

# SEVEN-POINT MIND TRAINING



**CHEKAWA YESHE DORJE (1101-1175)**

**Because of my numerous aspirations,  
I have defied the tragic tale of suffering  
And have taken instructions to subdue self-grasping.  
Now, even if death comes, I have no regrets.**



## **1. PRESENTATION OF THE PRELIMINARIES, THE BASIS**

- 1. First, train in the preliminaries.<sup>1</sup>**

## **2. TRAINING IN THE TWO MINDS OF AWAKENING, THE MAIN PRACTICE**

2A. Training in ultimate awakening mind

2A1. The actual meditation session

- 2. Train to view all phenomena as dreamlike.**
- 3. Examine the nature of the unborn awareness.**
- 4. The remedy, too, is freed in its own place.**
- 5. Place your mind on the basis-of-all, the actual path.**

2A2. The subsequent period [practices]

- 6. In the intervals be a conjurer of illusions.**

2B. Training in the conventional awakening mind

2B1. The meditation session

- 7. Train in the two – giving and taking – alternately.**
- 8. Place the two astride the breath.**

2B2. The subsequent period [practices]

- 9. There are three objects, three poisons, and three roots of virtue.**
- 10. In all actions, train by means of the words.**

## **3. TAKING ADVERSE CONDITIONS ONTO THE PATH OF ENLIGHTENMENT**

- 11. When the world and its inhabitants boil with negativity,  
Transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment.**

3A. Training in the two awakening minds, the extraordinary thoughts

3A1. Taking adverse conditions onto the path by means of training in the conventional awakening mind

3A1A. Recognizing your own self as the enemy

- 12. Banish all blames to the single source.**

3A1B. Recognizing sentient beings as friends and cherishing them

- 13. Toward all beings contemplate their great kindness.**

3A2. Taking adverse conditions onto the path by means of training in the ultimate awakening mind

- 14. With the three views and treasury of space,  
The protection of yoga is unexcelled.  
By meditating on illusions as the four buddha bodies,  
Emptiness is protection unsurpassed.**

3B. Striving in the dual practice of accumulation and purification, the extraordinary activities

- 15. The fourfold practice is the most excellent method.**
  - 1) Accumulation of merit
  - 2) Purification of negative karma
  - 3) Making offerings to malevolent forces
  - 4) Offering tormas to the Dharma protectors
- 16. Relate whatever you can to meditation right now.**

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1 The translation of the root text has been sourced from 'Essential Mind Training' translated by Thupten Jinpa (pages 39-41). The embedded outlines have been sourced from 'A Commentary on the Seven-Point Mind Training' by Se Chilbu Chokyi Gyaltsen also found within 'Essential Mind Training' (pages 43-105)

#### **4. PRESENTATION OF A LIFETIME'S PRACTICE IN SUMMARY**

**17. In brief the essence of instruction is this:**

**Apply yourself to the five powers.**

- 1) Propelling intention
- 2) Acquaintance
- 3) Positive seed
- 4) Eradication
- 5) Aspirational prayer

**18. As Mahayana's transference method is**

**The five powers alone, their practice is vital.**

- 1) Positive seed
- 2) Aspirational prayer
- 3) Eradication
- 4) Propelling intention
- 5) Acquaintance

#### **5. PRESENTATION OF THE MEASURE OF HAVING TRAINED THE MIND**

**19. The intent of all teachings converges on a single point.**

**20. Of the two witnesses uphold the principal one.**

- 1) Not being disapproved of by those who are reputedly sublime
- 2) Not being the object of your own disapproval

**21. Cultivate constantly the joyful mind alone.**

**22. If this can be done even when distracted, you are trained.**

#### **6. PRESENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS OF MIND TRAINING**

**23. Train constantly in the three general points.**

- 1) Your mind training should not contradict your pledges
- 2) Your mind training should not become offensive
- 3) Your mind training should not be biased

**24. Transform your attitudes but remain as you are.**

**25. Do not speak of the defects [of others].**

**26. Do not reflect on others' shortcomings.**

**27. Discard all expectations of reward.**

**28. Discard poisonous food.**

**29. Do not maintain [inappropriate] loyalty.**

**30. Do not torment with malicious banter.**

**31. Do not lie in ambush.**

**32. Do not strike at the heart.**

**33. Do not place the load of a dzo on an ox.**

**34. Do not sprint to win a race.**

**35. Do not abuse this [practice] as a rite.**

**36. Do not turn gods into demons.**

**37. Do not seek misery as a means to happiness.**

#### **7. PRESENTATION OF THE PRECEPTS OF MIND TRAINING**

**38. Accomplish all yogas through a single means.**

**39. Overcome all errors through a single means.**

**40. There are two tasks – one at the start and one at the end.**

**41. Forbear whichever of the two arises.**

- 1) Great fortune
- 2) Misfortune

*Seven-Point Mind Training*

- 42. Guard the two even at the cost of your life.**
  - 1) The precepts and commitments presented in the teachings in general
  - 2) The commitments of this particular mind training teaching
- 43. Train in the three difficult challenges.**
  - 1) Remember the antidotes
  - 2) Overcome the afflictions
  - 3) Eradicate the continuum of the afflictions
- 44. Adopt the three principal conditions.**
  - 1) There should be a qualified spiritual teacher
  - 2) Your state of mind should be such that many realizations have arisen
  - 3) Conditions conducive to Dharma practice must be gathered
- 45. Contemplate the three that are free of degeneration.**
  - 1) Make sure that your faith and respect toward your spiritual teacher remain undiminished
  - 2) Make sure that your enthusiasm for mind training remains undiminished
  - 3) Learn to guard your pledges undiminished
- 46. Be endowed with the three inseparable factors.**
  - 1) Make sure your body is never divorced from virtuous activity at all times
  - 2) Make sure your speech is never divorced from virtuous activity at all times
  - 3) Make sure your mind is never divorced from virtuous activity at all times
- 47. Train constantly toward the chosen objects.**
- 48. Do not depend on other conditions.**
- 49. Engage in the principal practices right now.**
- 50. Do not apply misplaced understanding.**
  - 1) Misplaced forbearance
  - 2) Misplaced aspiration
  - 3) Misplaced savoring
  - 4) Misplaced compassion
  - 5) Misplaced dedication
  - 6) Misplaced rejoicing
- 51. Do not be sporadic.**
- 52. Train with decisiveness.**
- 53. Be released through the two: investigation and close analysis.**
- 54. Do not boast of your good deeds.**
- 55. Do not be ill-tempered.**
- 56. Do not be fickle.**
- 57. Do not be boisterous.**

**Through this proliferation of the five degenerations,  
Transform [every event] into the path of enlightenment.**

**Because of my numerous aspirations,  
I have defied the tragic tale of suffering  
And have taken instructions to subdue self-grasping.  
Now, even if death comes, I have no regrets.**

# THE THREE VEHICLES

VEHICLE	ASPIRATION	GOAL	PRACTICES	VIPASHYANA
<b>THERAVADA</b> (Pali)	Renunciation ( <i>nihisarana</i> ) (Renunciate)	<i>Nirvana</i> ( <i>Arhat</i> )	<u>8-fold path</u> right speech right action right livelihood right effort right mindfulness right concentration right view right thought  <u>3 higher trainings</u> 1. ethics ( <i>shila</i> )  2. concentration ( <i>samadhi</i> )  3. wisdom ( <i>prajna</i> )	3 marks of existence 1. impermanence ( <i>aniya</i> ) 2. suffering ( <i>dukkha</i> ) 3. no self ( <i>anatman</i> )
<b>MAHAYANA</b> (Sanskrit)	<i>Bodhicitta</i> ( <i>Bodhisattva</i> )	Enlightenment ( <i>bodhi</i> ) ( <i>Buddha</i> )	<u>6 perfections</u> 1. generosity ( <i>dana</i> ) 2. ethics ( <i>shila</i> ) 3. patience ( <i>kshanti</i> ) 4. joyous effort ( <i>virya</i> ) 5. concentration ( <i>dhyana</i> ) 6. wisdom ( <i>prajna</i> ) <i>shamatha</i> <i>vipashyana</i>	Emptiness ( <i>shunyata</i> )
<b>VAJRAYANA</b> (tantra)	<i>Bodhicitta</i> ( <i>Bodhisattva</i> )	Enlightenment ( <i>bodhi</i> ) ( <i>Buddha</i> )	<u>2 stages</u> 1. generation stage ( <i>utpattikrama</i> ) 2. completion stage ( <i>sampannakrama</i> )	Emptiness ( <i>shunyata</i> )

Renunciation – the mind intent on liberation from samsara

*Bodhicitta* – the aspiration for complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings

*Nirvana* – freedom from the afflictive obscurations

Enlightenment – freedom from the afflictive & cognitive obscurations

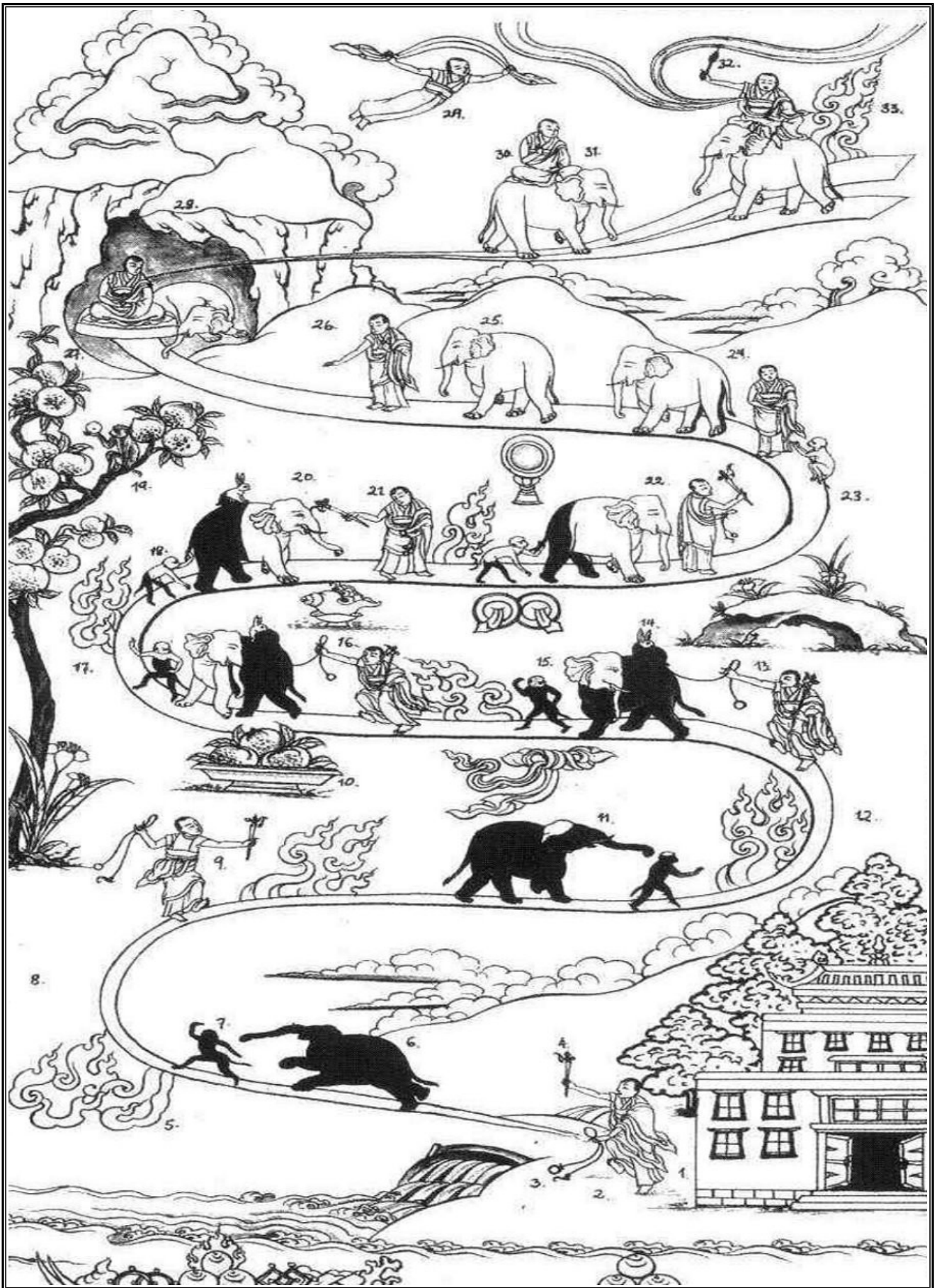
Afflictive obscurations – ignorance & seeds of ignorance

Cognitive obscurations – latencies (stains) of ignorance & mistaken dualistic appearance arising due to those stains

*Shamatha* – calm abiding

*Vipashyana* – special insight

# SHAMATHA



Shamatha is attained by progressing through the nine stages, relying on the eight antidotes to abandon the five faults. This is accomplished through the six powers and the four mental engagements.

Fault	Antidote
1. laziness	1. faith 2. aspiration 3. effort 4. pliancy
2. forgetfulness	5. mindfulness
3. laxity and excitement	6. introspection
4. non-application	7. application
5. over-application	8. equanimity

1. The first stage is attained through the *power of hearing*.
- 2. Stage 1 - Setting the mind**
3. Mindfulness
4. Introspection
5. From here until the seventh stage the flame progressively decreases in size until it becomes absent. This difference denotes the measure of the strength of effort required regarding mindfulness and introspection.
6. The elephant is the mind and the black colour symbolises laxity.
7. The monkey is the proliferation of thoughts and the black colour symbolises excitement.
8. The second stage is attained through the *power of thinking*.
- 9. Stage 2 - Continuous setting**
10. Excitement has the five sense pleasures as its objects.
11. From here, the black colour progressively becomes white. This symbolises the factor of clarity and the factor of stability progressively increasing.
12. The third and fourth stages are attained through the *power of mindfulness*.
- 13. Stage 3 - Resetting**
14. The rabbit is subtle laxity. From here, one can individually identify coarse and subtle laxity.
15. Looking back means that having recognized that the mind has wandered, it is again directed back to the object.
- 16. Stage 4 - Close setting**
17. The fifth and sixth stages are attained through the *power of introspection*.
18. The potential for excitement to arise prior to meditation has weakened.
19. Since virtuous thoughts are an interruption at the time of shamatha meditation, it is necessary to stop them. At other times it is not necessary.
20. Due to introspection the mind does not fall into scattering and through being uplifted, it is drawn into concentration.
- 21. Stage 5 - Disciplining**
- 22. Stage 6 - Pacifying**
23. The seventh and eighth stages are attained through the *power of effort*.
- 24. Stage 7 - Thorough pacifying**
- At this stage it is difficult for subtle laxity or excitement to arise and even if they do arise a little, they are immediately eliminated with the slightest effort.
25. The black colour of the elephant is gone and there is no monkey. This means that in dependence on initially applying a little mindfulness and introspection, the mind can engage continuously in concentration without any potential of being interrupted by laxity, excitement or thoughts.
- 26. Stage 8 - Making one-pointed**
27. The ninth stage is attained through the *power of familiarity*.
- 28. Stage 9 - Setting in equipoise**
29. Physical pliancy
30. Mental pliancy
31. Attainment of **shamatha**
32. The root of samsara is cut by the union of shamatha and vipashyana observing emptiness.
33. Equipped with mindfulness and introspection, seek the correct view of emptiness.



# SUFFERING AND ITS CAUSES

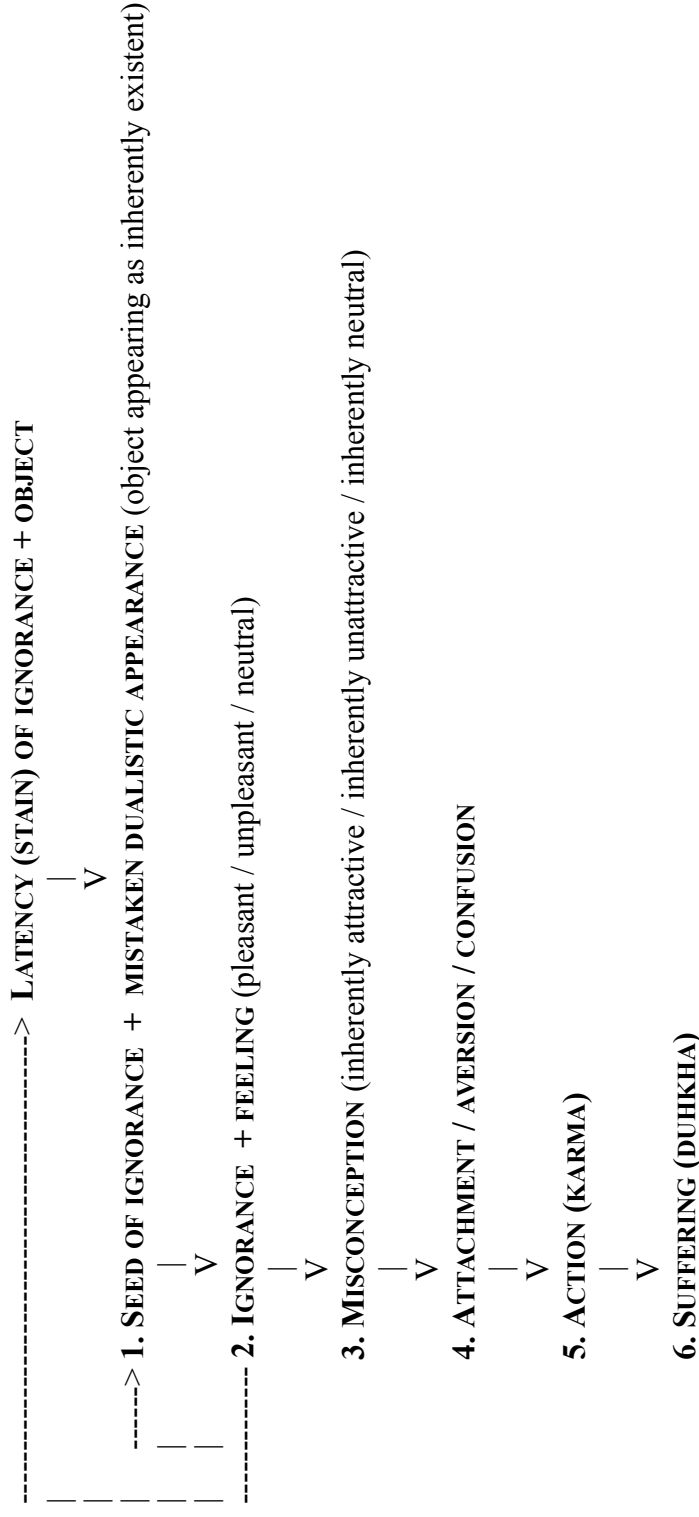
As said in Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*

By extinguishing actions and mental afflictions, there is liberation.

Actions and mental afflictions arise from misconceptions.

And misconceptions arise from elaborations.

Elaborations will cease through cultivating emptiness. [18.5]



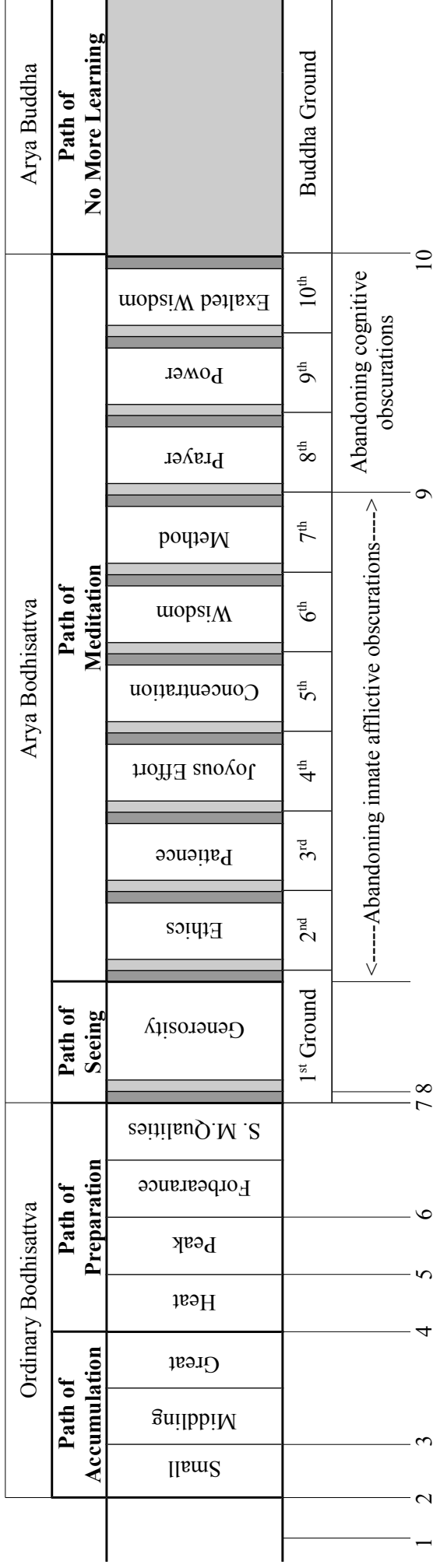
Ignorance – conception of inherent existence; Confusion – grasping as inherently existent

### TWO OBSCURATIONS

1. Afflictive obscurations – conception of inherent existence along with its seeds
2. Cognitive obscurations – latencies of the conception of inherent existence and all factors of mistaken dualistic appearance that arise due to the force of those

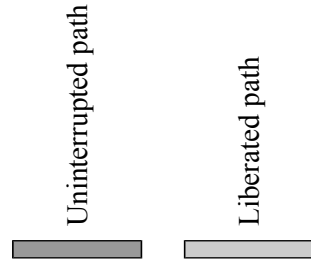
# MAHAYANA PATH

According to Madhyamika Prasangika (Middle Way Consequence school)



## Milestones

- 1 – Inferential realization of emptiness (sharp faculty trainees)
- 2 – Uncontrived renunciation and bodhicitta
- 3 – Will never fall to a lower vehicle
- 4 – Union of shamatha and vipashyana observing emptiness
- 5 – Roots of virtue cannot be severed
- 6 – No more rebirths in lower realms
- 7 – Initial direct realization of emptiness (Arya)
- 8 – Abandoned intellectually acquired afflictive obscurations
- 9 – Nirvana (Arhat)
- 10 – Enlightenment (Buddha)



<b>Afflictive Obscurations</b>	Conception of inherent existence along with its seeds
<b>Cognitive Obscurations</b>	Latencies of the conception of inherent existence and all factors of mistaken dualistic appearance that arise due to the force of those

# PRAYERS FOR MEDITATION

## **The Four Thoughts**

This precious life of leisure and opportunity is rare and easily lost.  
The world and those within it are impermanent. I too will die soon.  
The results of my virtuous and non-virtuous actions will without fail ripen within me.  
And since there is no genuine happiness to be found within the abodes of samsara  
I must correctly practice the true Dharma.

## **Going for Refuge and Generating Bodhicitta**

I go for refuge until I am enlightened  
To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.  
Through my practice of giving and other perfections  
May I become a buddha to benefit all sentient beings. (3x)

## **The Four Immeasurables**

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.  
May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering.  
May they never be separated from the happiness that knows no suffering.  
May they dwell in equanimity, free from attachment and aversion to those near and far.

## **Seven-Limb Prayer**

Reverently, I prostrate with my body, speech, and mind;  
I present clouds of every type of offering, actual and imagined;  
I declare all my negative actions accumulated since beginningless time  
And rejoice in the merit of all holy and ordinary beings.  
Please remain until the end of cyclic existence  
And turn the wheel of Dharma for sentient beings.  
I dedicate all the virtues of myself and others to the great enlightenment.

## **Request**

Please bless me to cease all deluded minds immediately,  
From disrespect for the gurus to the subtle dualistic conception.  
Bless me to generate all unmistakable minds instantly,  
From respect for the gurus to the realisation of emptiness.  
Bless me to completely pacify all outer and inner obstacles.

## **Dedication Prayers**

Due to the merits of these virtuous actions,  
May I quickly attain the state of a guru-buddha  
And lead all sentient beings, without exception  
Into that enlightened state.

May the supreme jewel bodhicitta  
That has not arisen, arise and grow;  
And may that which has arisen not diminish  
But increase more and more.

# DEDICATION PRAYER

From Master Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*

May all beings everywhere  
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind,  
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy  
By virtue of my merits.

May no living creature suffer,  
Commit evil or ever fall ill.  
May no one be afraid or belittled,  
With a mind weighed down by depression.

May the blind see forms  
And the deaf hear sounds.  
May those whose bodies are worn with toil  
Be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing  
The hungry find food;  
May the thirsty find water  
And delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth,  
Those weak with sorrow find joy;  
May the forlorn find hope,  
Constant happiness and prosperity.

May there be timely rains  
And bountiful harvests;  
May all medicines be effective  
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.

May all who are sick and ill  
Quickly be freed from their ailments.  
Whatever diseases there are in the world,  
May they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid  
And those bound be freed;  
May the powerless find power  
And may people think of benefiting each other.

For as long as space remains,  
For as long as sentient beings remain,  
Until then may I too remain  
To dispel the miseries of the world.