

# THE HEART SUTRA

**ARYA BHAGAVATI PRAJNAPARAMITA HRIDAYA SUTRA**



**SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA**

# THE HEART OF THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM SUTRA

(*Arya-bhagavati-prajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra*)

1. Prologue indicating the origination of the sutra

1A. Common prologue

**Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavan was dwelling on Mass of Vultures Mountain in Rajagrha together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas.**

1B. Uncommon prologue

**At that time, the Bhagavan was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called “Profound Perception.” Also, at that time, the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara looked upon the very practice of the profound perfection of wisdom and beheld those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.**

2. Subject matter of the actual sutra

2A. Shariputra’s question on the mode of practising the perfection of wisdom

**Then, through the power of Buddha, the venerable Shariputra said this to the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara: “How should any son of the lineage train who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom?”**

2B. Avalokiteshvara’s responses

2B1. Individual presentation of the mode of training in the path of those of inferior faculties

2B1A. Presentation of the mode of training in the perfection of wisdom on the path of accumulation and the path of preparation

2B1A-1. Transition

**He said that and the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara said this to the venerable Sharadvatiputra. “Shariputra, any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom should look upon it like this,**

[2B1A-2. Mode of training in brief]

**correctly and repeatedly beholding those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.**

[2B1A-3. Extensive presentation]

2B1A-3A. Mode of training in the ultimate nature of the aggregate of form

**Form is empty. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is also not other than emptiness.**

2B1A-3B. Extending the same analysis to the remaining aggregates

**In the same way, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, and consciousness are empty.**

2B1B. Presentation of the mode of training on the path of seeing

**Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are emptiness; without characteristic; unproduced, unceased; stainless, not without stain; not deficient, not fulfilled.**

2B1C. Presentation of the mode of training on the path of meditation

**Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no discrimination, no compositional factors, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no visual form, no sound, no odor, no taste, no object of touch, and no phenomenon. There is no eye element and so on up to and including no mind element and no mental consciousness element. There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to and including no aging and death and no extinction of aging and death. Similarly, there is no suffering, origination, cessation, and path; there is no exalted wisdom, no attainment, and also no non-attainment.**

2B1D. Presentation of the mode of training on the path of no more learning

**Shariputra, therefore, because there is no attainment, bodhisattvas rely on and dwell in the perfection of wisdom, the mind without obscuration and without fear. Having completely passed beyond error, they reach the end-point of nirvana. All the buddhas who dwell in the three times also manifestly, completely awaken to unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment in reliance on the perfection of wisdom.**

2B2. Presentation through mere words of mantra to those of superior faculties

**Therefore, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequaled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering, should be known as truth since it is not false. The mantra of the perfection of wisdom is declared:**

**TADYATHA [OM] GATÉ GATÉ PARAGATÉ PARASAMGATÉ BODHI SVAHA**

2B3. Exhortation to train by means of summarizing the subject matter

**Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like that.”**

2C. The teacher's affirmation of this

**Then the Bhagavan arose from that concentration and commended the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara saying: “Well said, well said, son of the lineage, it is like that. It is like that; one should practice the profound perfection of wisdom just as you have indicated; even the tathagatas rejoice.”**

2D. The assembly member's delight and their pledge to uphold

**The Bhagavan having thus spoken, the venerable Sharadvatiputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara, those surrounding in their entirety along with the world of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas were overjoyed and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan.**

**COLOPHON:** The Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra has been translated from the Tibetan, consulting the Indian and Tibetan commentaries and previous good translations, by Gelong Thubten Tsultrim (George Churinoff), the first day of Saka Dawa, 1999, at Tushita Meditation Centre, Dharamsala, India. Amended March 8, 2001, in the New Mexico desert.

Note: Embedded outlines originate from a commentary on the Heart Sutra by Jamyang Gawai Lodro. The translated outlines have been sourced from the Appendix of *Essence of the Heart Sutra* (by His Holiness the Dalai Lama).

# THE HEART OF THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM SUTRA

## Arya-bhagavati-prajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra

1 Prologue  
2 Common

Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavan was dwelling on Mass of Vultures Mountain in Rajagrha together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas.

At that time, the Bhagavan was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called "Profound Perception." Also, at that time, the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara looked upon the very practice of the profound perfection of wisdom and beheld those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

1 Shariputra's question

Then, through the power of Buddha, the venerable Shariputra said this to the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara: "How should any son of the lineage train who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom?"

He said that and the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara said this to the venerable Shariputra. "Shariputra, any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom should look upon it like this,

1 Transition

Path of  
1 accumulation & preparation

correctly and repeatedly beholding those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

2 In brief

Form is empty. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is also not other than emptiness.

In the same way, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, and consciousness are empty.

Form  
1 aggregate

Remaining  
2 aggregates

Extensive  
3 presentation

Path of  
2 seeing

Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are emptiness; without characteristic; unproduced, unceased; stainless, not without stain; not deficient, not fulfilled.

1 Inferior faculties

Path of  
3 meditation

Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no discrimination, no compositional factors, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no visual form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no object of touch, and no phenomenon. There is no eye element and so on up to and including no mind element and no mental consciousness element. There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to and including no aging and death and no extinction of aging and death. Similarly, there is no suffering, origination, cessation, and path; there is no exalted wisdom, no attainment, and also no non-attainment.

Path of  
4 no more learning

Shariputra, therefore, because there is no attainment, bodhisattvas rely on and dwell in the perfection of wisdom, the mind without obscuration and without fear. Having completely passed beyond error, they reach the end-point of nirvana. All the buddhas who dwell in the three times also manifestly, completely awaken to unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment in reliance on the perfection of wisdom.

2 Superior faculties

Therefore, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequalled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering, should be known as truth since it is not false. The mantra of the perfection of wisdom is declared:

TADYATHA [OM] GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHĀ

3 Exhortation

Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like that."

Then the Bhagavan arose from that concentration and commended the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara saying: "Well said, well said, son of the lineage, it is like that. It is like that; one should practice the profound perfection of wisdom just as you have indicated; even the tathagatas rejoice."

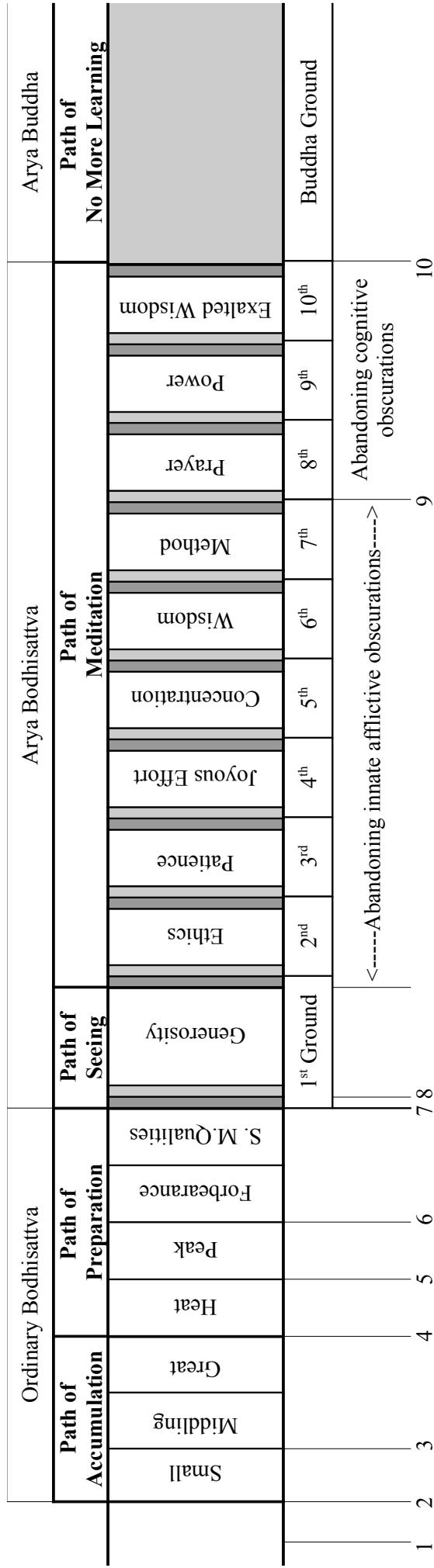
The Bhagavan having thus spoken, the venerable Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva aryā Avalokiteshvara, those surrounding in their entirety along with the world of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas were overjoyed and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan.

4 Assembly's delight

## Heart Sutra

# MAHAYANA PATH

According to Madhyamika Prasangika (Middle Way Consequence school)



## Milestones

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

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Afflictive Obscurations

Cognitive Obscurations

Conception of inherent existence along with its seeds

Latencies of the conception of inherent existence and all factors of mistaken dualistic appearance that arise due to the force of those

# THE THREE VEHICLES

VEHICLE	ASPIRATION	GOAL	PRACTICES	VIPASHYANA
<b>THERAVADA</b>	Renunciation ( <i>nihssarana</i> ) (Renunciate)	Nirvana (Arhat)	<p>3 higher trainings</p> <p>1. ethics (<i>shila</i>)</p> <p>right speech right action right livelihood</p> <p>2. concentration (<i>samadhi</i>)</p> <p>right effort right mindfulness right concentration</p> <p>3. wisdom (<i>prajna</i>)</p> <p>right view right thought</p>	<p>8-fold path</p> <p>3 marks of existence</p> <p>1. impermanence (<i anitya<="" i="">)</i></p> <p>2. suffering (<i>duhkha</i>)</p> <p>3. no self (<i>anatman</i>)</p>
<b>MAHAYANA</b>	Bodhicitta (Bodhisattva)	Enlightenment ( <i>bodhi</i> ) (Buddha)	<p>6 perfections</p> <p>1. generosity (<i>dana</i>)</p> <p>2. ethics (<i>shila</i>)</p> <p>3. patience (<i>kshanti</i>)</p> <p>4. joyous effort (<i>viryā</i>)</p> <p>5. concentration (<i>samadhi</i>)</p> <p>6. wisdom (<i>prajna</i>)</p> <p><i>shamatha</i> <i>vipashyana</i></p>	Emptiness ( <i>shunyata</i> )
<b>VAJRAYANA</b> (tantra)	Bodhicitta (Bodhisattva)	Enlightenment ( <i>bodhi</i> ) (Buddha)	<p>2 stages</p> <p>1. generation stage (<i>upattikrama</i>)</p> <p>2. completion stage (<i>sampannakrama</i>)</p>	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 stains  
 Shamatha – calm abiding  
 Vipashyana – special insight

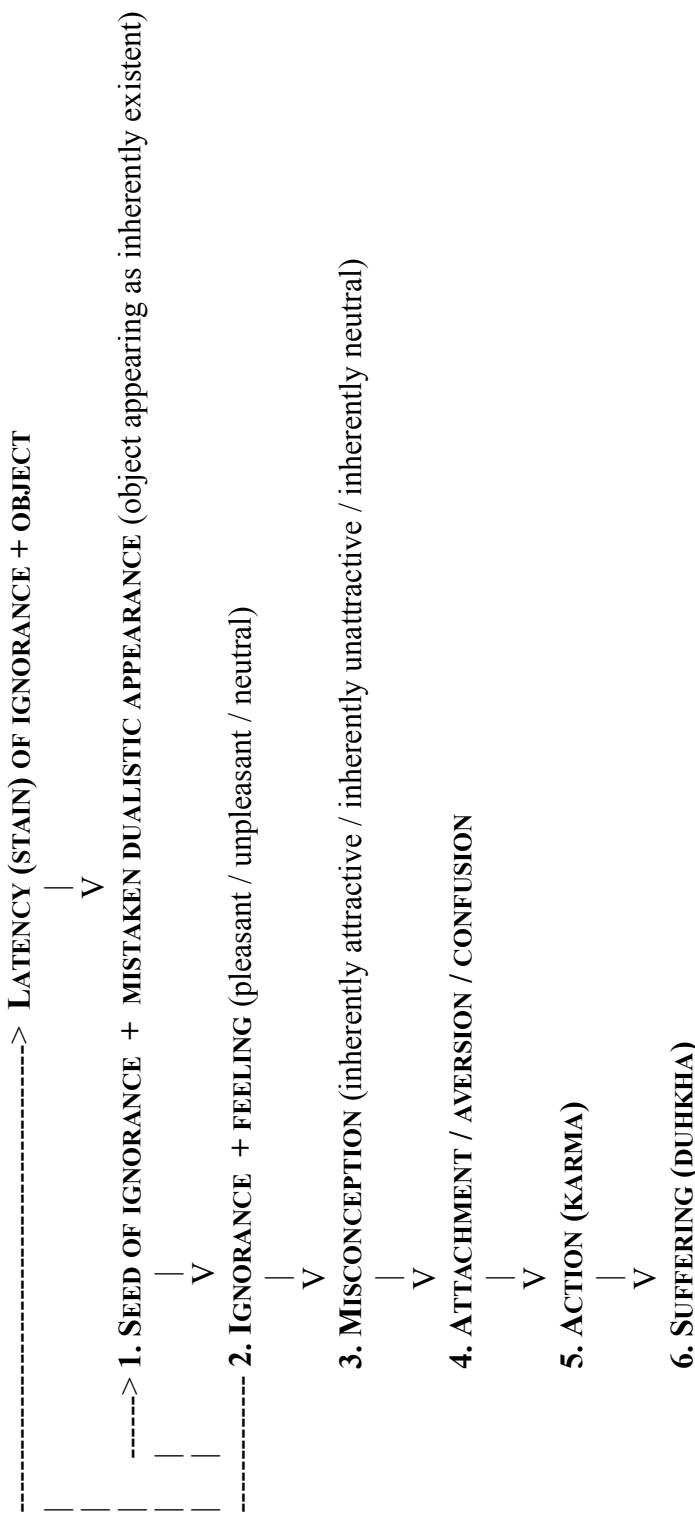
# SUFFERING AND ITS CAUSES

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 they 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

# THE FOUR BUDDHIST TENET SYSTEMS

Source: Jetsun Chogyi Gyeltsen's *Presentation of Tenets*

SCHOOL	SUB-SCHOOLS	PROPONENT	ILLUSTRATION OF PERSON
<b>VAIBHASIKA</b> (Great Exposition)	18 sub-schools <sup>1</sup>	A person propounding Hinayana tenets who does not accept self-cognition but does accept truly existent external objects	Various assertions: the mere collection of the five aggregates, the continuum of the aggregates, the mental consciousness
<b>SAUTRANTIKA</b> (Sutra)	<b>FOLLOWERS OF SCRIPTURE</b> Followers of Vasubandhu's <i>Treasury of Manifest Knowledge</i> <b>FOLLOWERS OF REASONING</b> Followers of Dharmakirti's <i>Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition</i>	A person propounding Hinayana tenets who asserts both self-cognition <sup>2</sup> and truly existent external objects	The mental consciousness
<b>CITTAMATRA</b> (Mind Only)	<b>FOLLOWERS OF SCRIPTURE</b> Followers of Asanga's <i>Five Treatises on the Grounds</i> <b>FOLLOWERS OF REASONING</b> Followers of Dharmakirti's <i>Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition</i>	A person propounding Mahayana tenets who does not assert external objects but does accept truly existent self-cognition	The mere mental consciousness
<b>MADHYAMIKA</b> (Middle Way)	<b>SVATANTRIKA</b> (Autonomy) <b>YOGACARA SVATANTRIKA</b> (Yogic Autonomy) <b>SAUTRANTIKA SVATANTRIKA</b> (Sutra Autonomy) <b>PRASANGIKA</b> (Consequence)	A person propounding Mahayana tenets who does not accept true existence even conventionally	The mental consciousness The mere 'I' which is imputed in dependence on the five aggregates

<sup>1</sup>The division into 18 sub-schools: Majority Community, One Convention, Proponents of World-Transcendence, Much Hearing, Proponents of Imputation, Monument Ones, Eastern Mountain Ones, Western Mountain Ones, Abiding Firmly, Proponents of the Existence of All, Vatsiputra Followers, Dharmottara Followers, Bhadravaya Followers, Mahasammata Followers, Great Teaching, Great Teaching, Dharmagupta Followers and Uttara Followers. [Maps of the Profound (Hopkins) pages 210-217]

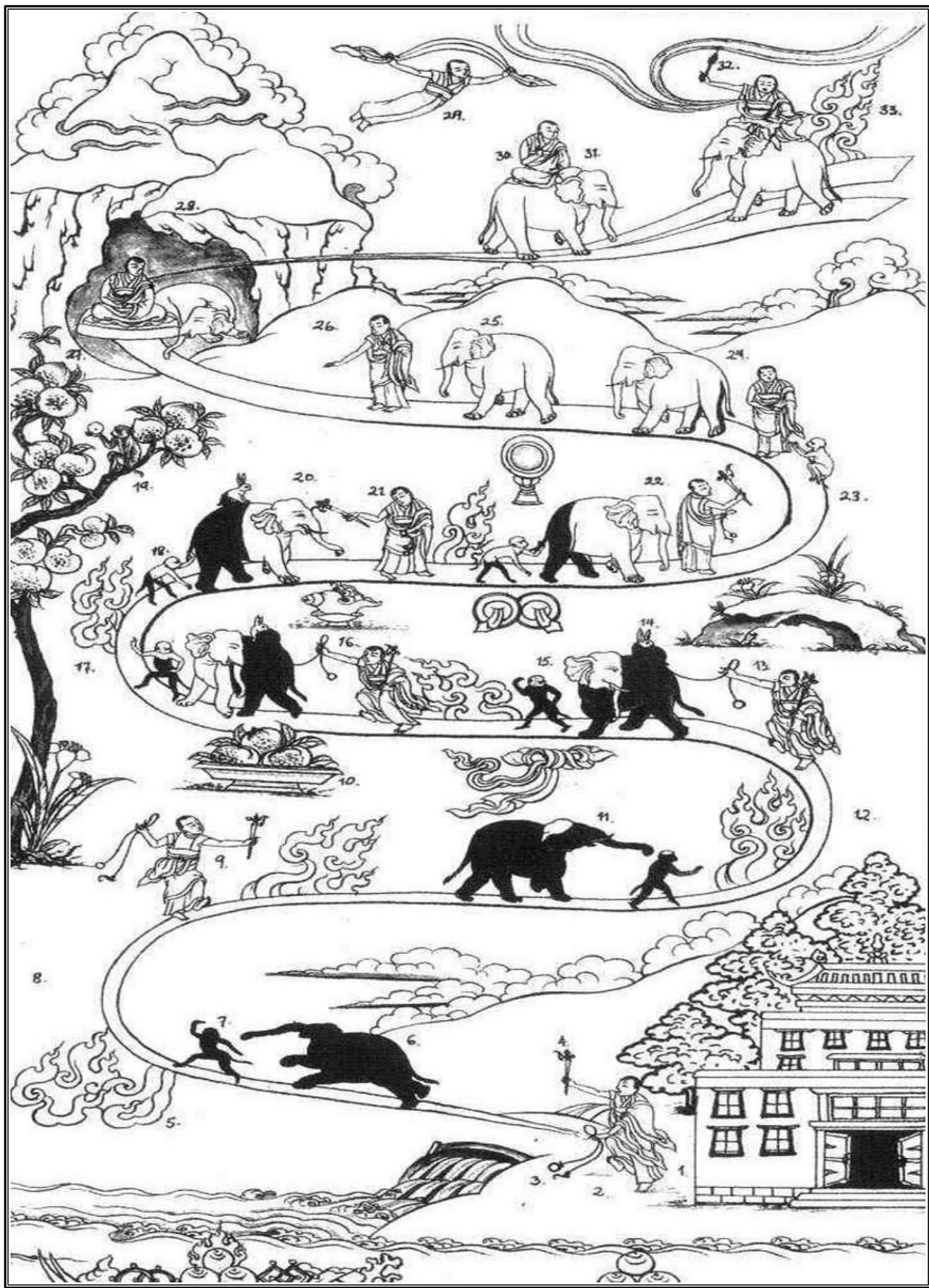
<sup>2</sup>The definition of valid self-cognizing perception is: a new and non-deceptive cognition that is free from conceptuality, is only inwardly directed and bears the aspect of an apprehending-subject.

# OBJECTS OF ABANDONMENT

Source: *Presentation of Tenets* - Jetsun Chögyi Gyeltsen

SCHOOL	AFFLICTIVE OBSCURATIONS		COGNITIVE OBSCURATIONS
	COARSE	SUBTLE	
VABHASIKA (Great Exposition)	Conception of a permanent, unitary, independent person	Conception of a self-sufficient substantially existent person	None
SAUTRANTHIKA (Sutra)	Conception of a permanent, unitary, independent person	Conception of a self-sufficient substantially existent person	None
CITTAMATRA (Mind Only)	Conception of a permanent, unitary, independent person	Conception of a self-sufficient substantially existent person	Conception apprehending form and the valid cognition apprehending that form to be different substances
MADHYAMIKA (Middle Way)	Svatantrika (Autonomy)	Conception of a permanent, unitary, independent person	Conception of true existence
	Prasangika (Consequence)	Conception of a self-sufficient substantially existent person	Latencies of the conception of inherent existence and all factors of mistaken dualistic appearance that arise due to the force of that

# 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.

# THE TWO TRUTHS

Source: *Appearance and Reality* – Guy Newland  
*Presentation of Tenets* – Jetsun Chogyi Gyeltsen

SCHOOL	CONVENTIONAL TRUTH	ULTIMATE TRUTH
<b>VAI BHASIIKA</b> (Great Exposition)	A phenomenon which is such that if it were physically destroyed or mentally separated into parts, the consciousness apprehending it would be cancelled. A phenomenon such that an awareness apprehending it is cancelled if it is broken up or mentally separated into its individual parts.  (Eg. A pot)	A phenomenon which is such that if it were physically destroyed or mentally separated into parts, the consciousness apprehending it would not be cancelled. A phenomenon such that an awareness apprehending it is not cancelled if it is broken up or mentally separated into its individual parts.  (Eg. Directionally partless particles)
<b>SAUTRANTIIKA</b> (Sutra)	That which is ultimately able to perform a function. A phenomenon that is not able to perform a function ultimately.  (Eg. Generic image of a pot)	That which is ultimately able to perform a function. A phenomenon that is able to perform a function ultimately.  (Eg. A pot)
<b>CITTAMATRA</b> (Mind Only)	An object found by a correct knower which distinguishes an ultimate object. That which is realized by a valid perception directly realizing it by way of the vanishing of dualistic appearance.  (Eg. A pot)	An object found by a correct knower which distinguishes an ultimate object. That which is realized by a valid perception directly realizing it by way of the vanishing of dualistic appearance.  (Eg. Empiness that is a pot and the valid cognition apprehending that pot being empty of being different substances)
<b>SVATANTRIIKA</b> (Autonomy)	A phenomenon realized by the direct valid cognizer realizing it by way of an association with dualistic appearance.  (Eg. A pot)	A phenomenon realized by the direct valid cognizer realizing it by way of the vanishing of dualistic appearance.  (Eg. Empiness that is a pot being empty of true existence)
<b>MADHYAMIKA</b> (Middle Way)	That found by a conventional valid cognizer perceiving a false object of knowledge. An object that is found by a valid cognition analyzing a conventionality.  (Eg. A pot)	An object found by a reasoning consciousness perceiving the meaning of reality. An object found by a valid cognition analyzing the ultimate.  (Eg. Empiness that is a pot being empty of inherent existence)

# AVOIDING THE TWO EXTREMES

Source: Extracted from *Study of Svatantrika* (Lopez)

SCHOOL	AVOIDING EXTREME OF PERMANENCE	AVOIDING EXTREME OF ANNIHILATION
VAIBHASIKA (Great Exposition)	All conditioned phenomena are impermanent	All phenomena are substantially established
SAUTRANTHIKA (Sutra)	Permanent phenomena are not substantially existent	Objects are natural bases for names and conception
CITTAMATRA (Mind Only)	Objects are not natural bases for names and conception	Other-powered and thoroughly established phenomena are truly existent
MADHYAMIKA (Middle Way)	<b>Svatantrika</b> (Autonomy) No phenomena is truly existent	All phenomena exist from their own side
	<b>Prasangika</b> (Consequence) No phenomena exists from its own side	All phenomena are merely imputed by conception

# WHEEL OF LIFE (BHAVACHAKRA)



The Wheel of Life painting graphically illustrates the Buddha's teachings on impermanence, suffering, karma, death, and rebirth into one of the six realms of cyclic existence, and the twelve links of dependent origination.

At the central hub of the painting are a pig, a cockerel, and a snake, which bite each other's tails and symbolize the three primary poisons of ignorance, desire and aversion.

The next circle of the painting depicts beings ascending to the three upper realms on its white segment, and beings falling to the three lower realms on its left dark segment.

The third circle is divided by spokes into either five or six sections, with the three lower realms of animals, hungry ghosts (preta), and the various hell (narak) realms in the three lower segments, and the three upper realms of humans, demi-gods (asura), and gods (deva) in the two or three upper segments. Birth into one of these six realms is characterized by a particular mental state or poison:

- 1) the god or deva realm (pride),
- 2) the demi-god or asura realm (jealousy),
- 3) the human realm (desire or all five poisons),
- 4) the animal realm (ignorance or confusion),
- 5) the hungry ghost or preta realm (greed and miserliness), and
- 6) the hell or narak realm (anger and hatred).

The first three 'upper realms' are considered favourable, and the last three 'lower realms' miserable. Sometimes only five realms are listed, with the devas and asuras forming a single realm.

The outer circle of the wheel depicts in a clockwise sequence twelve metaphorical images of the twelve links of dependent origination. The twelve links in the chain of dependent arising is one of the most important doctrines on the Buddhist view of causation and interdependence, showing how suffering arises from ignorance and its motivational actions.

- 1) **Ignorance** (avidya), represented by a blind man.
- 2) **Conditioned or formative actions** (samskarakarma), as a potter making pots.
- 3) **Consciousness** (vijnana), as a playful monkey attracted by objects.
- 4) **Name and form** (namarupa), as two men in a boat.
- 5) **The six sense spheres** (ayatana), as a house with five windows and a door.
- 6) **Contact** (sparsha) and its desire for an object, as a couple kissing or making love.
- 7) **Feeling** (vedana) or desire giving rise to feelings of pleasure and pain, as a man blinded by an arrow in one eye.
- 8) **Craving** (trishna) or thirst, as a man drinking alcohol.
- 9) **Grasping** (adana), as a monkey plucking all the fruit from a tree.
- 10) **Becoming** (bhava) or maturing towards rebirth, as a pregnant woman.
- 11) **Birth** (jati) leading to endless rebirth, as a woman giving birth.
- 12) **Aging and death** (jaramarana) leading to endless cycles of life and death, as a corpse being carried to a cemetery.

The wheel itself is held in the claws of Yama, the 'lord of Death' – symbolizing impermanence – who bites and consumes the wheel with his deadly fangs.

Above and outside of this wheel stands the form of Shakyamuni Buddha, who raises his right arm to point towards the moon as a symbol of the Buddhist teachings that lead to liberation from the endless wheel of cyclic existence.