Content of the Path of No Further Training—Wisdom [B]***

This section has three parts: (1) a general classification of wisdom, (2) the nature of each wisdom, and (3) wisdom, and how it knows objects of knowledge.

### ***A General Classification of Wisdom [1]***

**The content of enlightenment, wisdom, is twofold—knowledge of the nature**

**Of the basic space of phenomena, free from the extremes of formulation of objects of knowledge; And precise knowledge of the multiplicity of phenomena in the round of rebirth and transcendent states.**

This classification is based only upon enlightenment's wisdom. The essence of the classification is twofold: wisdom of the knowledge of the nature of reality as it is and wisdom of the knowledge of multiplicity. The first is manifest knowledge of reality's essence, free from any formulation of objects of knowledge, such as cause and result. This is designated "wisdom of the basic space of phenomena."

The second wisdom, of the knowledge of multiplicity, has three parts: essence, classification, and cause. First, its essence is manifest knowledge of all objects of knowledge, such as cause and effect, to be like a magical display. Second, the classification of the wisdom of knowledge of multiplicity has four parts: mirrorlike wisdom, the wisdom of evenness, the wisdom of discernment, and all-accomplishing wisdom.

Third, these four forms of wisdom have two causes: causal antidotes, which remove obscurations, and natural causes, which are removed. First, on the four paths of training, you hear many teachings, retain them, meditate on the evenness of self and others, teach disciples you guide according to their connection to the teachings, and you accompany this with serving beings. These causal antidotes purify the stains that obscure the wisdoms naturally present in you and facilitate their accomplishment.

For the second, natural causes, from the perspective of appearances, removal of the obscurations which cover the naturally present wisdoms within you is termed "transformation." When the eight bands of consciousness of periods of impure experience, along with their support, the storehouse of all dualistic experience, are reversed, wisdom arises. For example, purification of the storehouse of all dualistic experience produces the wisdom of the basic space of phenomena. *Entering the Three Wisdom Bodies Discourse* states: The dissolution of the storehouse of all dualistic experience into basic space produces

the wisdom of the basic space of phenomena. The dissolution of the storehouse consciousness into basic space produces mirrorlike wisdom. The dissolution of the mental faculty's consciousness into basic space produces the wisdom of evenness. The dissolution of the afflicted mental function into basic space produces the wisdom of discernment. The dissolution of the consciousness of the senses' five gates into basic space produces all-accomplishing wisdom.

### ***The Nature of Each Wisdom [2]***

**Four wisdoms—mirrorlike, evenness, Discerning, and all-accomplishing—are explained through their essence, complement, and function.**

Mirrorlike wisdom is as follows. Its essence is endowed with five positive qualities: It is continuous, since it is not constrained by the partiality of clinging to an "I." It is not limited by place—knowledge that an objective domain exists does not prevent knowledge of another elsewhere. It is not limited by time—this wisdom has no impermanence, transition, or change, and does not dwell within the relative three times of past, present, and future, thus it is inconceivable and constant. It is not limited by mental focus, because this wisdom has knowledge of every phenomenon. It is not limited by objective forms—this wisdom is the knowledge of the existence of an object of knowledge and does not depend on the arising of its objective appearance.

The three other wisdoms complement mirrorlike wisdom. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Mirrorlike wisdom does not move.

Just these three wisdoms are based on it:  
The wisdom of evenness, the wisdom of discernment,  
And all-accomplishing wisdom.

The function of mirrorlike wisdom is as follows. When a face meets a mirror, a reflection arises. Likewise, when this wisdom meets beings to be spiritually guided, the wisdom body of perfect rapture and the three other wisdoms arise like a reflection. Thus this wisdom forms the basis for the manifest body's emanations. The same text states: Since it is the basic cause of all wisdoms,

It is like wisdom's supreme source.  
Enlightenment's perfect rapture itself,  
It is the source of the reflected wisdoms of the manifest body.

The essence of the wisdom of evenness comprehends everything in evenness, free from the two extremes of the round of rebirth and transcendent states. The same text states: What is called the wisdom of evenness

Is to enter nonstatic peace.

Supreme love and supreme nondual compassion complement it. Its function is the actual manifestation of wisdom bodies that have form consistent with the interests of beings to be guided. The same text states: Always endowed with supreme love

And compassion,  
It definitely demonstrates enlightenment's wisdom bodies  
According to sentient beings' interests.

I consider that mirrorlike wisdom provides the basis for the arising of the bodies of enlightenment, whereas the wisdom of evenness creates their presentation to the beings they guide.

The essence of the wisdom of discernment is the attainment of the mastery to teach, the unhindered wisdom that knows all phenomena. The same text states: The wisdom of discernment

Is never impeded by any phenomena.

Countless positive qualities, such as meditative states and retention, complement it. The same text states: It is just like a treasure

Of meditative states and retention.

Its function is to demonstrate within the enlightened being's circle of disciples the wisdom body's varied forms of spiritual wealth, producing a rain of teachings. The same text states: This wisdom demonstrates all wealth

In all circles of an entourage.  
To dispel all doubts,  
It produces a plentiful rain of sublime teachings.

The essence of all-accomplishing wisdom is accomplishment of the manifestation of infinite emanations to serve sentient beings in myriad ways. The same text states: In all realms, throughout a variety of lands,

All-accomplishing wisdom  
Produces infinite, inconceivable manifestations  
To serve all sentient beings.

Its function is inconceivable service for beings to be spiritually guided. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: Know that the acts forever accomplished

By enlightenment's manifestations—  
All their varieties, numbers, and realms—  
Are inconceivable.

### ***Wisdom, and How It Knows Objects of Knowledge [3]***

This section has two parts: (1) refutation of misguided explanations of wisdom and (2) the correct explanation of wisdom.

#### ***Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom [a]***

This section has three parts: refutation of misguided explanations of wisdom from (1) the middle way tradition, (2) the mind only tradition, and (3) the materialist tradition.

#### ***Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Middle Way Tradition [i]***

**Some middle way philosophers contend that enlightenment has no wisdom.**

Some middle way philosophers contend that enlightenment has no wisdom, and therefore, no knowledge from wisdom, since objects of knowledge are formulations and enlightenment is free from such formulations. Further, they claim that since ignorance pervades awareness, once ignorance (the pervading factor) is counteracted, awareness (the pervaded object) is likewise counteracted. *Entering the Middle Way* states: The wisdom body reveals the cessation of mind.

Does this prove their contention? No, it does not. From the perspective of the body of ultimate enlightenment (the emptiness aspect), neither the presence nor the absence of wisdom exists. To contend it exists can be refuted; the belief that it doesn't exist can be equally refuted. Therefore, the contention that wisdom does not exist is inadmissible.

From the perspective of the wisdom bodies that have form (the appearance aspect), once beings to be guided appear, enlightenment's deeds in their service necessarily appear and, therefore, wisdoms must appear. Further, although philosophies' conceptual terminology, such as objects of knowledge and their knower, are formulations, objects considered to appear without any such designated terminology are not considered formulations. Therefore, to deny that enlightenment has wisdom is incorrect because even worldly persons believe this. *Conformity with the World Discourse* states: What the worldly accept as existent, I too set forth as existent.

Awareness is the foundation for ignorance, not an object pervaded by ignorance. Thus, awareness is not counteracted when ignorance is counteracted, just as the land upon which a house was built remains after the building is destroyed. It has been said that the body of ultimate enlightenment is actualized by awareness: "The wisdom body reveals the cessation of mind," a source they also accept. When mind ceases, wisdom does not cease but increases in excellence and is always present.

Further, upon what basis does mind cease? If it is contended that its continuity ends to become like space, that belief resembles the hedonists' view. Therefore, mind (synthesized as mental states, the eight consciousnesses, and the storehouse of all dualistic experience) ceases on the ground of the wisdom of awareness. A *Commentary to "Entering the Middle Way"* states: The wisdom of unsurpassable deeds, which further any being's welfare, has been attained by the Honored One only in the Highest Pure Realm.

Thus, this quotation affirms that the writer Chandrakirti believes that enlightenment has wisdom.

### ***Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Mind Only Tradition [ii]***

**Some mind only philosophers contend that knowledge does not include appearances.**

Some mind only philosophers do not accept that the wisdom of enlightenment includes knowledge of objects in the external world. They contend that if wisdom knows appearances, it must involve dualistic experience; and they further contend that a thesis of wisdom's knowledge functioning without appearances would be absurd. Their belief is incorrect. To them I reply, "Your



contention denies omniscient wisdom: in your view, wisdom does not know objects in the external world and you analyze it and its powers of cognition as you would ordinary consciousness, according to whether an appearance is present or not.”

### ***Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Materialist Tradition [iii]***

**Some materialist philosophers contend that wisdom sees delusion’s perceptions.**

Some materialist philosophers of the two truths contend that delusion’s perceptions of the impure round of rebirth appear directly to the Buddha’s wisdom as self-existing phenomena. They consider this itself as the Buddha’s wisdom of knowledge of multiplicity. If these are not known, the impure environment and beings cannot be objects of knowledge, since they are not seen by omniscient wisdom. As a general principle, what enlightenment does not see is not an object of knowledge. Therefore, although the impure is seen, the faults of its delusion do not alter the wisdom that sees them.

Such is their belief, but it is incorrect. The wisdom of enlightenment aside, it is taught that even at awakening’s three pure stages, the consciousnesses of the five gates of the senses have been transformed so that bodhisattvas on those stages have mastery of pure lands. Since enlightenment is free from the defilements of delusion’s perceptions, it is mistaken to contend that within its perception, delusion’s appearances ever appear.

Moreover, some believe that the wisdom of enlightenment can know pure environments and beings, but for it to know the impure environment and beings is impossible, since those appearances are created by sentient beings’ mental afflictions and karma and because in enlightenment all impure appearances have been transformed into pure appearances.

This contention is also incorrect. The wisdom of enlightenment is either omniscient wisdom or it is not. If it is, we must reject the contention that it cannot know the beings’ deluded perceptions; if it is not, this undermines the notion of a wisdom of enlightenment.

Therefore, all these systems of thought are incorrect, since they are based either solely in consideration of what corresponds to their view, or without consideration of what contradicts it.

### ***The Correct Explanation of Wisdom [b]***

This section has two parts: (1) how wisdom sees objects of knowledge and (2) refutation of arguments.

### ***How Wisdom Sees Objects of Knowledge [i]***

**In enlightened beings' self-manifest experience, personal deluded perceptions have been purified so they do not see them.**

**However, they know entirely the causes and results that appear in the deluded perceptions of ordinary beings' experience of reality as other-manifest, Like the fable of someone awake who enters the dream path of a sleeping person.**

**They know the nature of reality as it is,**

**They know manifestly the illusory nature of phenomena,**

**And they know the three times unobstructedly and instantaneously.**

The correct explanation is as follows: From the perspective of enlightened beings' self-manifest experience, since all delusion has been totally purified, they do not see even an iota of delusion's perceptions. Delusion has been forever relinquished and perceptions based on it do not exist. In relation to delusion, the delusion-based experience of the entirety of reality as being other-manifest (that is, sourced and existent externally), enlightened beings know how each unenlightened being's mistaken perceptions arise, along with those perceptions' causes and effects, as if an amla fruit were placed in the palm of their hand. In a single instant, they simultaneously know the self-manifest and other-manifest experience of self and others, since this constitutes omniscient wisdom. *The Two Truths* states: In even a single instant of knowledge

Wisdom pervades all configurations of objects of knowledge.

The meaning of these two aspects of wisdom can be understood through a single example: In a sublime mansion of jewels, ornamented with infinite wealth, two brothers slept. The elder brother, who had gone to sleep first, awoke with the power of clairvoyance to know the other's mind. He saw that his younger brother had fallen asleep and was dreaming of the various forms of happiness and suffering related to each of the six kinds of beings' deluded perceptions. At that moment, it was impossible to wake him, yet to allow him to remain sleeping was of no use. Therefore, when the younger brother dreamed of taking birth, as a god for example, and experienced happiness or suffering, the older brother would approach him, in whatever manifestation was appropriate—such as a

noble practitioner or as a brahmin, as a man or as a woman, as a buddha, a hearer, a solitary sage, a bodhisattva, or an ordinary individual. He would present spiritual teachings, such as, “Alas! All composite phenomena are impermanent! They have no core! They are not true existence! These deluded perceptions are false: do not be attached to their reality! Apply yourself to the teachings!”

Due to this counsel, the younger brother rejected corrupting acts and engaged in ennobling acts. Thus, during repeated lifetimes in his seeming experience, he enjoyed the happiness of the higher realms and was born as a person who engaged in spiritual teachings. Thus his immediate circumstances were happy. As his sleep thereby became lighter, he understood the round of rebirth to be false and with this realization, he awoke. He saw that he had not moved from his bed, that what he had experienced had been dreams, and that his older brother had guided him through having sent out emanations. Although there was no difference between the two brothers, for the period that one slept and the other was awake, there seemed to be a momentary qualitative difference. The two brothers laughed.

Exactly as this fable relates, buddhas and sentient beings are equal masters in the palace of essential wisdom. However, their momentary differences can be compared to whether or not they have woken from the sleep of transitory obscuration.

The wisdom of enlightenment knows objects of knowledge in two ways. First, knowledge of the nature of reality is explained as follows. Within the essence of all phenomena of the round of rebirth and transcendent states, enlightenment’s wisdom severs every formulation, such as arising or cessation, and misinterpretation due to clinging to things as having intrinsic characteristics. Wisdom then directly comprehends that those objects of knowledge, including their nature, lack even the slightest substance which can be an object of focus. This is called knowledge of the nature of reality. A discourse states: To not see anything at all is to see the nature of reality.

Second, knowledge of multiplicity is explained as follows. The wisdom of enlightenment does not move from settling in evenness, yet has manifest knowledge of every object of knowledge as illusions. This is called knowledge of multiplicity. A discourse states: The frame of reference of omniscience is nonsubstantiality.

However, this knowledge is not like that of the sensory consciousnesses, in which each sense grasps its own domain. Instead, one aspect of consciousness

can know all subjects. *The Flower Ornament Discourse* states: The unsurpassable wisdom of the victors

Is aware of all meanings in a single instant.

It is not the case that the objects of knowledge of the past, present, and future are known in sequential order: they are known simultaneously. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: One ray from the sun

Illuminates the world;  
Likewise, all objects of knowledge  
Appear simultaneously in enlightenment's wisdom.

These objects of knowledge are seen without movement from the ongoing state of settling in evenness; therefore, the postmeditative state has no intrinsic characteristics—distraction, along with its habitual patterns, has been relinquished.

### ***Refutation of Arguments [ii]***

**Although no objects of knowledge exist, they dwell within the sphere of wisdom's activity.**

**Although things are not real, buddhas know them to exist as false.**

If one contends that since no object—a nature of reality—is possible within the knowledge of the nature of reality, a wisdom that sees it is impossible. *The Vajra Cutter Discourse* states: The nature of reality is not an object of knowledge

And cannot be known.

The Buddha spoke this to indicate that the nature of reality is not an object of knowledge with an existent essence. Nevertheless, the nature of reality—inexpressible, inconceivable, beyond extremes—is known, since it is the domain of the wisdom of individual indwelling awareness. *Rahula's Praise to the Mother of the Buddhas* states: The perfection of sublime insight—indescribable, inconceivable, and inexpressible,

Is neither born nor ceases, like the essence of space.  
It is the domain of the wisdom of individual indwelling awareness:  
Mother of the victors of the three times, to you I bow.

Some contend that since the perceptual domains of the wisdom of the sight of multiplicity—impure domains possessed of intrinsic characteristics—cannot possibly exist, a wisdom that sees them is impossible. However, even though such domains are unreal, they are known to exist as false: there are no possible limits to objects of knowledge, to the number of sentient beings, or to the beginning or end of the round of rebirth. To address the second point of that contention (that the wisdom of seeing those domains is impossible), we believe that enlightenment’s wisdom knows the extent of possible objects of knowledge. However, what is not possible is not an object of knowledge and is not seen, like horns on a rabbit.

*A Commentary to “The Highest Continuity”* states, “Although there is no beginning, there is an end.” This means that when those who attain the pure state have purified future mental afflictions, they are endowed with perfect omniscience.

### ***The Deeds, Enlightened Activity [C]***

**Until the end of the round of rebirth, enlightened activity’s timely deeds  
Work in skillful, appropriate ways to guide others.**

**They aid beings effortlessly, as shown clearly by nine metaphors.**

**To all fortunate persons, enlightened activity appears instantaneously,  
like the sun, Teaching disciples according to their karmic perceptions.**

**Those without a karmic connection hear nothing, like deaf persons.**

From the ongoing wisdom body of rapture, manifest forms of enlightenment, related to beings’ interests, diffuse uninterruptedly for as long as the round of rebirth endures. *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* states: Likewise, we believe that their activity continues uninterruptedly

For as long as the round of rebirth endures.

What is the nature of enlightened activity? Buddhas act with knowledge of the innate constituent enlightenment of sentient beings, how beings can be guided, the activity of skillful means, and without deviation from the appropriate time for their deeds. How do they undertake spontaneous activity? This can be understood through nine metaphors. *The Highest Continuity* states: Like Indra; a drum; a cloud;

Brahma; the sun; a sovereign, precious wish-fulfilling jewel;

An echo; space; and the earth—whoever works effortlessly for the welfare

of others until existence ends Has the enlightened heritage of practitioners.

The likeness of the Lord of Gods (Indra) shown on a jewel;  
The perfect counsel, like a divine drum;  
The master's masses of clouds of knowledge and supreme love  
Pervade infinite numbers of beings, up to the summit of existence.

Like Brahma, not moving from uncontaminated places,  
Emanations manifest in myriad forms.  
Like the sun, wisdom's illumination shines widely.  
Wisdom mind is like a pure wish-fulfilling jewel.

The victors' wisdom speech,  
Like an echo, has no letters.  
Their wisdom body is like space—  
All-pervading, formless, and permanent.

Enlightenment's ground,  
Like the earth,  
Is the foundation in every circumstance  
For beings' medicine of positive qualities.

Like the sun's infinite reflections in containers of water, this spontaneous enlightened activity appears simultaneously wherever there is the good fortune of beings' innate enlightened constituent. These appearances of enlightened activity, such as the Buddha's teaching, consist of the individual karmic perceptions of beings to be guided. The same text states: Within the heavens, the sound of the divine drum

Arises from the gods' own karma.  
Likewise, in the world, the Sage's teaching  
Arises from your own karma.

Further, for example, like deaf persons who cannot hear an echo, persons without the stores of karma to see the Buddha or to hear his teaching will not see or hear it. The same text states: Those without ears

Cannot hear faint sounds,  
And even those with divine ears  
Cannot hear everything.

Likewise, the finest teachings—  
The domain of subtle wisdom—  
Can enter the ears of the few  
Whose minds harbor no mental afflictions.

### **THE SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PATH OF NO FURTHER TRAINING [III]**

This chapter has three parts: (1) the special renunciation of the path of no further training, (2) the special realization of the path of no further training, and (3) the special qualities of the path of no further training.

#### ***The Special Renunciation of the Path of No Further Training [A]***

**The special renunciation is the purification of the two obscurations, with their related habitual patterns.**

On the path of no further training, the two obscurations, along with all their related habitual patterns, are relinquished. *The Ornament of the Discourses* states: The Sage is definitely liberated from all obscurations.

#### ***The Special Realization of the Path of No Further Training [B]***

**The special realization is the pure vision of all phenomena.**

*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* states:

There are no phenomena concerning which the transcendent buddhas are not manifestly, completely enlightened, none they do not see, or none they do not know. They thoroughly know all phenomena correctly, manifestly, and exactly as they are.

#### ***The Special Qualities of the Path of No Further Training [C]***

**The special qualities are the wheel of adornments  
And the sixty melodic qualities of the Buddha's speech: soft, gentle,  
compelling, Agreeable, pure, faultless, clear, sweet-sounding, pleasing,  
and calming—the first ten.  
Worthwhile, unassailable, not harsh, not inflexible, restrained,**

**Pleasing to the ear, to the body, and to the mind; gladdening, and pleasing—the second ten.**  
**Never troubling, to be known, to be understood, clear, heartening, Exhilarating, comprehensive, informative, coherent, relevant—the third ten.**  
**Not repetitive, forceful, trumpeting, thundering, sounding, melodious, like a divine bird, Like the voice of Brahma, like a *chakora* bird, and like the lord of the gods' voice—the fourth ten.**  
**Like a drum, not vain, not degraded, consistent, not deficient, Not incomplete, not timid, not weak, completely joyous, and encompassing—the fifth ten.**  
**Not rigid, fluent, impressive, complete, satisfying, irreproachable, Reliable, not rushed, resounds everywhere, and supreme—the sixth ten.**

The sixty-four positive qualities of the wheel of inexhaustible adornments of enlightened body, speech, and mind have been described above.<sup>35</sup>

The sixty melodic positive qualities of the Buddha's speech, according to the presentation found in *Illumination of "The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Twenty Thousand Verses"* and *The Discourse Showing the Transcendent Buddhas' Inconceivable Mysteries*, are as follows: (1) soft, since his speech presents the sources of ennobling acts of sentient beings' innate constituent enlightenment; (2) gentle, since it creates tangible happiness; (3) compelling, since its meaning is excellent; (4) reasonable, since the words are excellent; (5) pure, since it issues after the attainment of the transcendent, unsurpassable state; (6) faultless, since it is free from the habitual patterns of dormant mental afflictions; (7) completely clear, since its terms and words are perfectly audible; (8) sweet-sounding, since it has the quality of force that overcomes the views of all nonbelievers' negative outlooks; (9) worthwhile, since practice of it leads to definite disengagement from the round of rebirth; (10) unassailable, since it cannot be suppressed by any arguments from others; (11) pleasing, since it brings joy to everyone; (12) calming, since it acts as an antidote to desire and other mental afflictions; (13) not harsh, since it presents easy skillful means to engage in spiritual training; (14) not inflexible, since even if the rules of the training have been exceeded, it correctly presents the skillful means to create disengagement; (15) completely restrained, since it presents together the codes of conduct of the three Buddhist ways; (16) pleasing to the ear, since it acts as the antidote to distraction; (17) satisfying to the body, since it induces meditative states; (18) satisfying to the mind, since it instills complete joy in insight; (19) gladdening to the heart, since it dispels doubts; (20) delightful and pleasing,



since it dispels misunderstandings and uncertainties; (21) never troubling, since practice of it causes no regret; (22) to be known thoroughly, since it acts as the magnificent support of sublime insight that arises from hearing the teachings; (23) to be understood thoroughly, since it acts as the magnificent support for sublime insight that arises from reflection; (24) perfectly clear, since it teaches the instructions of the master without concealment; (25) heartening, since it inspires cheer in those who achieved their own aims; (26) exhilarating, since it is loved by those who have not achieved their own aims; (27) comprehensive, since it correctly teaches inconceivable phenomena; (28) informative, since it correctly teaches inconceivable phenomena; (29) coherent, since it does not contradict logic; (30) relevant, since it teaches disciples what is right; (31) not repetitive, since the Buddha does not say anything meaningless; (32) forceful like a lion's roar, since it intimidates assemblies of nonbelievers; (33) like an elephant's trumpeting, since it sounds widely; (34) like thunder, since it is profound; (35) like the voice of the lord of nagas, since it is worthy to be retained; (36) like the melodies of the divine musicians, since it is very sweet; (37) like the voice of the divine bird (*kalavingka*), since it is neither sharp nor repetitive; (38) like the voice of Brahma, since it is audible at a great distance; (39) like the *chakora* bird's song, since it auspiciously precedes all accomplishment; (40) sweet-sounding, like the lord of the gods' voice, since nothing surpasses it; (41) like a drum, since it precedes total victory over all demons and opposition; (42) not vain, since praises of it do not create any state of engulfing mental afflictions; (43) not degraded, since criticism does not weaken it; (44) consistent with all forms of grammar, since it conforms to the forms of Sanskrit and other grammars; (45) not deficient in linguistic form, since the Buddha does not speak in forgetfulness; (46) not incomplete, since it leads disciples to always continue their activity; (47) not timid, since it does not depend upon gain or honor; (48) not weak, since it is fearless; (49) completely joyous, since it has no sadness; (50) encompassing, since it shows erudition in all fields of knowledge; (51) not rigid, since it acts to complete all benefit for sentient beings; (52) fluent, since it is uninterrupted; (53) impressive, since it takes myriad forms; (54) grammatically complete, since its grammar has many forms; (55) satisfying to all senses, since one speech can be understood in many meanings; (56) irreproachable, since it does what it promises; (57) reliable, since it leads to the moment of attainment; (58) not rushed, since it is expressed slowly and in an orderly fashion; (59) resounding everywhere, since it can be heard the same from far or near; (60) supreme in every circumstance, since every worldly meaning is represented in metaphors.

These are the sixty melodic positive qualities of wisdom speech, the style of the melodic wisdom speech of the manifest wisdom body.

Other sources list these sixty positive qualities of the Buddha's speech as these six: the voice of Brahma, cymbals, song and dance, a divine bird (*kalavingka*), thunder, and a pleasant sound. Each of these has ten aspects: it stimulates perception, creates awareness, is worthwhile, is not disharmonious, is very profound, responds to beings' hopes and needs, is unassailable by anything or anyone, is pleasing to hear, is not disturbed, and is very clear.

Another source has the sixty positive qualities as the following ten each related to six circumstances: a very strong voice, fully pervasive, quickly understandable, resolves doubts, makes the auditor think that the Buddha sees him or her alone, is timely, is relevant in all circumstances, inspires focused intent, is encompassing, and subdues everyone.

This completes the explanation of the cause-based way of the transcendent perfections.

## **CONCLUDING VERSES AND REMARKS**

The body of ultimate enlightenment of supreme exaltation abides without formulations.

The wisdom body rapture of supreme clarity blazes with the marks and signs of the Buddha's physical perfection.

The manifest wisdom body of supreme goodness appears in forms to guide others in appropriate ways.

The glorious essence wisdom body dwells in pervasive inseparability.

The illumination of supreme wisdom has neither bounds nor center.

The positive qualities of the supreme spontaneous state are inconceivable.

Enjoyment of the supreme unchanging state flows continually.

Manifestations of supreme acts are inexhaustible.

The supreme miraculous wisdom body exceeds measure.

The supreme wisdom speech of Brahma's voice defies distance.

The supreme wisdom mind, beyond bounds, cannot be veiled nor made clearer.

The supreme highest result is sublime awakening.

This concludes the commentary to "The Result of the Middle Way," Book 10 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that

elucidates all ways of spiritual development. This has been written by Longchen Choying Tobden Dorje to foster correct understanding of authentic actualization of the ultimate result, the state of enlightenment.

Fortune! Fortune! Fortune!

This second volume of the common discourses has been printed by one whose altruistic intention, compassion, and awakened mind motivates him to be supremely diligent in spreading help and happiness for the doctrine and sentient beings—omniscient Tenpé Nyima Pal-zangpo, a reincarnation of the great scholar Shantarakshita.

The work of scribe was done by my disciple Tsultrim Drimé.

## THE ROOT VERSES: BOOKS 1 TO 10

*The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras Sutra Tantra  
Ratna Koka Saya Vrihi Britti Nidhanam Mahakalasha Bhatra Nama*

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IN THE LANGUAGE of India, Sanskrit, this text is entitled *Sutra Tantra Ratna Koka Nama Shastra*. In English, it is entitled *The Treatise Known as The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*.

### THE INTRODUCTION

*Namo Shri Samantabhadra-ya.  
Pal Kuntu Zangpo la chak tsal-lo.  
Lord Ever Excellent, to you I bow.*

The body of ultimate enlightenment, Ever Excellent, attained enlightenment before all other victors.

The wisdom bodies of perfect rapture are the victors, peaceful and wrathful deities—male and female chiefs of the five wisdom clans.

The manifest wisdom bodies are victors who manifest in such forms as are called natural, realm-guiding, supreme, or according to beings' needs.

These victors are inseparable within the essential wisdom body. To all who epitomize these, I pay homage.

Victor Lord of the Shakyas, highest teacher of gods and humanity;  
Precious master from Oddiyana, who unites in his single form all victors' wisdom, love, capability, and blessing; Refuge of the sacred doctrine—discourses and tantras, scriptural transmission and realization—teaching the Victor perfectly enunciated; The spiritual community's guides who uphold, preserve, and spread the Victor's doctrine: to you all, I pay homage.

The victors' holy regents, present-day spiritual masters and those of the lineage, are repositories of sublime blessings; Sacred circles of victors, hosts of deities, are treasures of ordinary feats and sublime accomplishment; The victors' mothers—mother and sister dakinis of the three regions—befriend those who honor their tantric bonds. Guardians of the victors' doctrine are authorized to

...HONOR THEIR TANTRA BODIES, GUARDIANS OF THE VICTORS' DOCTRINE ARE AUTHORIZED TO perform the four activities: May all of you be victorious!  
May I collect from all sources the meaning of the key instructions of an ocean of the Victor's doctrine—discourses, tantras, treatises, and pith instructions; And all the intent of excellent authoritative texts of profound meaning, and magnificent words and composition, And synthesize them within a single work, *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, And present it in twenty-five books, one hundred and one chapters, and twenty-one hundred headings.

## THE MAIN TEXT—A BRIEF PRESENTATION

In brief, this work's twenty-five books are as follows: reliance upon spiritual guides; how to teach and listen to Buddhist instruction; Four books—the difficulty of attaining a human life, death, acts and their consequences, and the flaws of the round of rebirth; Taking refuge; three books—the great way's basis, path, and result;

Cosmology, Buddhist culture, and an extensive explanation of ways of spiritual development; Secret mantra in general; three books to explain the mahayoga tantra, *Secret Essence*; One book on anuyoga; seven on atiyoga— One on the ground, five on the path, and one on the result.

The hundred chapters are divided as follows: the ten books on the subject of the discourses contain four, three, four, five, four, six, four, three, three, and three chapters; Those on knowledge, four, four, and six;

Those on meditation's creation and completion phases, eight, four, three, five, and four; And those on great perfection, four, four, three, four, three, two, and three.

The 2,179 headings are divided as follows:

Book 1 contains thirty-seven headings; Book 2, twenty-six;

Book 3, nineteen; Book 4, nine; Book 5, twelve;

Book 6, twenty-eight; Book 7, thirty-six;

Book 8, forty-eight; Book 9, eighty-six;

Book 10, nineteen; Book 11, forty-nine;

Book 12, one hundred and nineteen; Book 13, eighty-three;

Book 14, one hundred and fifteen;

Book 15, eighty-nine; Book 16, three hundred and forty-five;

Book 17, two hundred and one;

Book 18, thirty-five; Book 19, fifty-nine;

Book 20, one hundred and seventy-one; Book 21, one hundred and twelve;

Book 22, one hundred and forty-four;  
Book 23, one hundred and thirty-six; Book 24, seventy-eight;  
Book 25, eighty-one; and the Introduction and Conclusion, forty-two.

The root text contains 984 verses,  
Divided into three fascicles, with 84 four-line verses remaining.  
Within the root text, there are 31,672 dots between syllables,  
Divided by 7,868 punctuation marks that begin and end lines.

This single work has two divisions, three parts, and three main subjects.  
There are thirteen volumes, including a word-by-word commentary, an extensive  
commentary, and an illustrated version.  
Four outstanding characteristics distinguish the work. It presents the place,  
teacher, teaching, and persons who received it.  
It elucidates the distinct subjects of the bases, paths, and results of the three  
Buddhist codes of conduct.  
Its general content describes the path's view, meditation, and conduct.  
Exertion in hearing this text, and reflection and meditation upon it, leads to skill  
in teaching, debate, and composition, and to success; Your understanding,  
experience, and realization will increase, and you will swiftly accomplish the  
two goals.

## **BOOK 1: DISCIPLESHIP**

The extensive explanation of this text begins with "Discipleship."  
The general characteristics of spiritual guides are the following:  
Because holy persons lead the worldly, they resemble everyone.  
Because they transcend the mundane, they are unlike anyone; they are  
outstanding.  
Their acts and conduct are pure. They guide beings skillfully.

Supreme wish-fulfilling spiritual masters are skillful,  
Are imbued with supreme compassion, and have mastered great treasuries of  
discourses and tantras.  
They are vessels that cross the wide sea of existence,  
Guides for those who have entered the path, fine gems that dispel destitution,  
Rivers that extinguish the fires of karma and mental afflictions, clouds that  
rain the teachings, Mighty divine drums that bring joy to all beings,  
Healers who cure the sicknesses of the three poisons,

Bright lamps that dispel the darkness of ignorance, wish-fulfilling trees that bestow happiness, Exquisite vases that yield everything desired, new dawns of universal love, Moons that ease heartache, and mines of the riches of every quality, like the wealth god Son of Renown.

Respectfully rely upon such masters.

Spiritual masters whose qualities are naturally complete are from good families,  
Have all senses intact, are considerate and modest,  
Are loving and compassionate, have vast sublime insight,  
And are restrained, erudite, patient, and not deceitful.

Spiritual masters liberated from existence have turned their backs on common human life, Feel faint attachment to homeland, long-guarded wealth, and possessions, Believe in karma and its consequences, are circumspect in relation to ennobling acts to adopt and corrupting acts to reject, And have abandoned hopes for this life. They accomplish what is very meaningful for the long term.

Spiritual masters who know every subject of Buddhist culture are learned in philosophical tenets' words and meaning, Maintain exemplary view and conduct, and are never reprehensible in any way.

They do not invent their own teachings but adhere to scripture and logic,  
Examine the capacities of students, and teach accordingly.

Spiritual masters who preserve the lineage of accomplished masters have received the aural lineage's profound instructions.

They hold the tradition; thus, they are skillful in accomplishing the two goals.

They exert themselves in spiritual practice, have attained accomplishments, and are even able to transform others' perceptions.

They have inherited the discourses' and tantras' transmissions, and guard the tantric bonds purely.

Spiritual masters have trained in the awakened mind and continually help others.

The signs of having received blessing are that they are able to bless others' experience; They have experience of the view, meditation, and conduct and their results; and they are proficient in the signs that indicate attainment of meditative heat.

They are powerful, can eliminate all hindrances, and guide others skillfully.

Connection to spiritual masters who reveal the ultimate meaning brings you to the profound path.

They introduce the essential meaning of the body of ultimate enlightenment and

They introduce the essential meaning, the body of ultimate enlightenment, and reveal pith instructions to enrich that experience.

Consummately realized, they accompany disciples to the abiding nature, the ground of being.

They skillfully transform any circumstance into the path and are masterful in liberating others' streams of being.

The expanse of their wisdom minds spans the sky; their meditative states shine brilliantly like the sun; Their wisdom is deep as an ocean; and their nondual compassion flows like a mighty river.

Unmoved by distraction, like snow-covered mountains, they are as steadfast as mountains.

Unsullied by existence, like lotuses, they dwell in equanimity like a parent.

Replete with qualities like treasures, they lead beings like monarchs.

For difficult beings, they surpass any buddha.



Unworthy candidates to be rejected

Have poor faith, consideration, modesty, compassion, character,

Nature, behavior, and fortune. Their acts and mental afflictions are coarse.

They disregard ennobling acts and corrupting acts, vows and tantric bonds. Their positive influences are faint.

They are very foolish, small-minded, difficult to please, bad tempered, and argumentative.

They harbor the intent to sell to others the teachings they receive.

The enormity of bad effects of not examining a prospective disciple harms Buddhism.

Fortunate disciples are endowed with strong faith, energy, and sublime insight.

They exercise care, mindfulness, and thoughtfulness. They honor their vows and tantric bonds.

They do not disobey commands; they are peaceful, disciplined, and loving.

They are open-minded, mentally stable, and have strong devotion and pure perception.

There are six purposes for remaining inseparable from spiritual masters and to continually rely upon them: Spiritual masters provide profound and lastingly useful advice.

They relieve suffering by teaching discernment in relation to ennobling acts and wrongdoing.

They open disciples' eyes to sublime insight and illuminate the path to freedom.

Only spiritual masters can provide the highest support

For the swift cultivation of goodness and wisdom.

Because spiritual masters give refuge from all the sufferings of life and the miserable existences, It is worthwhile to rely upon them as your foremost refuge.

For those without qualities, spiritual masters cause ordinary and special noble qualities To develop and to flourish.

It is rare in this time of degeneration to find someone who surpasses spiritual masters As teachers of the deep and wide-ranging nectar of the Buddhist doctrine.

In any country or region qualified spiritual masters live,

Strive to find them as if searching for rare food or wealth.

Whatever spiritual masters do—gently or forcefully, meaningful or not, major or

minor— Is guided by their wisdom mind's realization.

Rely upon masters as you would, for example, ascetics, powerful guardians, warriors, rulers, Teachers, healers, or helpful companions.

Offer without attachment food, clothing, material things, jewels,

Grain, wealth, fine houses, fields, horses, vehicles,

All your special wealth—your children, spouse, or servants;

Sacred representations of wisdom body, speech, and mind; and the finest medicine.

Physically, bow, present offerings, and perform circumambulations. Do what you are asked on the masters' behalf.

Serve, wait upon, attend, and obey spiritual masters.

Protect them from fire or water, ravines, wild animals, and enemies.

Wrong physical behavior includes carelessness, disrespect, scowling, Frowning, clapping the hands, turning your side toward the master, stretching the arms or legs, Lying down, fighting, frivolity, playing games, spitting or cleaning your nose, Or stepping over the masters' hair or clothes.

Make requests with pleasant words, praise the masters,

Use polite language, speak supportively of what the masters have said,

Pray to them, relate the masters' qualities and life stories to others,

Answer honestly, take refuge, and examine your own speech.

Wrong verbal behavior includes lies, slander, idle talk,

Or using harsh language in the presence of spiritual masters, disobeying their commands, and talking back.

Mentally, remember the spiritual masters' kindness and qualities.

Develop the attitude that the masters, difficult to meet, are greater than the Buddha.

When recalling their acts, tremble and cry.

Consider that to see, hear, recall, or be touched by spiritual masters is a very meaningful event.

Wrong mental attitudes include lack of faith, wrong views, anger, critical attention, Contempt, competitiveness, pride, and coveting. Renounce these acts.

When the order arrives, "Devote yourself single-mindedly to meditation practice!"

Stay in seclusion, abandon all forms of business

Stay in seclusion, abandon all forms of busyness,  
And single-mindedly day and night raise the banner of essential spiritual  
practice.  
Become past masters' representative and actualize the fruit of accomplishment.

Inconceivable numbers of benefits accrue from correct discipleship:  
Every fault, shortcoming, suffering, and weakness ends.  
A great treasure overflows with favorable qualities, talents, meditative  
experiences, and realization.  
You bring help and happiness to Buddhism and to beings.

Misleading companions to be forsaken are described as follows:  
Befriending fools diverts you from the correct path.  
Deficient in knowledge, you unwittingly lead an ordinary, meaningless life.

When you befriend the faithless and apathetic,  
You neglect meditation practice; your humility and devotion fade.

When you befriend those of the lesser way, you yearn for peace and happiness  
for yourself alone, And you abandon significant acts for others' benefit.  
When you befriend those without correct views, meditation, or meditative states,  
those whose training has lapsed, Those who persist in ordinary deluded  
thinking, those who are acquisitive, Loners, or those who are nihilist or  
literalist,  
You only manage to talk about Buddhism without any meaningful results.

Befriending the unintelligent clouds sublime insight gained from hearing and  
reflection.

Befriending the hateful subverts your character.

Befriending the lustful fuels craving for the objects of desire.

Befriending the proud increases partiality and dualistic attachment.

Befriending those who are exceedingly jealous fosters the torment of  
competitiveness.

Befriending those attached to this life, those without disengagement or  
disillusionment at the state of existence, Those who socialize, those who seek  
amusement and follow fashions,

Those who wield power or crave wealth, profiteers,

Butchers, those who act evilly, those who act deceptively, or those who commit  
both good and evil acts Contaminates you with the reprehensible behavior of

each

Ed. 11.

Befriending misleading companions undermines lasting happiness  
And leads to extreme suffering in the round of rebirth's miserable existences:  
Examine your companions as you would a refuge, a guide, or an article you  
buy.

Forsaking misleading companions increases ennobling acts,  
You do not regress, and you will fully accomplish mindfulness,  
Meditative states, vast sublime insight, and an array of qualities.  
This life and the next will be happy; you will proceed from happiness to  
happiness.

This concludes "Discipleship," Book 1 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

## **BOOK 2: THE TRANSMISSION OF BUDDHISM**

Spiritual masters present the sacred doctrine as follows:  
Buddhas employ three miracles—  
Magical emanation, insightful exposition, and instruction.  
Arhats employed purity in three domains—  
The pure teacher, auditor, and subjects.  
Among scholars, those of Nalanda Monastic College

Taught the canon according to five magnificent aspects of a teaching  
And the treatises according to five initial considerations.

Scholars of Vikramashila Monastic College

Prepared the worthy recipient, and described the author of the text,  
The spiritual teaching, how to teach, and how to listen.

The five elements of teaching methods

Are the purpose, the summary, the literal meanings, the connections, and  
refutations of challenges.

The purpose has four aspects: the subject,

The purpose, the innermost purpose, and the progression.

Explanation of the tantras includes six topics—the general meaning, concealed  
meaning, Final meaning, auxiliary meaning, meaning of the words, and pith  
instructions; The six parameters—definitive meaning, provisional meaning,  
implied meaning, unimplied meaning, Literal meaning, and not literal  
meaning;

And four methods of interpretation—by the words' meaning, general meaning,  
concealed meaning, or final meaning.

Many systems of explanation are specific to individual tantras.

The four streams comprise the expository scriptures, blessing-empowerments,  
Aural lineage instructions, and rituals for accomplishing enlightened activity.

Other styles of commentary include providing the structure of the meaning, An  
outline of the main text, a word-by-word commentary,

And a summary into pith instructions; or a presentation, explanation, and  
summary.

Great perfection tantras are taught by describing six subjects:

Their essence, definitions, divisions, scope, examples, and proof.

The seventeen tantras are *Unimpeded Sound*, *Self-Manifest Awareness*, *Self-  
Liberated Awareness*, *Self-Arisen Perfection*, *The Lion's Full Strength*,  
*Auspicious Beauty*, *Exquisite Design of Gems*, *The Pearl Garland*, *Wordless*,  
*Mirror of Vajrasattva's Heart*, *Mirror of Ever Excellent's Wisdom Mind*,  
*Union of Sun and Moon*, *Elaborate Introduction*, *Blaze of the Holy Form*,  
*Heap of Jewels*, *Blazing Lamps*, and *Six Expanses*.

These tantras are classified as three essences, three nectars, and three flowers.

Tantras encompass, plumb the depth, or turn back the assault on wisdom.

There are two auxiliary tantras, a tantra of the contemplative practice of  
liberation, A heart-like tantra, the secret text we follow, and a weapon-like  
tantra.

They are useful. They can be taught as tantras, transmissions, or pith

instructions; Or according to the collection of twenty-three precious examples

instructions, or according to the collection of twenty-three precious examples  
And the wish-fulfilling tree of the five principles.

The magnificent setting, teacher, doctrine, entourage, and time period  
characterize The turning of the three cycles—on the four truths, on the  
absence of characteristics, and on definitive meaning.

Each of the four collections—on the monastic code,

The discourses, on observed phenomena, and the supreme collection on  
observed phenomena— Contains twenty-one thousand teachings spoken by  
the Buddha, the extent of the canon.

The doctrine's eighty-four thousand aggregations were compiled on three  
occasions.

The seven patriarchs, the six ornaments, the two supreme teachers, and others  
composed the treatises.

There are six styles of commentary

And three methods of teaching.

Among the texts translated into Tibetan, there are 210 discourses, 907 tantras,  
536 commentaries on the discourses, And 2,781 commentaries on the tantras  
—an approximate total of 4,400 texts.

Prepare the throne for the teachings, a seat, a canopy, banners, a parasol, Various  
forms of music, assorted offerings,

And the universe in the form of a mandala, all arranged attractively.

Take the teaching seat, uplift your mind to awakening,

Then teach coherently with pure and pleasant-sounding words.

When teaching the three collections, imagine yourself clearly as Lord of the  
Shakyas; When teaching the outer or inner tantras, as a principal buddha of  
enlightenment's five wisdom clans; When teaching great perfection, as  
Buddha Ever Excellent.

In each case, your adamant tongue produces the sound of the doctrine in the  
melodic voice of Brahma.

Think that this reaches beings who fill the bounds of space,

Wakes them from the sleep of ignorance, and causes the clearly manifest  
qualities Of their innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature, to blossom.

Infants and adults eat different diets;

Likewise, teach beginners such subjects as death, and actions and consequences.

Teach the lesser and great ways' paths to those who have entered the Buddhist  
path.

Teach cosmology and the five subjects of Buddhist culture to those who work

for others' good.

Teach a general outline of the tenets of philosophical schools to groups of scholars.

Teach instruction in the tantras to special recipients.

Teach the very profound essential meaning to those of supreme spiritual fortune.

For all those of dull minds, praise faith and purification of obscurations.

In teaching, generosity is practiced by correct explanation of words and meaning; Ethical conduct, by freedom from the faults of mental afflictions; Patience, by forbearance of grief or fatigue; diligence, by enthusiastic teaching; Meditative stability, by remaining undistracted; and sublime insight, by making distinctions.

“By the power of the stores of positive qualities of teaching, of hearing the doctrine, of reflection and meditation upon it, May all beings, with me, in every lifetime,

Always attain the supreme good fortune

Of enjoying the ten ennobling acts and the ten forms of spiritual conduct.”

Correct teaching's benefits

Are enhanced memory, meditative states, self-confidence, and stilling of mental afflictions.

You preserve the teachings' treasury, you receive teaching from the Buddha,

Gods and human beings praise you, your fame increases, you achieve your goals, You are not separated from the doctrine in every lifetime,

And you very quickly attain enlightenment and rain the teachings upon beings.

When listening to the sacred Buddhist doctrine, present a mandala and a mass of offerings; Make prostrations, and kneel or sit straight with folded hands.

When conducive conditions are gathered, listen respectfully without distraction.

When listening, avoid a vessel's three faults,

Six impurities, and thirty-six shortcomings—

Six acts of obstructive influences, six acts that cause obscurations,

Six causes of abandoning the teachings, six faults of distraction,

Six faults of misleading yourself, and six forms of spirituality contrary to the great way.

Maintain pure motivation by means of six precious attitudes, six hardships, Six armors unaffected by circumstances, six goals,

Six necessities, and six ways to seek instruction.

When listening in eighty-four ways,  
The mandala and other offerings constitute generosity;  
Control of body, voice, and mind, ethical conduct; forbearance of difficulty,  
patience; Enthusiasm, diligence; undistracted attention, meditative stability;  
Clarification of misunderstandings, sublime insight.

At the conclusion of the teaching, reflect on the master's kindness, and within an  
appreciation of the magical nature of phenomena, Dedicate to awakening the  
cultivation of the ennobling act of having listened.

The benefits of having heard the sound of the conch of the doctrine  
Are liberation from miserable existence, sublime insight, and flawless memory  
of what you listened to; Increase of ennobling acts; diminished wrongdoing;  
praise from gods and humans; And swift attainment of enlightenment, after  
which you turn the wheel of the doctrine.

Styles of faith in ennobling acts are described as follows:

Yearning faith prompts choices in relation to acts, causes, and consequences.

Devoted faith leads to dedication toward supreme ideals.

Respectful faith leads to outstanding conscientiousness.

Lucid faith uplifts the mind to positive qualities.

Trusting faith ends doubt concerning the teachings.

Certainty in faith leads to application in hearing the doctrine, and in reflection  
and meditation upon it.

The nature of faith resembles a field, a ship,  
An escort, a vehicle, a jewel, a warrior:  
You should value faith as your greatest wealth.

Without faith, you are like a stone on the ocean floor, a ship without a captain,  
An armless person, a burnt seed, the blind.  
You plunge to the depths of existence and wander forever within the round of  
rebirth.

Yearning faith arises from disillusionment with existence.

Devoted faith arises from disillusionment with evil companions.

Respectful faith arises from disillusionment with this life.

Lucid faith arises from pure, supreme ideals.

Trusting faith arises from hearing about karma and consequences.

Certainty in faith arises from all forms of hearing and reflection.

Causes that increase faith include relying upon holy persons.



Noble companions, examination of the discourses and tantras,  
Reflection on death, and acts and their consequences.  
These inspire increased effort in hearing and reflection, which cause faith to  
continually increase.

To hear the story of a holy person's life of freedom; to suffer harm from disease,  
demons, or enemies; To witness death; to experience sudden suffering— Once  
faith has arisen from having heard the teachings, it is valuable to sustain it.  
Conditions that cloud faith include consideration of spiritual masters' faults,  
Befriending common persons, increased craving for sensual pleasures,  
Laziness and apathy, preoccupation with this life's affairs,  
And activity detrimental to your spiritual life: these are signs of demons'  
blessing.

Indications of the arising of faith include disillusionment with the round of  
rebirth; Humility toward the three jewels; exertion in hearing the doctrine,  
reflection, training, and vows; Practice of ennobling acts; renunciation of  
wrongdoing; and the arising of new noble qualities.

Faith should be free from six inconsistencies.

Unchanging faith should have special qualities,

Like the king of mountains, the sun, the ocean, a mother, space, a bow-string, A  
ship, a bridge, a stream, and a silken cord.

The benefits of faith include increase of all positive qualities,

Relief from all suffering, finding the path to freedom,

Benevolent gods' protection, success in all your projects,

And the attainment of enlightenment: faith's benefits are infinite.

This concludes “The Transmission of Buddhism,” Book 2 of *The Invaluable  
Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all  
Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

### **BOOK 3: OUR PRECIOUS HUMAN LIFE**

The supreme contemplation of those who hear the doctrine with faith

Focuses on a jewel valuable beyond measure, the free and fully endowed human  
life, Extremely difficult to find anywhere among the six kinds of beings.

Obtaining it is like a blind person finding a gem:

Joyously seize its pure essence.

You are free from these eight unsatisfactory, restless states based in your own stream of being: In hell, suffering from heat and cold is unbearable.

Starving spirits are exhausted by hunger and thirst.

Dumb and foolish animals suffer terribly as beasts of burden.

Long-lived gods have no concept of spiritual practice.

Barbarians of the hinterlands live without ennobling acts and in the steady increase of wrongdoing.

Those who are mute or mentally handicapped cannot comprehend words or meanings.

Those who hold wrong views abjure correct views.

During dark eons, people live in ignorance of the subject of which acts to undertake and which to reject.

Renounce these eight restless states due to immediate circumstances:

Corrupting acts due to the five poisons' turmoil;

To fall under misleading companions' influence due to foolish and deluded thinking; To fall into demons' clutches due to mistaken views and conduct on a wrong path; Distraction by indolence although you intended to further your spiritual training; Although diligent, to be tormented by events when the lake of your bad karma overflows; To belong to the class of servants who live helplessly in others' power; To strive for materialistic goals because you entered the teachings for this life's sake; To practice Buddhism for gain, fame, or honor because your spiritual practice is contrived.

Eight restless states due to unconducive attitudes are the following:

To be bound by cords of attachment to family, friends, food, or wealth;

To have ignoble behavior and character that makes spiritual practice unprofitable; To feel no fear toward the sufferings of the round of rebirth or the miserable existences; To feel no faith whatsoever in ennobling acts;

Your acts in thought, word, and deed consist of corrupting wrongdoing;

To never consider the positive qualities of ennobling acts or the sacred doctrine;

To have damaged your vows of individual liberation or of awakened mind;

To have violated secret mantra's principal or secondary bonds.

Freedom from these twenty-four (three groups of eight) unsatisfactory, restless states is crucial.

Five personal endowments must be complete:

Previous spiritual training in ennobling acts has awakened—you attained a human birth.

You were born in a central country where the doctrines of Buddhist teaching and

practice have spread.

You possess the supreme conditions for spiritual practice—all your senses are intact.

You have not transgressed the laws of karma because you feel inclined toward ennobling acts.

You have faith in the sanctuary of faith, the three jewels.

The twelve unsurpassable teachers have appeared in this world.

They turned the wheel of the doctrine's nine ways of discourses and tantras.

The general and specific durations of the doctrine have not expired.

Many persons have entered the teachings' gate and accomplished the two goals.

Qualified spiritual masters have accepted you and benefactors support you.

These five social endowments together with the five personal endowments comprise the ten conducive endowments.

Now that they are complete, accomplish your long-term aspirations.

To give an example, to attain a precious human birth is rarer

Than for a turtle to stick its head through the hole

Of a yoke adrift on the open seas.

It is more difficult to be born with a body possessing these qualities

Than for beans to sprout on the surface of a plastered wall.

It is even more difficult than for a mustard seed to grow on the point of a needle.

Concerning number, humans, animals, starving spirits,

And hell beings are like daytime stars and stars at night:

The former is far outnumbered by the latter.

It is said that animals fill the oceans like the fermented grains left after beer has been brewed; Starving spirits cluster like snowflakes in a snowstorm;

And hell beings are as numerous as the particles of dust on the earth.

Mere human beings have no notion

Of ennobling acts or wrongdoing and their ripening:

Their evil behavior leads them to fall to the miserable existences' endless depths.

Special human beings, either householders or practitioners,

Confound ennobling acts and wrongdoing—

Sometimes they perform spiritual acts, but mostly materialistic ones.

At death, they have nothing but the seed of freedom.

The precious human life is the supreme support or vessel for the practice of the Buddhist teachings.

Such persons diligently apply themselves to hearing the doctrine, and to reflection and meditation upon it, subduing well their own minds, And they energetically bring others to the correct path.  
The victors have commended and praised this life as sublime.

Even the Buddhist teachings depend on the mind.  
The mind is based upon this free and fully endowed life. Therefore, when all the causes and conditions are gathered, Make subduing the mind the focus of your Buddhist practice.

Now that you have it, ride the ship of the free and fully endowed human life  
Across the wide sea of existence's unbearable suffering.  
If you do not make this exemplary life a vessel for the teachings,  
The round of rebirth's many sufferings will torment you later.

Like returning empty-handed from an isle of jewels,  
To waste this free and fully endowed life in meaningless acts is unconscionable.  
Since time immemorial, sufferings of existence have fallen like rain,  
The fault of not reflecting on the difficulty of attaining this human life.  
Upon the attainment of the precious human body  
Depends the support for the doctrine of the lesser and great ways, discourses and mantra; And the results of the paths of hearers, solitary sages, arhats, the victors' heirs, and sublime victors.  
Therefore, grasp the essence of this life and always meditate joyously.

You must spurn all materialistic, meaningless acts.  
Renounce both lifestyles' activities: farming, companions,  
Fortune, giving counsel, partiality, and philosophies.

When you have these conditions, you can achieve their related work:  
The finest horse; warmth, moisture, and manure; a warrior's troops;  
A mine; autumn crops; a guide; equipment; or servants.  
Likewise, energetically make your human life's leisure and endowments meaningful now.

In any activity, such as moving about or sitting, abandon six faults, including indolence.

Like the hungry seeing food  
Or the thirsty seeing drink; the destitute, wealth and possessions;  
Doctors, medicine; parents, their children;  
Those in danger seeking any refuge they can find,  
Practice every form—elaborate or simple—of the cultivation of ennobling acts.

Energetic reflection as described leads you to forsake this life's concerns, To  
strive for the next life, and to spend this life busy in the practice of ennobling  
acts.

The blaze ignited by diligence will quickly liberate you from the ocean of  
existence: You will hold the victory banner of freedom.

This concludes “Our Precious Human Life,” Book 3 of *The Invaluable Treasury  
of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all Buddhist ways of  
spiritual development.

#### **BOOK 4: REFLECTION ON DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE**

Although you have gained a life with leisure, so difficult to attain,  
It is definitely impermanent, like a jewel found in a dream.  
This body and possessions, seemingly so real,  
Are all impermanent in their minutest detail; even your body will change into  
another.

The four elements, Supreme Mountain, and the four continents, with the sun and  
moon, And any being of the six kinds in billions of realms are impermanent.  
All undergo the four stages of formation, duration, destruction, and vacuity:

How can this bubble-like body be permanent?

If very powerful beings, such as Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, planets, nagas, noxious  
spirits, Universal monarchs, and others imbued with glowing strength, wealth,  
and glory Are subject to impermanence,  
This body of negligible goodness will soon pass away.

Guides of this world, mighty sage buddhas; hosts of victors' spiritual heirs;  
Hearers, solitary sages, the circle of disciples, and the doctrine  
Have previously appeared in infinite numbers but were each subject to  
impermanence: This life which is like dew cannot last.

After birth, death is certain

But its time, place, and causes are not.

Many things cause death; few prolong life.

Time cannot be added; life passes in an instant. It is impossible to stay.

At death, your home, possessions, family, glory, abilities,  
Masses of supporters, and other things are all of no use.  
Therefore, it makes sense to abandon now the projects of this life's deluded  
perceptions And to strive single-mindedly at the sacred Buddhist doctrine.  
The people gathered in one household and close entourage  
Are like shoppers in the marketplace—each goes his or her own way.  
Old or young, it is uncertain who will have to depart for the next life: Everyone  
should avoid animosity or quarrels and devote themselves to ennobling acts.  
A tree on the riverbank, a decrepit house, an old tree trunk,  
Dry wood, autumn flowers, thunder or echoes,  
Clouds, fog, a rainbow, the sun and moon,  
And the extinguishing of a flame: these illustrate the body's impermanence.

At death, the three jewels and your stores of ennobling acts will surely prove  
helpful.  
Rely upon holy persons; and in everything you do, whether sitting or moving,  
Remember death as a means to inspire yourself to spiritual life.  
You should guard this as the heart of your experiential cultivation.

Reflecting on death, you see the destructibility of composite phenomena.  
Your diligence increases and you abandon pursuit of this life's activity.  
You have not even an instant of leisure time to dwell in the mundane.  
Disillusionment and renunciation diminish your preoccupations.

The benefits are abandonment of faulty behavior; the natural gathering of  
qualities; Liberation from delusion, from desire and anger, and from  
attachment to things as permanent; Utmost diligence in ennobling acts;  
completion of stores of goodness and wisdom; and consideration by the  
victors: You die in happiness and quickly attain enlightenment.  
This concludes "Reflection on Death and Impermanence," Book 4 of *The  
Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates  
all Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

## **BOOK 5: THE WORKINGS OF KARMA**

Death is certain; therefore, the choice between ennobling acts and wrongdoing is  
our central issue.

On the foundation of the storehouse of all dualistic experience, ignorance and its associated factors— The afflicted mind's three poisons—produce the ten corrupting acts,

Which result in the three miserable existences; and the ten ennobling acts, which result in birth as a god or human; And uncontaminated ennobling acts, which lead to the attainment of freedom.

Killing is the unmistakable, deliberate ending of another's life;

Striking, beating, or other acts that harm another's well-being belong to the same category.

Taking what is not given is to steal another's wealth;

Gain through deceitful or dishonest means belongs to the same category.

Wrong sexual conduct is to have intercourse with a partner claimed by another;

Inappropriate sexual activity belongs to the same category.

Lying is to confound truth and lies in order to deceive another;

Manipulation with seeming honesty belongs to the same category.

Divisive speech is to speak words that estrange persons in harmony or those already unfriendly; To incite animosity by speaking of another's faults belongs to the same category.

Meaningless speech is to talk of unsound treatises or gossip;

To speak of irrelevant or materialistic topics belongs to the same category.

Rough speech is to use words that hurt another's feelings;

To talk of things that cause others discomfort belongs to the same category.

Covetousness is the wish to acquire another's possessions;

To be attached through desire to another's wealth belongs to the same category.

Ill will is mental agitation with malicious thoughts toward another;

To not wish for another's good fortune belongs to the same category.

Wrong views are views of eternalism, nihilism, or of no relation between action and consequence; To exaggerate or denigrate the correct teachings belongs to the same category.

Corrupting acts produce four consequences:

Ripened consequences, experience consistent with karma, acts consistent with karma, and environmental consequences.

Acts' ripened fruits are these:

Minor acts among the ten corrupting acts result in rebirth as an animal; Medium

acts, as a starving spirit; and serious acts, as a hell being.

Experience consistent with corrupting karma is as follows: even if you attain rebirth in the higher existences, Killing results in a short life span and in many sicknesses that prove incurable.

Taking what was not given results in poverty and in encountering many enemies and thieves.

Wrong sexual conduct results in an unattractive spouse and in many competitive enemies.

Lying results in slander and deceit.

Divisive speech results in separation from friends and in general disharmony.

Rough speech results in hearing many unpleasant things and in arguments.

Meaningless speech results in lack of self-confidence and in not being believed.

Covetousness results in not accomplishing your hopes and in lack of contentment.

Ill will results in fearfulness and in often being harmed.

Wrong views result in continued bad views and in often being deceived.

Thus, each consequence of the ten corrupting acts has two aspects.

Acts consistent with the ten corrupting forms of karma

Incline a person to continue to do now

Whatever acts he or she did in the past and thus, naturally and effortlessly, To commit many evil deeds and to fall once again to miserable existences.

Environmental consequences ripen in the place of birth:

Taking another's life results in birth in an unattractive region

Where medicinal plants do not grow, the food and drink are not nutritious and hard to digest, And any sickness can be life-threatening.

Taking what was not given results in birth where harvests do not ripen, Frost and hail are common, and famines occur.

Wrong sexual conduct results in birth in a swampy area,

In a region which is unhygienic and malodorous with feces and urine,  
And in a frightening and depressing place.

Lying results in birth in a land of disharmony and changing fortunes,  
And in a deceptive region full of fear.

Divisive speech results in birth in a land of ravines, steep cliffs, and deep gorges,

Where travel is difficult, the land is very uneven,  
And both moving and settling down are inconvenient



And both moving and settling down are inconvenient.

Rough speech results in birth in a dusty, filthy land of bad crops,  
Where rocks, stunted tree trunks, thorns, salty ground, and other things  
Make the land disturbing and unpleasant.

Meaningless speech results in birth in an unstable land where the seasons are  
unpredictable, And where harvests do not ripen.

Covetousness results in birth in a land where fruit is sparse but bark plentiful,  
And where the place and time are evil.

Ill will results in birth in a land where harm abounds:  
Bandits, thieves, snakes, poison, rulers' punishments,  
Wild malicious animals, and hot-tasting fruit.

Wrong views result in birth in a land without natural resources, such as jewels,  
Where flowers, fruit, and medicinal trees are rare,  
And where there is no security or powerful friends to provide sanctuary.

The path of ennobling acts has ten aspects:

Having renounced killing, you ransom the lives of those sure to die.

Not taking what was not given, you give gifts of material goods.

Not engaging in wrongful sexual activity, you act purely.

Not lying, you speak honestly.

Not speaking divisively, you seek to reconcile discord between others.

Not speaking nonsense, you talk about meaningful subjects.

Not speaking roughly, you speak pleasantly.

Not coveting, you are content.

Untroubled by ill will, you develop an altruistic attitude.

Having abandoned wrong views, you devote yourself to correct views.

Acts of stillness are meditations of the four levels of meditative stability And the  
four formless realms.

The consequences of ripened ennobling acts are these:

Ennobling acts tainted by jealousy and associated factors result in birth in  
regions of demigods; Minor accumulation of ten ennobling acts tainted by  
pride results in birth as a human being; Middle accumulation of such acts,  
among gods of the desire realm;

Major accumulation of such acts, if done in conjunction with the four levels of  
meditative stability, among gods in the form realm.

If the ten ennobling acts are performed in conjunction with the four levels of  
formless meditative stability, among gods in the formless realm.

In the desire realm, karma principally manifests in the seven collections of coarse consciousness; In the form realm, in clarity without discursive thought, the storehouse consciousness; In the formless realm, in tranquility that remains one-pointed within the storehouse of all dualistic experience.

Experience consistent with ennobling karma is as follows:

Renunciation of killing results in long life, freedom from illness, and happiness.

Renunciation of taking what was not given results in attainment of magnificent power and wealth.

Renunciation of wrong sexual conduct results in an attractive partner and no competitive enemies.

Renunciation of telling lies results in gaining others' praise and respect.

Renunciation of divisive speech results in being attractive in others' sight.

Renunciation of meaningless speech results in your words being credited as trustworthy.

Renunciation of rough speech results in the increase of your favorable renown.

Renunciation of covetousness results in accomplishment of all your goals.

Renunciation of ill will results in being attractive and subduing others on sight.

Renunciation of wrong views results in correct views arising in your mind.

The consequence of having practiced the ten ennobling acts in previous lifetimes

Is turning away from corrupting acts in thought, word, and deed,

And natural application to the ten ennobling acts.

This leads to the attainment of excellent lifetimes among gods and humans.

The environmental consequences of engaging in the ten ennobling acts are as follows: Renunciation of killing results in birth in a pleasant land,

Where medicine and grains are nutritious and life is secure.

Renunciation of taking what was not given results in birth in a land where harvests are abundant And wealth in food and riches increases.

Renunciation of wrong sexual conduct results in birth in an attractive land, Which is clean, wide, and sweet-smelling.

Renunciation of lying results in birth in a land

Where wealth lasts, which lives in harmony with its neighbors, and where there is no deceit or fear.

Renunciation of divisive speech results in birth in a land

Which is spacious, happy, and even; where both travel and settling down are easy.

Renunciation of meaningless speech results in birth in a land

Where the seasons are regular, where leaves, flowers, and fruit ripen on time.

Renunciation of rough speech results in birth in a land

Where the land and fields are even, and which is adorned with lakes and pools.  
Renunciation of covetousness results in birth in a land  
Where plentiful harvests of every desirable object multiply.  
Renunciation of ill will results in birth in a land  
Where all inhabitants—humans and nonhumans—are not harmful, and which  
has every conducive condition.  
Renunciation of wrong views results in birth in a magnificent land,  
Which has jewel mines, security, and powerful allies.  
To gain freedom from the sufferings of existence,  
Enter the way of the hearers, solitary sages, or bodhisattvas,  
Then strive day and night at ennobling acts,  
Epitomized by awakening's thirty-seven facets,  
The four immeasurable aspirations, and the six transcendent perfections.  
Ennobling acts of body, speech, and mind such as these  
Sealed with dedication to enlightenment are called “acts consistent with  
freedom.”

Physical, verbal, and mental ennobling acts guided by the skillful means and  
sublime insight Of the three Buddhist ways constitute acts  
That result in the temporary attainment of life as a god or human and in the  
ultimate attainment Of the hearers' or solitary sages' awakening or of supreme  
awakening.

This concludes “The Workings of Karma,” Book 5 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

## **BOOK 6: THE FLAWS OF THE ROUND OF REBIRTH**

As described, action and consequences function precisely and subtly.  
Therefore, many evil acts motivated by the power of anger  
Result in the hells' excruciating suffering.

Among these, in Reviving Hell, beings take miraculous birth on a ground of hot  
iron, On seeing one another, they become uncontrollably enraged, and strike  
one another with sharp weapons.  
Once dead, a sound revives them, and they reexperience the same torment.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows:  
Fifty human years equal a day for the gods of the four great divine kings.

Thirty such days equal a month; twelve months, one year.

Five hundred of such years equal one day in Reviving Hell.

Beings in this hell live five hundred of their own years:

Thus, they suffer for a total

Of one trillion, six hundred and twenty billion human years.

Below, in Black Line Hell, beings are sliced up by saws, then rejoined, and again cut and rejoined: Their sufferings are immeasurable.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows: one hundred human years equal one day for the gods in Heaven of the Thirty-Three; One thousand of their years equal one day in Black Line Hell;

Beings in that hell live one thousand of their own years.

In human terms, this equals three trillion, two hundred and forty billion years Of enduring suffering from being cut and sliced up.

Below, in Crushing Hell, the mountains are shaped

Like heads of tigers, lions, horses, or camels.

Beings are pulverized to dust between these; the mountains separate, and the beings return to life.

In a region of iron, hammers beat them to powder;

They are pressed so their blood flows in great streams.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows: two hundred human years equal one day in the Heaven of Twins; Two thousand years there equal one day in Crushing Hell;

Beings in this hell live two thousand years,

Equal in human terms to six trillion, four hundred and eighty billion years Of torment due to unbearable karma.

Below, in Wailing Hell, beings are burned in blazing fires and cooked in molten iron: They cry out in agony.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows: four hundred human years equal one day in Joyful Heaven.

Four thousand years there equal one day in Wailing Hell;

Beings in this hell live four thousand of their own years,

Equal in human terms

To twelve trillion, nine hundred and sixty billion years.

Below, in Great Screaming Hell, in iron buildings,  
Beings are burnt in blazing fires: a great screaming resounds.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows: eight hundred human years equal  
one day in Heaven of Joy in Creation.

Eight thousand years there equal one day in Great Screaming Hell.

Beings in this hell live eight thousand of their own years,

Equal in human terms to twenty-five trillion, nine hundred and twenty billion  
years.

Below, in Hot Hell, beings enter blazing iron buildings,  
Where they are beaten by hammers and pierced by spears.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows:

One thousand, six hundred human years equal one day in Heaven of Control of  
Others' Creations.

Sixteen thousand years there equal one day in Hot Hell.

Hell beings there live sixteen thousand of their own years,

Equal in human terms

To fifty-one trillion, eight hundred and forty billion years of the experience of suffering.

Below, in Extremely Hot Hell, in two-storied iron buildings,

Beings are pierced by a three-pronged spear that protrudes from the head and the two shoulders, Then placed on a flat slab of blazing iron and cooked in molten copper.

Life there lasts half an eon,

A time incalculable in human years.

Below, in the Hell of Uninterrupted Torment, in blazing iron buildings,

No difference can be perceived between sentient beings and fire,

Apart from hell beings' anguished cries.

They are consumed like a lamp's wick.

Life there lasts for an intermediate eon.

Since no greater suffering exists,

This hell is known as Torment Without Respite or Interruption.

The differences in the heat of the hells' fires are this:

Each is seven times more intense than the one above.

The eight cold hells are located in layers directly above the eight hot hells.

In their dark expanse, raging snowstorms swirl

In icy enclosures that are extremely cold.

In descending order, they are Blistering, Blister Bursting,

Teeth Chattering, Sneezing Achoo, Sneezing Kerchoo,

Splitting like a Water Lily, Splitting like a Lotus,

And Splitting like a Large Lotus.

Inside the hell beings' open wounds live various sharp-toothed insects that gnaw into their flesh.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows:

If one hundred bags of sesame seeds are emptied at the rate of one grain each hundred years, this equals the life of a being in Blistering.

Longevity in each hell is double that of the preceding one.

The neighboring hells are located around the eight hot hells or around the Hell of Uninterrupted Torment.

Four lie in each of the four directions, sixteen in all:  
Fire Pit, Swamp of Corpses, Plain of Weapons,  
And River Without Ford.

In Fire Pit, beings find a good trench where they can hide, but when they enter it, it becomes a pit of coals Where they experience the suffering of their flesh and bones being burned.

In Swamp of Corpses, they see a cool swamp but when they enter it, it becomes a swamp of corpses, Where stinking worms with sharp iron and copper beaks eat them.

In Plain of Weapons, they see a pleasant plain but when they go there, Many extremely sharp razors slice them to pieces.

When they go to an attractive forest, it becomes a forest of swords—

The wind moves the swords, which fall, cutting them.

They see their previous homeland at the top of a mountain, but as they go toward it, Sharp iron spikes cut them so they bleed.

At the top, vultures pluck out their brains, eyes, and fat.

Then they think they hear a summons from the bottom of the hill—

During their descent, the spikes turn upward and they are again tormented by being pierced.

At the bottom, they are embraced by sharp-toothed men or women, Burned, and then eaten by dogs and wolves.

In River Without Ford, they see a river, but on entering it, they sink up to their necks In hot ash, burning their flesh and bones.

On the banks they see fearsome death demons who prevent them from leaving.

In these hells, suffering is experienced for many thousands of years.

Occasional hells are located in various places—

On mountains, in forests, between rocks, in fire or water, or at the edge of the continents.

Beings can be few, many, or alone, and so on;

Each is oppressed by suffering appropriate to their karma.

A moderate number of evil acts motivated by desire and greed results in birth as a starving spirit.

Starving spirits obscured in relation to outer phenomena see any of four mistaken perceptions: Those who mistakenly perceive mountains see a cool forest, but on going there, The forest burns and falling pieces of wood scorch them

Those who mistakenly perceive rivers see a stream, but on going there,  
The wind blows hot sand: the place becomes a plain of agony.  
Those who mistakenly perceive rain clouds see a cloud from which a rain of iron  
arrows Falls like bolts of lightning with fire-arrows and smoke, cutting them.  
Those who mistakenly perceive temperature feel snowstorms hot when heat  
threatens them, And fire cold when cold threatens.  
Those obscured in relation to physical perceptions have a mouth the size of the  
eye of a needle, A belly the size of a province, and arms and legs the size of  
blades of grass.  
When they eat a little, a fire burns inside,  
Scorches their inner organs, and sends smoke billowing out their mouths.

Those who have general obscurations are obsessed with food and drink  
But see others aggressively guarding the food.

Starving spirits who fly through space include ruler demons,  
Noxious spirits, ogres, *tsen* spirits, and demons.  
They fly unhindered through the power of their miraculous karma.  
They cause diseases, steal radiant well-being, obstruct vitality,  
And perform various kinds of harmful acts.

Their duration of life is calculated as follows: one human month is a day for the  
starving spirits.  
They live five hundred of their own years: in human terms, fifteen thousand  
years, During which they experience suffering corresponding to their previous  
acts.  
A small number of corrupting acts motivated by stupidity results in birth as an  
animal.

Submerged in the depths of oceans between the continents,  
Dolphins, fish, crustaceans, and other such wealth of the nagas—  
Animals of various shapes and sizes—  
Live crowded together like the fermented grains left after beer has been brewed.  
The large eat the small; the small pierce the large.  
At such dark places as the sides of the iron mountains at the far reaches of the  
world-system, Animals experience the limitless suffering of being eaten by  
one another.

Species scattered among the five other realms of existence—  
Such as birds, deer, wild animals, horses, cattle, and sheep—  
Are made beasts of burden or are slaughtered for their meat, skin, or bones.



Hot sand and fear of garudas torment nagas.  
The animals who live the longest live for an eon; the shortest, for a day.  
Life span is uncertain and varied.

A small number of ennobling acts motivated by pride and attachment  
Results in birth as a human of the four continents.  
Humans of all four continents, and particularly those of this world, Land of  
Jambu, Experience torment by three principal and eight secondary sufferings.  
The three principal sufferings are suffering heaped upon suffering:  
For example, when assailed by enemies, to fall ill.  
The suffering of change: for example, after suffering from hunger, to be unable  
to digest food.  
The suffering of the composite: for example, to act corruptly to acquire food or  
clothing; Or afflictive poisons that lead to committing the causes of suffering.  
In the womb, energy, mind, semen, and ovum conjoin:  
The fetus grows and develops for nine months and ten days,  
During which time it experiences the sufferings of being cramped in a dark,  
nauseating place.  
When the mother eats, the fetus feels as if crushed under a mountain;  
When she moves, as if falling down a precipice.  
When karma turns the child's head and backsides around at birth,  
The child experiences suffering like that of the Crushing Hell.

During the suffering of aging, the complexion fades, hair turns white,  
Teeth fall out, eyes weaken, warmth grows faint, digestive strength is exhausted,  
Memory fades, and you walk, sit, or move with difficulty.  
The tongue cannot taste distinct flavors, sounds are unheard,  
Faults multiply, qualities diminish: everybody disdains you.

During the suffering of sickness, this healthy body  
Is made seriously ill by disturbances of circulating energy, bile, or phlegm.  
Food and drink seem revolting,  
Sleep is impossible, lancing pain racks your body,  
And intolerably strong medicines and treatments, such as burning and blood-  
letting, must be borne.

When life's creative force is spent, karma at an end, and conditions that nurture  
life dissipate, The signs of death appear and delusory perceptions arise.  
You must leave behind this cherished body, possessions, family, and  
companions To wander alone along the terrifying passage between lifetimes.

You assume the new miserable body your karma impels you to take—  
Miseries such as these make the suffering of death interminable. How  
heartbreaking!

The suffering of meeting enemies

Includes the misery of not having the means to prevent their harm

To your body or possessions  
Due to their numbers; their foul, harmful acts; or their time of appearing.

When separated from loved ones,  
You remember their qualities and wail with many laments.  
Without companions or loved ones, your power is weak, your mind hesitant.  
You have no opportunity for happiness; you feel great anguish.

With no food for your mouth, no clothes for your back,  
No place to stay, no useful wealth,  
You sink into the misery of poverty and destitution,  
When no matter how hard you try, you can't accomplish the slightest fraction of  
your wishes.

The five contaminated psychophysical aggregations—  
Form, sensation, perception, formative factors, and consciousness—  
Are nothing but suffering's support, vessel, and source.

Ennobling acts influenced by jealousy and associated factors  
Result in birth as a demigod of four kinds.  
They feel overpowering jealousy toward the gods' wealth and splendor  
And are wounded or killed in battle during conflicts and disputes with the gods.

Accumulating a large number of the ten ennobling acts motivated by pride  
results in birth as a god of the desire realm.  
When they suffer death and falling,  
Their color worsens, their seat becomes uncomfortable, their flowers wilt, Their  
clothes reek, and their bodies perspire.  
Abandoned by friends, they sit alone and confused.  
With clairvoyant power, they see the place of their future rebirth: they become  
terrified.  
These unbearable experiences last for seven days of the gods.

When the form realm gods' karma of meditative stability is spent  
Or when the formless gods' karma of stillness is exhausted,  
They plummet from level to level, experiencing endless descent into the  
suffering of conditioned existence.  
Therefore, attainment of higher existences is but a fleeting respite from  
suffering.

Since suffering exists wherever you are born within the round of rebirth, You must exert yourself to achieve freedom.

The techniques taught by innumerable victors have not been sufficient in themselves: Think, “I will strive above all else at the sublime means to reach freedom And accomplish my aspirations for a lasting state of sure excellence.” This concludes “The Flaws of the Round of Rebirth,” Book 6 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

## **BOOK 7: TAKING REFUGE AND THE LESSER WAY**

Refuge is taken in fear of the round of rebirth as described,  
And with the wish for freedom.

Lesser individuals take refuge in fear of miserable existences  
And to gain the higher existences of gods and humans.

The two kinds of middle individual fear the round of rebirth.

Great individuals take refuge to liberate all beings and in fear of both existence  
and the bliss of static peace.

These three individuals’ attitudes are inferior, middle, and best.

The duration of refuge: Lesser individuals take refuge until they achieve positive results later.

Middle individuals take refuge either temporarily, for as long as they live, Or ultimately, until they achieve the results of the ways of hearers or solitary sages.

Great individuals take refuge until they reach unsurpassable awakening.

The formless body of ultimate enlightenment is endowed with five kinds of vision, six forms of clairvoyance, Ten powers, aspects of retention, ten forces, Four forms of fearlessness, four modes of individual awareness,  
And eighteen unique qualities.

Enlightenment’s two bodies that have form—the body of perfect rapture and the sublime manifest body— Display the thirty-two excellent signs, the eighty marks of physical perfection, And all sixty aspects of melodious speech.

They epitomize wisdom, love, and capability.

The doctrine of scripture comprises discourses, aphorisms in verse, Prophetic declarations, verses, meaningful expressions, narratives, Parables, legends, extensive teachings,

Tales of past lives, established instructions, and marvelous events;  
And the tantras—action, conduct, yoga, father, mother, and nondual.  
The doctrine of realization comprises realization  
Gained from experiential cultivation on the paths of the ways of discourses and  
tantras.

The spiritual community comprises hearers and solitary sages in four pairs, The  
victors' heirs who have reached stages of awakening, and hosts of dakinis,  
adepts, and awareness holders.

In the vivid presence of the places of refuge, imagined in space,  
All beings respectfully fold hands in prayer with you and recite:

“To become free from every danger  
Of the realms of existence and of static peace,  
I respectfully take refuge with faith in the spiritual master,  
The Buddha, the doctrine, and the spiritual community, until I attain  
unsurpassable awakening.”

After repeating those lines three times, consider that you receive the refuge  
vows.

The givers of refuge joyfully send their blessings in the form of a mass of light  
That purifies your own and every being's physical, verbal, and mental  
wrongdoing and obscurations: This completes your cultivation of goodness  
and plants the fortune for you to attain enlightenment's bodies that have form.  
The Buddha is the teacher of your teacher of refuge;  
The doctrine is the path; the spiritual community, your companions in its  
practice.

The place of refuge which is the result is the body of ultimate enlightenment's  
wisdom— The ultimate jewel, luminosity, the sublime state free from  
embellishment.

Settle in evenness in the ultimate ongoing state  
In which the giver of refuge and the taker of refuge are indivisible.  
This completes the store of wisdom and leads to the attainment of the body of  
ultimate enlightenment.

After, in the understanding of phenomena as illusory, dedicate the goodness of  
the act of having taken refuge.

Training in refuge as a cause includes the following points: do not forsake the

spiritual master and the three jewels Even for the sake of your life or country.  
After having taken refuge in the spiritual master, do not mislead venerable persons; Forsake slander or unpleasant speech to holy persons.

After having taken refuge in the Buddha, do not bow or make offerings to other gods; respect Buddhist images.

After having taken refuge in the doctrine,

Renounce harming others; respect the slightest amount of the written word.

After having taken refuge in the spiritual community, do not make close friendships with non-Buddhists, and foster respect toward even a scrap of orange cloth.

During the day and night's six sessions, remember the three jewels and take refuge.

Training in refuge as a result includes training in the native state of the nature of reality, Unembellished by concepts of high and low, what must be done or not done, and so on.

The refuge vows are given up when wrong views have arisen and the training is violated.

The benefits of refuge are freedom from fear during future lifetimes;

Rapid completion of the stores of goodness and wisdom; increase of qualities;

And protection by benevolent gods: refuge has limitless benefits.

It forms the supreme foundation for all qualities.

In the sublime doctrinal cycle of the four truths,

The Teacher, the Buddha, emphasized training in ethical conduct.

In Varanasi, he taught this to the five excellent individuals. Upali compiled these teachings.

Five hundred arhats composed *The Treasury of Detailed Explanation*.

Gunaprabha wrote and spread *The Root Discourse on the Monastic Code of Conduct*; Shakyaprabha, *The Three-Hundred-Verse Commentary on the Training of Novices*, and other texts.

In Tibet, Shantarakshita spread the lineage of the substantialist order's vows.

The original translations include four texts on the transmission of discipline: *The Basic Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct*, *The Detailed Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct*, *The Supplementary Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct*, and *The Highest Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct*.

These books contain a total of 104,800 stanzas.

The Tibetan canon contains seventy-two discourses

And sixty-three treatises of commentary that belong to this cycle.

The essence of the vows is abjuration, based on an attitude of disengagement, Of acts that harm others and the basis of such acts.

Since the vows arise based upon the body and voice,

They are considered to have form.

The seed of a continual attitude of renunciation is crucial.

The vows' classification includes three vows for laypersons:

Vows for temporary fasting, and vows for male and female laypersons;

And five kinds of vows for renunciants: vows for male novice monk and female novice nun, female spiritual apprentice, and fully ordained monk and fully ordained nun.

Together, these constitute the eight kinds of individual liberation vows.

Another classification counts four: vows of temporary fasting, layperson, novice, and full ordination.

Rituals of former times to receive vows included natural full ordination; Full ordination was also completed by understanding wisdom; acceptance of the command, "Come forward!"; Promises; replies to questions; and messages.

In modern rituals, an individual free of the five certain hindrances and with none of the four obstacles Receives the ordination gradually, in three stages.

In the former two stages, before full ordination, refuge,

Personal affirmation, and others' acceptance constitute the three parts.

The vows arise after the personal affirmation. In the latter stage, which comprises recitations of the essence, action, and performance, The vows arise immediately after the action recitation.

The temporary fasting vows have eight aspects:

The four main vows—aspects concerned with ethical conduct;

Renunciation of intoxicants—an aspect concerned with conscientiousness;

Renunciation of seats that are large or high, dancing and wearing garlands, And eating after the noon meal—three aspects of disciplined conduct.

Lay practitioners who maintain the three refuges

Renounce three things and practice three things.

Among five acts, four principal acts can be renounced—to kill, to steal, wrongful sexual conduct, and to lie; And a supplementary act—to take intoxicants.

One, two, three, or five of these can be renounced.

To do so represents, respectively, "one part," "some parts," "most," and



“complete” conduct.

To renounce all impure (that is, sexual) activity constitutes the “pure-living layperson’s” vows.

To sustain these eight vows permanently constitutes the “venerable layperson’s” vows.

Novices renounce four principal acts—

Taking life, taking what was not given, impure conduct, and lying;

And six supplementary acts—taking intoxicants, dancing and related acts, wearing garlands and related attire, resting on a high bed, Eating after the noon meal, and accepting gold and silver.

When added to the first four, these comprise ten coarse acts.

There are thirty fine points of training, thirteen permissions,

And three pertinent offenses to be renounced.

Female spiritual apprentices must renounce six principal acts—

To travel alone, to swim, to touch an adult male person,

To sit together with an adult male, to match-make, and to conceal their faults;

And six related ones—to keep gold, to shave their pubic hair,

To till the soil, to eat food that has not been formally offered and accepted, To eat stored food, and to cut grass.

The discipline for fully ordained monks comprises two hundred and fifty-three regulations.

They are divided into five classes of downfalls.

The first class is the four principal defeating acts;

The first of these is impure conduct.

Its basis one of the three openings of another’s body;

The intention is to satisfy desire; the act is the movement of the penis; the completion is satisfaction.

The second defeating act is to take what has not been given.

The basis of theft is another’s wealth; the intention is the wish to make it the monk’s own; The act is to steal a valuable object.

The completion of the act is to have thought that he has obtained it. At that moment, the vow is broken.

The third defeating act is taking human life.

The basis of killing is another human being.

The intention is the wish to kill the individual the monk knows is present

The intention is the wish to kill the individual the monk knows is present.  
The act is to begin the act of murder. Its completion is achieved when the other dies before the monk.

The fourth defeating act is to lie concerning spiritual attainment.

The basis of lying is a human being who understands the meaning of the monk's words; The intention is to wish to speak in order to change the other's perception; The act is to claim clairvoyance or other abilities, although the monk has none; The act is completed when the other understands the lie.

The thirteen remaining downfalls are to ejaculate, to touch a female out of desire, To speak lustful words to a woman, to extol service for intercourse, to match-make, To construct an oversized house, to construct a large house for himself, Baseless accusation, slightly substantiated accusation,

To create a division within the monastic community, to side with those who split the monastic community, To disappoint laypersons, and to voice discontentment with the commands of the monastic assembly.

The thirty downfalls for which the object that caused the downfall must be forfeited concern the robes, the mat, and the begging bowl—ten for each.

The ninety downfalls are divided into nine categories of ten each:

Conscious, seeds, without designation, repetition,

Within water, layperson, intentional, many travelers, and teaching the doctrine.

The four acts to be acknowledged individually are to beg for food, to eat food served with favoritism, To beg in spite of restrictions, and to not watch the forest but to eat.

The one hundred and twelve reprehensible acts include ten concerning wearing clothes— Seven concern the lower robe; three, the upper robe.

Twenty concern behavior when walking to homes; nine, how to sit;

Eight, acceptance of food; twenty-one, eating food;

Fourteen, handling the begging bowl;

Twenty-six, teaching; three, practice of hygiene; and one, movement.

In total, there are two hundred and fifty-three vows for fully ordained monks.

In brief, a fully ordained nun renounces eight defeating acts, twenty remaining downfalls, Thirty-three downfalls that require relinquishment, one hundred and eighty simple downfalls, Eleven acts to be acknowledged individually, and one hundred and twelve reprehensible acts— Three hundred and sixty-four regulations in all.

The life that is the support for the vows is a male or female human being. From

The one that is the support for the vows is a male or female human being from one of three continents. Non-Buddhists, those who have committed one of the acts of immediate fruition, Persons without genitals, or persons from the continent of Unpleasant Sound are ineligible.

The vows are terminated by offering back the training, by death, by change of gender, By the arising of wrong views, by the commission of one of the principal downfalls, By the decline of the sacred Buddhist doctrine, or by other events.

If a defeating act has been committed, the fact must not be concealed. The training must be offered back with regret: It is said the vows can thereby arise again.

If a defeating act is concealed, the vows cannot be repaired during this lifetime. In the case of remaining downfalls, downfalls that require relinquishment, and others, they must be regretted In the presence of the monastic community. By energetic application to restoring the vows, they can be purified.

On the basis of the vows of individual liberation, taken so that the holder reaches freedom from existence, The hearers practice the four guidelines of ennobling training.

The view is realization of the nonexistence of a self sensed in the individual;

Meditation is actualization of the thirty-seven facets of awakening

Along the paths of cultivation, application, seeing, and meditation.

The code of conduct is to keep the two hundred and fifty-three monastic vows during ten thousand great eons.

Having thus trained, the result beyond training is the state of arhat.

The foundation of the way of solitary sages is to correctly restrain yourself, motivated by disengagement.

The view is the nonexistence of the individual sense of self, but without renunciation Of the clinging consciousness that grasps objective phenomena.

The rhinoceros-like sage traverses the path during the course of one hundred great eons; The solitary sage of a large community, during one hundred lifetimes;

And the solitary sage of a small community, in just thirteen human lifetimes.

On the four paths—cultivation, application, seeing, and meditation—

Meditation is done on the thirty-seven facets of awakening, the three gateways to liberation, And the unfolding and reversal of the twelve links of causation—

Ignorance, formations, consciousness, name and form aggregations,

Senses, contact, sensation, craving,

Grasping, existence, birth, and aging and death.

The code of conduct is to sustain the sublime ethical conduct of serenity and self-control.

The result of no further training is the state of a solitary sage arhat, a middle state of awakening.

Solitary sages rest in the sphere of static peace for as long a period as they spent cultivating goodness and wisdom.

Then they are born in a lotus in a pure land of the manifest body of enlightenment; After seven years, the lotus opens,

The sages see the Buddha's face, and they learn the great way.

This concludes "Taking Refuge and the Lesser Way," Book 7 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

## **BOOK 8: THE FOUNDATION OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

On the foundation established by the vows of refuge,  
The enlightened heritage's meaning can be explained within the context of the  
great way's uplift of the mind to that which is sublime.

In lands of gods, nagas, and others,  
Shakyamuni taught a variety of disciples  
His final cycle of instructions, definitive ultimate truth.

The original translations include *Flower Ornament Discourse*; *Mound of Jewels Discourse*; *Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse*; *Discourse Requested by the King, the Powerful Formula*; *Lion's Roar of Shrialadevi*; *Discourse Requested by the Girl Named Ratnadevi*; *Discourse Requested by the Goddess Vimalaprabha*; *Discourse to Help Angulimala*; *Discourse Requested by Maitreya*; *Discourse on Buddha Nature*, and others—Ninety units in all. The new translations include twenty-four discourses And forty treatises of commentary.

From the perspective of ultimate truth, the qualities of buddha nature's  
appearance aspect Manifest as enlightenment's bodies and pure lands;  
Its emptiness aspect's qualities include the ten forces and four forms of  
fearlessness.

The primordial, ever-present, unchanging constituent of innate awareness Is  
veiled by incidental stains—the delusion of dualistic clinging, karma, and  
mental afflictions.

When these veils are purified, stainless qualities unfold.

Buddha nature pervades all sentient life.

The signs of this enlightened heritage having awakened are sight of existence's faults and of the qualities of perfect peace.

Its supreme qualities liberate us from the sea of existence.

The basic space of phenomena is the support; appearances, the content.

The enlightened heritage can exist within impurity, purity, or extreme purity.

Butter, a lamp, a jewel, gold, grain,

And fruit: these six metaphors illustrate the basis, path, and result.

A buddha within a lotus, bees and honey,

Grain in a husk, gold in filth,

A buried treasure, a sprout from a seed,

A jeweled image in rags, a sovereign in the womb,

Gold covered with earth: these are nine metaphors of the meaning.

The basic space of phenomena, enlightenment, buddha nature, innate constituent enlightenment, ultimate truth, Radiant wisdom, emptiness, perfection of sublime insight, true nature.

The innate constituent enlightenment can be believed in, partially seen, or manifest.

Empty of faults and formations, the enlightened heritage's qualities are complete.

Once the five mistakes are corrected, one works joyfully and energetically for the good of others.

Under the heading of relative truth, there is its essence, definition of the term, Characteristics, and two categories of its classification—genuine and misleading.

On Vulture Peak, Powerful Sage (Shakyamuni)

Turned the doctrine's middle cycle, that of absence of characteristics,

For those endowed with the great way's enlightened heritage.

His teachings compiled by Gentle Melody (Manjugosha), explained by Nagarjuna and his spiritual heirs, And expounded by Shantideva are the profound view tradition.

His teachings compiled by Loving Kindness (Maitreya). explained by Asanga

and his brother, And expounded by Lord Atisha are the vast activity tradition.  
Lotus-Born's personal tradition concurs with the profound view tradition.

The original translations have twenty-three discourses in this cycle, including  
*The Lengthy Perfection of Sublime Insight in One Hundred Thousand* and  
*Twenty-Five Thousand Stanzas*, *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eighteen  
Thousand Stanzas*, in *Ten Thousand*, *Eight Thousand*, *Seven Hundred*, *Five  
Hundred*, *Three Hundred*, and *One Hundred Stanzas*.

The original translations also include 197 treatises of commentary.

In a past life, the Sage offered a parasol, and seashells to the great Shakyamuni  
And in that buddha's presence uplifted his mind to supreme awakening for the  
first time.

He then traversed the paths of cultivation and application by honoring fifty-five  
thousand victors; He reached the seventh stage of awakening by honoring  
sixty-six thousand victors; And completed the tenth stage of awakening by  
honoring seventy-seven thousand victors.

These three progressions lasted a total of three great incalculable eons.

Thirty-four lifetimes from among the past lives of the Buddha:

(1) Born into a brahmin family, he became a renunciant and kept a circle of  
disciples.

Then, out of compassion, he gave his body to a tigress.

(2) As king of Shibi, he gave whatever was wished:

To a brahmin he gave his eyes. By his declaration of truth, he gained divine  
sight.

(3) As king of Kosala,

He remembered a past life and recounted that his position was the consequence  
of a gift of warm food.

(4) As the merchant Courage in Giving, he crossed the fires of hell  
To offer alms to a solitary sage.

(5) As the merchant Invincible, although his wealth was exhausted,

He offered his profits from selling grass: the god blessed him with endless and  
increasing wealth.

(6) As a rabbit, he gave spiritual teaching to an otter, a jackal, and a monkey.

He leapt into a fire: the gods gave him gifts and praise.

(7) As the brahmin Agastya, when staying in retreat,

His food became depleted; he offered leaves to his guest, Shakra.

(8) As King Forge of Love, he gave his gift of his own flesh and blood

- (8) AS KING FORCE OF LOVE, BY HIS GIFT OF HIS OWN FLESH AND BLOOD  
To five noxious spirits, they became the five excellent individuals.
- (9) As the prince All-Liberating, he offered everything—  
An elephant; then sons, daughters, and wife.
- (10) As King Maker of Gifts and Offerings, he skillfully  
Turned his subjects away from wrongdoing and led them to joy and happiness.
- (11) As Shakra, he was left behind by the gods' armies.  
To rescue a garuda, he turned around and scattered the demigods.
- (12) As a brahmin, his preceptor wished to test him  
And asked him to steal: when he refused, the teacher was pleased.
- (13) As a king, he desired an entrancing woman  
But he bore what was unbearable and perfected patience.
- (14) As a traveler on an ocean ship blown off course,  
His declaration of truth returned it to home.
- (15) As a fish, to save the lives of fish when a lake dried up,  
His declaration of truth brought rain, saving them.
- (16) As a young pheasant, when the forest burned,  
His declaration of truth calmed the fire's spread.
- (17) As Shakra, the force of his description of alcohol's faults  
Led the king, his court, and entourage to renounce alcohol and to apply  
themselves to ennobling acts.
- (18) As a wealthy man, he gave everything away and became a renunciant;  
He did not heed pleading to reconsider, but spoke of the many shortcomings of  
home life.
- (19) As a brahmin, his brothers, sisters, and servants all became renunciants.  
The lotus roots were hidden by Shakra, who asked forgiveness.
- (20) As a merchant chief, a minor event led him to retreat;  
He skillfully led his family and friends to renunciation.
- (21) As Crown Ornament Awakening, he and his wife became renunciants.  
He was not angry at the king, who became his servant.
- (22) As the king of geese, after he was caught in a trap,  
He gave spiritual teachings to the king and his officials, who offered him gifts  
and praise.
- (23) As Great Awakening, he skillfully led the king and officials  
Away from negative views to the excellent path.
- (24) As an ape, he led someone who had fallen down a cliff to safety.  
When the man tried to kill him, he compassionately showed the path home.

(25) As a *sharabha*, he led a killer, a king who had fallen down a cliff, To safety and had him enter the spiritual path.

(26) As a spotted deer, a person he saved from being carried away by a torrent Recounted the event. The king's army surrounded him but was tamed by his teaching.

(27) As a monkey, he made a path with his body on the treetops, Thus rescuing the pack of monkeys from danger and inspiring faith in the kingdom's people.

(28) As Patient Speech, a king Provoked by desire and anger cut off his limbs. The earth opened and the king fell.

(29) As Brahma, he taught the truth to a king who held wrong views: He was moved to faith and led his subjects to ennobling acts.

(30) As an elephant, he showed the path to seven hundred persons who had been exiled to the wilderness; To feed them he jumped into a ravine, thus saving their lives.

(31) As Prince Moon, he persuaded Sudasa's son to stop eating human flesh, Thus making everyone secure.

(32) As a prince in an iron house He became disillusioned with life while at a festival and stayed in retreat.

(33) As a water buffalo, when bullied in many ways by a monkey, A noxious spirit asked him questions and he expressed patience. The spirit developed faith.

(34) As a woodpecker, He relieved a lion's pain. The lion forgot his kindness but the bird was praised by the gods.

The domain of equanimity is enemies, friends, and those you regard as neither.

While wandering in the round of rebirth without beginning or end,  
Enemies have been friends and your friends  
Have been enemies who caused you incalculable harm.  
If you treat enemies as friends, they will prove helpful.  
Help to friends is most often repaid with harm:  
Rest in equanimity toward others—those toward whom you feel attraction,  
aversion, or neither.

There is no being who has not been your parent;  
At that time, they helpfully protected you with incalculable kindness.  
To return that aid, repay them with helpfulness



To return that aid, repay them with helpfulness.

Endeavor to lead others to temporary and permanent happiness  
And to the causes of such happiness.

Any place that space reaches is filled with beings;  
Beings' lives are filled with the sufferings of ignorance, karma, and mental  
afflictions; Thus they experience the causes and effects of suffering.  
Beings, our venerable mothers, are tormented  
By the causes and effects of suffering, and will never become free from the  
prison of existence.  
Consideration of their condition induces unbearable compassion.

When seeing beings who act nobly and enjoy happiness,  
Feel more joy than if these things were your own:  
This will increase your joy until it becomes immeasurable.

Biased meditation on those to whom you are related, your immediate circle Of  
relatives and fellow citizens, amounts to worldly love, compassion, joy, and  
equanimity.

The support for uplifting the mind to awakening can be a person who has taken  
one of the seven kinds of individual liberation vows; Or, it is taught that even  
such beings as gods, nagas, or noxious spirits can do so.

Classification by nature yields two, three, four, five, or six categories.  
The levels can be illustrated by twenty-two metaphors.

The benefits of uplifting the mind to awakening are elimination of all fear and  
suffering.

You become a recipient for the veneration of all beings, including the gods.

Your cultivation of ennobling acts becomes endless and ever increasing.

That uplift forms the root or seed of spiritual life.

It cures the sickness of suffering; it induces the dawn of wisdom.

Your qualities increase and you quickly attain supreme enlightenment.

To prepare, arrange sacred representations and many offerings.

“I invite the host of transcendent victors and the victors' spiritual heirs To  
witness the uplift of my mind to sublime awakening:

Please be seated on this throne and supreme seat in this fine, beautiful place.”

“With body, speech, and mind multiplied to equal the atoms of all realms, I bow  
in homage to the spiritual master, and to the victors and their heirs.”

in homage to the spiritual master, and to the victors and their heirs.

“To the supreme host of recipients of offerings,  
I offer both real and imagined offerings—the seven offerings of common use,  
the pleasures of the five senses, The auspicious signs and substances, the  
seven precious possessions of a monarch, The three realms, the triple cosmos,  
and the splendor of realms filling space.”

“I admit with regret any evil acts I have accumulated  
By the force of karma and mental afflictions throughout lifetimes without  
beginning or end.”

“I wholeheartedly rejoice in the cultivation of ennobling acts  
And the positive karma of every being, ordinary or exalted.”

“For the sake of deluded beings, I request you to forever turn the supreme wheel  
of the doctrine, Which guides beings according to their needs.”

“I request you to not transcend sorrow but to remain  
Until the round of rebirth’s seas run dry.”

“In order that all beings be liberated, I dedicate to sublime awakening  
This vast ennobling act generated by the twofold cultivation of goodness and  
wisdom.”

The main ritual concerns the sublime mind of both aspiration and application:

Aspiration is the wish to attain the state of enlightenment  
For the benefit of beings;  
Application is to undertake spiritual practice, the cause of that attainment.

On bended knee, with hands joined in prayer, with intense faith and humility,  
repeat: “Until I reach the heart of awakening, I take refuge

In the Buddha, the doctrine, and the sublime gathering of the spiritual  
community.

Victors of the ten directions and your spiritual heirs, heed me!  
Just as the blissful buddhas of the past and their spiritual heirs  
Uplifted their minds to sublime awakening and engaged in its training,  
I uplift my mind to sublime awakening  
And will engage in its training  
For the sake of all beings.

“I will liberate listener and solitary sage arhats  
Who are not free from cognitive obscurations and states of static peace. I will

Who are not free from cognitive obscurations and states of static peace, I will  
liberate ordinary individuals and exalted ones  
Who are not free from the two obscurations;  
I will give supreme release to those who are bound,  
Beings assailed by extreme torment in the three miserable existences;  
And I will place all beings in the transcendent state free of abiding,  
Beyond life's wheel of interdependent arising."

"Today I have become a child of the victors;  
A recipient of honor by gods and humans; a supreme guide for beings;  
And one who has obtained the crowning name *bodhisattva*:  
In rapturous joy, I will aid beings."

The goodness of this is such that victors as numerous as the sands of the Ganges  
Could not completely express it during eons as numerous as sands of the  
Ganges.

This concludes "The Foundation of the Middle Way," Book 8 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

## **BOOK 9: THE PATH OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

After you uplift your mind to sublime awakening as described, you engage in all facets of the training: Renew your commitment to awakened mind during the six periods of day and night.

Employ various means to gradually remove  
Every stain that obscures your innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature.

The three kinds of ethical conduct are restraint from faulty conduct,  
Gathering ennobling qualities, and altruistic acts.

Renounce the seven things that undermine these forms of ethical conduct; rely  
on the three things that preserve its integrity And the nine things that enhance  
it. The classification and standard enumeration are as three.

Two traditions present the vows of restraint from faulty conduct.

The tradition of Nagarjuna follows *The Discourse of the Bodhisattva Sky Essence* and *The Discourse of Skillful Means*, And is delineated in *The Compendium of Training*.

Twenty fundamental downfalls and eighty reprehensible acts are as follows: Five definitely apply to rulers—to confiscate offerings to the three jewels, to renounce Buddhism, To punish ennobling practice, to commit any act of

renounce Buddhism, to punish ennobling practice, to commit any act of immediate fruition, and to hold wrong views.

Five definitely apply to government officials—to destroy villages, provinces, cities, towns, or surrounding areas.

Eight definitely apply to ordinary persons—to speak of emptiness to those who are mentally unprepared; To lead someone to the lesser way; to induce abandonment of the lesser way and adherence to the great way; To claim that the lesser way does not prevent mental afflictions in encouraging another to adhere to your own beliefs; To criticize others and to praise yourself, driven by jealousy; to lie, for gain or glory; To cause a fully ordained individual to be punished and to accept a bribe; To disrupt a renunciant's mental tranquility by confiscating their possessions to give to a reciter of texts.

The last two are to relinquish the aspiration to awaken or the application to awakening. Thus, there are twenty in all.

Of the reprehensible acts, twenty-four concern disregard of happiness and suffering; Sixteen, disregard of spiritual practice— A total of forty. These, differentiated by temporary or permanent disregard, give a total of eighty.

Training in aspiration includes to not mentally abandon any being, to recall the benefits of awakened mind, To cultivate stores of goodness and wisdom, and to be diligent in training in awakened mind.

Renounce these four negative acts: to deceive those worthy of veneration, to provoke regret, To criticize holy persons, and to deceive anyone.

Practice their opposite, the four positive acts.

The training in application includes renunciation of four fundamental downfalls:

To criticize another and to praise yourself for gain or honor;

To not give objects or spiritual instruction out of greed;

To remain angry and abusive even though another has acknowledged a mistake;

To present a false impression of yourself as a spiritual person after having renounced the great way.

There are thirty-four and twelve reprehensible acts—forty-six in all.

The ethical conduct of gathering ennobling qualities includes the six transcendent perfections, Their characteristics, literal meaning, classification, enumeration,

Order, ways of practice, and benefits.

The ethical conduct of altruistic acts is the four means to gather disciples— To summon disciples by means of the signal of generosity;  
To draw their attention by pleasant speech;  
To have them practice, according to their interests, the meaning of ways of spiritual development; And to conform to that meaning, thus putting them at ease.  
During the four forms of activity—walking, sitting, eating, and sleeping— Be circumspect, exercising vigilance and mindfulness,  
As described in the collection of *The Discourse of Perfectly Pure Conduct*.  
Recite with pure motivation prayers of aspiration that relate to your circumstances.

The four parameters are actual downfalls, apparent downfalls, Nondownfalls, and apparent nondownfalls.

The seven corrupting acts of body and voice are permitted  
If they will surely help another. In that case, they are ennobling.

In Nagarjuna's tradition, the means to acknowledge downfalls is as follows: if a fault has exceeded the period, It can be repaired by praying at dawn to the bodhisattva Sky Essence.  
Additional downfalls can be purified by recitation of *The Discourse of the Three Aggregations* at the six junctures of the day.

In Asanga's tradition, the fundamental downfall is to abandon another being;  
Auxiliary downfalls, to commit one of the four negative acts or to damage your aspiration or application.

One defeating act can be motivated by great, medium, or lesser degrees of involvement.

These relate to varying degrees—to commit the act continually, without shame or embarrassment, To be pleased by it, and to consider it positive.

If a defeating act has been committed, the vows must be taken again.

Acts done with a medium degree of involvement must be admitted before three persons.

Acts done with a lesser degree of involvement must be formally admitted before one person.

If this is not possible, admit the act mentally in the presence of the victors.

At the outset of training in the six transcendent perfections for the sake of beings. Recognize that all beings have been your mother and recall their

kindness.

Decide to repay their kindness and help them reach happiness. You have the opportunity to guide them.

Do what you can. Have compassion. Uplift your mind to awakening. See them as the focus of your spiritual practice.

Helping others will accomplish your own goals, please the buddhas,

Provide aid, and do so without difficulty. Marshal the four forces.

See yourself and others as equals and exchange yourself for others.

Generosity can be expressed to needy beings through material gifts, the gift of spiritual teaching, and the gift of refuge from fear.

Material generosity can be expressed through giving any wealth desired;

Great giving—your child, spouse, or other loved ones;

Or extreme giving—your head or limbs.

Lesser spiritual generosity is expressed through gifts of paper, ink, or books;

Great spiritual generosity is given by teaching appropriate ways of spiritual development.

Generosity of refuge from fear is to provide freedom from danger.

The three kinds of ethical conduct are restraint from faulty conduct,

Gathering ennobling qualities, and altruistic acts.

The three kinds of patience are to accept suffering, to not dwell on harm done,

And definite realization of the teachings.

Patience constitutes supreme goodness, the most exemplary ascetic practice.

Anger causes rebirth in the hells: you should avoid it.

Things that cause harm are numerous: it is difficult to neutralize them all.

If you only discipline your mind, you will neutralize all negative circumstances.

By using harmful circumstances, you perfect patience.

Think of the kindness of enemies; feel gratitude toward them.

Harm, disturbance, and suffering arise from your karma:

To discipline karma's source, your mind, is vital.

If the situation can be changed, why be unhappy?

If no change is possible, of what use is sadness?

The object of anger and the angry individual lack an intrinsic nature and are

naturally empty.

If there is no intrinsic self, what self is there to cling to? What cannot be tolerated?

The three forms of diligence to be undertaken are the armor of intention, application to acts, And joyful service to sentient beings.

Three kinds of laziness must be rejected: attachment to negative acts that should be renounced, Inertia, and underestimating yourself.

Diligence attracts praise from worldly people and leads to achieving goals, The increase of every quality, and the quick attainment of enlightenment.

All worldly and transcendent fortune and excellence

Are achieved through energetic diligence: develop enduring and enthusiastic diligence.

Renunciation of distraction and busyness are requisites for the practice of meditative stability.

Sensual pleasures and possessions are impermanent: remain in isolated places.

To accumulate, guard, and search for possessions causes suffering;

Vanity, craving, and greed lead to the miserable existences.

Companionship with spiritually immature persons increases wrongdoing and clouds your ennobling acts.

Such persons are difficult to please, have many plans, and foster arguments—such friendships are like poisonous snakes.

Until you gain stability, life in your homeland is deceptive.

Always remain in retreat on a pleasant mountainside.

In retreat, various experiences and realizations naturally arise.

Seven steps toward retreat surpass an eon of offering to the victors.

In the main practice of meditative stability, assume the seven-point posture And rest the mind focused on an object, such as the form of the Buddha.

Practice the meditative stability of the spiritually immature—

The four levels of mental stability and the four formless levels;

Full discernment of the meaning; and the sacred noble meditative stability of the blissful buddhas.

Know the differences between these three meditative states—

For those who have not entered the path, for those who have entered it, and the meditative state of exalted bodhisattvas.

The nine ways of placing the mind, the ten discordant influences,  
The six impediments, and the eight remedial mental formations,  
And three meditative states—magic, warrior's movement, and vajra-like—  
Result in the qualities of divine sight, clairvoyance, and miraculous powers.

The view is the self's lack of intrinsic nature, the meaning free from formulation.  
Sublime insight gained in hearing the doctrine, and in reflection and meditation  
upon it Establishes that view, overcomes accumulated mental afflictions, and  
leads to transcendence of existence.

Hearing concerns analysis and what is analyzed.

Analysis that reveals the true state is definitive meaning;

Analysis that reveals the means to enter the basic character of being is inductive  
meaning.

Intention and indirect intention elucidate these two meanings.

Intention comprises intention directed toward evenness, other meanings,  
Other times, and individuals' attitudes.

Indirect intention comprises indirect intention in respect to entry into the  
teaching, characteristics, Antidotes, and interpretation.

What is analyzed—phenomena—reflects either relative or ultimate truth.

Relative truth, the appearing state, is inaccurate or accurate.

Inaccurate grasping of inaccurate appearances is misleading relative truth.

Correct relative truth does not deviate from the result: it is the wisdom of the  
path's basis.

It does not deviate from the attainment of the result, the form bodies of  
enlightenment, with their wisdoms.

Ultimate truth is the true state of the basic character of being,

Subjective experience, the nature of reality, and the basic character of being arise  
interdependently.

The outer and inner phenomena of the round of rebirth arise interdependently.

To guide beings, the buddhas demonstrated the interdependent origination of the  
transcendence of samsara.



TRANSCENDENCE OF SORROW.

To accept and nurture fortunate disciples, reflect upon the words and meanings taught.

Examine the scripture and reasoning used in debate to stem misleading belief systems.

Examine your experience in reading the composition of extensive or brief clear and profound texts.

Use thorough analysis to arrive at certainty in any subject.

As in a dream, phenomena have not come into being:

In the sleep of ignorance, dreams of deluded perceptions arise.

Without clinging to the myriad objects, subjects, and collections of thoughts that appear, Meditate that they are like dreams.

As in a magical display, phenomena do not cease.

There are four modes of magic—natural magic, Impure magic, skillful magic, and wisdom magic.

Meditate having reached definite understanding through the examples of magic.

As in an optical illusion, phenomena do not draw near.

As in an optical illusion, form, sound, smell, taste, touch, thoughts, and phenomena Are completely devoid of reality.

Develop skill in this and settle free from discursive thought or recollection.

As in a mirage, phenomena do not go:

They don't arise, cease, or remain, like a mirage.

Regard joy or pain, affirmation or denial, and dualistic clinging to be like a mirage.

Settle free from hope or fear, and from the mind's outward or inward movement.

Like the reflection of the moon on water, phenomena are free from

nonexistence: While they appear, they are empty; while they are empty, they appear.

Know all clinging to the reality of phenomena—appearances, sound, thought, clinging, existence, nonexistence— To be just the empty appearance of a reflection.

As in an echo, phenomena are free of permanence:

All sounds, of praise or of blame, pleasant or unpleasant,

Have neither basis nor source, and not the slightest intrinsic nature.

Meditate that whatever appears is like an echo.

As in an ephemeral city of spirits, phenomena are not multiple.  
From the moment such a city appears on the plain at twilight, it has no intrinsic nature.

Likewise, delusion's perceptions within the round of rebirth are unreal.  
Familiarize yourself with the meaning of that.

As in an emanation, phenomena are not singular:  
Meditate that what arises—the environment, beings, karma,  
Mental afflictions, suffering, the stages and paths of awakening, and any appearance— Has in itself no inherent existence.  
On the subject of meditation, the path of cultivation includes the support, nature,  
Cause, result, and four points to describe the essence— Characteristics,  
example, classification, and special attributes.  
The duration of the path can be thirty-three, seven, or three incalculable eons.  
The special attributes are antidotes, renunciation, realization,  
Qualities, and meditation, both general and specific.

On the lesser path of cultivation you meditate on the four recollections—  
Recollection of body, sensation, mind, and phenomena.  
On the middle path of cultivation, you meditate on the four genuine  
renunciations— To not develop corrupting qualities that have not yet arisen,  
to stem those which have, To develop ennobling qualities that have not yet  
arisen, to increase those which have.  
On the higher path of cultivation, you meditate on the four supports for  
miraculous powers— The supports of the meditative states of aspiration,  
diligence, mind, and conduct.  
The explanation of the path of application describes its support and nature.  
Its nature has cause, result, and essence; its essence, characteristics, definition,  
And a classification—heat, peak, forbearance, and supreme qualities—and  
special attributes.

You meditate on heat and peak with the five powers—  
Faith, diligence, mindfulness, meditative states, and sublime insight.  
You meditate on forbearance and supreme qualities with the five forces.  
The path of application's special attributes are its antidotes, renunciation,  
Realization, qualities, and superiority when compared to the path of  
cultivation.

An explanation of the path of seeing describes its support and nature;  
Its nature has cause, result, and essence; its essence, characteristics, example,  
Classification, and special attributes. Its classification has the sixteen instants

and the seven aspects of awakening— mindfulness, analysis of phenomena, Diligence, joy, extreme skill, meditative states, and equanimity.

Its special attributes are the antidote, renunciation, time, realization, and qualities.

The enumeration has characteristics, classification, and the way of renunciation.

Classified according to essence, there are six; according to misunderstanding, ten; Or according to what is renounced on the path of seeing, one hundred and twelve.

The special qualities are that in one instant,

You see one hundred buddhas, you receive one hundred buddhas' blessings, You go to one hundred pure lands and receive instruction for one hundred eons, Your wisdom comprehends one hundred lifetimes, such as those in the past or future, You enter into one hundred meditative states and bring one hundred beings to spiritual maturity, You move one hundred realms, illuminate one hundred realms,

Open one hundred doors to spiritual instruction, and teach in one hundred forms, Each form surrounded by one hundred disciples.

The fault of greed is purified and the transcendent perfection of generosity is completed.

On the stage of Intense Joy, you take the form of the ruler of this world, the Land of Jambu.

The explanation of the path of meditation describes its support and nature; Its nature, cause, result, and essence; its essence, characteristics and example.

On the levels of the path of meditation, its lesser, middle, and higher stages Are each divided into three—the path of meditation's nine stages:

Immaculate, Illuminating, Radiant, Difficult to Refine,

Manifest, Far Reaching, Unmoving, Excellent Intelligence.

The path of meditation's ninth stage is the tenth stage of awakening, Cloud of the Doctrine.

The ten stages of awakening correspond to the ten transcendent perfections:

generosity, ethical conduct, Patience, diligence, meditative stability, sublime insight, skillful means, force, Aspiration, and wisdom. The ten things renounced

Are greed, lapsed ethical conduct, anger, laziness,

Distraction, wrong understanding, unskillful acts,

Obscured force, unfulfilled aspirations, and cognitive obscurations.

At the nine stages, the path of application and the path without interruption are

antidotes of renunciation; In the main part of a stage, the path of complete

liberation is the antidote of the support. And at the end of a stage, the special

liberation is the antidote of the support, and at the end of a stage, the special path is the antidote of distance.

Four hundred and forty aspects of the mental afflictions and cognitive obscurations are renounced.

At awakening's first stage, the mind's luminous nature is realized in evenness. At the second, what you have realized is realized to be supreme, and you clear away impurities.

At the third, you are diligent in hearing the doctrine to realize the basic space of phenomena.

At the fourth, you renounce attachment without clinging to the self.

At the fifth, you realize that the innate constituent enlightenment in your own and others' minds is not separate.

At the sixth, through realization of the natural purity of the innate constituent, you rest without clinging.

At the seventh, you overcome clinging to traits through nonseparateness.

At the eighth, through realization of the unaltered essence, you gain forbearance of the unborn nature of phenomena.

At the ninth, you realize that the innate constituent inherently has individual awareness.

At the tenth, you realize the innate constituent to be a source of enlightened activity and you master the four powers.

The qualities at the first stage of awakening are twelve times one hundred.

Increasing, at the second, to twelve times one thousand.

At the third, twelve times one hundred thousand.

At the fourth, twelve times ten million.

At the fifth, twelve times one thousand ten million.

At the sixth, twelve times one hundred thousand ten million.

At the seventh, twelve times one hundred thousand million times ten million.

At the eighth, twelve times the atoms in one hundred thousand cosmos.

At the ninth, twelve times the atoms in one hundred thousand incalculable cosmos.

At the tenth, qualities will appear equal to twelve times the atoms of inexpressibly numerous realms.

At the second stage, you take birth as the wheel-monarch of the four continents;

At the third, as Shakra; at the fourth, as the ruler of the Sumaya gods; At the

fifth, as the ruler of Joyful Heaven; at the sixth, as the ruler of the Heaven of

Joy in Creation; At the seventh, as the ruler of the Heaven of Control of

Others' Creations; At the eighth, as Brahma, general chief of a simple cosmos;  
At the ninth, as Great Brahma, chief of a double cosmos;  
At the tenth, as Great Vishnu, chief of a triple cosmos.  
At the tenth stage, the eightfold exalted path entails correct view, thought,  
speech, action, Livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and meditative states.  
Bodhisattvas at the point of culmination make offerings  
To all victors of the ten directions. From all the victors' foreheads  
The supreme luminosity empowerment dissolves into the crowns of the  
bodhisattvas' heads.  
They attain vajra-like and other meditative states,  
Numbering incalculable hundred thousands. These end their cognitive  
obscurations: The qualities of their innate constituent are actualized and they  
attain enlightenment.  
This concludes "The Path of the Middle Way," Book 9 of *The Invaluable  
Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all  
Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

## **BOOK 10: THE RESULT OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

Upon reaching the end of training in and traversing the paths and stages of  
awakening, and the twofold cultivation, as described, The path of no further  
training is reached. It is explained through a description of its support and  
nature.

Its nature has cause, result, and essence; its essence, characteristics and  
examples.

The essential wisdom body abides in the nature of reality, supreme purity and  
evenness.

The body of ultimate enlightenment, the qualities of the innate constituent  
enlightenment fully manifest, Has twenty-one groups of wisdom's qualities:

- (1) Thirty-seven facets of awakening—four foundations for mindfulness,  
Four correct renunciations, four supports for miraculous powers,  
Five powers, five forces, seven aspects of awakening,  
And the eightfold exalted path. (2) Four immeasurable aspirations—  
Love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.
- (3) Eight forms of freedom—of an embodied being, formless being,  
Beauty, the four stages of arising and development, and cessation.
- (4) Nine states of meditative composure—four levels of mental stability, four  
levels of formlessness, and cessation.

- (5) Ten unlimited spheres of meditative control—earth, water, fire, air, blue, yellow, red, White, space, and consciousness.
- (6) Eight overpowering spheres of meditative control—by those with personal form over small external form; Personal form over large external form; Formless over small or large; formless, by perception; Over blue, yellow, red, and white.
- (7) To relieve mental afflictions from others' minds. (8) To know former aspirations.
- (9) Six forms of clairvoyance—miraculous powers, divine hearing, Knowledge of others' thoughts, recollection of past existences, Divine sight, and the cessation of contamination.
- (10) Four modes of correct discerning awareness—of phenomena, meaning, Definitions, and confidence.
- (11) Four purities—of the support, intention, wisdom mind, and wisdom.
- (12) Ten powers—over longevity, mind, necessities, action, birth, Intent, aspiration, miracles, wisdom, and instruction.
- (13) Ten forces—knowledge of positive or negative fields of action, maturation of deeds, Interests, faculties, acumen, the paths to every destination, Purification, recollection, death and birth, and the cessation of contamination.
- (14) Four kinds of fearlessness—toward realization, impediments, the path, and renunciation.
- (15) Unguarded pure conduct of body, speech, and mind.
- (16) Three kinds of mindfulness—without attachment, anger, or indifference.
- (17) No lapse in helping beings. (18) To have overcome all habitual patterns.
- (19) Supreme nondual compassion.
- (20) Eighteen unique qualities—the first six are no mistakes, no faulty speech, perfect memory, No gap in settling in evenness, no dualistic perception, no nondiscerning equanimity.
- The second six are consistent intention, diligence, recollection, meditative states, sublime insight, And complete liberation.
- The third six are that the acts of body, speech, and mind are preceded and followed by wisdom; And perception of the three times (past, present, and future) is without attachment and impediment.
- (21) Three forms of knowledge—knowledge of everything, knowledge of the path, and knowledge of every basis.

In the Highest Pure Land of Dense Array, bodies of enlightenment's perfect rapture, five chiefs of the wisdom clans, Such as the Buddha Illuminator, display the beauty of the marks and signs of physical perfection.

The thirty-two excellent signs are the following: (1) wheel designs on the soles and palms, (2) Flat soles, (3) webbed fingers and toes, (4) Long and narrow fingers, (5) round heels, (6) Supple hands and feet, (7) inconspicuous ankles, (8) Antelope-like calves, (9) retracted genitals, (10) Long arms that reach the knees, (11) golden color, (12) Body hair curls upward, (13) the hair curls clockwise, (14) Soft skin with no smell of perspiration, (15) fullness in seven places, (16) Well-rounded forearms and biceps, (17) lionlike torso, (18) Large and straight body, (19) symmetry like a banyan tree, (20) Lionlike jaw, (21) white teeth, (22) Even teeth equal in size, (23) complete set of forty teeth, (24) A long, wide tongue, (25) tongue that finds everything delicious, (26) An even collar-bone, (27) radiance that extends one arm span, (28) Deep blue eyes, (29) eyelashes like the finest cow, (30) The melodic voice of Brahma, (31) a protuberance on the crown, And (32) a curl of hair between the eyebrows.

The eighty excellent marks are the following: (1) fingernails copper-colored, (2) shiny, and (3) high in the middle; (4) Round fingers, (5) broad in span, (6) and tapered;

(7) Inconspicuous veins, (8) that have no knots; (9) Ankles that do not protrude; (10) feet that are even; (11) A lion's gait, (12) an elephant's gait, (13) a swan's gait, (14) a buffalo's gait, (15) A gait tending to the right, (16) an elegant gait, (17) an erect gait, (18) a graceful gait; (19) Body is as if polished, (20) well-proportioned, (21) Clean, (22) soft, (23) pure; (24) fully developed genitals; (25) an expansive bearing; (26) Even step; (27) clear eyes; (28) youthful, (29) not stooped; (30) full-bodied, (31) Solid; (32) limbs well defined; (33) clear vision; (34) Tapered waist; (35) belly not long, (36) not bulging or uneven; (37) A deep navel (38) that swirls clockwise; (39) an attractive demeanor; (40) pure in conduct; (41) No moles on skin; (42) soft hands; (43) lines on the palm that are clear, (44) Deep, and (45) long; (46) a face that is not too long; (47) red lips; (48) A tongue that is long, (49) fine, and (50) red; (51) A voice that is thunderous, (52) pleasing, and (53) gentle; (54) teeth that are rounded, (55) sharp, (56) white, (57) even, and (58) Tapering; (59) high nose; (60) wide eyes, (61) Thick eyelashes, (62) eyes like lotus petals; (63) eyebrows that are long, (64) soft, and (65) shiny; (66) Eyebrows' hair of even length; (67) long arms; (68) symmetrical ears, (69) No deficiency in hearing; (70) a forehead that is

well-formed and

(71) Broad; (72) large head; (73) hair that is black, (74) thick, (75) soft, (76) untangled, (77) Not unkempt, (78) and fragrant; (79) a body marked with knot of eternity and (80) auspicious emblems.

The five certainties of the wisdom body of perfect rapture also include an entourage of bodhisattvas of the tenth stage of awakening, The doctrine of the great way; and permanent, continual time.

Created manifest forms of enlightenment include statues and texts.

Incarnate forms of enlightenment manifest in various forms to guide others.

Supreme manifest bodies of enlightenment display the twelve acts of buddhas:

(1) Descent from Joyous Heaven, (2) entering the womb, (3) birth, (4) Education in skills, (5) life with a circle of queens, (6) disenchantment, (7) Ascetic practices, (8) travel to the place of awakening, (9) defeat of the demons' armies, (10) Enlightenment, (11) turning the wheel of the doctrine, and (12) transcendence of sorrow.

The content of enlightenment, wisdom, is twofold—knowledge of the nature Of the basic space of phenomena, free from the extremes of formulation of objects of knowledge; And precise knowledge of the multiplicity of phenomena in the round of rebirth and transcendent states.

Four wisdoms—mirrorlike, evenness,

Discerning, and all-accomplishing—are explained through their essence, complement, and function.

Some middle way philosophers contend that enlightenment has no wisdom.

Some mind only philosophers contend that knowledge does not include appearances.

Some materialist philosophers contend that wisdom sees delusion's perceptions.

In enlightened beings' self-manifest experience, personal deluded perceptions have been purified so they do not see them.

However, they know entirely the causes and results that appear in the deluded perceptions of ordinary beings' experience of reality as other-manifest, Like the fable of someone awake who enters the dream path of a sleeping person.

They know the nature of reality as it is,

They know manifestly the illusory nature of phenomena,

And they know the three times unobstructedly and instantaneously.



Although no objects of knowledge exist, they dwell within the sphere of wisdom's activity.

Although things are not real, buddhas know them to exist as false.

Until the end of the round of rebirth, enlightened activity's timely deeds Work in skillful, appropriate ways to guide others.

They aid beings effortlessly, as shown clearly by nine metaphors.

To all fortunate persons, enlightened activity appears instantaneously, like the sun, Teaching disciples according to their karmic perceptions.

Those without a karmic connection hear nothing, like deaf persons.

The special renunciation is the purification of the two obscurations, with their related habitual patterns.

The special realization is the pure vision of all phenomena.

The special qualities are the wheel of adornments

And the sixty melodic qualities of the Buddha's speech: soft, gentle, compelling, Agreeable, pure, faultless, clear, sweet-sounding, pleasing, and calming—the first ten.

Worthwhile, unassailable, not harsh, not inflexible, restrained,

Pleasing to the ear, to the body, and to the mind; gladdening, and pleasing—the second ten.

Never troubling, to be known, to be understood, clear, heartening,

Exhilarating, comprehensive, informative, coherent, relevant—the third ten.

Not repetitive, forceful, trumpeting, thundering, sounding, melodious, like a divine bird, Like the voice of Brahma, like a *chakora* bird, and like the lord of the gods' voice—the fourth ten.

Like a drum, not vain, not degraded, consistent, not deficient,

Not incomplete, not timid, not weak, completely joyous, and encompassing—the fifth ten.

Not rigid, fluent, impressive, complete, satisfying, irreproachable,

Reliable, not rushed, resounds everywhere, and supreme—the sixth ten.

This concludes "The Result of the Middle Way," Book 10 of *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, a work that elucidates all Buddhist ways of spiritual development.

# THE OUTLINE: BOOKS 1 TO 10

## *The Wish-Fulfilling Vine*

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### PROLOGUE

*Namo shriratna trayaya adanamahéna sharanam madram*

Illustrious three jewels, to you I bow and take refuge with utmost respect!

The new dawn of your exquisite wisdom body, sublimely resplendent, is wreathed in the radiant rays of the marks and signs of a buddha's physical perfection.

The symphony of Buddhist teachings, falling like rain from the clouds of your melodious wisdom speech, brings all beings to spiritual maturity.

The sky of your brilliant wisdom mind holds in its embrace the enchanting constellations of the planets and stars of love and wisdom.

May you, victors in infinite numbers and your spiritual heirs, generously bestow upon us a virtuous celebration of common and supreme accomplishments.

I respectfully bow to the mighty sage Shakyamuni's sublime wish-fulfilling tree, source of benefit and happiness: Its roots are firmly planted in the uplift of your mind to awakening, a vast foundation of compassion and of altruistic acts.

Its branches, aspects of your awakening, flourish in the space of incalculable eons during which you cultivated goodness and wisdom.

Its ripened fruit, supreme awakening, falls in a rain of the eighty thousand teachings, filling every container, the minds of beings.

The best speakers, suns of oratory, teach according to the interests of their audience; Their excellent explanations have been conscientiously collected in the excellent canon and treatises in Tibetan translation.

*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra* unites these in a single comprehensive text that provides useful clarification for every Buddhist way.

The subject of this book, an outline of the contents of this outstanding work of outstanding qualities, will elucidate its difficult vital points.

THE SUBJECT REFERRED TO here, the sublime ambrosia of the sacred doctrine, is found in the treatise entitled *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*. This excellent text contains the essence of the realization of infinite numbers of buddhas of all times and directions, validated in the transmission of their canon; pith instructions validated by a sea of scholars, accomplished meditators, and awareness holders, and by my holy spiritual master; the key instructions found in every treatise on the major subjects of Buddhist culture; and information I have validated with my own reasoning, based on hearing the doctrine, reflecting, and meditating upon it.

On an outer level, this text provides subjects for hearing the doctrine: its words of the scripture's teachings form towering waves on a wide ocean. On an inner level, this text provides subjects for reflection: its meanings, potent jewels of knowledge, are arrayed in superb designs. On a secret level, this text provides subjects for meditation: this work thoroughly explains the key instructions for experiential cultivation according to the tantras, and illuminates them with the radiant luminosity of the sun and moon.

*The Wish-Fulfilling Vine*, presentation of a concise outline of this garland of wish-fulfilling gems, sufficient in itself for all purposes, has three major parts: an introduction, the main text, and the conclusion. The inaugural engagement in the treatise, its preliminary, creates the text's initial virtue, the introduction. This has three parts: (1) the meaning of the text's title, (2) an expression of homage, and (3) the resolve to compose the text.

The domain of that engagement, the body of the treatise, the text's substance, creates the work's continuing virtue—the main text. This has three parts: (1) a brief presentation, (2) the extensive explanation, and (3) a summary.

Completion of the treatise creates the work's culminating virtue, the conclusion. This has three parts: (1) a description of the text's measureless benefits, (2) the formulation of pure prayers to dedicate the goodness of the text's composition and prayers of aspiration, and (3) an account of the circumstances that inspired the writing of the book, accompanied by an expression of auspicious wishes.

## THE INTRODUCTION

### I. The Meaning of the Title of the Root Text

#### A. A Brief Presentation of the Reason for Titles

#### B. The Extensive Explanation of the Title of the Root Text 1. Translation of the Title

##### 2. Explanation of the Title

- 2. Explanation of the Title
- 3. The Text to Which This Title Is Given
- II. An Expression of Homage
  - A. A Brief Homage
  - B. The Extensive Homage
    - 1. Homage to the Teachers Who Epitomize the Three Wisdom Bodies
    - 2. Homage to the Three Jewels
    - 3. Homage to the Three Roots
- III. The Resolve to Compose the Text

## **THE MAIN TEXT**

The domain of my engagement to bring this work to fruition, the body of the treatise, the text's substance, creates the work's continuing virtue—the main text. This has three parts: (1) a brief presentation, (2) the extensive explanation, and (3) a summary.

## **A BRIEF PRESENTATION**

- I. The Content of the Books in This Work
- II. The Books' Chapters and Headings
- III. An Outline of the Content

## **BOOK 1: DISCIPLESHIP**

To the spiritual guide, supreme captain  
 Who steers the ship of the supreme way's doctrine  
 Across existence's wide sea of unbearable suffering  
 To the land of jewels, omniscience, I bow.

The extensive explanation of the main text's twenty-five books begins with Book 1 of this excellent text, "Discipleship." This has four chapters: 1. The Characteristics of Qualified Spiritual Masters

- 2. The Characteristics of Worthy Disciples
- 3. The Stages of Spiritual Apprenticeship
- 4. Forsaking Misleading Companions

These four chapters contain a total of thirty-seven specific headings: I. The Characteristics of Qualified Spiritual Masters

- A. The General Characteristics of Spiritual Guides
  - B. Supreme Wish-Fulfilling Spiritual Masters
  - C. Spiritual Masters Whose Qualities Are Naturally Complete
  - D. Spiritual Masters Liberated from Existence
  - E. Spiritual Masters of Vast Sublime Insight
  - F. Spiritual Masters Who Hold the Blessing of the Successive Lineage
  - G. Spiritual Masters Who Compassionately Lead on the Path
  - H. Spiritual Masters Who Reveal the Ultimate Essential Meaning
- II. The Characteristics of Worthy Disciples

- A. The Characteristics of Disciples to Be Rejected
- B. The Characteristics of Disciples to Be Accepted

III. The Stages of Spiritual Apprenticeship

- A. The Reasons to Rely upon Spiritual Masters
  - 1. Spiritual Masters Provide Lastingly Useful Advice
  - 2. Spiritual Masters Teach Correct Conduct
  - 3. Cultivation of Goodness and Wisdom Accelerates
  - 4. Protection from Suffering
  - 5. Qualities Flourish
  - 6. Gain of the Rare Opportunity to Receive Profound Teachings
- B. How to Rely upon Spiritual Masters
  - 1. Search for Qualified Spiritual Masters Wherever They Live
  - 2. Realize That Whatever Spiritual Masters Do Is Guided by Their Wisdom Mind's Realization
  - 3. Rely upon Them Considering Various Examples
  - 4. Please Masters with Material Offerings
  - 5. Pleasing Masters Physically
    - a. Pleasing Masters Physically
    - b. Displeasing Acts to Renounce
  - 6. Pleasing Masters Verbally
    - a. Pleasing Masters Verbally
    - b. Displeasing Acts to Renounce
  - 7. Pleasing Masters Mentally
    - a. Pleasing Masters Mentally
    - b. Displeasing Acts to Renounce
  - 8. Please Masters by Obeying Their Commands
  - 9. The Benefits of Discipleship

IV. Forsaking Misleading Companions

- A. The Harm in Betriending Fools
  - B. The Harm in Befriending the Faithless and Apathetic
  - C. The Harm in Befriending Those of the Lesser Way
  - D. The Harm in Befriending Those without View, Meditation, and Meditative States
  - E. The Harm in Befriending Those Whose Five Poisonous Mental Afflictions Are Intense
  - F. The Harm in Befriending Those Who Feel No Disengagement from the Round of Rebirth
  - G. Why You Must Forsake Misleading Companions and the Benefits of Doing So
- You must train as the following texts advise. *Advice from a Spiritual Friend* states: People worsen by relying on a spiritual master inferior to themselves; They stagnate by relying on a master at the same level; They attain a holy state by relying on a superior spiritual master: Therefore I advise you to rely on a superior spiritual master.

*The Treasury of Qualities* states:

The person who first exercises discernment in examining spiritual masters,  
 Later exercises discernment in relying on spiritual masters, And finally  
 exercises discernment in training according to their intention and conduct  
 Will travel the correct path.

## Concluding Verses

The supreme way's texts, the essential doctrine,  
 Contain the supreme essential meaning, upon which you must deeply reflect.  
 Then, with essential effort, rely upon a sublime, holy person  
 And apply yourself to the essential intent—eternal cultivation of spiritual practice.  
 Heartfelt, single-minded spiritual practice of the sacred Buddhist doctrine  
 Requires compassion that aids beings in any way suitable to them,  
 No thought in your heart besides the good of the doctrine, And a firm will from the  
 bottom of your heart and the depth of your bones.  
 Forsake like poison companions who act negatively in mundane ways.  
 Rely upon noble companions who act according to the Buddhist doctrine as if it  
 was medicine.  
 Gather the necessary articles and favorable conditions for the practice of the  
 teachings.  
 Strive ceaselessly at the ten forms of spiritual conduct.

## BOOK 2: THE TRANSMISSION OF BUDDHISM

You illuminate the meaning of the canon: you are a hundred lights (the sun);  
You vanquish evil-speaking wild animals: you are the powerful thief (a lion);  
You bring a torrential rain of help and happiness: you are a wish-fulfilling  
jewel— To you, the six ornaments, the four great teachers, and the two  
exemplary masters, I pay homage.

This homage introduces Book 2 of this excellent text, “The Transmission of Buddhism.” This book has three chapters: 1. How Buddhism Is Taught

2. How to Listen to Buddhist Teaching
3. An Exposition of Faith, the Foundation of Spiritual Life These three chapters contain a total of twenty-six specific headings: I. How Buddhism Is Taught
  - A. Buddhism’s Teaching Methods in General
  - B. Specific Teaching Methods
    1. How the Discourses Are Taught
    2. How the Tantras Are Taught
      - a. How Secret Mantra in General Is Taught
      - b. How Great Perfection Is Taught
  - C. A Definitive Presentation of the Doctrine
  - D. The General Categories of Canonical Texts and Treatises Translated into Tibetan
  - E. How to Teach
  - F. What the Teacher Meditates upon When Teaching
  - G. Teaching Adapted to the Disciples’ Degrees of Acumen
  - H. How Teaching Completes the Stores of Goodness and Wisdom
  - I. The Dedication of Goodness and an Explanation of Teaching’s Benefits
  - II. How to Listen to Buddhist Teaching
    - A. How to Act While Listening and When to Listen
    - B. Renunciation of Impure Motivation
    - C. Maintaining Pure Motivation
    - D. How to Complete the Eighty-Four Ways of Hearing the Doctrine and the Six Transcendent Perfections
    - E. Dedication of Goodness and the Benefits of Having Heard the Teachings
    - III. The Six Styles of Faith, the Foundation of the Sacred Buddhist Doctrine
      - A. The Nature of the Six Styles of Faith, the Source of All Forms of Buddhism
      - B. Sure Examples of Faith
      - C. The Harm in Lacking Faith
      - D. The Object and Causes of Faith

- E. Forsaking Conditions That Cloud Faith
- F. Indications of the Arising of Faith
- G. Tireless and Steadfast Faith
- H. The Benefits of Having Engendered Faith

*Advice from a Spiritual Friend* states:

Hearing the teachings fosters knowledge of the teachings.  
Hearing the teachings does not induce harmful influences.  
Hearing the teachings turns you away from wrongdoing.  
Hearing the teachings leads to the attainment of transcendence of sorrow.

*The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* states:

Because you have heard this sacred discourse,  
Rebirth in the miserable existences will be impossible for you In future ages  
Numbering seventy-three incalculable eons.

*The Lamp of the Jewels Discourse* states:

How can service in every pleasing way during an eon  
To beings equal in number to the atoms of ten pure lands Be compared to  
the goodness of having faith in this teaching?  
The latter's goodness is particularly remarkable; the former cannot  
compare.

## **Concluding Verses**

Teaching the sacred doctrine provides medicine that relieves beings' torment.  
Teaching the sacred doctrine provides an inexhaustible treasure of goodness.  
Teaching the sacred doctrine crowns all beings, including the gods.  
Teaching the sacred doctrine forms the foundation of all welfare and happiness.  
Hearing the teachings, the wealth of the exalted, banishes the darkness of  
ignorance.

Hearing the teachings, the source of happiness, opens a vault of noble qualities.  
Hearing the teachings is your residence, companions, possessions, path, army,  
and family.  
Reliance on hearing the teachings quickly leads to enlightenment.



Faith is the underlying source for magnificent ennobling acts and well-being.  
Faith causes every positive quality to increase.  
Faith is the powerful wish-fulfilling gem that provides whatever you desire.  
Faith constitutes the means to realize the supreme meaning of the abiding nature.

### **BOOK 3: OUR PRECIOUS HUMAN LIFE**

You accurately translated the pure canon and the treatises, Then brought benefit and happiness to the beings of this dark age By preserving, protecting, and spreading the Buddhist doctrine: Scholars, accomplished masters, translators, monarchs, and government officials, to you I pay homage.

This homage introduces Book 3 of this excellent text, “Our Precious Human Life.” This section has four chapters: 1. A General Explanation of the Difficulty of Attaining a Free and Fully Endowed Human Life 2. A Specific Explanation of the Difficulty of Finding Such a Life, Based on Examples and Numbers 3. Identification of the Nature of the Leisure and Endowments of Human Life 4. The Need to Fully Grasp the Essence of Human Life Now That You Have It These four chapters contain a total of nineteen specific headings: I. The Difficulty of Attaining a Free and Fully Endowed Human Life A. A Brief Presentation of the Essence of Human Life

- B. An Extensive Explanation of the Nature of the Leisure and Endowments of Human Life 1. Eight Restless States Based in Your Own Stream of Being 2. Eight Restless States due to Immediate Circumstances 3. Eight Restless States due to Unconducive Attitudes 4. Five Personal Endowments 5. Five Social Endowments

II. The Difficulty of Finding Such a Life, Based on Examples and Numbers A. Examples to Illustrate the Difficulty of Finding Such a Life B. Numbers to Illustrate the Difficulty of Finding Such a Life III. The Nature of the Leisure and Endowments of Human Life A. A Mere Human Life

- B. The Special Human Life
- C. The Precious Human Life

IV. The Need to Fully Grasp the Essence of Human Life Now That You Have It A. Certainty Concerning What Human Life Supports B. The Need for Exertion Now; Without It, You Will Later Suffer Within the Round of Rebirth C. The Need to Grasp the Essence of Life with the Support of the Doctrine of Path and Result D. The Need to Spurn Meaningless Acts

meaningless news  
E. The Need for Exertion in Spiritual Practice While the Circumstances Are  
Conducive F. Abandonment of the Six Faults, and Exertion in Any Practice  
of Ennobling Acts G. The Benefits of Reflection on the Difficulty of  
Attaining a Free and Fully Endowed Human Life *Entering the Conduct of  
Bodhisattvas* states:  
Ride the ship of your human life to freedom  
Across the wide river of suffering.  
Later, such a ship will be difficult to find:  
Fools do not wake from sleep in time!

## Concluding Verses

Now, on this occasion of attaining an exemplary life endowed with leisure, I  
should now focus without distraction on techniques to reach happiness.  
From now on, I should develop diligent strength  
To develop the means to stop continual circling within the round of rebirth.

What my eyes once found so beautiful, beautiful—enticing forms and shapes;  
What my ears once found so pleasing, pleasing—sounds of news I followed;  
What my mind once found so exciting, exciting—thoughts of this life: All has  
proven so truly deceptive, deceptive—life within the round of rebirth.  
What is certainly necessary is the Victor’s doctrine, source of everything needed  
and desired.

What is certainly beneficial are the three jewels who act benevolently.  
What brings certain well-being are acts consistent with the doctrine, source of  
well-being.  
What provides certain happiness is the experience of meditation, inseparable  
from happiness.

## BOOK 4: REFLECTION ON DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE

Living purely within the dense enclosure of a valley forested in sandalwood,  
Rainbows of inconceivable miracles move:  
Victory banners of the doctrine, assemblies of the four pairs of hearers and  
solitary sages— The sixteen great elders—to you, I bow.  
This homage introduces Book 4, “Reflection on Death and Impermanence.” This

book has five chapters: 1. A Brief Presentation of Impermanence

2. The Extensive Explanation of Impermanence
  3. Examples to Illustrate Impermanence
  4. Advice to Be Diligent Because of Impermanence
  5. The Measure of Signs of Success in Meditation on Impermanence, and Its Benefits
- These five chapters contain a total of nine specific headings:
- I. Impermanence, Briefly

## II. Impermanence, in Detail

- A. The Impermanence of All Environments and Beings
  - B. The Impermanence of Great Beings, Such as Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, and Universal Monarchs
  - C. Impermanence Shown by Past Victors and Their Spiritual Heirs Who Demonstrated the Transcendence of Sorrow
  - D. The Certainty and Unpredictability of Death
  - E. At Death, This Life's Appearances Will Be of No Use Whatsoever
- ## III. Examples to Illustrate Impermanence
- A. The Example of a Marketplace
  - B. Development of Disillusionment through Consideration of Various Examples
- ## IV. Advice to Be Diligent Because of Impermanence
- ## V. Signs of Success in Meditation on Impermanence, and Its Benefits
- A. Signs That Indicate Success in This Meditation
  - B. The Benefits of Familiarization with Death and Impermanence
- Advice Concerning Impermanence* states:  
Death stands  
Before every person  
And I as well do not transcend it:  
Put the doctrine into practice today!

*The Vast Enjoyment Discourse* states:

The three worlds are as fleeting as autumn clouds;  
Beings' movements change like reflections of the moon on water; A  
person's life passes like water rushing down a ravine: Everywhere I look,  
composite phenomena are the same.

## Concluding Verses

The round of rebirth's phenomena pass with the fleetingness of lightning.

Their nature is unreal and ever-changing.  
They cause every unwanted suffering.  
To fall under the power of foolish unconsciousness of impermanence is real torment.

At the time of death, you leave your home, your body, and every possession, To go into the Lord of Death's frightful presence.  
At death, nothing but the Buddhist doctrine is of any use: The time has come for you to practice the true instructions for death.  
It's surely impossible to remain living for long:  
What are all your long-range plans for?  
If you do nothing meaningful to prepare for the end of life coming soon, In no time at all, these appearances will cease and you will go to the next life.

## **BOOK 5: THE WORKINGS OF KARMA**

Sacred representations of wisdom body, speech, and mind, like gems; Temples, like wish-fulfilling trees;  
Teaching places for the doctrine, like exquisite vases containing great treasure: I bow to these in their dance of myriad manifestations.

This homage introduces Book 5, "The Workings of Karma." This has four chapters: 1. A Brief Presentation of the Nature of Action, Karma, and Consequences 2. The Extensive Explanation of Corrupting Acts and Their Consequences 3. The Explanation of Ennobling Acts Consistent with Goodness and Their Consequences 4. A Concise Presentation of Acts Consistent with Freedom and Their Consequences These four chapters contain a total of twelve headings.

- I. The Nature of Action, Karma, and Consequences
- II. Corrupting Acts and Their Consequences
  - A. The Ten Corrupting Acts of Body, Speech, and Mind
  - B. The Consequences of Ripened Corrupting Acts
  - C. Experience Consistent with Corrupting Karma
  - D. Acts Consistent with Corrupting Karma
  - E. The Personal or Environmental Consequences of Corrupting Acts III.
- Ennobling Acts Consistent with Goodness and Their Consequences A. The Ten Ennobling Acts of Body, Speech, and Mind
- B. The Consequences of Ripened Ennobling Acts

- C. Experience Consistent with Ennobling Karma
  - D. Acts Consistent with Ennobling Karma
  - E. The Environmental Consequences of Ennobling Acts
- IV. Acts Consistent with Freedom and Their Consequences
- A. Acts Consistent with Freedom
  - B. Results Consistent with Freedom

*The Garland of Jewels* states:

Acts impelled by desire, anger, or stupidity  
 Are not ennobling.  
 Acts impelled by absence of desire, anger, or stupidity Are ennobling.  
 Corrupting acts produce all suffering  
 And, likewise, all miserable existences.  
 Ennobling acts produce every pleasurable existence  
 And happiness in every life.

A discourse states:

The acts of embodied beings  
 Are not exhausted even after one hundred eons:  
 What has been cultivated will, at the proper moment,  
 Produce a ripened result.

## Concluding Verses

Evil acts created by the five poisons  
 Resemble enjoyment of poisoned food.  
 The fruit of what has grown from poisonous seeds  
 Is certain to produce only poison-like consequences: suffering.

The sacred nectar of ennobling acts,  
 Beneficial for yourself and others, is the nectar of fully positive acts.  
 Those fortunate enough to drink the Buddhist teachings' nectar Will attain the  
 supreme exalted state of everlasting nectar.  
 Suffering arises from evil wrongdoing;  
 Those who want to avoid suffering renounce such acts.  
 Happiness results from ennobling acts;  
 Those who wish for happiness apply themselves in thought, word, and deed to

ennoding acts.

## **BOOK 6: THE FLAWS OF THE ROUND OF REBIRTH**

Those worthy of praise, whose acts conform to the Buddhist doctrine; False practitioners, who are insincere semblances of Buddhists; Those whose connection to the doctrine is to copy texts, recite, offer, or praise with slight respect; Or those who have only a little devotion: to all of you I bow.

This homage introduces Book 6, “The Flaws of the Round of Rebirth.” This has six chapters: 1. The Suffering from Heat and Cold in the Hells

2. The Suffering from Hunger and Thirst among Starving Spirits
  3. The Suffering of Beasts of Burden in the Animal Realm
  4. The Suffering from Birth, Aging, Sickness, and Death in the Human Realm
  5. The Suffering from Conflict in the Demigods’ Realm
  6. The Suffering from Death and Falling in the Realm of the Gods
- These six chapters contain a total of twenty-eight headings.

### **I. The Suffering from Heat and Cold in the Hells**

- A. The Eight Hot Hells and the Differences in Their Fires’ Heat
1. Reviving Hell
2. Black Line Hell
3. Crushing Hell
4. Wailing Hell
5. Great Screaming Hell
6. Hot Hell
7. Extremely Hot Hell
8. The Hell of Uninterrupted Torment
9. The Differences in the Heat of the Fires of Hell

#### **B. The Eight Cold Hells**

#### **C. The Neighboring Hells**

#### **D. The Occasional Hells**

### **II. The Suffering from Hunger and Thirst among Starving Spirits**

- A. Starving Spirits Who Live in Specific Locations

- B. Starving Spirits Who Fly Through Space

### **III. The Suffering among Beasts of Burden**

### **IV. The Suffering from Birth, Aging, Sickness, and Death among Humans**

- A. Principal Sufferings

- B. Secondary Sufferings

1. The Suffering of Birth
2. The Suffering of Aging
3. The Suffering of Sickness
4. The Suffering of Death
5. The Suffering of Meeting Hated Enemies
6. The Suffering of Separation from Loved Ones
7. The Suffering of Poverty and Destitution
8. The Suffering of Contamination

V. The Suffering from Conflict among Demigods

VI. The Suffering from Death and Falling among Gods

- A. The Suffering from Death and Falling Experienced by Gods of the Desire Realm  
 B. The Suffering of Seeing the Next Life for Gods of the Form and Formless Realms  
 C. A Teaching on the Need to Achieve Freedom for Yourself Once You Have Understood the Round of Rebirth as Suffering
- Venerable Katyana states:

There sits she who eats her father's flesh, strikes her mother, Clutches on  
 her lap an enemy who has evil karma,  
 And chews on her husband's bones:  
 Life within the round of rebirth is ridiculous!

*Advice from a Spiritual Friend* states:

In this world, the suffering due to a fierce beating  
 By three hundred short spears during one day  
 Is a minor suffering in hell;  
 But one cannot make any assumptions—these experiences are not  
 comparable even in part.

*The Discourse of the Miracle of Definite Pacification* states: For a number of eons,

Your body will measure five hundred leagues  
 And will have five hundred heads.  
 Each head will have  
 No less than five hundred tongues.  
 Each tongue will be plowed  
 By no less  
 Than five hundred red-hot plows:  
 Such is the result of the wrongdoing of denigration.

*The Mindfulness Discourse* states:

O fully ordained ones! Develop disillusionment toward the realms of existence! Why should you feel any such disillusionment? While circling within the round of rebirth since time immemorial, the number of bodies you have assumed as an insect and then discarded, if collected together in a heap, would tower above the king of mountains, Supreme Mountain. The tears you have shed would exceed the waters of the four oceans. During the infinite number of lifetimes you have been a hell being or a starving spirit, the molten copper, blood, pus, marrow, and mucus you have drunk would surpass the waters of every river that flows from the four continents into the sea. The number of heads, eyes, limbs, fingers, and toes you have lost due to your desires equals the number of finest atoms of earth, fire, and wind in realms as numerous as the sands of the Ganges.

## **Concluding Verses**

In the three worlds' frightful imprisoning trench,  
The three bonds' ropes hold you tightly,  
And the three sufferings' punishments torment you continually.  
The three miserable existences' weapons are very sharp and painful.

On this wide plain of the round of rebirth's unending anguish, Birth, aging, sickness, and death's sharp thorns pierce you; Heat, cold, hunger, and thirst's barren earth and stone surround you; Myriad sufferings' savage, wild animals attack you.

The mountains of flesh, bones, limbs you have discarded rise high; The oceans of blood, pus, and tears you have shed measure deep; The bodies of your various karmic rebirths swirl like fine atoms: How sad, this dense darkness of ignorant folly!

## **BOOK 7: TAKING REFUGE AND THE LESSER WAY**

I bow to the three whose guidance leads to a gloriously joyful mind: The omniscient Teacher, master of the ten forces;  
The teachings, the sacred doctrine of realization and of the scriptures of discourses and tantras; And the upholders of the teaching, the spiritual



community—bodhisattvas, hearers, and solitary sages.

This homage introduces Book 7 of this excellent text, “Taking Refuge and the Lesser Way.” This book has four chapters: 1. How to Take Refuge, the Foundation for All Vows

2. How to Keep the Seven Kinds of Individual Liberation Vows
3. An Explanation of the Foundation, Paths, and Results of the Hearers’ Way
4. An Explanation of the Foundation, Paths, and Results of the Solitary Sages’ Way

These four chapters contain a total of thirty-six headings: I. How to Take Refuge, the Foundation for All Vows

- A. The Individual Who Takes Refuge
  - B. The Period for Which Refuge Is Taken
  - C. In Whom Refuge Is Taken—the Three Jewels
  - D. How to Take Refuge as a Cause for a Later Result
  - E. Taking Refuge as the Result in Itself
  - F. Training in Refuge as a Cause and as a Result
  - G. How the Refuge Vows Are Violated
  - H. The Benefits of Taking Refuge
- II. How to Keep the Seven Kinds of Individual Liberation Vows
- A. The Original Setting of the Vows
  - B. The Essence of the Vows
  - C. Classification of the Vows
  - D. How to Receive the Vows Not Yet Taken
  - E. How to Keep the Vows Taken
    1. Vows for Laypersons
      - a. Temporary Discipline for Laypersons
      - b. Sustained Discipline for Laypersons
    2. Vows for Renunciants
      - a. Training for Novices
      - b. Training for Female Spiritual Apprentices
      - c. Acts That Constitute Downfalls for Fully Ordained Monks
        - i. Four Principal Defeating Acts
          - A) Impure Conduct
          - B) Taking What Is Not Given
          - C) Killing
          - D) Lying Concerning Spiritual Attainments
        - ii. Thirteen Remaining Downfalls
        - iii. Thirty Downfalls That Require Forfeiture



## **BOOK 8: THE FOUNDATION OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

Above the Earth's dagger (a mountain), born from one hundred vases (gold),  
The circle of illumination (the sun) dazzles with shining light, Expressed as  
perfect forms of enlightenment with marks and signs of physical perfection:  
Chief of Intellect and Invincible Guide, to you I pay homage.<sup>36</sup>

This homage introduces Book 8 of this excellent text, "The Foundation of the Middle Way." It has three chapters: 1. How the Buddha Taught the Doctrine's Final Cycle and an Explanation of Ultimate Truth and Relative Truth 2. The Doctrine's Middle Cycle, the Buddha's Past Lives, and Mental Training by Means of the Four Immeasurable Aspirations 3. The Actual Uplifting of the Mind to Sublime Awakening These chapters contain a total of forty-eight headings.

- I. The Doctrine's Final Cycle, and an Explanation of Ultimate Truth and Relative Truth
  - A. How the Buddha Taught the Doctrine's Final Cycle
  - B. An Explanation of Ultimate Truth
    1. The Nature of the Enlightened Heritage
    2. How the Enlightened Heritage Is All-Pervasive
    3. A Complete Classification of the Enlightened Heritage
      - a. Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Its Support and Content
      - b. Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Its Circumstances
      - c. Classification of the Enlightened Heritage Based on Metaphors and Meaning
        - i. Metaphors for the Enlightened Heritage and Their Meanings
        - ii. Names for the Enlightened Heritage
        - iii. How the Essential Nature is Realized
    4. Proofs Based on Instruction in the Enlightened Heritage
  - C. An Explanation of Relative Truth
- II. The Doctrine's Middle Cycle, the Buddha's Past Lives, and Mental Training by Means of the Four Immeasurable Aspirations
  - A. The Turning of the Doctrine's Middle Cycle and Its Compilation
  - B. The Buddha's Past Lives
    1. How the Buddha Initially Uplifted His Mind to Sublime Awakening
    2. The General Way the Buddha Cultivated Goodness and Wisdom
    3. A Specific Description of Thirty-Four Past Lives (Three Sets of Ten and One Set of Four)
  - C. Mental Training by Means of the Four Immeasurable Aspirations
    1. Immeasurable Equanimity
      - a. The Domain of Immeasurable Equanimity
      - b. How to Meditate on Equanimity



And still exceed its bounds!

*The Reunion of Father and Child Discourse* states:

O fully ordained ones! Transcendent buddhas equal in number to the sands of the Ganges speaking during eons equal in number to the sands of the Ganges could not express the mass of qualities of uplifting the mind to awakening, for it has the qualities of omniscience itself.

## **Concluding Verses**

The wondrous enlightened heritage, innate constituent of enlightenment, buddha nature: how supremely wonderful!

Wondrous great skillful means, uplift of the mind to awakening: how supremely wonderful!

Wondrous profound sublime insight, emptiness: how supremely wonderful!

Wondrous perfect awakening: how supremely wonderful!

The essence of uplift of the mind is the inconceivable altruistic mind alone.  
The domain of uplift of the mind is the inconceivable realms of beings, our mothers.

The benefits of uplift of the mind are vast, endless, and inconceivable.

The result of uplift of the mind is the inconceivable state of enlightenment.

What is essential is to include uplift of the mind in any essential ennobling act.

What is essential is to develop exclusively the essential altruistic attitude.

What is essential is to work for others' welfare with essential immeasurable compassion.

What is essential is to assume the essential responsibility to increase help and happiness for Buddhism and for beings.

## **BOOK 9: THE PATH OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

The moon's rise enhances the splendor of the tamala flower's essence; The towering waves of their activity lead beings to lasting happiness: I bow to the eight close spiritual sons of the Buddha

And the community of bodhisattvas of all times.

This homage introduces Book 9 of this excellent text, “The Path of the Middle Way.” This book has three chapters: 1. A General Explanation of Bodhisattvas’ Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct 2. A Detailed Presentation of the Six Transcendent Perfections 3. A Specific Presentation of the Thirty-Seven Facets and Ten Stages of Awakening on the Four Paths of Training These three chapters contain a total of eighty-six headings.

- I. Bodhisattvas’ Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
  - A. A Concise Presentation of Bodhisattvas’ Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
  - B. The Extensive Explanation of Bodhisattvas’ Training—the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
    1. How to Maintain Ethical Conduct
      - a. A General Presentation of the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
      - b. A Detailed Explanation of the Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
        - i. The Two Traditions of the Ethical Conduct of Restraint from Faulty Conduct
          - A) Nagarjuna’s Tradition of the Ethical Conduct of Restraint from Faulty Conduct
          - B) Asanga’s Tradition—Training in Aspiration and Application
        - ii. The Ethical Conduct of Gathering Ennobling Qualities
        - iii. The Ethical Conduct of Altruistic Acts
          - A) The Actual Ethical Conduct of Altruistic Acts
          - B) Training and Conduct Related to All Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
      2. How to Repair Violations of Ethical Conduct
        - a. The Downfalls—the Four Parameters
        - b. How to Engage in Training Conscious of the Permissions and Prohibitions
        - c. Explanation of Effective Restoration of the Training
          - i. Nagarjuna’s Tradition of Restoration of Bodhisattva Training
          - ii. Asanga’s Tradition of Restoration of Bodhisattva Training
        - A) Identification of the Causes of Abandoning the Training
        - B) How to Repair Faults and Downfalls
- II. The Six Transcendent Perfections
  - A. A Brief Presentation of Equalizing and Exchanging Self and Others
  - B. The Extensive Explanation of the Six Transcendent Perfections
    1. The Three Kinds of Generosity
    2. The Three Kinds of Ethical Conduct
    3. Patience
      - a. A General Presentation of the Three Kinds of Patience
      - b. How to Cultivate Patience
      - c. The Need to Discipline Your Mind Rather Than to Control What Is Causing You Harm
      - d. How Harmful Circumstances Perfect Patience
      - e. The Reflection That Causes of Anger Arise from Yourself
      - f. The

Reflection on Whether or Not What Is Undesirable Can Be Changed g.  
Presentation of the Nature of Anger as Emptiness

#### 4. Diligence

- a. The Three Kinds of Diligence
- b. Renunciation of the Three Forms of Laziness
- c. The Measure of the Qualities of Diligence
- d. Instruction in the Necessity of Diligence through a Presentation of Its Benefits

#### 5. Meditative Stability

- a. Requisites for the Practice of Meditative Stability
- b. What Is Detrimental to Meditative Stability
- c. The Faults of Companionship
- d. The Need to Always Stay in Retreat
- e. The Arising of Experience and Realization in Retreat and Its Benefits
- f. How to Meditate and Its Qualities

#### 6. Sublime Insight

- a. A Brief Presentation of Sublime Insight
- b. The Extensive Explanation of Sublime Insight
  - i. Sublime Insight Gained from Hearing the Doctrine
    - A) Explanation of the Precious Keys to Analysis
      - 1) Explanation of Definitive and Inductive Meanings
      - 2) Explanation of Intention and Indirect Intention, to Clarify the Two Levels of Meaning and to Understand the Nature of Correct Intention
        - a) The Four Intentions
        - b) The Four Indirect Intentions
    - B) The Treasury of Sacred Doctrine Analyzed
      - 1) The Two Truths
        - a) Presentation of Relative Truth
        - b) Presentation of Ultimate Truth
      - 2) Presentation of the Nature of All Phenomena as Interdependent Arising
        - a) The Interdependent Origination of the Basic Character of Being
        - b) The Interdependent Origination of the Round of Rebirth
        - c) The Interdependent Origination of the Transcendence of Sorrow
  - ii. Sublime Insight Gained from Reflection
  - iii. Sublime Insight Gained from Meditation—How the Eight Extremes and Metaphors for Illusion Are Taught
    - A) Like a Dream
    - B) Like a Magical Display
    - C) Like an Optical Illusion
    - D) Like a Mirage
    - E) Like the Reflection of the Moon on Water

- F) Like an Echo
- G) Like a City of Spirits
- H) Like an Emanation

### III. The Thirty-Seven Facets and Ten Stages of Awakening on the Four Paths of Training

- A. The Path of Cultivation
- B. The Path of Application
- C. The Path of Seeing
- D. The Path of Meditation
  - 1. A Concise Presentation of the Path of Meditation
  - 2. The Extensive Explanation of the Path of Meditation
    - a. Levels of the Path of Meditation
    - b. Special Attributes of the Path of Meditation
      - i. Antidotes on the Path of Meditation
      - ii. Renunciation on the Path of Meditation
      - iii. Realization on the Path of Meditation
      - iv. Qualities on the Path of Meditation
      - v. Assumed Forms on the Path of Meditation
    - c. The Eightfold Exalted Path
    - d. Culmination of the Path of Meditation

*The Concise Discourse of the Perfection of Sublime Insight* states: Every quality of the five transcendent perfections and awakening is based upon the perfection of sublime insight.

*The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* states:

Those with discursive minds examine existence and nonexistence, But such analysis cannot pacify suffering.  
 What are known as “existence” and “nonexistence” are extremes, As are the concepts of purity and impurity:  
 The wise do not abide even in the middle.

*The Irreversible Wheel Discourse* states:

“Existence” is one extreme,  
 “Nonexistence” is another;  
 Like self and no self,  
 Like eternalism and nihilism.



## Concluding Verses

Generosity is an inexhaustible vast ocean;  
Ethical conduct, a harmless foundation of good earth;  
Patience, secure, supreme armor;  
Diligence, a quick, untiring horse;  
Meditative stability, an unchanging inviolable state;  
Sublime insight, an unstoppable diamond weapon.

The gift of necessary things is the best hook to attract a circle of disciples.  
Pleasant speech is the captivating music of a tambura.  
Teaching according to the disciples' levels causes a rain of various wished-for things.  
Conduct that conforms to the teachings sounds the divine drum to summon a great assembly.  
The thirty-seven facets of awakening are the great constellations.  
The activity of purification and crossing the paths of spiritual development cause the lotus garden to blossom.

### **BOOK 10: THE RESULT OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

Your wisdom sees beings, your universal loving-kindness protects them, And your acts of enlightened activity reflect your various skillful means to help others in ways appropriate to each.

Together these three—wisdom, love, and acts—bestow splendid joy to all beings: Buddhas of the three times and ten directions, to you I bow.

This homage introduces Book 10 of this excellent text, “The Result of the Middle Way.” This book has three chapters: 1. A Brief Presentation of the Support and Nature of the Path of No Further Training 2. An Extensive Explanation of the Path of No Further Training 3. A Detailed Presentation of Special Characteristics of the Path of No Further Training These chapters contain a total of nineteen specific headings: I. The Support and Nature of the Path of No Further Training II. The Path of No Further Training

#### A. The Support, the Bodies of Enlightenment

1. The Body of Ultimate Enlightenment
2. The Body of the Perfect Rapture of Enlightenment
3. The Manifest Body of Enlightenment

- B. The Content of the Path of No Further Training—Wisdom
    1. A General Classification of Wisdom
    2. The Nature of Each Wisdom
    3. Wisdom, and How It Knows Objects of Knowledge
      - a. Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom
        - i. Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Middle Way Tradition
        - ii. Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Mind Only Tradition
        - iii. Refutation of Misguided Explanations of Wisdom from the Materialist Tradition
      - b. The Correct Explanation of Wisdom
        - i. How Wisdom Sees Objects of Knowledge
        - ii. Refutation of Arguments
  - C. The Deeds, Enlightened Activity
- III. The Special Characteristics of the Path of No Further Training
- A. The Special Renunciation of the Path of No Further Training
  - B. The Special Realization of the Path of No Further Training
  - C. The Special Qualities of the Path of No Further Training
- The Flower Ornament Discourse* states:
- The king of wish-fulfilling jewels  
 Bestows in full whatever you wish.  
 Likewise, the nature of enlightenment  
 Always fully accomplishes aspirations.  
 Enlightenment leads worldly persons  
 To a world without center or limit.  
 By the force of their aspirations,  
 The victors fill the ten directions.

## Concluding Verses

The body of ultimate enlightenment of supreme exaltation abides without formulations.

The wisdom body rapture of supreme clarity blazes with the marks and signs of the Buddha's physical perfection.

The manifest wisdom body of supreme goodness appears in forms to guide others in appropriate ways.

The glorious essence wisdom body dwells in pervasive inseparability.

The illumination of supreme wisdom has neither bounds nor center.

The positive qualities of the supreme spontaneous state are inconceivable.

Enjoyment of the supreme unchanging state flows continually.

Manifestations of supreme acts are inexhaustible.

The supreme miraculous wisdom body exceeds measure.

The supreme wisdom speech of Brahma's voice defies distance.

The supreme wisdom mind, beyond bounds, cannot be veiled nor made clearer.

The supreme highest result is sublime awakening.

## THE GOLDEN KEY TO THE CONTENTS: BOOKS 1 TO 25

*An Index to The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*

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This short work by Choying Tobden Dorje provides a list of the eighty separate texts that make up his entire work *The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*. (It situates itself on the list at number 67.) Sadly, apart from these few pages of number 67, only the texts to number 65 have survived. Among those that did not are his autobiography and his directives for using the whole work as the curriculum in Buddhist institutions. The list presented here follows the order of the texts' appearance in the thirteen volumes of the original Tibetan edition.

Endless treasure of precious qualities,  
Refuge who masters precious qualities,  
You bring down a rain of the precious qualities I desire: You are the victor who  
bestows precious qualities.

Precious qualities difficult to fathom:  
*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra's* precious qualities.  
Source of precious qualities,  
I praise this sublime treasure of precious qualities.

The precious qualities of intense faith and diligence, The precious qualities of a  
deep intellect,  
And the precious qualities of good fortune's meaning: With these three precious  
qualities I write this text.

This text, *The Golden Key*, has three parts: A list of texts that comprise this  
sublime treatise Of the sacred doctrine, to present their order; The life story of  
the author of this excellent treatise, To present his acts;  
And a guide to formal study of this treatise,  
To present how classes in it should be conducted.

First, the treatise comprises thirteen precious volumes: One volume contains the  
table of contents and the root text; One volume contains the word-by-word  
commentary; Two volumes, a former and a latter, present the discourses; Two  
volumes, a former and a latter, present subjects of study; Two volumes, a  
former and a latter, present the tantra; Three volumes, a former, a middle,

former and a latter, present the tantras; three volumes, a former, a middle, and a latter, present great perfection; And two volumes, a former and a latter, contain the illustrated version.

These thirteen contain a total of eighty separate texts: Volume 1, KA, contains

1. (*Ka*) *The Invaluable Treasury of Buddhist Discourses and Tantras*, The root text in verse,

To facilitate recitation and memorization.

2. (*Kha*) The table of contents in prose, To provide a delineation of the wide ground of the text In a style that reverberates like a dragon's thunder.

Volume 2, KHA, contains

3. (*Ga*) The word-by-word commentary in prose, That each word of the root text be understood.

This text illuminates the meaning like the sun.

Volume 3, GA, contains

4. (*Ngā*) The meaning of the title and the introduction, For those of highest and middle capability.

This includes an initial brief presentation of the treatise.

5. (*Ca*) How to rely on the supreme spiritual guide And to reject misleading companions,

That you might recognize an eternal guide.

6. (*Cha*) How Buddhism is taught and listened to And how faith provides the foundation,

That the lotus of your intellect blossom.

7. (*Ja*) The sublime free and fully endowed human birth Which is difficult to repeatedly obtain,

That you grasp the essence of what is meaningful.

8. (*Nya*) How to recall impermanence and death, The best way to orient yourself to spiritual life, That you mentally renounce this life as meaningless.

9. (*Ta*) A fine and detailed presentation of conduct, and karma and its consequences In relation to ennobling and corrupting acts,

That your sufferings end and that you live in happiness.

10. (*Tha*) The obvious truth of the individual sufferings Of each of the six kinds of beings,  
That you gain freedom from the prison of the round of rebirth.

11. (*Da*) Refuge, ethical conduct,  
And the foundation, path, and result of the paths of hearers and solitary sages,  
That you rely on an infallible, eternal refuge.

Volume 4, NGA, contains

12. (*Na*) The two truths, the four immeasurable aspirations, The past lives of the Buddha, and the ritual for uplifting the mind to awakening, That you initially develop that supreme intention.

13. (*Pa*) The three forms of ethical conduct, The six transcendent perfections, and the thirty-seven facets of awakening, That you subsequently cultivate goodness and wisdom.

14. (*Pha*) The three wisdom bodies, the five wisdoms, And the ocean of enlightenment's activity,  
That you finally actualize the result.

Volume 5, CA, contains

15. (*Ba*) The eons of creation, abiding, destruction, and vacuity; And the design of the bodies and pure lands of Buddha Great Brimming Lake, To illuminate the designs of realms in the universe.

16. (*Ma*) The general categories  
Of the subjects of logic and grammar,  
To eliminate misleading expression.

17. (*Tsa*) A clear presentation of the thirty letters of the Tibetan alphabet And their interconnections,  
To elucidate the correct usage of the Tibetan script.

18. (*Tsha*) A very clear presentation of precise Tibetan grammar, The meaning of the container of culture,  
To foster verbal erudition.

19. (*Dza*) The wonderful science of construction, Both sublime and ordinary,  
To please everyone, of high and low station in life.

20. (*Wa*) A clear index to the vital points Of the four medical tantras,  
To overcome the four hundred and four diseases.

21. (*Zha*) The contents of the general categories of commentaries in the collection of treatises in Tibetan translation— The middle way, the transcendent perfections, observed phenomena, the monastic code— To provide an entry to an understanding of the commentaries.
22. (*Za*) The five gatherings and other subjects From the outer Wheel of Time, To understand the domain of stellar astrology.

23. (*'A*) The keys to astrology,  
The five methods of calculation,  
To present clearly favorable and unfavorable influences of the elements.

24. (*Ya*) A concise astrology guide  
In verse, to facilitate understanding,  
That the effects of oppositions, conjunctions, and so on, be clear.

Volume 6, CHA, contains

25. (*Ra*) A general presentation of the body, adornments, and correcting faults  
in poetry As in *The Mirror of Poetry*,  
To foster skill in use of suitable words.

26. (*La*) Synonymics, with a relation given between Sanskrit and Tibetan,  
Like exquisite jewelry,  
To foster skill in collection of terms.

27. (*Sha*) Prosody in verse,  
Using Vritta or Jati,  
To ornament one's writing with *prastara* [calculation of meter in Sanskrit verse].

28. (*Sa*) Drama, dance, and the analysis Of the marks and signs of men and women,  
To foster skill in song, dance, and legends.

29. (*Ha*) Geomancy of earth, wood, and water, The study of conduct in planning construction, To analyze a site, and other related subjects.

30. (*A*) Judgment of horses, human life, And synchronicity,  
To foster skill in both traditions (worldly and spiritual).

31. (*Ki*) The spiritual traditions of gods, humans, Non-Buddhists, eternalists, and nihilists,  
To foster knowledge of worldly religions.

32. (*Khi*) The philosophical tenets of the hearers, Mind only, independent reason, and consequentialist, To foster knowledge of the way of dialectics.
33. (*Gi*) The clear distinctions between The outer and inner tantras and the four tantras, To foster knowledge of the way of tantra.
34. (*Ng*) Tibetan Bön, medicine, divination, And the spread of the ancient and modern doctrines in Tibet, To elucidate Tibetan culture.
35. (*Ci*) The array of the garland of reasoning From the lower *Treasury of Observed Phenomena*, To defeat challenges in debate.

Volume 7, JA, contains

36. (*Chi*) The basis, path, and result  
Of the action, conduct, and yoga tantras,  
To facilitate understanding of the three outer tantras.

37. (*Ji*) The basis, path, and result  
Of highest secret mantra,  
To understand the highest class of tantras.

38. (*Nyi*) The presentation of the name, classifications, Introduction, content, and definition of the root *Secret Essence Tantra*, To understand its meaning.

39. (*Ti*) The empowerment into the illusory configuration Of the cloud of syllables of wisdom mind, speech, and body, To define the seven bases of the peaceful deities.

Volume 8, NYA, contains

40. (*Thi*) The phase of creation of the peaceful deities, And its related feast, mantra practice, phase of completion, and praise, To elucidate that path and result.

41. (*Di*) The basis of the wrathful deities, mantras, configurations, offerings, Tantric bonds, activity, and praise,  
To elucidate that basis, path, and result.

42. (*Ni*) The combined root text and commentary Of *Gentle Splendor's Net of Magical Manifestation*, To understand the meaning of *A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor*.

43. (*Pi*) The origins of anuyoga, enumeration of its tantras, Empowerments, tantric bonds, view, and meditation, To understand the mother tantras.

44. (*Phi*) The preliminary, main practice, conclusion, Conduct, and result of the path of means,  
To understand supreme coemergent exaltation and emptiness.



Volume 9, TA, contains

45. (*Bi*) The origins of great perfection, enumeration of its tantras, empowerments, The basis, and the distinctions between the storehouse of all dualistic experience and the body of ultimate enlightenment, and between mind and awareness, To understand the meaning of the basis of great perfection.

Volume 10, THA, contains

46. (*Mi*) The preliminary practices, means of realization, And various stages of instruction,

To understand the view of great perfection.

47. (*Tsi*) The stages of meditation of cutting through the solidity of dualistic experience For those of average, middle, or highest capability, To practice that meditation.

48. (*Tshi*) The place where awareness resides, The preliminary practices of direct vision, main practices, and final support, To practice that meditation.

Volume 11, DA, contains

49. (*Dzi*) Various forms of conduct,

Essential binding points, pointing-out instructions, and judgment of signs, To greatly enhance experience through conduct.

50. (*Wi*) Liberation in the period between lifetimes for those of the middle degree of acumen And how those of the lowest degree of acumen reach liberation in the manifest body of enlightenment, To gain liberation without having to undergo the period between lifetimes.

51. (*Zhi*) Primordial purity; spontaneous presence; And enlightenment's body, speech, mind, qualities, and activity, To understand the meaning of the complete result.

52. (*Zi*) A summary of the basis, path, and result; The conclusion, and the colophon,

To study the concise vital points in a few words.

Volume 12, NA, contains

53. (*'I*) The illustrated version

Of the introduction and brief presentation.

54. (*Yi*) The illustrated version

Of reliance on the spiritual guide and rejection of misleading companions.

55. (*Ri*) The illustrated version

Of faith and the teaching of Buddhism and listening to it

of faith, and the teaching of Buddhism and listening to it.

56. (*Li*) The illustrated version  
Of grasping the essence of the free human life that is difficult to attain.
57. (*Shi*) The illustrated version  
Of how to assiduously apply yourself, now faced with impermanence and death.
58. (*Si*) The illustrated version  
Of a fine and detailed presentation of conduct in relation to the karma and consequences of ennobling and corrupting acts.
59. (*Hi*) The illustrated version  
Of the uninterrupted suffering in the wheel of life.
60. (*I*) The illustrated version  
Of taking refuge in the three jewels.
61. (*Ku*) The illustrated version  
Of the foundation of the great way, uplift of the mind to awakening.
62. (*Khu*) The illustrated version  
Of the path of the great way, cultivation of goodness and wisdom.
63. (*Gu*) The illustrated version  
Of the supreme result of the great way, manifest enlightenment.
64. (*Ngu*) The illustrated version  
Of the design of realms in the ten directions and three times.
65. (*Cu*) The illustrated version  
Of the five major and five minor subjects of Buddhist culture.
66. (*Chu*) The illustrated version  
Of worldly and transcendent philosophies.
67. (*Ju*) *The Treasury's* index,  
The author's life story, and a manual of regulations.

Volume 13, PA, contains

68. (*Nyu*) The illustrated version  
Of the foundation, path, and result of the four classes of tantra.
69. (*Tu*) The illustrated version  
Of the title, classifications, and origin of *The Secret Essence Tantra*.
70. (*Thu*) The illustrated version  
Of the stages of the foundation, path, and result of the peaceful deities.
71. (*Du*) The illustrated version  
Of the basis, path, and result of the wrathful deities, and *A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor*.
72. (*Nu*) The illustrated version  
Of the foundation, path, view, meditation, conduct, and result of anuyoga.
73. (*Pu*) The illustrated version  
Of the nature of the ground of being, storehouse consciousness, and the body of ultimate enlightenment, according to great perfection.
74. (*Phu*) The illustrated version  
Of the means to understand the view and various instructions.
75. (*Bu*) The illustrated version  
Of the clear meditation of primordial purity, cutting through the solidity of dualistic experience.
76. (*Mu*) The illustrated version  
Of the clear meditation of spontaneous presence, direct vision.
77. (*Tsu*) The illustrated version  
Of conduct, pointing-out, and judgment of signs.
78. (*Tshu*) The illustrated version  
Of the four in-between states and the natural pure land of the manifest body of enlightenment.
79. (*Dzu*) The illustrated version  
Of the result—enlightenment’s body, speech, mind, qualities, and activity.

80. (*Wu*) The illustrated version  
Of the complete summary and conclusion.

This list of the entire content  
Of what resembles the body of the treatise—  
The root text and the parts of the commentary— Is clearly set forth here: so be  
it!

The extremely numerous treatises  
That grow from this one, like spreading limbs, Can surely be found elsewhere.  
By the force of this work's stores of ennobling acts And of excellent acts  
cultivated in the three times, May all beings, infinitely kind,  
Understand the meaning of an ocean of discourses and tantras And quickly attain  
the three bodies of enlightenment.

## AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR'S AFTERWORD

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In this afterword, you will find the reflections of the author, Choying Tobden Dorje, on the subject of each book. These have been culled from the illustrated version of his work—they appear at the end of each collection of drawings that accompany a specific book. Thus, both in their physical placement and in their tone, they constitute his last words on each major subject.

Under each heading below, Choying Tobden Dorje's words appear first, indented, followed by comments from the translator.

### **INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF PRESENTATION**

Most people do not own many books. They might acquire some, but those copies' editions can be marred by errors. Some books might be error-free but the owners do not acquire the requisite corresponding empowerments, transmissions, and instructions. Or, even if they receive the reading transmission for some, they find it difficult to curb their scattered attention.

Some readers are interested in the subjects of acts, karma, and consequences, and in the monastic code of conduct. Some are interested in the conduct of the victors and their spiritual heirs (that is, the bodhisattva path). Some are interested in the rapid path of tantra. Some are interested in various aspects of Buddhist culture. Some are interested in teaching the terms used to present information in texts. Some are interested in the profound meanings of the key instructions for experiential cultivation. Some are interested in extensive collections of profound meaning. Some are interested in excellent texts of extensive definitive instructions. For readers of these and other varied interests, I have composed this work in which all these subjects are complete.

I, Choying Tobden Dorje, wrote this as a means to turn the reader's mind to all the Buddhist canon's discourses, tantras, and treatises.

THESE CONCLUDING REMARKS are quite short compared to those he makes at the end of the following books. Choying Tobden Dorje makes two major points here. The first concerns the sorry state of book publishing and readership in Tibet. In modern countries, we are startled when we find even a single spelling mistake in a published book: for this we must thank the practically invisible guild of eagle-eyed editors and copy editors. Should these individuals want to continue that work in their next lifetime, they might consider rebirth in Tibetan regions: they're sorely needed.

Yet even if a Tibetan Buddhist book comes into our hands error-free, it is incumbent on us as readers to ensure that the book corresponds to our active spiritual life. One high Tibetan lama complained aloud in my hearing that he'd been in a bad mood that day and wanted "to read like Westerners do—just to read something I hadn't read before." Normally, he maintained a strict, traditional discipline in relation to the reading of Buddhist books. Each work he opened had a context, the same one that Choying Tobden Dorje laments the general readership disregards: a spiritual ecosystem in which books constitute but a single part in a much larger whole. Tibet did not have a system of legal copyright; what it did have was a tacit understanding, articulated above, that sacred books belong within a process that includes empowerment, reading transmission, and instruction. Ideally, Buddhist readers treat their books as we do the myriad miraculous and powerful substances we refer to as prescription drugs. As vital and even life-saving as they can be, and as convinced as we might be that we are in need of a specific remedy, we are obliged to first consult with a doctor, receive the drug from a pharmacist, and to ingest it as we've been advised. We usually follow that system not just because there is no legal alternative; it just seems sensible, especially if we've witnessed the results of others' attempts at self-medication. We keep prescription drugs in special cabinets, out of the reach of children and out of the sight of all but those closest to us. Most of us would be hesitant to share any drug with even a family member—shouldn't they first consult with their trusted doctor as we did? What is the best medicine for us could easily prove poisonous to another, so we think.

If only we had the exactly same attitude toward sacred texts!

For Tibet's Buddhists, there is a world of difference between books read for entertainment or information, and sacred books. The first is seen as being like an over-the-counter treatment (usually for boredom); the second is regarded as we do the most powerful life-saving medicine. Each sacred book comes infused with the spiritual influence—"blessing"—of the author and the lineage, as well as the presence of all the wisdom beings in whom we take refuge, including the dakinis and guardians of the doctrine. The Buddha's doctrine is unfathomably

wide and deep, and said to be entirely virtuous in the beginning, middle, and end, yet no Buddhist spiritual practice condones unsupervised reading. One reader's meat can be another's poison, even on elementary levels.

What Choying Tobden Dorje has on the menu in *The Complete Nyingma Tradition* is the second point of his remarks. In this informal mission statement, he states he has written a work in which everyone can find something of interest. An impartial examination of his long list of book and chapter titles in the brief introduction confirms that he succeeded in what he set out to accomplish.

The format of his long introduction that begins this work is anything but arbitrary: our author conforms to the demands of classical Buddhist literature as the Tibetans assimilated and reproduced it. Introductions have three parts: a description of the title, offerings of homage, and a declaration of the author's resolve to complete the text. Here we are treated to the scenic route to touch these three inevitable elements that open a Buddhist treatise, yet even at the beginning of more modest works these same points can be discerned.

We find the same heed for past models in the brief presentation, where at the end of his generous description of the work to come, the author cites universally known and accepted Buddhist treatises as precedents to validate his approach. His care in respecting the past extends beyond the work's structure to the content itself. Our author signs this first book adding "Longchen" to his name: this is a wink to literate Tibetan readers. Choying Tobden Dorje in other works adds "Dzokchen" to his name, signaling the author's sense of identity and the thrust of the writing in that instance. Here, he openly indicates his debt to Longchenpa (1308–1363), the main source he drew upon in this work. One other contributor whose writing Choying Tobden Dorje borrowed is Lochen Dharmashri (1654–1718). To describe in detail how these towering Nyingma masters' writings have been woven into the fabric of the present work constitutes laudable scholarship but frightful manners. One Tibetan resource person whose tireless help was invaluable for this project named me "the Kenneth Starr of translators," in "honor" of an investigator who toiled doggedly to reveal to the public what might have better remained a private matter. The resource person felt my researching zeal to be equally misplaced.

In the context of this book, then, I will not intrude on the private space shared between the author, and you, the reader. The author has dropped a broad hint that the inebriating perfume that wafts from the page comes from Maison Longchenpa. To say more would spoil the mystery and the thrill of your discovery. I'll leave you two alone.



## **BOOK 1: DISCIPLESHIP**

Those who speak the truth in keeping with the scriptures of the Buddha's word and who in every circumstance are energetic in skillfully leading all beings' minds to the sacred Buddhist doctrine are called spiritual masters or guides, even if they do not have impressive titles, positions, possessions, or clothing. If you correctly rely upon such persons, your mind will turn toward the sacred doctrine and you will certainly gain lasting happiness. Those whose speech is in discord with the scriptures of the Buddha's word and who are energetic in skillfully leading all beings' minds to negative, corrupting, evil acts related to the appearances of this life might succeed in bringing beings immediate happiness but will eventually guide them to various karmic causes of tremendous suffering. Even if such persons have impressive titles, positions, possessions, clothing, entourage, and wealth, they are called misleading companions, guides on the path to miserable realms within the round of rebirth. You should avoid them like poison.

Those called spiritual guides are content should food or wealth come their way and remain content even if they do not. What is really necessary for them is genuine spiritual practice. Those who use many means to undertake ennobling acts are spiritual guides; those who employ many means to undertake wrongdoing are misleading companions. Since the result of ennobling acts is happiness, you should rely upon a spiritual guide however you can. Since wrongdoing's results are suffering, you should forsake misleading companions however you can. The extent to which you rely upon a spiritual friend is profitable; the extent to which you rely on a misleading companion entails loss.

Positive ennobling acts provide the source of magnificent happiness, both temporary and permanent. Since spiritual masters and guides are the source of ennobling acts, you should know them to be the source of happiness. To be happy accomplishes your personal goal. Vile wrongdoing provides the source of unwished-for suffering, both temporary and long-term. Since misleading companions are the source of wrongdoing, you should know them to be the source of suffering. When you find yourself tormented by various sufferings, you have not achieved your personal goals.

To integrate the sacred Buddhist instructions with your mind, you

must gaze at these drawings and repeatedly bring them to mind. If these become integrated with your mind, all appearing existence dawns as sacred texts and your own mind will surely dawn as the spiritual master. Whatever you see or hear should arise as instructions for the common or extraordinary paths, and should arise as spiritual masters. Since spiritual masters should present the meaning of the sacred doctrine in metaphors, I have put such metaphors into drawings. If you memorize the words and keep the images firmly in mind, you will have no hesitation in teaching, reflection, or meditation.

In drawing these examples, I have drawn various objects, such as mountains, cliffs, forests, lakes, water, fire, wind, space, buildings, and beings. Appearing existence naturally arises without being drawn; thus all appearing existence is itself sufficient as drawings. The appearances of existence are the metaphorical or symbolic spiritual master. Regardless of the form you rely upon, whatever leads your mind to the sacred doctrine, that is the spiritual master.

Since this is a concise illustrated version of the discourses and tantras, everyone can manage to examine it. The infinitely vast version, the illustrations in appearing existence, can be recognized by fortunate persons, who should not place their hopes in illustrations with black letters; that is, in print.

We hear the doctrine to resolve our outer misunderstandings; we should meditate to resolve our inner misunderstandings. First, rely on human spiritual masters as your spiritual master. Later, rely on books as your spiritual master. Finally, rely on your own mind as your spiritual master.

First, we must be skilled in examining spiritual masters. Later, we must be skilled in relying upon them in word and deed. Finally, we must be skilled in training in how spiritual masters, with towering waves of the realization of wisdom mind and its conduct, act for the good of Buddhism and beings.

It is inappropriate to train in wrong conduct, which consists of beings' ordinary acts and conduct related to the concerns of this life. These you must forsake. If you follow the example of past holy persons' lives, you will in turn become a holy individual. Therefore, turn your attention now to the sacred Buddhist doctrine. You must firmly turn your mind away from negative, corrupting acts and have your mind firmly merge with the ennobling, sacred doctrine. Search,

as you would for nectar, for spiritual masters and guides who dwell near ennobling acts, and companions who are intent on ennobling acts, and then rely upon them.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

And so it—*The Complete Nyingma Tradition from Sutra to Tantra*—begins, with the subject of discipleship. Our author does not explain that choice of the first subject his readers encounter; he simply makes an articulate case for the vital importance of the master-disciple relationship.

Other translators sometimes render *master-disciple* as “teacher-student.” I cannot comment on the context in which that translation can be apt; here, our author clearly describes a relationship that is highly charged, far beyond what the term “teacher-student” implies. If even very slight physical, verbal, or mental disrespect toward an individual will land us in hell in a future rebirth—a fact we learn here—we are no longer in the territory of student-teacher dynamics we’re familiar with outside tantric Buddhist practice. Our author also does not describe an individual who could be designated as a pastor, minister, priest, rabbi, and so on, in the sense of someone who brings the presence of a religious tradition into the life of the community at significant junctures, such as births, comings of age, marriages, or funerals.

Spiritual masters (gurus or lamas) can and do serve human communities, but their primary role is not to reinforce the ties that bind us to our loved ones, our chosen careers, and our social roles. They live on the outskirts of our lives until Buddhist feelings stir within us—disillusionment, disenchantment, renunciation, for example—signs that the first of the Buddha’s four truths, that of life’s intrinsic suffering or unsatisfactory nature, has hit home.

In the passage directly above, Choying Tobden Dorje uses this opportunity to introduce his drawings. For him, they belong under the category of spiritual master since they provide a first step to the recognition of the “metaphorical or symbolic spiritual master,” that is, all appearing phenomena arising as indicators of the true nature of things.

As for spiritual masters in general, he states that we must begin fostering a relationship with a human spiritual master, then enlarge our scope with books, and finally find the ultimate spiritual master within. After his lengthy description in the main text of the complicated relationship we forge with Buddhist spiritual masters, a reader might wish to be spared that risky and perilous feature of the path. Can’t we do without the foibles and fallibility of other human beings? Can’t we graduate directly to books or our own mind?

It might seem like a tempting proposition. Even an example of a perfect

disciple, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche, would remark, laughing, that his experience of discipleship meant that “I end up not doing much of what I wanted to do and doing lots I never wanted to do.” Despite that, he was an enthusiastic and humble disciple his entire life. He and all other spiritual masters I’ve tried to follow have stated unanimously that everyone must begin the Buddhist path as a disciple of a human being. This is obviously an opinion shared by Choying Tobden Dorje: for him, discipleship comes first.

## **BOOK 2: THE TRANSMISSION OF BUDDHISM**

The sacred doctrine is like a wish-fulfilling jewel: whoever finds it gains effortlessly everything needed and desired. Thus it is important to give the gift of the excellent rain of Buddhism’s jewels to all beings, both high and low. Gifts of food or wealth can help relieve minor temporary suffering but cannot ease long-term suffering. Even minor teachings among the precious sacred Buddhist doctrine can end suffering that has lingered for many lifetimes. No one wishes to suffer. The cause of suffering is corrupting acts; the cause of happiness is ennobling acts. Ennobling acts are like nectar: you must gain them however you can. Corrupting acts are like poison that is fatal to the touch: you must reject them however you can. This can be learned by listening to the sacred doctrine.

By applying yourself to the transmission of the precious sacred Buddhist doctrine to the exclusion of all other activity, you will surely become a recipient of honor on the part of all beings, a spiritual master and guide. You should always teach. To the extent that you teach others, you should apply these teachings to yourself and have your mind mix with experiential cultivation in spiritual practice. You must also be skilled in surely leading others to apply the teachings and to experiential cultivation. What we call “teaching Buddhism” is to prevent yourself and others from physical, verbal, and mental wrongdoing, and to provide the means for application to ennobling acts.

It is not enough to have understood the teachings once: you must listen to them repeatedly, reflect upon the meaning of what you have heard, meditate upon the meaning of your contemplation, and rapidly bring your meditation into the domain of experience and realization. It is not enough to have eaten food once: you must always eat, regularly

nourishing your vitality. Likewise, you must continually develop exertion in listening to the teachings. Any Buddhist teaching heard is excellent wealth that lasts for every lifetime, whereas ordinary wealth is just borrowed.

Faith is the supreme exalted jewel: if you cultivate the experience of the sacred Buddhist doctrine with faith, you will always be happy. Since you can suffer even if materially wealthy, you should replace collecting wealth and possessions with accumulation of the wealth of faith. If you are rich in the wealth of faith, you will surely become free from the prison of the round of rebirth; material wealth will surely keep you in that prison. You might fill the triple cosmos with various precious substances to offer to the buddhas, yet a moment's faith in the teachings of the great way is more beneficial. With faith, you have positive qualities; if faith increases, ennobling, positive qualities increase. If faith becomes clouded, ennobling, positive qualities decrease. Therefore, to increase faith, you should listen to spiritual masters' teachings and examine the Buddha's word.

You should turn your mind to the teachings that provide lasting happiness in the same way as the hungry wish for food. You should search for instruction just as the poor search for wealth. Even if the poor find wealth, they gain only temporary relief from the suffering of poverty, whereas striving for the Buddhist doctrine brings both temporary and lasting happiness. If you find the doctrine, you find food and wealth along with them. If you become rich in Buddhism in your own stream of being, you will surely become rich in food, wealth, and possessions at the same time.

Instead of planting seeds in the fields, plant seeds of faith in your own being and have the sprouts of awakening grow. Instead of selling things for profit, engage in ennobling acts for the welfare of sentient beings: this will enrich you with infinite goodness. Instead of caring for horses and wealth, protect your own body, speech, and mind from the cliffs of corrupting wrongdoing. If you take the path of ennobling acts, you will reach the land of enlightenment while gaining horses and wealth along the way. If you want to never experience suffering again, cultivate the experience of the precious sacred doctrine. If you want to always be happy without interruption, train assiduously in the sacred doctrine. Its root is to subdue your own mind. Since your own mind harbors negative habits, you find wrongdoing easy, but this must be firmly transformed and turned toward ennobling acts. Once your mind

turns toward ennobling acts, it must never vacillate. You should vow to yourself, “May my mind never turn from the sacred Buddhist doctrine!”

When you see a sacred text, take it and touch it to your head. When you hear the sacred instructions taught, listen with gladness. Train your body, speech, and mind in the conduct of the sacred Buddhist doctrine. You should consider how the customs of the sacred doctrine might be preserved for a long time. Think, “May I develop energetic application to the various ways the sacred teachings of Buddha’s doctrine can spread and flourish, and how sentient beings can put them into practice!” If you always maintain that intention and apply it, you will surely attain enlightenment.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

The transmission of Buddhism in its entirety involves many different and divergent levels of truth and of teaching styles. Choying Tobden Dorje treats three levels—discourses, tantras, and great perfection tantras—separately and does not look back to do a comparative study of views and terminologies, a study that would likely require a whole book to itself. Suffice it to say that to read and appreciate the full range of Tibetan Buddhist literature requires us to become tricultural (or quadricultural, if we note the divide in the discourses between the lesser and great way approaches).

Some features do not change from the beginning to the end of the paths of Buddhist training. These include discipleship of the previous book, and in this book, the process of transmission and faith. Where some translators use the word “study,” I have translated words literally here as either “listening” or “hearing” where either appears. Again, Choying Tobden Dorje seems to intend that those words be taken literally in his work. As for the subject of faith, I found its inclusion here startling at first—it constitutes a telling choice on the part of our author. Certainly, it influenced my avoidance of the word “study” since remarkable advances in “Buddhist studies” continue to issue from secular environments where a teacher, student, or researcher’s faith in the subject is irrelevant. It is entirely possible that our author would be delighted by the situation in the present day; nevertheless, what he clearly meant then cannot be rendered as something along the lines of a “student working with a teacher to study Buddhism,” language sometimes used in translation to describe this process.

Textual Buddhism often mentions the three-step process of listening or hearing, then reflection, then meditation, yet in more direct instruction (which I

have assisted as a translator), another three-step process more often supplants it: understanding, then experience, then realization. Choying Tobden Dorje refers to this framework in the introduction: “Those on the path of cultivation understand; those on the path of application experience; and those on the path of seeing realize. Or, it is said that we first understand the meaning of the text, then experience it, and finally realize it.” The Tibetan word rendered here as “experience” can also mean “to taste” or “to savor” the flavor of something. When faced with bright modern minds whose lives have been defined from a young age by their experience in educational institutions, some Tibetan lamas express their hope and expectation that their disciples will not only “learn about” Buddhism, as they’re so well-trained to do, but to draw it into the realms of spiritual experience and realization.

### **BOOK 3: OUR PRECIOUS HUMAN LIFE**

What is called the difficult attainment of a free and fully endowed human life cannot be equated with every human being. It refers to those human beings who have a spiritual practice. What we call a precious human life can be found among those who assiduously apply themselves equally to hearing, reflecting, and meditating on the sacred Buddhist doctrine and to the continual use of skillful means to calm and tame their own minds. When their meditative experience and realization dawn, they teach the nectar of the sacred doctrine to others, all sentient beings, our venerable mothers, who are plunged in the darkness of ignorance and have plummeted into the prison pit of existence, to free them from the round of rebirth’s sufferings and to place them on the excellent path of liberation. Now that you have the power to do so, it is very important that you give careful consideration to transforming your life to such a precious human life.

From the perspective of its cause, examples, numbers, and essence, the precious human life, replete with every freedom and endowment, is extremely difficult to attain. Therefore, now that you have for once gained it, you should not use it to defeat enemies, protect friends, or to search for and hoard food or wealth. In whatever way possible, you should turn your mind to the sacred Buddhist doctrine that is an excellent means to achieve your long-term wishes. If you begin at a young age to firmly apply yourself to Buddhism, becoming someone who completes their spiritual practice, your present and your future

will be happy. If you waste this human life in meaningless, materialist acts, you defeat your own purpose. You should undertake a prodigious stream of activity to aid Buddhism and beings in general, and to reverse the large river of your wrongdoing. You should ensure that your legacy will definitely be that of helpful contributions to Buddhism and to beings.

If you now become distracted in various meaningless acts related to the circumstances of this life and don't grasp the essence of this life, it is as if a jewel came into your hands and you didn't use it to gain what you needed and desired. From now on, you should maintain an intense determination to put into practice only ennobling acts and to fully seize the essence of this life. If you do so according to the teachings, your present and future lives will be happy; if you don't, your present and future lives will surely be miserable. Therefore, you should gladly undergo hardships in your spiritual life, should they be necessary.

The precious sacred doctrine is the source of happiness: with your eyes, read the Buddhist scriptures; with your ears, listen to the words of the teachings; with your mind, reflect on their meaning; with your mouth, teach others Buddhism. With your body, engage in Buddhist conduct: when sitting, sit as a Buddhist; when walking, walk as a Buddhist; when eating, eat as a Buddhist; whatever you do, do as a Buddhist, in keeping with the life stories of holy masters of the past. If persons are in discord, do what you can to create harmony. When harmony reigns, make it even stronger. By doing so, you help both yourself and others; this life, the next, and the period between lifetimes will be naturally, seamlessly happy; you will effortlessly accomplish all your plans; and everything you have done will become part of your path to awakening. Thus, if the thought arises in your mind, "I have nothing on my mind apart from Buddhism," this constitutes supreme spiritual experience and realization.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

The subject of what constitutes a precious human life is often the first instruction given to beginners. It forms one of the touchstones of Buddhist spiritual practice—that just the fact of our having such a life is more significant and potentially more meaningful than any obvious social or cultural marker of success. It is the rarest, most valuable gem in the world, and we already own it.

What I found interesting is that Choying Tobden Dorje devotes a whole "book" (by his standard) to this subject, as well as the following three—



impermanence, karma, and the sufferings of the round of rebirth. These four make slim volumes, and could have been gathered together under the oft-used heading of “four reflections to turn our minds to spiritual practice.” Instead, he places these four subjects on the same level as other books of considerable girth within this larger work.

To be clear, the point of reflection on our human life is not to persuade ourselves that human life has some special intrinsic value apart from the opportunity it provides for exiting the round of rebirth. Other forms of life are as precious to their inhabitants as our own is to us. Yet beings of other kinds—gods, demigods, animals, and so on—are overwhelmed by their environments, the narratives of their dramas, be they utterly blissful or sheer torture. We humans can decide to opt out of the (human) rat race, to spend what years of health and well being remain to us in the pursuit of regaining the enlightenment that is the nature of every being equally from the tiniest insect to the highest buddha.

#### **BOOK 4: REFLECTION ON DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE**

*The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* states, “Compared to giving one hundred fully ordained persons their noon meal and an offering, how much better it is to give a moment’s thought to the impermanence of composite phenomena!” Therefore, repeated recollection of death and impermanence has very considerable benefits. This meditation on death is a profound teaching. Meditation on death alone is certain to subdue your mind, even without such practices as verbal recitations of prayers.

To repeat the experience of recalling your own death is what is called “experiential cultivation.” To reflect on death is meditation. If you do not bring death to mind, you become agitated with the many things you need and the many things you have to do. Your leisure time disappears and your spiritual practice stagnates. By remembering death, you feel you don’t need anything and you do nothing besides spiritual practice. Therefore, you should always meditate on the certainty of your death, the unpredictability of the time of your death, and the uncertainty of the eventual cause of your death.

Remembering death will turn your attention from its attachment to activity related to this life’s events. You will mentally reject wrongdoing related to this life and the thought to practice the authentic

doctrine will naturally well up in you. By acting according to the Buddhist doctrine, you will attain freedom and the state of omniscience. Therefore, to initially recall death makes your attention turn to the doctrine. To subsequently recall death makes you never turn away from the doctrine. To recall death at last has you gain stability in the nature of reality, the ultimate abiding state. Therefore to meditate on death is crucial.

If you want to become someone who practices Buddhism correctly, recall death. “I won’t die now” is the thought through which all decline arrives: you must reject it. To repeatedly recall death opens the gate to the source of all that is magnificent. You must join your mind to that thought.

It is certain that you will die and be forced to abandon this body and to leave. What then is this pleasant house for? These beautiful clothes and jewelry? This delicious food and drink, these plentiful expensive objects, this extensive retinue of many servants, this high rank, these many family members and friends, and so on? Even though you own a lot of these things, you will have to leave them all and go alone to your future life. This pleasant house you built will be another’s. These beautiful clothes and jewelry you have arranged will be worn by another. Likewise, all the activity that appears in this life is ultimately deceptive. Happiness is like a rainbow in space—very fine, but ephemeral. Your close companions and possessions are like those you saw in last night’s dream, impermanent. You have no control over your own body: you must take another rebirth. That as well will be impermanent and you will have to take yet another. Births and deaths are innumerable; suffering, limitless—they are the result solely of not recalling death.

You must seize the innate citadel of deathlessness. When you cut the root of birth and death, you rid yourself of the ignorance that attends them. Become familiar with awareness, the awakened mind. To genuinely accomplish the teachings on death, abandon concern for this life, live in seclusion where no other humans live. Live alone in the mountains and meditate on death during your six daily meditation sessions. Since this was the principal experiential cultivation of past holy masters, meditation on death leads to enlightenment in one lifetime. Whoever meditates on death now finds the sacred Buddhist doctrine effective. Who meditates on death in the future conforms to the sacred doctrine.

You can't live longer than seventy or eighty years in all, and many die suddenly due to obstacles' accidents. Therefore, don't lend your attention to this life; prepare yourself for the next. At death, your guides are your spiritual masters: rely on them. Your enjoyments will be your ennobling acts: collect them. Your refuge will be the three jewels: make offerings to them. This illusory body is rented: you will have to leave it. You protect your body with love, yet you must abandon it. You energetically accumulate wealth and objects, yet you must leave them. You really love your family and friends, yet you must part. You have lots of things you have left to do, yet you must forsake them. At death, all the stuff of this life is of no use to you: why be so attached to it?

From now on, sincerely recall death. Be content with the food and wealth you have, and stop caring for gain and honor. Forsake cultivating friendships; give up struggling with enemies; abandon your projects. From this moment on, you should genuinely cultivate your experience in the sacred doctrine that will surely prove useful at death. You must be energetic in the means to ensure that your mind will be happy and free from regret at death. You need the firm confidence that after death, regardless of what appearances arise during the period between lifetimes, you will recognize them as if meeting an old acquaintance. Continually say the words, "Death, death . . ." Think about it. Keep death firmly in mind and meditate on it. Even if you are skilled in Buddhist teaching, without meditation on death, you aren't a practicing Buddhist. Those who make meditation on death the core of their spiritual lives will surely become pure Buddhists.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

Contemplation of our inevitable demise is a practice common to all forms of Buddhism; its benefits are easily understood and commonly accepted. In short, remembering death is akin to splashing cold water on our face to sharpen our senses. Refreshed, we continue our spiritual practice with renewed vigor.

That is the usual story, but midway through retelling it, our author introduces us here to an altogether different approach: "You must seize the innate citadel of deathlessness." This is to say, reflection on death can be more than a prod to goad us into spiritual practice. Reflection on death can be an end in itself, a way to discover what never dies. Here, he refers to what never dies as "innate," which is to say that we are not responsible for creating it by spiritual practice. We contemplate death to turn our attention away from all that will soon perish—

everything—but we also eventually turn away from concentration upon death itself.

He then writes, “When you cut the root of birth and death, you rid yourself of the ignorance that attends them.” We do not worship death: ignorance accompanies it as much as lack of wakefulness permeates our mundane life. Reflection on death is the antidote to any attachment to life; once that sickness is cured, we stop taking the medicine, to instead, “Become familiar with awareness, the awakened mind.”

This is a stunning sentence, as it shows our author tipping his hand. He has slipped out of the guise of a common Buddhist teacher into that of a great perfection master. He equates “the innate citadel of deathlessness” with awareness, which he in turn identifies as the awakened mind. To briefly unpack the language used here, “awareness” in this context refers to our natural capacity for an experiential mode other than “I am aware of . . . (something).” Our author asks us to turn away from mundane awareness (what all living creatures are endowed with) to deathless awareness, which predates our life as any living creature in any world. He refers to such awareness as “awakened mind,” a synonym for buddha nature. (As such, the term as used here cannot be comfortably back-translated into the Sanskrit *bodhichitta* or into such terms as “mind of awakening” or “awakening mind” that suggest a state of mind, however exalted, that is part of a process.) According to Choying Tobden Dorje and the tradition of great perfection he here represents, the successful conclusion of reflection on death and impermanence ends in “seizing the citadel” of our indwelling deathless enlightened nature.

## **BOOK 5: THE WORKINGS OF KARMA**

Commission of the ten corrupting acts, motivated by the three or five poisons, only results in suffering and will not produce happiness. Commission of the ten ennobling acts, free from the three or five poisons, results in happiness and will not produce suffering. Among beings, those who are happy enjoy the consequence of ennobling acts; those tormented by suffering experience the consequence of corrupting acts. Those who experience a mixture of happiness and suffering enjoy the consequence of a mixture of ennobling acts and wrongdoing. Those who experience mainly happiness and a little suffering enjoy the consequence of mainly ennobling acts and a few corrupting acts. Those who experience mainly suffering and a little happiness have the

consequence of mostly corrupting acts and a few ennobling acts. The results of happiness and suffering within the round of rebirth grow from the seeds of ennobling acts and wrongdoing. Just as hot seeds produce hot fruit, corrupting seeds will surely produce suffering. Just as sweet seeds produce sweet fruit, ennobling seeds will surely produce happiness. Round seeds will not produce oblong fruit; oblong seeds will not produce round fruit.

You must understand in detail the meaning of what is called “action, karma, and consequences.” If you claim that you do an ennobling act in committing an overtly corrupting act in the name of an illusory (that is, false) ennobling act—for example, by killing an animal and offering its flesh and blood—you have done a corrupting act. This will produce suffering. When, as a consequence of a minor corrupting act, your body is afflicted by a minor pain of sickness, and you wonder what karma you’ve accumulated that has led to this unbearable suffering, someone might tell you, “Suffering results from corrupting acts, therefore don’t do what is corrupting!” If you don’t listen to such advice and kill an animal to cure your sickness, or kill to cheat death, or commit corrupting acts in order to practice “ennobling acts,” this constitutes misguided religious practice. This is actually an outward-oriented non-Buddhist practice, not the Buddha’s doctrine.

The true doctrine of the Buddha states: “Leave any wrongdoing behind,” to indicate that wrongdoing is never appropriate. “Make perfect ennobling acts yours” indicates that what is called “an ennobling act” is magnificently pure throughout its basis, intention, act, and completion. The Buddha said to engage in such acts. “Subdue your own mind” indicates that the root of abandonment of corrupting acts and the practice of ennobling acts depends upon the essential subduing of your own mind, these wild and rough habits. If your mind tends toward corrupting acts, wrongdoing will result and you will experience suffering. If your mind tends toward ennobling acts, ennobling acts will result and you will experience happiness. Therefore, you must firmly turn your mind away from corrupting acts and firmly lead it to ennobling acts, which bring happiness.

It is said that on the middle level of the path of cultivation, we meditate on the four aspects of genuine renunciation: in the future, do not develop negative, corrupting attitudes that have not yet arisen; stem corrupting attitudes that are present in your mind; firmly develop ennobling attitudes that have not yet arisen in your mind; and increase

ennobling attitudes that have.

The body and voice follow the mind in rejecting corrupting acts and in constant diligence in ennobling acts. Therefore, exalted hearers and solitary sages meditate in this way on the middle level of the path of cultivation. The bodhisattvas meditate in this way on the great way middle level of the path of cultivation during innumerable eons, cultivate stores of goodness and wisdom, and become buddhas. If we ourselves meditate in this way, we will surely become free from the round of rebirth's sufferings and surely attain the happiness of freedom and omniscience.

What is called "the teaching of the path of cultivation" presents this. What is called "entering the path of cultivation" is to have the mind enter this spiritual path. This is the meaning of "discipline by completely subduing your own mind." This is "mind training." This is "the Buddha's doctrine." This basic abandonment of the ten corrupting acts and the practice of the ten ennobling acts, in different contexts, constitutes the vows and bonds of the three codes of Buddhist conduct—individual liberation, bodhisattva, and mantra.

No one cherishes anything more than they do their own life, therefore renounce harming others' lives in thought or deed. Give up eating food made from flesh and blood. Don't wear clothing made of leather. The appearances of this life are but a momentary dream. Let go entirely of acts related to this life and accomplish what is lastingly useful. Compared to the misfortune of having no food or clothing now, later suffering as a starving spirit or in hell is greater. Therefore firmly give your attention to contemplation of how you can be happy later.

This encouragement has been given by Choying Tobden Dorje.

In this afterword, our author does not deviate from the traditional presentation of the fundamental Buddhist teaching on karma. Above, under the heading of impermanence, he remarks, "Even if you are skilled in Buddhist teaching, without meditation on death, you aren't a practicing Buddhist." He does not make a similar statement concerning the subject of karma, but it could be said that a religious tradition lacking a presentation of karma and its consequences cannot claim to be Buddhist. Buddhist sacred literature is replete with descriptions of the workings of karma; the path of realization in Buddhism has three indispensable ingredients, the first of which is ethical conduct, anchored in belief in karma (the other two are meditative stability and sublime insight). The subject stands as a pillar of the Buddhist faith.

I have most often reserved the Sanskrit word *karma* for the Tibetan word “gyu” (*rgyu*) although *karma* as the word is understood in Tibetan (as “lé,” *las*) refers just to an act itself, be it physical, verbal, or mental. Nevertheless, the word *karma*, if it is used at all in English, comes with the implication of an invisible glue that connects us to our acts until they produce a result, at which point their force expires. “What goes around comes around,” so the saying goes, a modern version of “as you sow so shall you reap.” Technically, the word *karma* refers only to the sowing, not the reaping. Nevertheless, when someone says that an event reflects a person’s “karma,” I believe that what is implied is not some original act or set of acts (including habitual mental patterns that have crystallized into an individual’s perceived “character”). Rather, I think that in popular usage, so-and-so’s “karma” refers to the sense that acts have a life of their own, that they lead to consequences for the doer in entirely different circumstances at a much later date. Although that is not a technically correct use of the term “karma,” I have accepted it: thus, instead of “karma, cause, and consequences” we read here “action, karma, and consequences.”

The Tibetan terms *géwa* and *mi-géwa* have long proved troublesome for translators: they have been rendered elsewhere as “virtuous and nonvirtuous,” “wholesome and unwholesome,” or simply, “positive and negative.” Here, I have added another option: “ennobling and corrupting,” in the hope that these words point to the experience of the doer of acts as varied as, on the one hand, theft, idle chatter, murder, and a lack of belief in past or future lives, for example; and on the other, generosity, meaningful speech, nurturing life, and the belief that our acts will outlive the self that we are now until their impetus has been exhausted.

Under the heading of corrupting acts, we note that the description of “wrong sexual conduct” is addressed to individuals whose object of desire is female. The many readers for whom that is not the case will have to change the wording to better suit their preferences. While this text (and some others I have read) relegate penetration of “other openings” as a corrupting act, I have not heard any modern high lama defend this injunction. To the contrary, one master’s comment was that no form of desire can be considered ennobling and that the objects of our desire are individual matters, one person’s desired object being no better or worse than another’s. I translated those remarks in the course of the public talk during which they were made, in the 1980s. More recently in a well-attended public talk, another high Tibetan master ridiculed heterosexual men for any pride they have because they crave one kind of opening to penetrate while looking down on others who crave penetration of a different shaped opening (the word “homosexual” was left unspoken but clearly implied). That same master once

remarked outside of the context of a public talk that, when confronted by the bewildering gamut of sexual behavior reported by the consenting adults among his disciples, he was left wondering whether their remarkable flexibility was due to past life profound training in overcoming notions of pure and impure, cleanliness and filth, or due to past lives as dogs.

In any case, many (most?) Tibetan masters exposed to free-wheeling modern sexual mores have taken an “enlightened” attitude: in the words of advice of one master to his inquiring disciples, “I think it’s better to let people be as they are.” To be clear, this remark was made in the context of sexual conduct between consenting adults not bound by religious or secular vows.<sup>37</sup> My impression is that, in their heart of hearts, most lamas would like their disciples to try out (for a short or long term) a radical form of sexual behavior—celibacy. In Buddhism, celibacy vows preclude any form of sexual conduct, heterosexual or homosexual. Apart from that wish which the lamas mostly keep to themselves, they do not seem interested in refereeing others’ active sexual lives.

I have digressed here because this subject of religious prohibitions of our intimate lives can be extremely distressing. Were I an editor of the original text, I would have asked the author to kindly delete those few words. My principal role, however, is as translator of the text as we find it, and here as reporter of the evolving attitudes of Tibetan masters of ancient wisdom in the modern world.

To return to the main text, right at the beginning of Book 5, our author describes the “storehouse of all dualistic experience,” which underlies all our mundane acts, positive or negative. His statement that this “storehouse” has “no primordial existence” can be understood using the example of ice. Certain specific conditions cause ice to form and it continues in that form for as long as those conditions persist. When conditions change, what was once solid ice changes to water—its ice-ness vanishes without a trace. Water that was once ice can evaporate to become something else again, and so on. Ice, then, has “no primordial existence”—it was not always as it appears to us, nor does it have some intrinsic quality that ensures that it will last. Conditions outside the ice—cold—created it; when the cold disappears, ice has no inborn ice-ness to call upon to save it.

Here, the storehouse of all dualistic experience is the ice of our existence—the seemingly solid but temporary bedrock of our sense of self. It is the “storehouse” of all our acts, good or evil, and it provides the ground for the experience of their effects—our experience of a self and a world; that is to say, dualistic experience. In itself, the storehouse is neither good nor bad: it is referred to as “undetermined.” Nightmares or states of ecstatic bliss form on it, yet it itself is



as numb as a movie screen. We live, act, and experience ourselves on its ground, and all the while it simply stores whatever we think, say, or do for as long as our dualistic experience persists. And that is the key: it has “no primordial existence.” The searing cold of our lack of awareness of our true nature creates it, but when that cold disappears, it does as well.

I cannot help but note that “storehouse of all dualistic experience” is an unwieldy term. We might well ask ourselves what word in pre-Buddhist English that corresponds to. I am not so foolish to imagine that Buddhist terminology in English will “go there,” yet the closest correspondent term is “the soul” in the sense of an aspect of our being that our acts imprint, and which outlives us. The fatal flaw with the term “soul” in a Buddhist context is that, while we believe that whatever it (a soul, a storehouse) does in fact survive our demise, it is not in any way immortal or eternal.

Regardless of the name we give this stratum of our being, it is important that we differentiate it from our enlightened, or “buddha,” nature. If we use common language for our storehouse of all dualistic experience—soul—this other aspect of our being might be called our “spirit” (but won’t be, for many reasons). The storehouse of all dualistic experience is, in the end, a composite, impermanent thing, albeit one that endures for countless lifetimes. Buddha nature is not composite or impermanent; it is everlasting. The storehouse of all dualistic experience is an impartial repository, a deep level of our being that might be called our “basic numbness,” whereas our buddha nature is far deeper still and has been called our “basic goodness.”

The subjects of karma and consequences, the storehouse of all dualistic experience, and (implicitly) buddha nature underlie a passage in Book 5 under the heading of “The Consequences of Ripened Ennobling Acts”:

In the desire realm, the main form of conscious experience is the seven collections of consciousness: the six collections of sense-based consciousness arisen in response to sensory fields plus coarse consciousness that has arisen from circumstances. In the form realm, the main form of conscious experience is meditative stability within clarity without discursive thought. This dwells within the ongoing state of the storehouse consciousness itself. In the formless realm, the main form of conscious experience is the meditative state of one-pointed tranquility. This dwells within the ongoing state of the storehouse of all dualistic experience, while the other aspects of consciousness exist as latent potentials.

To restate this, we are beings of the desire realm, and our customary experience is here subsumed as seven bandwidths of consciousness—one for each of the six senses (the mental function, or mental switchboard, being number six), plus circumstantial consciousness. This describes the totality of our daily experience.

The beings who live in the form realm are gods more evolved than us in the desire realm—their consciousness consists of clarity or lucidity without the presence of thoughts. This the author equates with immersion in a deeper level of consciousness, called the storehouse consciousness; that is, the first suspended and sustained moment of individuation.

Beings of the formless realm are disembodied “gods,” for want of a better term, entirely absorbed in the storehouse of all dualistic experience—boundless neutral numbness with nothing to trouble that infinite stillness. Although degrees of this composure must be extremely subtle, four are identified based on the individual’s impression of the experience: infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothing whatsoever, and the pinnacle of existence. The name of this last state means what it implies: this constitutes the highest possible limit of any sentient being’s range of experience.

In relation to our everyday experience, our waking life involves the coarse aspects of consciousness related to our senses, as mentioned above. Our dream life takes place within the storehouse consciousness and the subtle aspects of consciousness related to our senses. When we fall into deep sleep, where we land is the ground, or storehouse, of all dualistic experience. Our author finishes this section by including a quote on the subject from Asanga’s *Bodhisattvas’ Stages of Awakening*:

A state without thoughts that is unrelated to sensory fields is the experiential context of the storehouse of all dualistic experience itself. A state without thoughts that is related to sensory fields is the experiential context of the storehouse consciousness. Awareness of each sensory field is the experiential context of the five sense-based aspects of consciousness. The initial arising of thoughts in relation to sensory fields, followed by examination, creates dualistic experience—the experiential context of the mental function’s consciousness and the afflicted mind.

What is the author’s point in sharing this information? The title of the section gives a clue: “The Consequences of Ripened Ennobling Acts.” He is informing us that these states are the final consequences of all good, ennobling acts done in

life, be they performed in mundane circumstances, or those of non-Buddhist religious practice, or those of unguided practice of meditation, Buddhist or other. Such acts lead to extremely exalted states of being . . . but not to freedom. Good karma can take us only so far.

Under the headings of acts and results that are consistent with, or lead to, freedom, our author does not go into detail and instead promises, “These subjects will be clearly presented in detail below, in chapters that describe the discourses’ and tantras’ foundation, path, and result.” What we’re left with amounts to a cautionary tale, one with a history: Longchenpa famously remarked on the subject of ennobling states of well-meaning but misguided meditation,

Days and nights can pass

In such meditation

Yet it amounts  
To a fettering preoccupation,  
Like the gods' meditative stability,  
So the Victor declared.

One lama for whom I translated was a recent arrival from Tibet. Some people worried aloud to him concerning the pitfalls of “blind faith.” He replied that from what he had seen so far outside Tibet, people were more prone to falling prey to something worse, a mistaken state he coined “blind meditation.” I believe this is what our author implies here, but we have to wait a couple of volumes and a thousand pages for the other shoe to drop: a description of how and why and what meditation actually leads directly to freedom.

The last note to be added to Book 5 concerns the relation between a belief in karma and the development of compassion. Our culture teaches us to expect the bad guys or girls to be punished or thwarted in the end, and the good guys or girls to win the battle and the prize of the object of their desires. To a degree, this is a reasonable expectation, as long as one can wait some lifetimes for the happy ending to transpire, for transpire it inevitably will. As our author has informed us, good karma can only lead to happiness, bad karma can only lead to suffering. As one great bodhisattva declared, “The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

Yet our learned satisfaction in the villains' defeat and comeuppance—they were so unspeakably vile, they deserved all that and more—is little more than ill-will. As Buddhists following the Tibetan tradition, we can never utter the words, “Well, that's their karma” and be satisfied with anyone's suffering, or be content to retreat to a detached seeming equanimity: “Karma's a bitch, isn't it?” If we see—karma forbid—our mother hit by a car, we don't stand by the road and contemplate that this event amounts to her just desserts, or reflect sagely on the unfathomable mysteries of karma's unfolding. We move to help her right away without even a first thought, let alone a second one. The examination of the workings of karma is meant to provide a mirror that we raise to view only ourselves. Having done so, our attitude toward all others, no matter how evil, is to pray that their bad karma and its effects come entirely to us, and that our good karma and its effects go entirely to them. As Buddhists our deepest wish is for even the worst monsters to never experience the consequences of their evil deeds; we send them to pure lands where they live happily ever after, no longer as sentient beings but as buddhas. That's the end Buddhists are praying and practicing for.

## **BOOK 6: THE FLAWS OF THE ROUND OF REBIRTH**

In the past, within the range of lands in the ten directions of the round of rebirth, there is no place you have not taken birth, no place you have not called home. In all ten directions of space, there is no place you have not taken birth. Wherever you have been born within the round of rebirth, the nature of that rebirth was only suffering. Those who have high worldly rank suffer in an upper prison; the humble suffer in a lower prison—there's no other difference! If all the flesh and bones of your past lives were gathered together, their mass would equal the size of this worldly realm; all your mucus and blood, the oceans. The pile of heads you have lost due to desire would reach the heaven of Brahma; the tears you have shed would fill an ocean. The number of bodies you have had as a snake or as an eater of filth would equal Supreme Mountain.

From now on, you must be reborn innumerable, uncountable times within this place of suffering, the round of rebirth. If you kill one sheep, it is certain that in five hundred lives you will be killed just as that sheep was slaughtered. Likewise, if you kill by suffocating ten sheep, goats, birds, pigs, cows, or other such animals, you will be killed by suffocation in five thousand lifetimes. If you behead one hundred animals, you will die by beheading in fifty thousand lifetimes. If you kill one thousand animals by cutting open their chests, it is certain that you will die by having your chest cut open in five hundred thousand lifetimes.

If you have another person kill a sheep, this enters the stream of being of both persons: the slaughterer will be killed five hundred times; you, the orderer, one thousand times. If you order the slaughter of a thousand animals, the slaughterer will be killed five hundred thousand times; the orderer, five million.

What is called the ripening of karma is this: if you bind a sheep with multicolored cord and kill it with a black-handled knife, in five hundred lifetimes you will be bound with a multicolored cord and killed with a black-handled knife. If you kill someone by striking the right side of their head with a triangular black stone, in five hundred lifetimes you will surely be killed by being struck in the right side of the head with a triangular black stone. If you cut off someone's leg without killing them, in five hundred lifetimes you will have your leg

cut off without it killing you. Therefore, do not commit wrongdoing!

If you snare and kill a fox or another animal, you will be reborn five hundred times as an animal and be snared and killed. If you sell five hundred animals to be killed for food, for clothing, for ornaments or necessities, or for any other reason, you will be reborn fifty thousand times and be sold for slaughter for others' food, clothing, or needs. If you skin one hundred animals, you will be skinned in fifty thousand lifetimes. If you pierce the nose or castrate one hundred animals, during fifty thousand lifetimes you will have your nose pierced or be castrated. If you burden an animal with ten loads, you will have to carry loads during five thousand years. If you beat an animal with a crop one thousand times, you will be beaten five hundred thousand times. If you eat another's arm, your karma will cause your arm to be eaten by others in five hundred lifetimes. If you eat another's inner organs, such as the heart, one hundred times, in fifty thousand lifetimes, others will eat your inner organs, such as your heart. If you wear others' skin on your head, feet, or back ten times, in five thousand lifetimes, others will wear your skin on their head, feet, or back.

What is called the ripening of karma resembles the way that when you plant wheat, much wheat grows; when you plant barley, much barley appears. Thus it is impossible that the way you kill others now will not ripen to you in precisely the same way. Just as hot seeds produce hot fruit, the poison of corrupting wrongdoing will produce many poisonous results of suffering. Those who commit wrongdoing jump into a ravine from which there is no escape. They drink poisoned water. They wear weapons. Don't commit corrupting acts!

Later, you will take rebirth and then die in this great ocean of the round of rebirth's suffering one hundred times, one thousand, ten thousand, one hundred thousand, a million, ten million, one hundred million, a billion, and countless more times. If you feel very afraid of a single death now, why aren't you afraid of that many deaths? The result of ennobling acts will give you happiness during some lifetimes, but if you have not sealed those acts with dedication of the force of their goodness to the goal of the attainment of enlightenment, their effects easily dissipate. The acts of wrongdoing of body, speech, and mind that you have done are innumerable; their result will be innumerable experiences of suffering. Previous lifetimes' ennobling acts or wrongdoing will result in many more unendingly numerous



lifetimes. The result of karma accumulated by this body must ripen during many future eons. This has been a rough explanation of how it is that each act ripens into five hundred results.

In detail, the basis of the act of killing, the sentient being killed—such as a human being, an animal, a bodhisattva, your parents, or a spiritual master—determines the relative gravity of the act. Further, the intention—stupidity, desire, anger—determines the act's gravity. Even the act, such as the duration of the being's suffering at death, determines its gravity. That the result of one act of killing should ripen five hundred times is extremely light. If you even slightly harm such beings as your parents, a spiritual master, or a bodhisattva, you will have to experience many eons of suffering during lifetimes too numerous to calculate.

If you think that it is untrue—that the accumulation of karma will not ripen in such ways—this signals the arising of wrong views. Among the ten corrupting acts, wrong views are the most serious. Who harbors wrong views is not a Buddhist.

If you wish in the future to not take rebirth in the round of rebirth and to stop this stream of suffering, you must realize the meaning of the nonexistence of the self sensed in phenomena and the nonexistence of the self sensed in you, the individual—profound emptiness, the great mother of all buddhas, the perfection of sublime insight. You must reverse your clinging to the reality of phenomena. You must end your dualistic experience. You must gain stability in the meaning of the inconceivable nature of reality. Therefore, for however much time is left in your life, single-mindedly cultivate your experience in this profound teaching. When you realize emptiness, your freedom from the suffering of the round of rebirth is ensured. When you gain stability in the meaning of nonarising, it is no longer necessary to take rebirth. Without birth, there is no cause for sickness, no cause for aging, and no cause for death.

Without realization of emptiness, pure conduct results in the experience of happy realms of gods and humans, but when its goodness is exhausted, you must experience the result of wrongdoing—suffering. Due to your lack of familiarity with ennobling acts, their force is weak. From time immemorial, you have instead familiarized yourself with corrupting wrongdoing, thus such acts are strongly ingrained in you and easy to repeat—you can effortlessly accumulate negative karma. Thus you will have to experience suffering

uninterruptedly.

Without reflection on the extent of suffering inherent in this and all lives, when you don't have food or clothing during this life, you suffer, and when you have some food or clothes, you're happy. However, wrongdoing increases in proportion to the food and wealth you own: wealth must be sustained and protected, fields must be sown, and profits must be made in commerce, and so on. Food and wealth thus gained are food and wealth gained through wrongdoing. Food and wealth gained through theft, robbery, and defeat of others are even more negative. To not practice Buddhism correctly but to present yourself as a spiritual person and to enjoy the food offered by faithful persons and the food and wealth of the dead (given for funeral ceremonies) entails debts that are difficult to repay. Therefore it is very important to develop contentment and to harbor few desires.

Desire, wrath, and foolishness are our three enemies: you must renounce them. It is due to these three that you experienced suffering in your past lives, from time immemorial. In the future, it will be due to these three poisons that you will have to take innumerable rebirths and experience suffering. Why do you experience suffering now? It is due to these three poisons. Therefore, consider these three poisons your enemies. If you didn't have this anger, how could the suffering of hell arise? If you didn't have this desire and greed, how could the sufferings of the starving spirits arise? If you didn't have this stupidity, how could the suffering of the animals arise? Without jealousy, you couldn't take rebirth as a demigod. Without pride, you can't be reborn a god. Without desire, you won't be reborn a human being. Without the five poisons, plus greed, the sixth, rebirth among the round of rebirth's six kinds of beings is impossible. If you have the five poisons, you will accumulate the ten corrupting acts; their results, suffering, will occur. You must firmly renounce the source of such suffering—the mental afflictions and corrupting acts.

If you take what is not given once, you will be reborn poor five hundred times. If you engage in ten relationships of wrongful acts of desire, you will be reborn five thousand times with an unattractive companion and many enemies. If you tell one hundred lies, you will be reborn fifty thousand times in lives where you are cheated by others and blamed. If you say one thousand words of divisive speech, you will be reborn five hundred thousand times friendless and in disharmony with others. If you say ten thousand harsh words, you will

be reborn fifty million times always hearing unpleasant words. If you engage once in meaningless speech, in five hundred lifetimes your every word will be considered untrue. If you have coveted ten times, in five thousand lifetimes your hopes will be unfulfilled. If you have developed malice one hundred times, in fifty thousand lifetimes you will be often threatened by harm. If you have held one thousand wrong views, in five hundred thousand lifetimes you will dwell in wrong views.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

Honestly, is there anything more to say on this subject? I think not. Yet in the main text of Book 6, the author opened a subject I wished he had left tightly closed—the Buddhist attitude toward terminating pregnancy. Here, and in Book 7, he quotes from classical Buddhist texts that reflect the belief that life begins at conception. Thus, the deliberate termination of a human pregnancy is equated, karmically, with ending a life. I would be surprised to hear of any Tibetan master who disagrees with the statement that the scriptures in unison declare that human life begins at conception. I would also be surprised to hear of any Tibetan master (male or female) who would give their assent to the termination of a child he or she had a part in conceiving. Anecdotally, I have known masters offering to adopt as-yet unborn but inconvenient children whose parents contemplated abortion. One example of this can be seen in the movie *Sky Dancer*, a documentary on the subject of the master Kunzang Wangmo (since deceased), during which she offers to adopt an unborn child even though doctors have informed the parents that the child will be born handicapped. She does nothing to add to the parents' woes, but the viewer senses her alarm at the thought of the child's premature demise: she wants to help everyone involved, the future child included.

In a single sentence: Buddhist texts, and traditional masters, are explicitly, unequivocally against deliberate termination of a pregnancy from the first instant of conception.

Yet that is but one side of the story. In practice, masters in our times encourage their disciples to refrain from any act that harms others or abuses their own body or mind. There are many, many aspects of modern life and modern belief systems that our masters would gladly wish away, and such tragedies as suicide, depression, and drug addiction number among the most challenging for spiritual teachers called to assist. By comparison, counseling women or couples who have chosen to end pregnancies seems to pose few problems for Tibetan lamas: they see their role as offerers of solace during a very difficult moment.

No one welcomes an abortion; there is more than enough pain to share. I have never personally seen or heard of a Tibetan master scolding a woman after an abortion; I have seen them do their best to help in the healing process, which does not include lectures, large or small, on karma. I was with a leader of one of the Kagyu lineages when a disciple regretted to him two abortions she'd had (she was a lifelong Buddhist). He replied, "Do you know how many deer I've hit and killed while driving?" The message: there's much that's wrong with much of our life, many ways in which grievous harm is inflicted on others in our name, all of which amounts to our incarnation's collateral damage. It's excellent to acknowledge that even the most benign aspects of our common lives—the clothes we wear, for instance—have come to us accompanied by enormous hardships. One Buddhist writer of the past estimated that each cup of tea we drink is heavy with such unintended but terrible suffering: insects killed in planting, cultivation, and harvesting; animals killed and people displaced to create the roads and buildings for the tea's transportation, packaging, storage, and sale; and the misery of workers at every stage between the tea fields and our homes, most of whom toil for next to nothing in conditions we could not long bear.<sup>38</sup> As it is with a simple cup of tea, so it is with the whole gamut of things we acquire to consume or possess. When we calculate how many insects died in the production of even a bowlful of grains, "the number of beings killed is incalculable. If you think about it, it is almost as if we are eating powdered insects."<sup>39</sup> So it is even with our physical presence on this earth: we immensely powerful humans live above all in this world, yet our position is only maintained by the functioning of large and small life-support systems to keep us here, safe and sound.<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, our eyes and our hearts are not sufficiently hard to closely examine those very systems. How many beings die, and in what ways, that we might live?

I do not write these lines to suggest an excuse for anyone to act in any way, major or minor, that harms themselves or another. No, Buddhism does not condone terminating pregnancy, nor does it condone life lived as circumstances force us to—everything is tainted, everything leads to suffering. There is no possible happy ending; there is not even an ending. Thus, among the many unsatisfactory choices before us, suicide is absolutely the worst. Disenchanted and disillusioned with the round of rebirth, we keep moving forward toward spiritual practice, renewing our determination to do no harm and to attain enlightenment for the good of all. As our author wrote above, we have lived everywhere, been everything, and done everything. No ennobling act and no wrongdoing is foreign to our karmic résumé. Nothing worked: it's time to use the exit door the Buddha opens.

## BOOK 7: TAKING REFUGE AND THE LESSER WAY

The spiritual master and the three jewels give certain refuge from the sufferings of the round of rebirth in general, from the sufferings of miserable existences in particular, and, temporarily, from all sufferings during this life. With the thought that the three jewels thus constitute a special sanctuary, you should take refuge in them. Nothing has more powerful or rapid miraculous power than these jewels; therefore, whether you are happy or sad, you should think of nothing besides the precious master and the jewels. You should have such trust as the thought, “Whether you send me aloft or throw me down, enfold me in your wisdom mind.” You should have the thought, “I am happy that my trust in the three jewels is not mistaken.”

Since all comfort and happiness surely come from offerings made to the three jewels, and since all we want is comfort and happiness, we should always foster diligence in making offerings to the three jewels. If we offer half of our food and wealth to the three jewels, accomplishments will surely fall to us like rain. At the six times of the day and night, following the custom of contemplative practice, you should offer such articles as water, flowers, incense, lamps, and food to the three jewels and take refuge in them.

Persons of limited intelligence pray from the bottom of their hearts to regional gods, local deities, or worldly gods, and they place their trust in such mundane gods. If we pray in the same way to the three jewels, it is certain our wishes will be spontaneously accomplished. We should think, “Even if I trust this life’s rulers or worldly gods, that attitude does not help me: why should I continue to do so?” When you have a place of refuge in the three jewels, more precious than a wish-fulfilling gem, what need is there to put your hopes in this life’s rulers? You don’t need to expect for your happiness to come from any human being: whatever wish you harbor, you can ask the three jewels. They are all you need. They are never, ever angry; they are easy to approach; they have rapid miraculous power; they always protect you as their offspring, with great love; and they produce a rain of accomplishments.

You don’t need to consider various schemes, “What can I do to make happiness come to me? What can I do to avoid suffering?” Whether you want to gain happiness or to avoid suffering, mere

prayers to the three jewels will accomplish your wishes. If you can trust the jewels, your inner attitude will definitely improve. What good can your acquaintances do? What good is there in approaching false gods? The three jewels are free from all danger to themselves and they can definitely provide others with refuge from all danger. If you have control over your own mind, you should firmly accept the spiritual master and the three jewels as your supreme refuge.

Once your mind has turned to the sacred Buddhist doctrine, in order to cultivate every positive ennobling act, you should sustain an appropriate physical, verbal, and mental discipline. The first of all Buddhist teachings is that of the fundamental ethical conduct of discipline. Ethical conduct is like the ground: it must be firm. Those endowed with ethical conduct are honored and served by those high and low in this life. It is impossible for those endowed with ethical conduct to descend to miserable existences; they will be reborn as gods or as human beings. During those lifetimes, due to karmic results consistent with the karma of previous acts, they will once again exert themselves in sustaining ethical conduct and will eventually attain freedom and omniscience. Those whose acts are inconsistent with ethical conduct will, even in this lifetime, endure a rain of many unwanted sufferings and, in the next life, take rebirth in miserable existences.

The exalted hearers and solitary sages take pure ethical conduct as the basis of their spiritual lives and meditate on the thirty-seven facets of awakening. They permanently overcome their evil foes—the eighty-four thousand mental afflictions, source of every suffering in the round of rebirth. Thus they never need to experience the round of rebirth's sufferings; they attain the holy sanctuary of happiness and freedom.

These days, those with a limited outlook consider as quite inferior individuals who say they follow the lesser way. This betrays a lack of understanding of the doctrine. Those of us who only work for this life's happiness are ordinary individuals. Such activity as ours does not carry much significance. Although the lesser way cannot produce prodigious acts for the welfare of others, yet in whatever way it can, it accomplishes much for others' benefit. As for us, who live mundane lives, not only can we not accomplish others' welfare, we can't even accomplish our own, either for this life or for the next. Whatever we've done is a means to be miserable now and to continue our misery in the future. Since we're so unskillful, it is very important that we

turn our minds toward taking refuge and toward the lesser and middle ways of Buddhist spiritual development.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

Within northern Asian Buddhism, and the Tibetan tradition in particular, the “lesser way” suffers from poor branding: it’s forever the lesser, the smaller, the lower. To a degree, those adjectives reflect a certain reality. When the great way spirit of universal altruism ignites within us, and we embrace the bodhisattva ideal as best we can, all other religious quests seem petty, all other truths seem limited and uninspired. Yet the wellsprings of Buddhism are found in this so-called lesser way; its attitudes, customs, teaching, and terminology are woven inextricably into the fabric of the great way.

Book 7 affords us a glimpse into the legal code of the Buddhist community, the way it has been since the Buddha established it. The rules for ordained individuals and procedures for the community were determined by the Buddha. Every single aspect of deportment, down to table manners and how to walk or sit, reflect the Buddha’s intent. How wonderful and incredible to have this window onto a functioning spiritual community founded over 2,500 years ago. Yes, these rules pertain to just the monks—or nuns, whose rules are even more numerous—and our author does not provide many details on the community procedures, yet I think all Buddhists should take the time to read the second chapter of Book 7, to gain some appreciation (hopefully!) of Buddhism on the ground floor.

Nuns and monks of yore renounced the mundane cares and concerns of life and entered a discipline of conscientious dignity, simplicity, and integrity. Has anything changed in the present day? How are we to understand the shaven-headed women and men in maroon robes who are today’s renunciants-with-cellphones/computers/email accounts? Our author does not discuss in Book 7 the subject of the three codes of conduct in Tibetan Buddhism: individual liberation, bodhisattva training, and tantric bonds. At the very least, what we can guess when we meet modern adult monks or nuns in the Tibetan tradition is that they were most likely inspired by the same elements of Buddhist practice that touch us: the bodhisattva ideal and the path of tantra. Most of the monks and nuns we meet (be they Asian or Western) are anything but solemn, grey characters. They are most often cheerful, carefree, joyous, inspired, and inspiring. While there may be a few who are dedicated exclusively to the straight and narrow of the lesser way, the vast majority use the constraints of the lesser way’s rules to impose a simplicity on their lives so they can devote themselves entirely to Buddhism’s higher calling—the great way and the way of secret mantra.

Most of the preeminent masters of India and Tibet reached high levels of spiritual accomplishment by adhering impeccably to the lesser way rules in their physical and verbal deportment, infusing their hearts with the universal compassion and insight into emptiness of the bodhisattva, and immersing their minds in the nondual wisdom of bliss-emptiness of the tantras. Our modern friends who have taken the plunge into the renunciant community are following this very same well-trod, noble path. What we all share as persons who have taken refuge in the three jewels (and specifically, refuge in Buddhist scripture and realization) is a commitment to not do anything to harm any sentient being. The basic code for nonviolent behavior is called the four guidelines of ennobling training: to not respond to anger with anger, to verbal abuse with verbal abuse, to blows with blows, or to criticism with criticism. This at the least is the path common to all Buddhists.

One of the exciting tasks for me in this book was to translate the list of all Buddhist canonical discourses, which begins here in Book 7 and continues in Book 8. Of course, we don't learn much of anything by just perusing such a litany of titles, but I still find it inspiring to see these, our most sacred texts, listed together in English as they are in Asian languages. Yet, here they all are, surprisingly for the first time in print in a Western language.

A word of caution: I assume that one reason that scholars have not previously translated this kind of list is that while the titles were set in stone in Asian Buddhist languages (Tibetan, Sanskrit, Chinese, and so on) a thousand or more years ago, no reliable equivalent exists at this early infant stage of Western language translation. A single canonical text can have already undergone a number of translations, each bearing a different title. It may be centuries before the gold dust settles and some conventions become widespread and accepted. That is to say, in that still far-off time when English itself becomes a Buddhist language.

We are extremely fortunate that all the canon's sacred texts are in the process of translation thanks to the incredible work of the group laboring for a project called 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. The list appearing here and in Book 8 amounts to a mere menu of items that we will soon be able to savor in their entirety at our leisure.

## **BOOK 8: THE FOUNDATION OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

Throughout previous lifetimes from time immemorial, we have only



served ourselves. Thereby, we have not helped others, nor have we succeeded in our own goals. Our attitudes have been faulty and, until now, we have only been tormented with suffering. To be here, suffering endlessly along with all sentient beings, is the reward for having served ourselves alone. We are now destitute due to our negative attitude toward these sentient beings, to having advised them badly, and to having acted badly—negative, self-centered acts. If our flesh and bones from past lives were gathered, they would equal the worldly realm—the reward for our self-centeredness. Our heads cut off in past lives would reach the world of Brahma—the fault of our self-centeredness. If our mucus and blood shed in past lives were gathered, they would equal an ocean—the flaw of negative, self-centered acts.

From this day forward, we should do what helps ourselves and others, what brings continual happiness and comfort in every time and circumstance—we should think of helping others. We should develop enthusiasm toward any means to foster in our stream of being the thought of helping others, like a wish-fulfilling jewel.

There is no sentient being who has not been our parent, yet these kind past parents of ours now wander in dismal ignorance within the six kinds of life in the round of rebirth. They are afflicted by great blazing flames of anger, carried away by the wide rivers of desire, disoriented by winds of jealousy, oppressed by mountains of pride, and bound by iron chains of greed. They assiduously plant only the seeds of corrupting wrongdoing and continually harvest only the causes of the experience of unbearable suffering, their lot. How sad!

They don't understand correct conduct: that they should undertake ennobling acts and reject evil acts. Thus, we must in every time and circumstance strive to create the conditions in various ways to lead them to the causes of help and happiness. Since the best way to help them is to have their minds turn toward the sacred doctrine spoken by wisdom beings, we must do whatever we can to change their attitude. If they understand the meaning of the teachings, that the result of corrupting wrongdoing is suffering, they will surely turn away from corrupting conduct. When their minds turn away from wrongdoing, they will no longer commit corrupting acts. Once they do not accumulate bad karma, they will never experience its result, suffering. When they listen to the precious, sacred doctrine, their minds naturally turn to the practice of ennobling acts. Once their minds turn toward ennobling acts, their character will be diligent in the practice of them.

The effect of diligence in ennobling acts can only be happiness.

Giving the sacred doctrine is very important as means for sentient beings to become happy and to have the causes of happiness, and for them to become free of suffering and its causes. Therefore, as a means for sentient beings' happiness, we must spread the sacred doctrine of the Buddha's precious teaching. If the doctrine flourishes, sentient beings will surely be happy. To be a great help to sentient beings, we will listen to an ocean of the Buddhist doctrine's sacred teachings. We will cut through the nets of our doubts through reflection, and once we have merged our minds with the teachings through meditation, we will gain confidence through experience and realization. To do so, we will practice the teachings. Since we use this support of our bodies to accomplish others' welfare, whatever food, clothing, or wealth we have, whatever we do, we diligently act with our bodies, express with our voices, and keep in mind only the spread of the Buddha's precious doctrine and the means for the happiness of sentient beings.

Each act that you do for others' welfare and each altruistic thought you have increases the goodness of your store of ennobling acts to a degree equal to the altruistic attitude you have. Compared to long eons of ennobling acts done for your own good, an instant of ennobling acts for others' good is more beneficial.

When hearing the sacred doctrine, reflecting on it, and meditating on it; when asking questions, reciting texts, or reading; when painting wisdom deities or erecting sacred representations of wisdom; when presenting offerings to the jewels; when giving gifts to those less fortunate; or when keeping the pledges and vows of your training, if you do these things with only the thought of helping other beings, this is what is called "the great way's awakened mind." Those acts constitute the conduct of the heirs of the great way's victorious buddhas.

When your mind is given over to others' good, all that you do consists of positive ennobling acts. Should you perform ennobling acts solely for your own good, this is a false reflection of true ennobling acts. At all times, consider the flaws of self-centered acts and consider the positive qualities of acts done in altruism. The main part of your experiential cultivation should be meditation solely on the altruistic attitude of the great way's awakened mind. In meditation, count the number of your altruistic thoughts. When you eat, look to see whether or not you're guided by altruistic thoughts. When you move,

look to see whether or not you're moving toward an altruistic attitude. Whatever you've done, look to see whether or not you've been motivated by altruistic thoughts. Ensure that you're a person who has merged your mind with an altruistic attitude.

To encourage others' minds to engage diligently in altruism, listen to and teach the sacred doctrine. Create many skillful ways for others' minds to surely turn to the sacred doctrine. You have stored up this wish-granting gem of the sacred doctrine. Should you give it to others, it produces a wealth of lasting happiness for yourself and others.

Mental ennobling acts are more powerful than physical or verbal ennobling acts. Everyone says you should have a good attitude, but they don't know what it is. "A good attitude" is an altruistic attitude: it is very important to ensure that everyone takes this into their stream of being.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

Translators probably shouldn't play favorites, but if I were asked to choose one of the books from this volume as a must-read, this would be it.

One crucial subject of Book 8 is referred to as "ultimate truth"—our enlightened, or "buddha," nature. In Book 5, our author informed us that tremendous amounts of ennobling acts, good karma, lead not to enlightenment but to pleasant lives within the round of rebirth, culminating in a state of meditative composure at the very pinnacle of existence. In Book 6, he said that this state amounted to nothing more than the highest echelon of a prison, a seemingly boundless golden cage. Book 7 laid out one approach to gaining release from the entire prison, high and low: insight into the absence of an intrinsic self after having adopted a lifestyle that starves the machinery of suffering of its fuel—the false sense of self and attachment to it. This path based on the Buddha's four truths is excellent, impeccable, and selfless, in all senses of the word.

Now, however, we find a description of the ultimate truth according to the great way—buddha nature—a subject unmentioned in Book 7. Our author provides us with a wealth of synonyms for buddha nature, two of which appear often in this chapter: enlightened heritage (Tib. "rik," *rigs*; not the same as "rik-pa") and innate constituent enlightenment ("kam," *khams*). Remarkably, at the end of the first section that elucidates these subjects, he admits that their nature, our nature, is paradoxical and unfathomable—"inconceivable" in his wording. This admission also marks a great divide between the lesser and great ways: we've now entered territory that is hazardous to the rational mind, and things get

worse as we proceed. (Think, for example: “Form is emptiness and emptiness is form. There is no other form than emptiness and no emptiness other than form.”) As far as Buddhism goes, we basically have to check our belief in solid, material reality at the entrance to the great way.

I find it interesting that our author turns the graded path on its head, and begins at its apex—ultimate truth—then descends to thirty-four tales of the Buddha’s past lives. These charming stories are meant to instruct us how we can model our behavior after the same bodhisattva, in lifetimes as a god, a human, or an animal, whose courageous deeds on the spiritual path ended in his enlightenment as Buddha Shakyamuni. These tales are meant to answer our questions concerning predicaments we encounter in our own lives: how should we act? These are seemingly gentle stories, practically children’s tales, but at their core lies a determination that is stronger than steel. At every juncture, the future Buddha sacrificed whatever was asked of him in order to continue moving forward on the spiritual path. We hear the echo of these stories in Choying Tobden Dorje’s chilling logic: we’re going to die a million deaths anyway, most of them miserable and meaningless, due to the inevitable unfolding of our wretched karma. Why are we so averse to making meaningful sacrifices when the opportunity arises?

Book 8 ends with a ritual for uplifting our minds to awakening, thereby entering the path to the ultimate truth as understood in the great way. Here, and elsewhere in this book, I have translated *jang-chub sem* (Tibetan: *byang chub sems*; Sanskrit: *bodhichitta*) as “awakened mind” rather than “awakening mind” or “mind of awakening.” To my ears, the latter terms put the accent on states of mind during the process of awakening. At what point in the text does the mind of awakening become, finally, the awakened mind? In Tibetan (or Sanskrit), only one word is used from beginning to end, and that word would be best rendered as awakened mind, or so I believe. Awakened mind expresses itself differently in specific contexts (meditative, post-meditative, relative, ultimate, and so on) but apart from identifying those contexts with adjectives, there is no change made in the term itself, which our author uses as a synonym for buddha nature.

## **BOOK 9: THE PATH OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

You should think this: “I will provide the means for my mothers, all sentient beings, to have the happiness of the higher realms, freedom, and omniscience; and the causes of such happiness, ennobling acts; and the means for them to be free from the suffering of the round of

rebirth's miserable realms and the causes of such suffering, corrupting acts. To be able to do this, I must attain enlightenment, to have no more faults and to become endowed with every positive quality. I must gather stores of goodness and wisdom, cause of the attainment of enlightenment.”

Motivated by such thoughts of the awakened mind, with others' welfare in mind, you do such acts as to perform prostrations; present offerings; copy texts; give gifts of food and wealth; construct sacred representations of wisdom body, speech, and mind; protect others' lives; memorize words of Buddhist teaching; explain their meaning to others; and eat food, wear clothes, walk, and sit. All these acts, guided by the profound means of altruistic supreme compassion, awakened mind, constitute a cause of enlightenment, the cultivation of goodness. The cultivation of wisdom is any ennobling act sealed with the profound sublime insight of emptiness—all appearing phenomena of the round of rebirth and transcendent states are in fact naturally devoid of intrinsic reality, and transcend all verbal or mental formulations. Ennobling acts, such as prostrations, offerings, or recitation of prayers, guided by the motivation of others' welfare, the relative awakened mind—and equally guided by the ultimate awakened mind, emptiness—complete the integration of the two stores of goodness and wisdom.

To guide your acts by awakened mind in both ultimate and relative contexts is very important. Ennobling acts guided by them constitute the cause of enlightenment and gather what must be cultivated during incalculable eons. Ennobling acts not guided by these two can result in rebirth in the higher realms and freedom, but not enlightenment. Without enlightenment, you cannot accomplish your own or others' welfare. Attainment of enlightenment depends upon the cultivation of the two stores of goodness and wisdom. Such cultivation depends upon your positive motivation. If you wish to uplift your mind to awakening, approach a spiritual master who teaches the great way, and hear the source texts of the great way and reflect upon them. Once you have done so, your meditation on the two forms of the awakened mind merges your hearing and reflection with your stream of being, and from that point on, the cultivation of the stores of goodness and wisdom will not present any difficulty.

There is no spiritual technique more profound than uplifting your mind to awakening. There is no sublime insight quicker than meditation on profound emptiness. It is said that one instant of

noncomposite virtue, profound emptiness, is superior to the entire extent of composite ennobling acts of body, speech, and mind—generosity, ethical conduct, patience, diligence, and meditative stability.

In the doctrine's middle cycle—in such texts as the lengthy, middle length, and abridged versions of *The Perfection of Sublime Insight*—emptiness alone is extensively praised. Therefore, understanding the ultimate awakened mind, profound emptiness, is extremely important. Uninterrupted clinging to reality as being substantial and possessed of intrinsic attributes has created the round of rebirth. Ultimately, even the name of the round of rebirth does not exist. Life in the round of rebirth has been created by holding what does not exist as existent, and by holding what is not real as real. Freedom from dualistic clinging and its formulations is the middle way's path. To believe that things exist is eternalism; to believe that they do not exist is nihilism. What is the point of such fixation? Train in not clinging.

Although the spiritual practice of profound teachings presents no difficulty, torment by karma we've accumulated from time immemorial makes us disinclined to such practice. From now on, firmly turn your mind to the great way. Don't search for food or wealth; accumulate the eternal food and wealth of the two stores of goodness and wisdom. Don't transgress the Buddha's stipulated bounds of ethical conduct of restraint from faulty conduct; always train in the ethical conduct of gathering ennobling qualities, the six transcendent perfections. Engage in the ethical conduct of altruistic acts, by serving sentient beings widely through the four means of gathering disciples.

Always cultivate goodness through four transcendent perfections—generosity, ethical conduct, patience, and meditative stability; cultivate wisdom by settling in evenness within profound sublime insight, emptiness; and cultivate their common companion, diligence. All of these transcendent perfections should be guided by the awakened mind. For example, you must train in the transcendent perfection of all-inclusive generosity: the substance and characteristics of the object given, the giver, and the recipient of the gift do not exist. You should train in the transcendent perfection of generosity that has no set reference point. Since all clinging to reality as being substantial and possessed of intrinsic characteristics becomes the cause of the round of rebirth, you must cleanse yourself of this habit of clinging to reality as

possessed of intrinsic characteristics and train in having no reference point in relation to what is insubstantial and without intrinsic characteristics.

The extent of your cultivation of goodness and wisdom depends upon the extent to which an act has been guided by awakened mind. Like lead transformed into gold once touched by an alchemical potion, any ennobling act guided by awakened mind will become the cultivation of goodness. Any ennobling act should initially be undertaken with that sacred motivation. It should be guided by sacred all-inclusiveness during the act and guided by sacred dedication once complete. It is extremely important that these three (motivation, all-inclusiveness, and dedication) be present.

If you don't energetically grasp the means to traverse the path now, you will find it difficult to free yourself later, having sunk in the seas of the round of rebirth's sufferings. Therefore, you should develop energetic application, day and night, in body, speech, and mind, to techniques to attain enlightenment.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

In Book 8, at the conclusion of the accounts of thirty-four of the Buddha's past lives, our author slipped in a concise presentation of the four immeasurable aspirations, beginning with the one usually listed last, equanimity. His parting note, before heading into the ritual for entering the bodhisattva path, concerned the importance of setting aside biased love and compassion to embrace love and compassion without regard to our personal feelings or affinities. This injunction comes to mind when we read the code of conduct for bodhisattvas in the first chapter of Book 9. Instead of the black and white of the monastic code, the underlying message here is, "It's complicated." For those familiar with Buddhism's repeated pleas to us to forsake harmful acts, lines such as these can startle: "If a specific act can be a means to help others, it is permitted to commit the seven physical and verbal acts from among the ten corrupting acts rejected when you take vows to restrain from corrupting activity."

This cannot be read as an invitation to do as we've always done: protect ourselves and those people or possessions we cherish, or thwart the influence of our enemies, all under some supposed pretext of "helping others." This is perhaps why our author elected to include those practical instructions on love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity after the stories filled with examples of the future Buddha's sacrifice of his well-being, possessions, status, family, and even his own life. We understand that we need to be equipped with

more than a simple monastic rule book on the bodhisattva path. If our objective is enlightenment for the sake of all beings, when it comes to the games of mundane life, we are always playing alongside the Buddha—for the losing side. As our author advises, we can't even make a big deal of things that seem bigger than ourselves, such as our identity as a loyal Buddhist and defender of the faith: "Don't even become angry toward others for the sake of such as your teacher, preceptor, spiritual master, or the three jewels. If you get angry, not only will this not help them, this will cause very significant harm to you and others now and in the future."

Conventional Buddhist wisdom has it that the monastic vows are much easier than the bodhisattva vows. Why? As we read in Book 9, although there are in fact some dos and don'ts that we can keep on a mental checklist, both the letter and the spirit of the bodhisattva training are located not in physical or verbal acts, or perceptible disciplines, but in the mind, the altruistic attitude stretched far beyond what we once imagined possible.

Among the rules of the bodhisattva path, the very first vow for common people (that is, those of us who are not rulers or government officials) is surprising: to refrain from speaking "of emptiness to a sentient being who has no previous mental training." This first of the fundamental downfalls for bodhisattvas, the commission of which causes rebirth in the hells, reminds us of the later bonds of secrecy central to the tantric code of conduct.

On the other hand, this book's last chapter, on the paths and stages of awakening, looks backward. That is to say, its framework of four paths—cultivation, application, seeing, and meditation—is lifted whole from that of the lesser way detailed in Book 7. In the great way, there exists an incredible amount of literature on the subject of its own paths, and this chapter is a quick stroll through it. We note however that while many of the signposts are the same as what we encountered in Book 7, what we find is quite different. The same dilemma faces us when the same framework of paths is transposed on different dimensions of tantric practice, including great seal and great perfection: the language used, particularly when we consider its original setting, is wildly at odds with the new context. It's as if the first map of Buddhist spiritual progress was designed for solitary travel in a rowboat (the lesser way) and the same bearings are reused for journeys by air or in outer space.

We've read in Book 2 how maps and terminologies are lifted from a previous level of theory and practice and resituated in another. As our author writes, "What is called the 'general meaning' is common to both discourses and secret mantra. It includes subjects explained in the general discourses of the way of the transcendent perfections, such as awakening's thirty-seven facets, five paths, and



ten stages. *Such subjects included in the category of general meaning are taught to reassure those who entered the path of transcendent perfections and who might otherwise feel regret that tantra is inconsistent with their path*” (italics added). Using quotes from sacred texts, our author informs us that such weaving of previous, lower paths’ terminology into that of a higher path is done to “prevent remorse” or to avoid “antagonizing” those loyal to earlier approaches. In other words, we’re witnesses to diplomacy as applied to Buddhist terminology. In practical terms, while we’re always given the same encouragement, “Follow the yellow brick road!” (in other words, the paths of cultivation, application, seeing, meditation, and no further training), roads of the same name can lead to very different destinations.

Another issue one might have with the elaborate descriptions of awakening’s paths and stages according to the lesser or great way concerns the time necessary to journey through them. The fact that, by the great way’s own estimates, we will spend eons of lifetimes in this quest is not hidden in the fine print. Eons here, eons there, it all begins to add up—to at least three incalculable eons, so claim even spokespersons of the great way itself. This system of mapping the spiritual path is important in Buddhism: we are obliged to familiarize ourselves with it should we want to understand Buddhist theory. Yet it amounts to a detailed travel guide to destinations we will never be able to afford in this or many lifetimes, at least as advertised. Nonetheless, at least the descriptions have caught our attention. If we want to go to these far-off lands, we can only do so in our lifetime by taking a conveyance other than the great way—that of tantra.

## **BOOK 10: THE RESULT OF THE MIDDLE WAY**

The intense winds of the profound twofold cultivation of goodness and wisdom during three incalculable eons clear away and totally purify the entire mass of clouds of the incidental two obscurations’ deluded dualistic experience, along with their habitual patterns. Then the sun, the positive qualities of our enlightened heritage or innate constituent enlightenment, buddha nature—enlightenment’s four bodies and five wisdoms, along with their activity—shines brilliantly in its natural luminosity, the full radiance of the positive qualities of the wheel of inexhaustible ornaments of wisdom body, speech, and mind. This sacred state of victorious and transcendent perfect enlightenment, once attained, manifests continually in relation to sentient beings’ dispositions, in whatever ways can appropriately guide them. Although

this activity continues until the end of the round of rebirth, apart from a self-manifest perception produced by the convergence of enlightenment's blessings and sentient beings' karmic perceptions, enlightenment's manifestations do not move and wisdom speech has no expression, like the moon in space that appears reflected in various containers of water. Through the blessings of these quiescent forms and ineffable speech, beings understand the sacred doctrine in many ways, according to their individual interests and in their own languages. It is difficult for beings' intellects to fathom enlightenment; thus they make such false affirmations as, "This much is the extent of enlightenment's body, speech, mind, positive qualities, or activity!" Enlightenment has no such limits; it is inconceivable.

This completes the presentation of the basis, path, and result of the cause-based transcendent perfections, the Buddhist way of philosophy free from attachment. If your hearing every part of this path, and of reflection and meditation upon it become truly effective, when you enter the profound practice of secret mantra, it will surely prove to be a very rapid path. Small-minded individuals who enter the rapid path of secret mantra without having trained their minds in the common path will surely find tantra to be a rapid path only to hell.

The basis of tantra is the profound uplift of the mind to supreme awakening; its path is the accumulation of supreme wisdom's two stores of goodness and wisdom. Apart from considering tantra to be an especially exalted revision of the great way path, do not regard tantra as a separate path in itself. Be constant in the appreciation of the identical intention of the discourses and the tantras by cultivating the experience of the path of the great way as it has been taught. Be sure to merge with your stream of being such teachings as diligence in far-reaching service for others by assiduous reflection on death, karma and its consequences, and so on. Stability is important, like the initial foundation upon which you begin to construct a building. If you verbally claim belief in the great way but your conduct is indistinguishable from that of ordinary persons, you are only deceiving yourself.

It is not possible for practitioners of the great way to not serve Buddhism and beings. Whatever they do is definitely for others' welfare. There will never be such a thing as a tantric practitioner who has not developed the great way's motivation. Those who have entered tantra without that motivation are mistaken. The vajra way of secret

mantra is the domain of individuals of very acute spiritual acumen, who have pure views, outstanding meditation, and exceptional conduct. Such persons can enter tantra; it is wrong for tantra to be open to just anyone.

The nectar that helps everyone is the common path of the discourses. If you want profound teaching, meditate only on supreme compassion: you will thereby complete great stores of goodness and wisdom and you will purify much wrongdoing and many obscurations. Precious compassion is so profound that very few persons meditate on it. Very many persons recite mantras without understanding the nature of tantra. However many mantras they recite, they will not reach accomplishment as described in the texts, their reward for not keeping the tantric bonds.

If you don't even know the rules for keeping the tantric bonds, you should give up your high, empty talk of the view and your coarse tantric conduct, to devote yourself to reflection on death, karma and its consequences, the flaws of the round of rebirth, and taking refuge. Train in the awakened mind. Act with serenity and self-restraint. Live in contentment, with few desires. Integrate your spiritual experiential cultivation with your own mind. Make your human life meaningful. Have your thoughts and deeds conform to the Buddha's word and to the advice of your spiritual masters and guides. Don't become distracted in meaningless acts in thought, word, and deed. Wholeheartedly bring intense effort to what is meaningful. If you are mentally at ease at the time of death, you have become wise. Therefore it is important that your hearing of the sacred doctrine, your reflection, and your meditation upon it be in equal proportions. Most importantly, if you fall to the miserable realms, it is your mind that falls, or if you attain enlightenment, it is your mind that attains enlightenment: meditation with your mind is crucial. Without meditation, enlightenment is impossible. Meditation frees you from the bonds that restrict your stream of being. You must meditate.

—Choying Tobden Dorje

Here, our author ends all that he will share on the subject of the lesser and great ways in *The Complete Nyingma Tradition* with a plea for persons interested in tantra to not excuse themselves from all that he has written to this point. Choying Tobden Dorje was a dedicated practitioner of tantra and of great perfection, yet he saw those higher practices as necessarily anchored in the

fundamental truths of the initial stages of the Buddhist spiritual path. As I mentioned earlier, why else has he dedicated separate books to elementary subjects—such as death, impermanence, and karma—on the same level in the context of this work as long commentaries to tantric meditations or profound subjects of great perfection? It is true that the landscape of tantric practice is radically different from that of the great way, yet nonetheless, until our final exit from dualistic experience into omniscient enlightenment, what we label “relative” truths, such as karma and its consequences, remain valid and very much in effect.

Our author has waited until this point to employ a common term for the great and lesser ways, to differentiate them from tantra: “cause-based.” That is to say, we tread the spiritual path in the belief that our ethical conduct, our meditation training, and our sublime insight are “causes” that will someday culminate in awakening and enlightenment: cause and effect. We do the best that our reasonable, rational mind can do, trusting that our efforts are furthering a process that will pay off one day, in three incalculable eons, to be exact. And so, in fact, they will, as these books describe.

In contrast to this approach, tantra is labeled “result-based.” Tantra begins with the immediate, immersive experience of the result—enlightenment itself—without it having been the effect of any process. The great way’s reasonable, rational, intelligent mind, however brilliant, is dualistic; tantra is rooted instead in nondual wisdom. Nevertheless, Choying Tobden Dorje seems to be encouraging us to remember to keep our lesser way common sense and our great way wits about us when we cross the pass into tantric territory in the later volumes of this series.

## NOTES

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1. *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems* (Junction City, Calif.: Padma Publishing, 2005), pp. 407–8. Reprinted with permission.
2. One of his descendants, the genius Gendun Chöpel (1905–51), followed in his footsteps and left Repkong to attend Drépfung.
3. Matthieu Ricard, et al., *The Life of Shabkar* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 562.
4. This marks the last time in this chapter the author refers to the titles or subjects of these books as “great way”; from here on, he consistently labels them with a term he seems to use interchangeably with “great way” in this context: “middle way.” In the books themselves, he does not offer comparative definitions of the two terms.
5. This information is also contained in *The Golden Key*, the text the author mentions as contained in Volume 12. *The Golden Key* appears in its entirety at the end of this translation.
6. The seven treasures of exalted beings are faith, ethical conduct, education, generosity, decency, conscience, and sublime insight.
7. The ten forms of spiritual conduct are copying texts, making offerings, giving gifts, listening to the doctrine, reading, memorization, teaching, recitation, reflecting on the meaning of the doctrine, and meditation on the meaning of the doctrine.
8. The three testaments were left by three founding awareness holders of the great perfection teachings in the human world: Garab Dorje, Manjushrimitra, and Jnanasutra. Some include Shri Singha as a fourth.
9. At this point, the author informs Tibetan readers that in his numbering system, *saya*, which can indicate either one million or ten million, “comes first,” meaning that its value is one million.
10. Some acts, such as murder, are naturally negative; others, such as eating after the noon meal, are prohibited within the context of vows designated by the Buddha.
11. In the following list of texts, the square brackets contain, first, the number ascribed to the text in the most recent comparative edition of the Tibetan Buddhist canon (*bka' 'gyur dpe bsdur ma*) (Beijing: China's Tibetan

Academic Press [*krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang*], 2006–2009); and second, the number of pages the text spans in that collection, which is printed in large, Western-style volumes.

12. In the modern edition, this text is followed by no. 316, *Summoning Gong* (8 pages) and no. 317, *Time of the Summoning Gong* (5 pages).
13. In the modern edition, this text is followed by no. 319, *Evident Arising* (334 pages).
14. In the modern edition, this text is followed by no. 322, *Examination of the Results of Ennobling Acts and the Corrupting Acts of the Five Downfalls* (9 pages).
15. In the modern edition, this text is followed by no. 356, *Results of Fully Ripened Karma* (7 pages).
16. In the modern edition, this text is followed by no. 366, *Parable of Sumagadha* (23 pages).
17. In the modern edition, this text is preceded by no. 378, *Parable of Tiger Ear, Shardulakarnga* (28 pages) and no. 379, *Seven Wounds* (11 pages). It is followed by no. 381, *Forty-Two Parts* (19 pages); no. 382, *Supreme Auspicious Fortune* (4 pages); no. 383, *Love* (20 pages); and no. 384, *Prophecy Concerning Loving Kindness* (12 pages).
18. After nineteen weeks of gestation, a fetus is considered a human being; before that point, a human being in fetal development.
19. These five are intent on desire, ill will, sleep and mental dullness, excitation or boredom, and doubt.
20. To this point, the author's description of the solitary sage relates only to the first of their three kinds, the rhinoceros-like solitary sage.
21. Our author's reference to the work to this point constituting "the first volume of the common discourses" corresponds to his plan, announced above in his introduction, for the entire work to fit into thirteen volumes. Among them, this first volume would be number three: "Volume 3, which resembles a universal monarch's precious supreme horse, constitutes the first volume on the discourses from the extensive commentary."
22. Our author did not provide a definition for the measure *tsen*, here rendered as vaguely as possible by "large unit."
23. One chapter (*bampo*) contains three hundred verses (*shloka*); each verse contains four lines (in poetic verse) or thirty-two syllables (in prose).
24. As in Book 7, the numbers in brackets are those assigned to the text in the most recent edition of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, followed by the number of pages in that edition.
25. These were the only parts translated into Tibetan: according to the eighth Tai

Situpa, Chökyi Jungné, the remaining chapters were lost in a fire at Nalanda University.

26. Again, the numbers in brackets are those assigned to the text in the most recent edition of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, followed by the number of pages of the text in that edition.
27. This gives a hint of which edition of the canon the author follows in these lists: only the Urga edition lists this text with 301 sections.
28. The verses throughout this section on the Buddha's past lives are found in Master Vira's *Thirty-Four Past Lives of the Buddha*.
29. Indians and Tibetans see the image of the rabbit, not a man, on the surface of the moon.
30. This is an autumn moonlight festival, honoring Kaumudi, wife of the moon.
31. I have added the numbers on the left and the corresponding metaphors to the right.
32. The four guidelines of ennobling training are to not return anger with anger, to not return verbal abuse with verbal abuse, to not return blows with blows, and to not return criticism with criticism.
33. These eight are discussed in detail in the next section, on sublime insight.
34. Our culture's version of a magician's "awareness mantra" is *abracadabra*.
35. The sixty-four mentioned here are the ten forces, the four forms of fearlessness, the eighteen unique qualities, and the thirty-two signs of physical perfection.
36. These two names are uncommon ones for, respectively, Manjushri and Maitreya.
37. Some Tibetan texts use the term "another's spouse" to refer to persons who belong to the category of those unsuitable as sexual partners. Our author prefers instead "a partner claimed by another," that is, anyone in a monogamous relationship, whether or not that status has been formalized by a public exchange of vows.
38. See *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, by Patrul Rinpoche: "When we think about the production and trade of such products, we can understand that even a single sip of tea cannot but contribute to [our own] rebirth in the lower realms" (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1998, p. 80; words in square brackets added).
39. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
40. Patrul Rinpoche again: "Some of us, thinking only of the specific act of killing with our own hands, might imagine that we are innocent of ever having taken life. But to start with, there is no one, high or low, powerful or feeble, who is not guilty of having crushed countless tiny insects underfoot

while walking around. . . . So all of us humans, in fact, spend our entire time taking life, like ogres” (ibid., pp. 102–3).



## WORKS CITED BY THE AUTHOR

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Many texts were mentioned in this work—the entire contents of the canon pertaining to the lesser way and the great way, for instance. The list below contains the titles of texts from which the author drew quotations, with the corresponding title the author used in Tibetan.

*Advice Concerning Impermanence* (mi rtag pa'i gtam)

*Advice from a Spiritual Friend* (mdza' bshes kyi mtshoms)

*Advice on Retreat* (dben pa'i gtam)

*The All-Creating Sovereign* (kun byed)

*The Aspirations of the Bodhisattva Loving Kindness* (byams pa'i smon lam) *The*

*Basic Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct* (lung gzhi) *Bodhisattva*

*Essence of Earth's Ten Wheels Discourse* (sa'i snying po 'khor lo bcu pa'i

mdo) *The Bodhisattvas' Stages of Awakening* (sa sde; byang sa; byang chub

sems dpa'i sa) *The Clear Lamp, a Commentary to Matrix of Mystery's Root*

*Tantra* (gsang 'dus rtsa rgyud kyi 'grel pa sgron ma gsal ba) *The Clear*

*Lamp, an Overview* (gsal sgron)

*The Cloud of Jewels Discourse* (dkon mchog sprin gyi mdo)

*The Collection of Sayings* (tshoms; also ched du brjod pa'i tshoms) *A*

*Commentary to Awakened Mind* (byang chub sems 'grel)

*A Commentary to "Entering the Middle Way"* ('jug pa'i 'grel pa) *A Commentary*

*to "The Array of the Three Tantric Bonds Tantra"* (dam tshig gsum bkod

pa'i rgyud 'grel) *A Commentary to the Certain Intention* (dgongs pa nges

'grel) *A Commentary to "The Highest Continuity"* (rgyud bla ma'i 'grel pa)

*A Commentary to "The Ornament of Manifest Realization"* (rgyan 'grel) *A*

*Commentary to Valid Cognition* (tshad ma rnam 'grel)

*The Compendium of All Discourses* (kun las btus pa)

*The Compendium of Definitions* (gtan la dbab pa bsdu ba)

*The Compendium of Observed Phenomena* (mngon pa kun las btus pa) *The*

*Compendium of Training* (bslab btus)

*The Compendium of Vajra Wisdom* (ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa) *The*

*Complete Array of Qualities Discourse* (yon tan yongs su bkod pa'i mdo)

*Complete Grasping of the Root of Ennobling Acts Discourse* ('phags pa dge

ba'i rtsa ba yongs su 'dzin pa) *The Complete Liberation of Maitreya Discourse* (byams pa'i rnam thar) *The Concise Collection of Teachings on Awakening* (byang chub kyi tshogs bsdus pa) *The Concise Discourse of the Perfection of Sublime Insight* (sdud pa) *Conformity with the World Discourse* ('jig rten mthun 'jug gi mdo) *The Dakinis' Secret Tantra, Key to the Instructions* (mkha' 'gro gsang rgyud bka'i lde mig) *The Design of the Basket Discourse* (za ma tog bkod pa'i mdo) *The Designation* (gdags pa)  
*The Detailed Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct* (lung rnam 'byed) *Discernment of Karma* (las rnam 'byed)  
*The Discourse of Advice to the King* (rgyal po la gdams pa'i mdo) *The Discourse of Entering Wisdom's Domain* (ye shes yul la 'jug gi mdo) *The Discourse of Gathered Precious Qualities* (yon tan rin po che sdud pa'i mdo) *The Discourse of Gentle Splendor's Manifestation* ('jam dpal rnam par 'phrul pa'i mdo) *The Discourse of Great Liberation* (thar pa chen po)  
*The Discourse of Individual Liberation* (so so thar pa)  
*The Discourse of Pith Instructions* (man ngag gi mdo)  
*The Discourse of Shridatta* (dpal sbyin gyi mdo)  
*The Discourse of Shrigupta* (dpal sbas kyi mdo)  
*The Discourse of Ten Qualities* (chos bcu pa'i mdo)  
*The Discourse of the Collection of Bodhisattva Teachings* (byang chub sems dpa'i sde snod kyi mdo) *The Discourse of the Essence of Enlightenment* (sangs rgyas kyi snying po'i mdo) *The Discourse of the Miracle of Definite Pacification* (rab tu zhi ba rnam par nges pa cho 'phrul gyi mdo) *The Discourse of the Wise and the Foolish* (mdo mdzangs blun) *The Discourse Requested by Achintyaprabhasa* (khye'u snang byed kyis zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Bhadra* (blo gros bzang pos zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Brahma* (tshangs pas zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Drita-rashtra* (yul 'khor skyong gis zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Inexhaustible Intellect* (blo gros mi zad pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Kashyapa* ('od srungs kyis zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Maitreya* (byams pas zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Ocean of Intellect* (blo gros rgya mtshos zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Purna* (gang pos zhus pa)  
*The Discourse Requested by Stable Intellect* (blo gros rab gnas kyis zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Suvatu* (lag bzangs kyis zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by the Good Magician* (sgyu ma mkhan bzang pos zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by the Great Seer Vasya* (drang srong chen po rgyas pas zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by the Naga King Sagara* (rgya mtshos zhus pa) *The Discourse Requested by the*

*Precious Child* (kye'u rin po ches zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Urga* (drag shul can gyis zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Requested by Vishnu* (sred med kyis bus zhus pa'i mdo) *The Discourse Showing the Transcendent Buddhas' Inconceivable Mysteries* (gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i mdo) *The Discourse That Creates Many Buddhas* (sangs rgyas mang byed kyis mdo; another name for The Flower Ornament Discourse) *The Discourse That Gathers the True Qualities* ('phags pa chos yang dag par sdud pa) *The Discourse That Gathers Wisdom's Realization* (dgongs pa 'dus pa; same as The General Discourse That Gathers Wisdom's Realization) *The Discourse That Presents Subjects in Fours* (chos bzhi bstan pa'i mdo) *The Discourse That Presents the Aspects of Awakening* (byang chub kyis phyogs bstan pa'i mdo) *The Discourse That Presents the Freedoms and Endowments* (dal 'byor bstan pa'i mdo; also appears as dal ba bstan pa'i mdo) *The Discourse That Presents the Ten Ennobling Acts* (dge bcu bstan pa'i mdo) *The Discourse That Presents the Two Truths* (bden gnyis bstan pa'i mdo) *Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes* (dbus mtha')

*Entering the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* (spyod 'jug)

*Entering the Middle Way* ('jug pa)

*Entering the Three Wisdom Bodies Discourse* (sku gsum la 'jug pa'i mdo) *The Essence of the Sun Discourse* (nyi ma'i snying po'i mdo) *The Exalted Discourse of Prophecy in Answer to the Questions of Lokadhara* ('phags pa 'jig rten gyis dris pas lung bstan pa'i mdo) *The Exalted Discourse That Presents the Design of Armor* ('phags pa go cha bkod pa bstan pa'i mdo) *Fifty Stanzas on Novice Vows* (ka ri ka lnga bcu pa)

*The Flaming Vajra Tantra* (rdo rje me lce'i rgyud)

*The Flower Ornament Discourse* (phal po che)

*The Fortunate Eon Discourse* (bskal pa bzang po)

*The Fundamental Verses on Sublime Insight* (rtsa ba shes rab) *The Garland of Jewels* (rin chen phreng ba)

*The Garland of Tongues of Fire Tantra* (me lce phreng ba'i rgyud) *The General Discourse That Gathers Wisdom's Realization* (spyi mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa; or spyi mdo) *Gentle Splendor's Wisdom Ornament Discourse* ('jam dpal ye shes rgyan gyi mdo) *The Glorious Tantra Equal to the Sky* (dpal nam mkha dang mnyam pa'i rgyud) *The Gong Discourse* (gandi'i mdo)

*The Great Design* (bkod pa chen po)

*The Great Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* (mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo) *The Heart Tantra of the Vast Expanse of Space* (thugs rgyud nam mkha klong yangs) *The Hévajra Tantra* (kye rdo rje)

*The Highest Certain Expression* (nges brjod bla ma)

*The Highest Continuity* (rgyud bla ma)  
*Highest Illusion* (sgyu 'phrul bla ma)  
*The Hundred Procedures* (las rgya pa)  
*The Hundred Verses on Illusion* (sgyu 'phrul brgya pa)  
*The Innumerable Ways of Purification Discourse* (sgo mtha' yas pa rnam par sbyong ba'i mdo) *The Irreversible Wheel Discourse* (phyir mi ldog pa'i 'khor lo'i mdo) *The Jewel Basket Discourse* (dkon mchog za ma tog)  
*The Journey to Langka Discourse* (langkar gshegs pa)  
*The King of Illusion* (sgyu 'phrul rgyal po)  
*The Lamp of the Jewels Discourse* (dkon mchog sgron me'i mdo) *Lamp on the Path to Awakening* (lam sgron)  
*The Later Tantra* (rgyud phyi ma)  
*Letter from a Spiritual Friend* (bshes spring)  
*Letter to a Disciple* (slob spring)  
*The Lion's Roar of Shrialadevi* (dpal phreng gi mdo)  
*A Litany of the Names of Gentle Splendor* ('jam dpal mtshan brjod) *The Lotus Mound* (padma spungs pa)  
*The Magnificent King Tantra* (rmad byung rgyal po'i rgyud)  
*The Major Commentary to "The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas"* (brgyad stong 'grel chen) *The Matrix of Awareness Discourse* (kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo)  
*The Middle-Length Version of the Mother of Sublime Insight* (yum bar ma) *The Middle Way Praise of the Inconceivable* (dbu ma bsam gyis mi khyab par bstod pa) *The Mindfulness Discourse* (dran pa nyer gzhaq)  
*The Minor Scripture on the Monastic Code of Conduct* (lung phran tshegs) *The Mirror of Ever Excellent's Wisdom Mind* (kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long) *The Ocean of Wisdom Tantra* (ye shes rgya mtsho'i rgyud)  
*The Ornament of Dense Array Discourse* (rgyan stug po bkod pa'i mdo) *The Ornament of Manifest Realization* (mngon rtogs rgyan)  
*The Ornament of the Appearance of Wisdom Discourse* (ye shes snang ba rgyan gyi mdo) *The Ornament of the Discourses* (mdo sde rgyan)  
*The Parable of the Pig* (phag gi rtogs pa brjod pa)  
*The Pattern of the Stem Discourse* (sdong po bkod pa; part of *The Flower Ornament Discourse*) *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eight Thousand Stanzas* (brgyad stong pa) *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Eighty Thousand Stanzas* (khri brgyad stong pa) *The Perfection of Sublime Insight in Twenty-Five Thousand Stanzas* (nyi khri) *The Pinnacle of Jewels Discourse* (dkon brtsegs)  
*Praise of the Basic Space of Phenomena* (chos kyi dbyings su bstod pa) *The*

*Precious Sky Discourse* (nam mkha rin po che'i mdo)  
*The Precious Tantra of Matrix of Mystery* (gsang 'dus rin po che'i rgyud) *The Precious Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* (yid bzhin rin po che)  
*Presentation of an Inexhaustible Treasure* (mi zad pa'i gter bstan pa) *The Pristine Moon Discourse* (zla ba dri ma med pa'i mdo)  
*The Pristine Sky Discourse* (nam mkha' dri ma med pa'i mdo) *Prophecy Concerning the Girl Sublime Moon, Chandrottara* (zla mchog gi mdo)  
*Purification of the Mind's Obscurations* (sems kyi sgrib pa sbyongs ba)  
*Rahula's Praise to the Mother of the Buddhas* (sgra gcan 'dzin gyis yum la bstod pa) *The Rational System of Exposition* (rnam bshad rigs pa)  
*The Refutation of Dispute* (rtsod bzlog)  
*Returning the Buddha's Kindness Discourse* (drin lan bsab pa'i mdo) *The Reunion of Father and Child Discourse* (yab sras mjal ba'i mdo) *The Root Discourse on the Monastic Code of Conduct* (rtsa ba'i mdo) *The Root Heart Medical Tantra* (rtsa ba thugs rgyud)  
*The Sacred Victory Banner Discourse* (mdo rgyal mtshan dam pa) *The Sacred Yogini Tantra* (rnal 'byor ma dam pa'i rgyud)  
*Sayings on Impermanence* (mi rtag pa'i tshoms)  
*Secret Enjoyment* (gsang ba rol pa)  
*The Secret Essence Tantra* (gsang snying)  
*Self-Manifest Awareness* (rang shar)  
*Self-Liberated Awareness* (rig pa rang grol)  
*The Seventy Verses on Refuge* (skyabs 'gro bdun cu pa)  
*The Short Commentary* ('grel chung; also 'grel tshul) *The Short Discourse on Mindfulness* (dran pa nyer gzhaq chung ngu) *The Sixty Reasons* (rigs pa drug cu pa)  
*The Songs of Realization* (do ha)  
*The Sovereign Meditative State Discourse* (ting nge 'dzin rgyal po) *The Sublime Essence* (snying po mchog)  
*Summary of the Root Tantra of Matrix of Mystery* (gsang 'dus rtsa rgyud kyi bsodus don) *The Tale of the Buddha's Past Life in an Iron House* (lcags kyi khyim du skyes pa'i rabs) *The Tantra of the Magical Display's Manifest Awakening* (sgyu 'phrul mngon byang) *The Tantra That Extracts the Essential Meaning* (snying po'i don len pa'i rgyud) *The Tantra That Turns Back the Hordes* (dpung rnam par bzlog pa'i rgyud) *The Three Hundred Stanzas for Novices* (sum brgya pa)  
*The Transcendence of Sorrow Discourse* (mya ngan las 'das pa'i mdo) *The Transmission of the Monastic Code of Conduct* ('dul ba lung) *The Treasury of Enlightenment Discourse* (sang s rgyas mdzod kyi mdo) *The Treasury of*

*Observed Phenomena* (mdzod)  
*The Treasury of Qualities* (yon tan mdzod)  
*The Twenty Commitments* (sdom pa nyi shu pa)  
*The Two Truths* (gden gnyis)  
*The Unstained Discourse* (dri ma med pa'i mdo)  
*The Upper Commentary to the Hundred Procedures* (las brgya pa'i stod 'grel)  
*The Upper Earring* (snyan gyi gong rgyan; *another name for The Flower Ornament Discourse*) *The Vajra Cutter Discourse* (rdo rje gcod pa)  
*Vajra Magical Illusion* (sgyu 'phrul rdo rje)  
*The Vast Enjoyment Discourse* (rgya cher rol pa'i mdo)  
*The Very Extensive, Great Flower Ornament Discourse* (shin tu rgyas pa chen po sangs rgyas phal po che; *same as Flower Ornament Discourse*) *The Wheel of Flames Tantra* (me lce 'khor lo'i rgyud)  
*The White Lotus Discourse* (padma dkar po)  
*The White Lotus of the Sacred Doctrine* (dam chos padma dkar po) *The Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* (yid bzhin mdzod)



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