

THE GREAT TREATISE
ON THE
STAGES OF THE PATH
TO ENLIGHTENMENT



JE TSONGKHAPA (1357 – 1419)

(OUTLINES AND QUOTES)

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“Here the teaching that I will explain is how fortunate beings are led to Buddhahood by way of the stages of the path to enlightenment that

- (1) contain the key points of all the Conqueror’s scriptures,
- (2) are the pathways forged by the two great trailblazers, Nagarjuna and Asanga,
- (3) are the system for supreme beings progressing to the state of omniscience, and
- (4) fully comprise all the stages practiced by the three types of persons.”

VOLUME ONE

1. Showing the greatness of the teaching’s author in order to establish that it is of noble origin [35]

“The author (1) should have mastered the five topics of knowledge, (2) should possess instructions that are the key points for practicing the meaning of the topics of Buddhist knowledge which have been transmitted in an unbroken lineage through excellent beings from the perfect Buddha; and (3) should receive permission to compose the text in a vision of his or her chosen deity... This great master was endowed with all three.”

A. How he took rebirth in an excellent lineage [36]

“The king of that country was Kalyanasri, the queen was Sriprabha. They had three sons, Padmagarbha, Candragarbha, and Srigarbha...Candragarbha is our present venerable guru [Atisha].”

B. How upon that basis he gained good qualities [36]

1. How, knowing many texts, he gained the good qualities of scriptural knowledge [36]

“At the age of twenty-one, he had mastered the sixty-four arts, all forms of crafts, the Sanskrit language, and all philosophy.”

2. How, engaging in proper practice, he gained the good qualities of experiential knowledge [38]

A. That Atisha possessed the training in ethics [38]

1. How Atisha possessed superior vows of individual liberation [38]

“Atisha, after receiving the complete vows of a monk, guarded at the risk of his life every minor fundamental training, not to mention the major fundamental trainings to which he was committed.”

2. That Atisha possessed the bodhisattva vows [38]

“There arose in his heart the spirit of enlightenment that cherishes others more than oneself. That aspirational spirit induced in him the engaged spirit of enlightenment. He then learned the practices pursuant to his promise to train in the great waves of bodhisattva deeds, and with those good actions he never transgressed the boundaries of the code of Conqueror’s children.”

3. That Atisha possessed the vows of Vajrayana [39]

“Nga-tso’s *Eighty Verses of Praise*: ‘Having entered the door of the Vajrayana, you saw yourself as a deity and possessed the vajra mind.’”

B. That Atisha possessed the training in concentration [40]

1. The training in concentration common to sutra and tantra [40]

“His mind became serviceable by means of meditative serenity.”

2. The training in the uncommon concentrations [40]

“He reached a very stable stage of generation due to having practiced the deeds of proficient conduct for six or three years.”

C. That Atisha possessed the training in wisdom [40]

1. The common training in wisdom [40]

“He gained a concentration of insight that was a union of meditative serenity and insight.”

2. The uncommon training in wisdom [40]

“He gained a special concentration of the stage of completion.”

C. Having gained those good qualities, what Atisha did to further the teachings [40]

1. What he did in India [40]

“In the palace of the great enlightenment at the glorious Bodhgaya, he upheld the Buddhist teaching three times by using the teachings to vanquish the poor instruction on non-Buddhist philosophers.”

2. What he did in Tibet [41]

“The result was that he re-established the practices of the Buddhist systems that had disappeared; he reinvigorated those that remained only slightly; and he removed corruption based on misconceptions. Thus he made the precious teachings free of defilement.”

2. Showing the greatness of the teaching in order to engender respect for the instructions [46]

A. The greatness of enabling one to know that all of the teachings are free of contradiction [46]

“Because these instructions in the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* guide students by gathering all the key points of the sutra and mantra vehicles into the path for one person to become a Buddha, they have the greatness of producing certainty that all the teachings are free of contradiction.”

B. The greatness of enabling one to understand that all of the scriptures are instructions for practice [50]

“There are no more than two types of teaching – scriptural and realised. The scriptural teachings determine the way that you take the teachings in hand, the procedures for practice; the teachings as they are realised are your practice of these procedures in accordance with how you have already determined them. Thus, these two serve as cause and effect.”

C. The greatness of enabling one easily to find the Conqueror’s intent [53]

“These instructions of the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* will readily bestow certain knowledge of the key points of the Buddha’s word and the treatises.”

D. The greatness of enabling one to refrain automatically from great wrongdoing [53]

“In general, there are many ways that abandoning the teaching can occur. However, the way indicated above [that some teachings are methods for becoming a Buddha and some are obstacles] is the worst, so take pains to eliminate it. Since you overcome abandonment by merely gaining certain knowledge of the first two greatnesses as indicated above, you automatically are kept from wrongdoing.”

3. How to listen to and explain the teachings [55]

A. How to listen to a teaching in which both the teaching and its author are great [55]

1. Contemplating the benefits of hearing the teaching [56]

“You should listen with five ideas in mind... (1) the idea of a jewel, due to the fact that the teachings are rare because Buddhas seldom appear, (2) idea of an eye, since the wisdom that arises together with hearing the teachings becomes greater and greater, (3) the idea of illumination, since the eye of wisdom that has arisen will see the real nature and the diversity, (4) the idea of great benefit, since in the end the teachings bestow the results of nirvana and enlightenment, and (5) the idea of being beyond reproach, since from this very moment you will attain the bliss of meditative serenity and insight.”

2. Developing reverence for the teaching and the instructor [57]

“Listen without the afflictions [of arrogance and contempt] and without bringing to mind the five conditions of an instructor... Not bringing to mind the five conditions means to cast away the thought, ‘I will not listen to this person because he or she (1) has fallen from ethical discipline, (2) is of poor lineage, (3) has an unattractive appearance, (4) is inarticulate, (5) or speaks harshly and unpleasantly.’”

3. How to actually listen [58]

“Furthermore, when you explain or hear the teachings, if your mind and the teachings remain separate, then whatever is explained will be inconsequential. Hence, listen in such a way that you determine how these teachings apply to your mind.”

A. Abandoning the three faults of a vessel [58]

“A vessel might have the following three faults: (1) being upside down; or (2) though held right side up, being dirty; or (3) though clean, having a leaky bottom... Similarly, there is no great purpose in your hearing the teachings if you (1) do not pay attention; or (2) though paying attention, misunderstand what is heard or listen with a bad motivation such as attachment; or (3) though lacking these faults, do not solidify the words and meanings taken at the time of hearing but let them fade due to forgetting them and so forth.”

B. Relying on the six ideas [58]

1. Think of yourself as a sick person [58]

“Stricken with the virulent and chronic disease of the three mental poisons, we are extremely sick, but we are completely unaware that we are ill... Thus, the idea of yourself as a sick person is extremely important, for if you have this idea, the other ideas will follow. However, if this idea is mere words, then you will not put the meaning of the instructions into practice.”

2. **Think of the instructor as a doctor** [59]

“For example, when you are stricken by severe illness, you seek a skilled doctor... Likewise, seek in this way a teacher who imparts the teachings.”

3. **Think of the instructor’s explications as medicine** [59]

“You should view the instructions that the instructor gives you as very important, taking great pains to hold them in high esteem, and not squandering them by lapses such as forgetting them.”

4. **Think of earnest practice as the way to cure your disease** [59]

“Earnestly engage in practice after you have seen that you cannot vanquish such afflictions as attachment without putting into practice the instructions given by the instructor.”

5. **Think of the Tathagatas as excellent beings** [62]

“Develop respect by remembering the one who set forth the teaching, the Bhagavan [Buddha].”

6. **Wish that the teachings will endure for a long time** [62]

“Think, ‘How wonderful if, in dependence upon studying the teachings, the Conqueror’s teachings would remain in the world for a long time.’”

B. How to explain a teaching in which both the teaching and its author are great [63]

1. **Contemplating the benefits of explaining the teaching** [63]

“You will come to have (1) recollection, (2) intelligence, (3) understanding, (4) stability, (5) wisdom, (6) supramundane wisdom, (7) little desire, (8) little hatred, and (9) little ignorance. Also, (10) demons will not find an opportunity to harm you; (11) the Bhagavan Buddhas will think of you as a precious, only child; (12) nonhumans will guard you; (13) deities will bestow charisma and power on you; (14) enemies will find no opportunity to harm you; (15) friends will remain steadfast; (16) your words will be trusted; (17) you will attain fearlessness; (18) you will have abundant happiness; (19) you will be praised by the wise; and (20) your gift of the teaching will be worthy of remembrance.”

2. **Developing reverence for the Teacher [Shakyamuni Buddha] and the teaching** [64]

“Since the teachings are respected even by the Buddhas, when you explain the teachings, be very respectful of the teachings and the Teacher as well, remembering his good qualities and kindness.”

3. **With what sort of thoughts and behaviour you should explain the teaching** [64]

“With regard to your thoughts... think of yourself as a doctor, the teachings as medicine, those listening as sick persons, and the Tathagatas as excellent beings, and wish that the teachings remain for a long time... With regard to your behaviour... with a radiant face, teach, using examples, reasons, and scriptural citations and other accessories for ascertaining the meaning.”

4. **Differentiating between those to whom you should and should not explain the teaching** [65]

“Do not explain the teachings without being requested to do so... Even when requested, it is necessary to investigate to see whether or not the potential student is suitable to receive the teachings. And even when not requested, it is appropriate to explain the teachings to someone only if you know them to be a suitable recipient.”

C. How a session should be concluded in relation to both hearing and explaining the teaching [66]

“With strong aspiration dedicate the virtues that have arisen from explaining and hearing the teachings to your temporary and final objectives.”

4. How to lead students with the actual instructions [69]

A. How to rely on the teacher, the root of the path [69]

1. **A somewhat elaborate explanation for developing certain knowledge** [70]

“The excellent teacher is the source of all temporary happiness and certain goodness, beginning with the production of a single good quality and the reduction of a single fault in a student’s mind and eventually encompassing all the knowledge beyond that.”

A. **The defining characteristics of the teacher to be relied upon** [70]

“Rely on a Mahayana teacher who is (1) disciplined, (2) serene, (3) thoroughly pacified, (4) has good qualities surpassing those of the student, (5) is energetic, (6) has a wealth of scriptural knowledge, (7) possesses loving concern, (8) has thorough knowledge of reality and (9) skill in instructing disciples, and (10) has abandoned dispiritness... Bo-do-wa said: ‘These five qualities – loving concern, knowledge of reality, and the three trainings – are foremost’... The guru who helps you to achieve liberation is the foundation of your deepest aspiration. Therefore, you who wish to rely on a guru should understand these defining characteristics and strive to seek one who has them. Also, those who wish to have students should understand these characteristics and strive to possess them.”

B. **The defining characteristics of the student who relies upon the teacher** [75]

“It is said that one who is non-partisan, intelligent, and diligent is a vessel for listening to the teachings. The good qualities of the instructor do not appear otherwise nor do those of fellow listeners... After adding the three qualities of the student to the two qualities of being focused and having respect for the teaching and its instructor, there are a total of five qualities... Investigate whether these attributes that make you suitable to be led by a guru are complete; if they are complete, cultivate delight. If they are incomplete, you must make an effort to obtain the causes that will complete them before your next life.”

C. How the student relies upon the teacher [77]

“Sung-pu-wa had many gurus. Geshe Drom-don-ba had few gurus – not more than five. Bo-do-wa and Gom-ba-rin-chen, themselves gurus, discussed which of these two ways was better. They agreed that Geshe Drom-don-ba’s way was better in these times when those with untrained minds still see faults in the teacher and lose faith. What they have said seems to be very true. Therefore, you should have few teachers. In general, a teacher is someone from whom you have received the teaching’s kind words; specifically, a teacher is someone who skilfully guides you with instructions of all the paths in their entirety.”

1. How to rely in thought [78]

A. A general indication of the attitudes needed to rely on the teacher [78]

“You should respect and serve the teacher with nine attitudes...(1) the attitude which is like the dutiful child, (2) the attitude which is like a diamond, (3) the attitude which is like the earth, and (4) how to assume responsibilities [which] itself consists of six attitudes...an attitude like (1) the foothills, (2) a worldly servant, (3) a sweeper, (4) a foundation, (5) a dog and (6) a ferry.”

B. In particular, training in faith, the root [80]

“Thus, in light of what you gain when it is present and what you lose when it is not present, faith is the basis of all good qualities...You must think of the guru as being the Teacher... When you recognize someone to be a Buddha, you will not discern faults in that person, and you will pay attention to his or her good qualities...Keep the masters’ good qualities in mind never seize upon their faults. Keeping their good qualities in mind, you will reach attainments. Seizing upon their faults, you will not.”

C. Remembering the teacher’s kindness and being respectful [83]

“Develop the following ideas with respect to your teachers. I have wandered for a long time through cyclic existence, and they search for me; I have been asleep, having been obscured by delusion for a long time, and they wake me; they pull me out of the depths of the ocean of cyclic existence; I have entered a bad path, and they reveal the good path to me; they release me from being bound in the prison of existence; I have been worn out by illness for a long time, and they are my doctors; they are the rain clouds that put out my blazing fire of attachment and the like.”

2. How to rely in practice [84]

“In brief, you must strive to achieve what pleases your gurus and eliminate what displeases them. The three avenues to achieving what pleases your gurus are (1) offering material gifts, (2) respecting and serving with body and speech, and (3) practicing in accordance with their words...If the abbot instructs you to do what is not in accord with the teachings, refuse.”

D. The benefits of relying on the teacher [87]

“By relying on the teacher, (1) you will come closer to Buddhahood; (2) you will please the Conquerors; (3) you will not be bereft of future teachers; (4) you will not fall into miserable realms; (5) neither bad karma nor afflictions will overpower you; (6) through mindfulness of the bodhisattva deeds and by not contradicting them your collection of good qualities will continue to increase, and you will reach all of your provisional and final goals; (7) after obtaining virtue through serving and respecting the teacher with thought and practice, you will accomplish others’ welfare, as well as your own, and complete the collections of merit and sublime wisdom.”

E. The faults of not relying on the teacher [89]

“If you have taken someone as your teacher and then your method of reliance is wrong [i.e. reproaching them], not only will you be harmed by much madness and sickness in this lifetime, but in future lifetimes as well you will experience immeasurable suffering in miserable realms for an immeasurable period of time...Furthermore, good qualities that have not yet developed will not develop, and those that have been developed will degenerate and disappear...Moreover, if you rely on non-virtuous teachers and bad friends, your good qualities will slowly diminish and all of your faults will increase. Then everything that is unwanted will develop. Therefore, always avoid them.”

F. A summary of the meaning of the previous five parts [91]

“When you practice a teaching from the heart, you must rely for a long time on an excellent teacher who guides you accurately...Therefore, these topics concerning reliance on the teacher are clearly the foundation of our deepest aspiration, which is more important than anything else...Thus, after you have understood the benefits and faults as previously explained, reflect on them repeatedly... Exert yourself in the practice of those teachings for which you are suited as a recipient, and repeatedly contemplate the complete qualifications of your teacher. Make many aspirational prayers and accumulate the collections of merit and sublime wisdom as causes for having such a teacher to look after you until you attain enlightenment.”

2. A brief indication of how to sustain the meditation [93]

A. The actual way of sustaining the meditation [93]

1. What to do during the actual meditation session [94]

A. Preparation [94]

“The six aspects of preparation...(1) clean well the place and arrange the representations of the Buddha’s body, speech and mind, (2) obtain offerings and arrange them beautifully, (3) sit up straight upon a comfortable seat in a suitable posture and then absorb yourself in the practices of going for refuge and developing the spirit of enlightenment, (4) visualise the field for accumulating the collections of merit and sublime wisdom, (5) purify your mind with the seven branches of worship, and (6) make supplications many times with strong aspiration...To summarise, the seven branches of worship are included in the following three: accumulation [obeisance, offering, rejoicing, imploring, and supplication], purification [confession] and bringing about an expansion and a lack of dissipation [dedication].”

B. Actual session [99]

“If at first you meditate for a long time, you will be readily susceptible to laxity and excitement. If this becomes your habit, it will be then difficult to correct your awareness. Therefore, meditate in many short sessions. When your meditation has become somewhat stable, lengthen the session.”

1. How to sustain the meditation in general [99]

“That which is known as ‘meditation’ is the act of sustaining an object of meditation and specific subjective aspects by repeatedly focusing your mind upon a virtuous object of meditation... Therefore, from the beginning, firmly determine the definite order and enumeration of whatever objects of meditation you wish to sustain. Without exceeding or falling short of what you have determined, sustain your meditation with mindfulness and vigilance.”

2. How to sustain the meditation specifically [100]

“First reflect on benefits of relying on the teacher... and the drawbacks of not relying on the teacher... Then, think, many times and with an attitude of restraint, ‘I will never allow myself to conceive of faults in my guru.’ After considering any of your guru’s good qualities that you know... meditate on them until you produce a faith that has an aspect of mental clarity. Then,... contemplate how your guru’s kindness has been and will be helpful to you. Meditate on that until you develop respect from the depths of your heart.”

C. What to do at the conclusion [100]

“By means of such prayers as the *Prayer of Samantabhadra* and *Aspiration in Seventy Verses*, dedicate the virtue that you have accumulated. Do it with an aspiration so strong that it will be the cause of fulfilling your provisional and final aims. Meditate in this way during four sessions: pre-dawn, morning, afternoon and at nightfall.”

2. What to do in between meditation sessions [100]

“The principal thing to do in this context is as follows... In between sessions, look at teachings that reveal the meaning of your object of meditation. Accumulate, by many means, the collections, which are favourable conditions for producing good qualities. Also, clear away, by many means, the obscurations, which are unfavourable condition. By applying what you know, strive at whatever vow you have promised to observe, as this is the basis of everything... Furthermore, learn the four [following] preconditions, which are causes that readily produce the paths of serenity and insight.”

A. Restraining the sensory faculties [101]

“*What you are restraining* is the six sensory faculties. *What you are restraining them from* is the six attractive and six unattractive sensory objects. *How to restrain* the sensory faculties has two parts... (1) guarding the sensory faculties [which] means protecting your mind against attachment and hostility, and making a great effort not to produce them... (2) practicing restraint with the six sensory faculties [which] is actually stopping the sensory faculties.”

B. Acting with vigilance [102]

Work on these practices [of restraining the sensory faculties and acting with vigilance] for it is said that if you do, you will have unusual success in all your virtuous practices; in particular, your ethical discipline will be completely pure; and you will easily attain the non-discursive states of concentration that comprise meditative serenity and insight.”

1. The foundations upon which you act [102]

“The five actions of movement are: (1) actions of the body, (2) actions of the eyes, (3) actions of the limbs, fingers, and toes, (4) actions of religious robes and alms bowls, and (5) actions related to alms... The five actions of activity in a temple are: (1) actions of the body, (2) actions of speech, (3) actions of mind, (4) actions of day, and (5) actions of night.”

2. Acting vigilantly with respect to the foundations [103]

“When you begin either movement or activity, right from the outset act conscientiously and establish mindfulness with respect to that action. Imbued with both of these, analyse the elements of the situation and analyse how you should proceed; then think about and arrive at an understanding of the situation in light of what you have concluded... In short, be mindful of whatever behaviours may take place in the night or day. Then understand which are to be done and which are not to be done... Whenever engaging ...or turning away... be vigilant.”

C. Appropriate diet [105]

“An appropriate diet has four attributes: (1) not eating too little, (2) not eating too much, (3) eating digestible and wholesome food, and (4) eating appropriate food which does not cause afflictions... Moreover, the remedy for craving food lies within meditating on the faults of food. There are three faults: (1) the fault that arises from the causes of enjoyment, (2) the fault that arises from digesting food, and (3) the five faults [1. procurement, 2. ruining close relationships, 3. insatiability, 4. lack of independence, 5. wrongdoing] that come from looking for food.”

D. How to practice diligently without sleeping at the wrong time and how to act properly at the time of sleep [106]

“Your conduct during sleep takes place between sessions, so do not treat even that as having no purpose... There are four kinds of thought with which to fall asleep: (1) the idea of illumination, (2) mindfulness, (3) vigilance, and (4) the idea of rising.”

B. Refuting misconceptions about meditation [109]

“Moreover, to claim that all conceptual thought involves the apprehension of signs of true existence, and thus prevents enlightenment, is the worst possible misconception insofar as it disregards all discerning meditation. This is the system of the Chinese abbot Ha-shang... Therefore, practice analytical meditation, because your mind requires a long-lasting and very forceful way to apprehend its objects... They also say that success is more difficult for those who contemplate on their own than those who transform their minds in a classroom, where those who know how to explain the teachings do so for those who know how to listen. This statement is excellent and true.”

B. The stages of how the students train their minds after they have relied on the teacher [117]

1. An exhortation to take full advantage of a life of leisure and opportunity [118]

“In order to develop this sort of fully qualified desire to take full advantage of a life of leisure, you must reflect on its four elements: (1) the need to practice the teachings, (2) the ability to practice, (3) the need to practice in this lifetime, and (4) the need to practice right now...If you reflect on this human life of leisure and opportunity from many perspectives, you will greatly affect your mind...Geshe Dolwa greatly valued this teaching on the difficulty of obtaining leisure and opportunity. Thus, he said that the practice of all other teachings follow this one. Since this is so, strive at it.”

A. The identification of leisure and opportunity [118]

1. Leisure [118]

“Leisure means freedom from a rebirth in any of the eight conditions that lack leisure. These eight conditions are stated in the *Friendly Letter*: To be reborn (1) with wrong views, (2) without a Conqueror’s word, (3) as an animal, (4) a hungry ghost, (5) a hell-being, (6) an uncultured person in a border region, (7) a stupid and mute person, or (8) a deity of long life.”

2. Opportunity [119]

A. The five aspects of opportunity that pertain to oneself [119]

“According to the *Sravaka Levels* the five are: (1) being human, (2) being born in a central region, (3) having complete sensory faculties, (4) having reversible karma, and (5) having faith in the source.”

B. The five aspects of opportunity that pertain to others [120]

“The five are: (1) that a Buddha has visited, (2) that the sublime teaching is being taught, (3) that the teaching remains, (4) that there are those who follow it, and (5) that there is caring for others... The first four aspects of opportunity that pertain to others are at present incomplete for us. However, it is suitable to consider an approximation of three of these four – the sublime teaching being taught, the teachings given remaining, and there being followers of the teaching which abides – to be complete for us.”

B. Contemplating the great importance of leisure and opportunity [120]

“Until death, animals strive merely to avoid suffering and achieve happiness. Therefore, if you do this and do not practice the pure teachings for the sake of achieving lasting happiness, then you are like an animal despite being born in a happy realm... A human life is the supreme basis for initially achieving the path... Why would I waste this attainment of such a good life? When I act as though it were insignificant, I am deceiving myself. What could be more foolish than this?”

C. Contemplating the difficulty of attaining leisure and opportunity [124]

“Beings of the happy realms – humans and the like – are frequently involved in such ignoble activities as the ten non-virtues. Because of this, they are reborn in the miserable realms... While you are experiencing the suffering in the miserable realms, you are constantly accumulating sins. Therefore,...you will continue to be reborn in miserable realms.”

2. How to take full advantage of a life of leisure and opportunity [129]

A. How to develop certain knowledge of a general presentation of the path [129]

1. How all scriptures are included within the paths of the three types of persons [130]

“All the teachings given by a Buddha simply accomplish the welfare of living beings... This welfare is twofold: the provisional goal of high status as a human or deity, and the final goal of the certain goodness of liberation or omniscience... Many of the Buddha’s statements pertain to the attainment of the temporary goal of high status. All these statements are included in the teachings for a person of genuine small capacity... Many of the Buddha’s statements pertain to the vehicle of the *pratyekabuddha* and the *sravaka*. All of these statements are included in the teachings for a person of actual medium capacity... The Mahayana of the perfections and the Mahayana of mantra... are included in the teachings of a person of great capacity.”

2. Why students are led in stages using the trainings of the three types of persons [132]

A. The purpose of leading students by means of the paths of three types of persons [132]

The stages of the path for the person of great capacity also include the paths of the other two types of person in their entirety. Thus, these two paths are parts, or branches, of the Mahayana path.”

B. Why one guides students through such stages [133]

1. The actual reason [133]

“From the outset you must have an uncontrived aspiration that seeks to attain these final and temporary benefits. If you do not have this, you might say, ‘I will strive to develop this spirit’ on account of those benefits that arise from developing the spirit of enlightenment, but it will be mere words.”

2. The purpose [139]

“It destroys the presumption of asserting that you are a person of great capacity despite not having developed the states of mind common to persons of small and medium capacities, and it is of great benefit for those whose minds have the greatest, medium, and least capacity.”

B. The actual way to take full advantage of a life of leisure and opportunity [144]

1. Training the mind in the stages of the path shared with persons of small capacity [144]

“Persons of special small capacity do not work very much on behalf of this lifetime, but they diligently strive for excellent high states of human or divine rebirth in future lifetimes by engaging in the cultivation of their causes.”

A. The actual training of thought for a person of small capacity [144]

1. Developing a state of mind that strives diligently for the sake of future lives [144]

A. Mindfulness of death, the contemplation that you will not remain long in this world [144]

“Although it is quite hard to produce this mindfulness of death, you must work at it because it is the foundation of the path...Meditate again and again until you have turned your mind away from the activities of this life, which are like adorning yourself while being led to the execution ground...No matter where the teachings of reliance on a teacher, leisure and opportunity, and impermanence may occur in the Buddha’s word and its commentaries, recognize that they are meant to be practiced and sustain them in meditation.”

1. The faults of not cultivating mindfulness of death [145]

“The avenue of injury is the very thought, ‘I will not die’...If you are obstructed by such an attitude and do not bring its remedy to mind, you will continue to think that you will remain in this life. Then you will continually think only of how to achieve happiness and evade suffering in this life alone, thinking, ‘I need this and that’. You will not engage in religious practice because you do not think about things of great importance, such as future lives, liberation, and omniscience...You will create strong attachment to goods, services, and the like. As if swept away by the current of a river, you will be immersed in strong hostility toward what prevented you, or what you fear might prevent you, from having these objects of attachment...Then, death will overcome you and bad karma will lead you into a hot and unpleasant place among strong and harsh sufferings of the miserable realms. What process could be worse than that?”

2. The benefits of cultivating mindfulness of death [146]

“If you create an authentic mindfulness of death, you will see that all toiling for worldly things such as goods, respect, and fame is as fruitless as winnowing chaff, and is the source of deception. Then you will turn away from wrongdoing. With constant and respectful effort you will accumulate good karma by doing such virtuous deeds as going for refuge and maintaining ethical discipline...You will ascend to a sublime state and will lead others there as well. What could be more meaningful?...Therefore, the thought that you will not die is the source of all deterioration, and the remedy for this is mindfulness of death, the source of all that is excellent.”

3. The kind of mindfulness of death you should develop [147]

“You should fear death if you have not secured your welfare in future lives by putting an end to the causes of the miserable realms and establishing the causes of high status and certain goodness...Thus, when you contemplate impermanence again and again, you think, ‘I will undoubtedly separate from my body and resources soon,’ and you stop the craving that hopes not to leave them. Consequently, you will not fear death out of the distress of leaving.”

4. How to cultivate mindfulness of death [148]

A. The contemplation that death is certain [149]

“The wonders of this life will be mere memories at the time of death, like waking up and remembering the pleasurable experiences in a single dream. Think, ‘If the enemy, death, is surely approaching and cannot be stopped, why should I delight in the delusions of this life?’ Then decide that you must practice the teaching and make heartfelt pledges to do so.”

1. The contemplation that the Lord of Death will definitely come, and therefore cannot be avoided [149]

“No matter what kind of body you assume at birth, death comes...Ga-ma-pa said, ‘Now we should be frightened by death. At the time of death we should be fearless. But we are the opposite – we are not afraid now and at the moment of death we dig our fingernails into our chests.’”

2. The contemplation that our lifetime cannot be extended and constantly diminishes [150]

“The time until death passes very quickly...Life diminishes day and night without a break... Everything around us teaches impermanence. After you reflect on this again and again, you reach certain knowledge. It is not helpful to do just a little reflection and then say that nothing happened.”

3. The contemplation of the certainty of death such that even while you are alive there is little time for religious practice [152]

“Much of your life has already been wasted. Half of what is left will be spent in sleep, and many of the waking hours will be wasted with other distractions. Further, as youth fades, the time of aging arrives. Your physical and mental strength deteriorate such that even if you want to practice religion, you lack the capacity to do so. Consequently, you have no more than a few chances to practice the teachings.”

B. The contemplation that the time of death is uncertain [154]

“After you have reflected in this way, you should resolve that since there is no certainty as to when the Lord of Death will destroy your body and life, you will practice the teaching right now, without assuming that you still have time. Make this pledge many times from the depths of your heart...The contemplation of the uncertainty of the time of death is the most important of the three roots. This is the very thing that will redirect your mind, so work hard at it.”

1. The contemplation that the life span in this world (Jambudvīpa) is uncertain [154]

“You can see that there is no certainty as to whether death will occur in youth, in old age, or in between...Bear in mind the cases you have seen or heard concerning gurus and friends...suddenly dying because of external and internal causes. Be aware of death, thinking over and over, ‘I too am subject to such a death.’”

2. The contemplation that the causes of death are very many and the causes of life few [155]

“There are many sentient beings and insentient things that do harm to this life...Furthermore, your body must be created from the four elements – earth, water, fire, and wind – and even these are harmful to each other when they become imbalanced...Furthermore, there are no causes of staying alive that do not become causes of death.”

3. The contemplation that the time of death is uncertain because your body is very fragile [157]

“Your body is very fragile, like a water bubble...Your life could be taken even by something that you only imagine to be harmful, like being pricked by a thorn.”

C. The contemplation that at the time of death nothing helps except religious practice [158]

“Consequently, think, ‘It will certainly come to pass that all the wonders of this world will leave me behind; I will leave them behind as well, and go to some other world. In fact, this will happen today!’ Contemplate how, at the time of death, only religious practice will serve as a refuge, a protection, a defence.”

1. Friends will not help [158]

“When you see that you must go to your next life, no matter how many loving and very worried relatives and friends surround you at that time, you cannot take even one with you.”

2. Resources will not help [158]

“No matter how many piles of beautiful jewels you have, you cannot take even the slightest particle with you.”

3. Your body will not help [158]

“As you even have to discard the flesh and bones with which you were born, what need is there to mention anything else?”

B. Contemplating what will occur in your future life: the happiness or suffering of the two types of beings [161]

“It is extremely important to meditate in general on the sufferings of cyclic existence and, in particular, on the sufferings of the miserable realms, for if you contemplate how you have fallen into the ocean of suffering, you will then turn away from it, and thereby overcome your pride and arrogance. Seeing suffering as the result of non-virtuous karma, you will be careful to avoid sins and infractions. Since you want happiness and understand that happiness is the result of virtue, you enjoy cultivating virtue. Once you have assessed your own condition, you develop compassion for others. After you have turned away from cyclic existence, you develop an aspiration for liberation. Frightened by suffering, you fervently go for refuge to the Three Jewels... After you have assessed your current condition, meditate until your mind is filled with fear and dread. Simply knowing about this without conditioning your mind to it, or only meditating on it for a little while, will not accomplish anything... Thus, meditation on suffering puts an end to laziness and generates joyous perseverance at accomplishing the path. It spurs you toward liberation and is the root of the cause for attaining it. Since it was praised for this even when the Teacher was alive, he had nothing superior to teach as a personal instruction for liberation.”

1. Contemplating the suffering of hell denizens [162]

“The conditions for being born in any of these hells are very easy to create, and every single day you acquire more of them. Since you have already accumulated innumerable causes in the past, your complacency is inappropriate. Therefore, after reflecting on these hells, be frightened – nothing separates you from them after the mere cessation of your breath.”

A. Contemplating the suffering of the great hells of living beings [163]

“There are eight great hells...(1) Reviving Hell, (2) Black Line Hell, (3) Crushing Hell, (4) Howling Hell, (5) Great Howling Hell, (6) Hot Hell, (7) Extremely Hot Hell, and (8) Unrelenting Hell.”

B. Contemplating the suffering of the adjoining hells [165]

“Each of the eight hot hells has four walls and four doors and is encircled by an iron fence, which has four doors. At each of these doors there are four additional hells for living beings: (1) Pit of Embers, (2) Swamp of Putrid Corpses or Swamp of Excrement that Stinks Like a Corpse, (3) Path of Razors, and (4) River with no Ford.”

C. Contemplating the suffering of the cold hells [166]

“Each of the eight great hells of living beings is ten thousand leagues in breadth, and the eight cold hells lie outside of these...(1) Blistering Hell, (2) Popping Blisters Hell, (3) Chattering-Teeth Hell, (4) Weeping Hell, (5) Moaning Hell, (6) Splitting Water-Lily Hell, (7) Splitting-Like-a-Lotus Hell, and (8) Great-Splitting-Like-a-Lotus Hell.”

D. Contemplating the suffering of the occasional hells [168]

“The occasional hells adjoin the hot hells and cold hells, and the *Levels of Yogic Deeds* says that they exist in the human regions as well.”

2. Contemplating the suffering of animals [169]

“Powerful animals kill weaker ones. Deities and humans exploit animals. Since others control them, animals have no independence and are harmed, beaten, and killed.”

3. Contemplating the suffering of hungry ghosts [170]

A. Hungry ghosts who have external obstacles for obtaining food and drink [170]

“When these hungry ghosts approach springs, lakes, and ponds, beings...block their way. Or else the water appears to them as pus and blood, and they lose the desire to drink.”

B. Hungry ghosts who have internal obstacles for obtaining food and drink [170]

“These beings have goiters and great bellies, but their mouths, which spew flames, are as small as the eye of a needle...They are unable to ingest food or drink even when they obtain it.”

C. Hungry ghosts who have obstacles within the food and drink [171]

“Some...cut their own flesh and eat it...[Some] are burned because whatever they attempt to eat or drink bursts into flames...[Some] eat faeces and drink urine.”

2. Relying on the means for achieving happiness in the next life [178]

A. Training in going for refuge, the excellent door for entering the teaching [178]

“Going for refuge is the main door to the Buddha’s teaching. If you go for refuge in a way that transcends mere words, you will not be defeated by outer and inner obstacles, for you are relying upon the highest power...Therefore, it is extremely important to uphold the refuges by means of fearing suffering, recalling the good qualities of the refuges, and so forth, and to make an effort not to transgress the precepts.”

1. The causes of going for refuge [178]

“In brief, the causes of your going for refuge are twofold: your fear of miserable realms and the like, and your conviction that the Three Jewels can protect you from them. Thus, you must strive to realise these two causes, because if they remain mere words, so will your refuge, but if they are strong and stable, your refuge will transform your mind.”

2. Based on that, the objects to which you go for refuge [179]

A. Identifying the objects to which you go for refuge [179]

“It is right to go for refuge to the Bhagavan Buddha, the true refuge. This citation applies to the Teaching Jewel and the Community Jewel as well.”

B. The reasons why they are worthy to be a refuge [179]

“There are four reasons why the Buddha is worthy to be a refuge. First, he has mastered himself and attained the sublime state of fearlessness...Second, he is in all ways skilled in the means of training disciples...Third, he has great compassion...Fourth, he is pleased, not by material things, but by offerings of practice...Thus, after you have ascertained these things, entrust yourself to the Three Jewels with a single-pointed focus. Develop this certainty from the depths of your heart, for, once you are able to do this, they cannot fail to protect you.”

3. The way you go for refuge [181]

A. Going for refuge by knowing the good qualities [181]

1. The good qualities of the Buddha [181]

“Reflect again and again upon the good qualities of the Buddha, and strive to attain certainty from the depths of your heart. Once you gain this, you reach the very core of the practice of going for refuge, for you will gain certainty with respect to the teaching from which the Buddha arose, and the community that practices the teaching. Without this, there is no practice of going from refuge that transforms your mind, not to mention other paths.”

A. The good qualities of the Buddha’s body [181]

“This entails recollection of the Buddha’s auspicious signs and exemplary features.”

B. The good qualities of the Buddha’s speech [182]

“Even if every living being in the universe asks him a different question at the same time, he comprehends them all with one instant of his wisdom. Then he answers all the questions with a single word, which all beings understand in their own languages.”

C. The good qualities of the Buddha’s mind [183]

1. The good qualities of knowledge [183]

“Without obstruction the Buddha’s knowledge contacts the real nature and diversity of phenomena, as if they were a *dhatri* fruit placed in the palm of his hand.”

2. The good qualities of caring [184]

“In the same way that living beings are bound inescapably by the afflictions, so is the Sage bound by great compassion, which thus arises continuously as he beholds the suffering of living beings. You should reflect on this.”

D. The good qualities of enlightened activities [185]

“The enlightened activities of the Buddha’s body, speech, and mind, being both spontaneous and everlasting, help all living beings.”

2. The good qualities of the teaching [187]

“The Buddha possesses limitless good qualities, all of which arose from meditating on and realising both the verbal teachings and the teachings as they are put into practice.”

3. The good qualities of the community [187]

“Think of them in light of their mindfulness of the good qualities of the teaching and their proper practice of it.”

B. Going for refuge by knowing the distinctions [188]

“According to the *Compendium of Determinations*, you go for refuge after understanding the distinctions among the Three Jewels.”

1. The distinction based on their defining characteristics [188]

“The Buddha Jewel has the defining characteristic of full, perfect enlightenment. The Teaching Jewel has the defining characteristic of arising from the Buddha Jewel. The Community Jewel has the defining characteristic of correct practice by means of personal instruction.”

2. **The distinction based on their enlightened activities** [188]

“The Buddha has the enlightened activity of giving sermons. The teaching...of focusing on the eradication of afflictions and suffering. The community...of fostering enthusiasm.”

3. **The distinction based on devotion** [188]

“You should appreciate the Buddha as the one to venerate and serve..., the teaching as that which is to be realised..., and the community as those with whom you should associate.”

4. **The distinction based on practice** [188]

“You should worship and serve the Buddha..., become familiar with the teaching by applying yourself..., and cultivate a relationship with the community through sharing...”

5. **The distinction based on recollection** [188]

“You should recollect the good qualities of each of the Three Jewels by reciting ‘Thus, the Bhagavan...’”

6. **The distinction based on how they increase merit** [188]

“Supreme merit is increased through the influence of either persons or the teaching. The Buddha and the community are instances of the former.”

C. **Going for refuge through commitment** [189]

“Going for refuge through commitment means upholding the Buddha as the teacher of refuge, the teaching – nirvana – as the actual refuge, and the community as those who assist us to attain refuge.”

D. **Going for refuge by refusing to acknowledge other refuges** [189]

“Going for refuge by refusing to acknowledge other refuges means first of all understanding the differences in worth between Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers, teachings, and disciples, for then you will uphold only the Three Jewels as your refuge, and refuse teachers, teachings, and disciples that do not accord with them.”

4. **Once you have gone for refuge, the stages of the precepts** [192]

A. **How they appear in the *Compendium of Determinations*** [192]

1. **The first set of subdivisions** [192]

A. **Rely on excellent persons** [192]

“You rely on excellent teachers when you see them as the source of all good qualities.”

B. **Listen to the sublime teachings** [193]

“You should listen to whatever is appropriate among the sutras and the like, teachings which are sublime.”

C. **Fix your attention properly on them** [193]

“Fix your attention on whatever serves to dispel the afflictions.”

D. **Cultivate a practice that conforms with the teachings** [193]

“You should practice in accordance with the teachings on nirvana.”

2. **The second set of subdivisions** [193]

A. **Do not excite your sensory faculties** [193]

“When the sensory faculties draw the inattentive mind to objects, you should view this excitement with regard to sensory objects as a fault, and withdraw the mind from them.”

B. **Take up the precepts correctly** [193]

“You should take up the trainings set forth by the Buddha – as many as possible.”

C. **Be compassionate toward living beings** [193]

“The Conqueror’s teaching is distinguished by compassion. Therefore, once you have gone to his teaching for refuge, you should also be compassionate toward living beings and forsake harming them.”

D. **Strive to make periodic offerings to the Three Jewels** [193]

“Each day you should make offerings to the Three Jewels.”

B. **How they appear in oral tradition** [193]

1. **The special precepts** [193]

A. **The proscriptive precepts** [194]

“There are three...(1) not going to other deities for refuge, (2) abandoning harm and malice toward living beings, and (3) not befriending non-Buddhist philosophers.”

B. The prescriptive precepts [194]

“There are three... (1) to treat images of the Buddha as objects of reverence, (2) never to show disrespect for the writings on the teachings, and (3) never to revile or despise members of the community, renunciates, or those who merely possess the symbols of a practitioner.”

2. The general precepts [196]

A. By recalling the distinctions and good qualities of the Three Jewels, go for refuge again and again [197]

“You should repeatedly keep in mind the differences between non-Buddhists and Buddhists, the distinctions among the Three Jewels, and the good qualities of the Three Jewels.”

B. By recalling the great kindness of the Three Jewels, strive to worship them constantly and offer the first portion of your food and drink [197]

“Thus, knowing that all temporary happiness and certain goodness that you experience, symbolized by food, are due to the kindness of the Three Jewels, you should make offerings with the intention of repaying their kindness.”

C. Establish other living beings in this practice by considering them with compassion [202]

“This means that you should use all available means to caringly establish other living beings in the practice of going for refuge.”

D. Whatever activity you engage in, and whatever your purpose, make offerings and supplications to the Three Jewels, forsaking any other worldly methods [202]

“Whatever activity you engage in, and whatever your purpose, rely on and do that which accords with the Three Jewels... Always entrust yourself to the Three Jewels.”

E. After you have understood the benefits, go for refuge three times in the day and three times at night [202]

1. The benefits as they appear in the *Compendium of Determinations* [202]

A. The first set of four [202]

1. You will obtain vast merit [202]

“If the merit of going for refuge took form, even these three realms would be too small to contain it – a cupped hand cannot measure the great ocean, the storehouse of water.”

2. You will obtain both joy and supreme joy [202]

“Thus, the one who relies on these three refuges grows more joyful with the thought, ‘I have really gotten something worth getting.’”

3. You will obtain concentration [203]

“You will be liberated through training in concentration and wisdom.”

4. You will attain purity [203]

“You will be liberated through training in concentration and wisdom.”

B. The second set of four [203]

1. You will have great protection [203]

“This will be explained later.”

2. You will reduce, extinguish, and totally annihilate all obscurations derived from incorrect belief [203]

“You will reduce and clear away bad karma accumulated on account of your believing in bad teachers, teachings, and friends and upholding them as refuges.”

3. You are counted among excellent persons, who genuinely accomplish the sublime [203]

“You are included among excellent persons.”

4. You delight and receive the approval of your teachers and religious companions, and of the deities who take joy in the teaching [203]

“They sing praises of such people, joyfully thinking, ‘...because he or she has gone for refuge and has become stable in it, he or she will be our companion.’”

2. The benefits as they appear in personal instructions [203]

A. You are included among Buddhists [203]

“To initially be included among Buddhists you must uphold the Three Jewels as your teacher and so forth from the depths of your heart. Without this you are not included among Buddhists, no matter what virtue you have cultivated.”

B. You become worthy to uphold all vows [204]

“You make your aspiration for nirvana firm by going for refuge, and your vows arise from this.”

C. You reduce and eliminate previously accumulated karmic obstructions [204]

“So too do you eliminate the conditions for rebirth in a miserable realm by going for refuge.”

D. You will accumulate vast merit [204]

“This has been previously explained.”

E. You will not fall into miserable realms [204]

“You should understand this from the earlier explanation.”

F. You will not be thwarted by human or non-human hindrances [205]

“If you rely on such a refuge, you will be freed from all suffering.”

G. You will accomplish everything you wish [205]

“If, before undertaking a religious activity, you make offerings to the Three Jewels, go for refuge, and then pray to succeed, you will easily accomplish it.”

H. You will quickly achieve Buddhahood [205]

“Thus, one who obtains a special kind of leisure, encounters the refuge, and trains in the special path will achieve Buddhahood without delay.”

F. Maintain your refuge and do not forsake the Three Jewels, even in jest or if it costs you your life [205]

“Inevitably you will lose your body, life, and resources. But, if you forsake the Three Jewels for the sake of these, you will suffer continually throughout many lives.”

B. Developing the faith of conviction that is the root of all temporary happiness and certain goodness [210]

“Unless you reflect at length on the two kinds of karma and their effects, and then properly cast aside the non-virtuous and adopt the virtuous, you will not stop the causes of miserable rebirths...The proper view of dependent-arising and the causality of the two types of karma is the indispensable foundation for the practices of all vehicles and the aims of all beings...You should look at other scriptures as well to develop an intense and enduring certainty. Take this to be a goal of crucial importance.”

1. Reflecting on karma and its effects in general [210]

A. The actual way in which to reflect in general [210]

1. The certainty of karma [210]

“It is impossible for happiness to arise from non-virtuous karma...It is impossible for suffering to arise from virtuous karma.”

2. The magnification of karma [211]

“An effect of immense happiness may arise from even a small virtuous karma. An effect of immense suffering may arise from even a tiny non-virtuous karma...Therefore, solidify the certainty that even the subtlest of virtuous and non-virtuous actions follow you like shadows and produce both great happiness and great suffering.”

3. Not experiencing the effects of actions that you did not do [214]

“If you have not accumulated the karma that is the cause for an experience of happiness or suffering, you will in no way experience the happiness or suffering that is its effect.”

4. The actions you have done do not perish [214]

“Those who have done virtuous and non-virtuous actions create pleasant and unpleasant effects.”

B. Reflecting on the distinctions among the varieties of karma [216]

1. The principal teaching of the ten paths of action [216]

“The Buddha, the Bhagavan, summarizing the key points, taught the most obvious, or coarse, among the virtues and non-virtues as being the ten paths of virtuous and non-virtuous actions. He taught that the extremely great foundations for a misdeed are the ten paths of non-virtuous action. He saw that when you give up these ten, you adopt virtuous actions and that the most important points of these virtuous actions are also ten in number. Therefore he taught ten paths of virtuous action...This practice is indispensable as the basis for all three vehicles as well as for the accomplishment of the two aims of beings. Hence, the Conqueror repeatedly praised it from many perspectives.”

2. The determination of the effects of actions [218]

A. Non-virtuous actions and their effects [218]

1. The actual paths of non-virtuous actions [218]

“A condensed presentation of each of the paths of actions in four categories – basis, attitude, performance, and culmination. ...Among these ten, intentions are actions, yet they are not paths of action. The seven non-virtuous actions of body and speech are not only actions but are also paths of action because body and speech are the bases of the intended operation. The three mental non-virtues – covetousness and so on – are paths of action but are not actions.”

A. Killing [218]

“The basis of killing is a being who is alive...The culmination is the death of another on the account of the performance, either at that point in time or at another point in time.”

B. Stealing [219]

“The basis of stealing is anything owned by another...As for the culmination...[for example] moving it to another location.”

C. Sexual misconduct [220]

“There are four possible bases for sexual misconduct: a person with whom you should not have intercourse, inappropriate body parts, inappropriate places, and inappropriate times...The culmination is the sexual union of the two parts.”

D. Lying [222]

- “The eight bases for lying are that seen, that heard, that distinguished, and that cognized, as well as the four opposites of these [that not seen, etc.]. Lying is when someone else – the recipient of the lie – comprehends the meaning of the lie...The culmination of a lie is someone else’s comprehension.”
- E. **Divisive speech** [223]
“The bases of divisive speech are living beings who are compatible or incompatible...The culmination is the others’ understanding of the divisive words that have been spoken.”
- F. **Offensive speech** [223]
“The basis of offensive speech is a living being in whom you can engender hostility...The culmination is the person to whom the offensive speech is spoken must understand it.”
- G. **Senseless speech** [223]
“The basis of senseless speech is speech about a topic that is not meaningful...The culmination is having finished an utterance of senseless speech.”
- H. **Covetousness** [224]
“The bases of covetousness are the wealth or possessions of another...The culmination is thinking ‘May it become mine,’ about the wealth and the like.”
- I. **Malice** [225]
“The basis...is the same as in the case of offensive speech...The culmination is a determination or decision to do things such as beating.”
- J. **Wrong views** [226]
“The bases of wrong views are existent objects...The culmination is the certainty that you have denied something.”
2. **Distinctions of weight** [227]
- A. **The weights of the ten paths of non-virtuous action** [227]
“There are five causes that make an action weighty...Weighty due to (1) attitude, (2) performance, (3) the absence of an antidote, (4) clinging to the perverse, and (5) its basis.”
- B. **A brief discussion of the criteria for powerful actions** [231]
1. **Strength in terms of recipient** [231]
“There is strength in actions directed toward the Three Jewels, gurus, those who are like gurus, parents, and the like, for, though you direct no intense thoughts toward them and do them only small harm or help, the ensuing misdeed and merit is great.”
2. **Strength in terms of support** [233]
“Likewise, the Buddha said, sins committed by those who are not knowledgeable and those who are knowledgeable are heavy and light as well.”
3. **Strength in terms of objects** [235]
“Among the giving of gifts to living beings, the gift of the teaching is vastly superior to the gift of material things. Among offerings to the Buddhas, the offering of practice is vastly superior to the offering of material things. Following these examples, understand the others.”
4. **Strength in terms of attitude** [235]
“With regard to wrongdoing, afflicted attitudes that are strong and long-lasting have greater strength and, among these, hatred is very powerful.”
3. **An exposition of the effects** [236]
- A. **Fruitional effects** [236]
“Through each of the great forms of the ten non-virtues – killing and so forth – you will be reborn in the hells, through each of the medium forms you will be reborn as a hungry ghost, and through each of the ten small forms you will be reborn as an animal.”
- B. **Causally concordant effects** [236]
“Even when you are reborn from the miserable realms as a human, [you still experience the effects of non-virtuous actions] as follows: [as a causally concordant effect of killing,] a short lifetime; [from stealing,] a lack of resources; [from sexual misconduct,] an unruly spouse; [from lying] much slander; [from divisive speech,] loss of friendships; [from offensive speech,] hearing unpleasant words; [from senseless speech,] others not listening to your words; and [from covetousness, malice, and wrong views] respectively, predominance of attachment, hostility, and confusion...Liking to kill and so on even once you have been born a human are causally concordant behavioural effects.”
- C. **Environmental effects** [237]
“From the non-virtuous action of killing, such things in the external environment as food and drink, medicine, and fruits will have little strength, be ineffective, have little potency and power, or, being difficult to digest, will induce illness. Hence, most living beings will die without living out their expected life spans.”
- B. **Virtuous actions and their effects** [238]
1. **Virtuous actions** [238]

“The basis of giving up killing is another living being...The culmination is the physical action of completing the correct restraint...Understand the others in this way as well.”

2. The effects of virtuous actions [238]

“There are three types of effects – fruitional, causally concordant, and environmental. The fruitional effect is that you are born as a human, a deity of the desire realm, or a deity in one of the two upper realms through small, medium, and great virtuous actions, respectively. You should take the causally concordant and environmental effects to be the opposite of those of the non-virtuous actions.”

C. A presentation of other classifications of karma [239]

1. The distinction between projecting and completing karma [239]

“Projecting karma projects a fruition. Completing karma is that by which, in a rebirth, you experience the wanted and unwanted.”

2. Karma whose result you will definitely or only possibly experience [240]

“Karma whose result you will definitely experience is that consciously done and accumulated. Karma whose result you are not certain to experience is that consciously done but not accumulated...From the viewpoint of the time at which you experience a result, there are three types of certainty of experiencing results of karma: (1) experiencing it here and now, (2) experiencing it after taking rebirth, and (3) experiencing it at another time.”

2. Reflecting on karma and its effects in detail [242]

“It is certainly the case that you will acquire a good body and mind through giving up the ten non-virtuous actions. Nonetheless, if you were to bring about a body and mind that are fully qualified, this would accelerate your cultivation of the path as nothing else would. Therefore, seek such a life.”

A. The attributes of the fruitions [243]

“There are eight fruitions: (1) consummate life span, (2) consummate colour, (3) consummate lineage, (4) consummate power, (5) trustworthy words, (6) renown as a great power, (7) being a male, and (8) having strength.”

B. The effects of the fruitions [243]

“There are eight effects of the fruitions: [respectively] (1) you accumulate much virtue for a long time..., (2) disciples are pleased and gather around you..., (3) people carry out your instructions without disregard..., (4) you gather living beings and then mature them..., (5) you gather living beings and mature them..., (6) they repay your kindness and listen immediately to your instructions..., (7) you will be unafraid in assemblies and will have no reversals or obstacles..., and (8) you will quickly have the superknowledges...”

C. The causes of the fruitions [244]

“There are eight causes of the fruitions: [respectively] (1) not harming living beings..., (2) giving light, such as butter lamps, and new clothing..., (3) overcoming pride and respecting others..., (4) giving food, clothing, and so forth..., (5) habituation to giving up the four vocal non-virtues..., (6) making aspirational prayers..., (7) delight in the attributes of a male..., and (8) accomplishing what cannot at all be done by others...”

3. How you engage in virtue and turn away from non-virtue after having reflected on karma and its effects in general and in detail [247]

A. A general explanation [247]

“Thus, having understood virtuous and non-virtuous karma and their effects, do not leave it at just an understanding but meditate on it over and over, because this is a very obscure subject and it is difficult to acquire certainty about it...Some, who claim that they have acquired certain knowledge of emptiness, are uncertain about karma and its effects and do not value it. This is a mistaken understanding of emptiness. For, once you understand emptiness, you will see that it is the meaning of dependent-arising, and it will assist you in becoming certain about karma and its effects.”

B. In particular, the way of purification through the four powers [251]

“Confession, restraint, and so forth weaken the capacity of karma to bear fruit. Such karma will not bear fruit even when it comes into contact with other conditions. Likewise, it is said that anger and the production of wrong views weaken the ability of roots of virtue to give effects.”

1. The power of eradication [252]

“The first power is great contrition for having done non-virtuous actions since beginningless time. In order to feel this, it is necessary to meditate on the way in which you produce the three effects of actions – fruitional and so forth.”

2. The power of applying remedies [252]

“The second power has six sections: (1) dependence on the profound sutras, (2) interest in emptiness, (3) dependence on recitation, (4) dependence upon images, (5) dependence on worship, and (6) dependence on names.”

3. The power of turning away from faults [253]

“The third power is actually restraining yourself from the ten non-virtues...Confession that lacks an attitude of wholehearted restraint becomes merely words.”

4. The power of the foundation [254]

“The fourth power is going for refuge to the Three Jewels and cultivating the spirit of enlightenment.”

B. The measure of the attitude of a person of small capacity [261]

“Previously you have had an uncontrived interest in this life, while your interest in future lives has merely been an understanding that follows what others say. You have generated the attitude of a person of small capacity when these interests change places, and your interest in the future becomes paramount, while your interest in this life has become merely incidental. However, you must make this attitude stable. Thus, once it has occurred, cultivate it diligently.”

C. Clearing up misconceptions concerning the attitude of a person of small capacity [261]

“Even persons who strive for liberation must diligently but temporarily seek excellent bodies, etc., in cyclic existence.”

2. Training the mind in the stages of the path shared with persons of medium capacity [265]

“Persons of medium capacity develop disenchantment with all of cyclic existence, and then make their goal their own liberation from cyclic existence. They then enter the path of the three trainings, the method for attaining liberation.”

A. The mental training [267]

“From beginningless time you have been conditioned to believe that the wonders of cyclic existence are sources of happiness, and you have habitually projected upon them a false image of beauty. But if, as a remedy, you train yourself to meditate on suffering and unpleasantness, you will put an end to these wrong ideas. Hence, it is vitally important to meditate on the faults of cyclic existence.”

1. Identifying the mind intent on liberation [267]

“Liberation means freedom from bondage, and what binds you to cyclic existence is karma and the afflictions. Under their power the aggregates are reborn. Since this is the nature of bondage, freedom from rebirth impelled by karma and the afflictions is liberation, and the desire to obtain that freedom is the mind intent on liberation.”

2. The method for developing the mind intent on liberation [268]

A. Reflection on suffering and its origin [268]

1. Reflection on the truth of suffering – the faults of cyclic existence [268]

A. Showing the significance of the Buddha’s asserting the truth of suffering as the first of the four truths [269]

“If his disciples failed to develop a proper determination to liberate themselves from cyclic existence first, they would sever the very root of liberation...Unless you reflect on the truth of suffering to the point of actually becoming revolted by cyclic existence, your desire to attain liberation will be mere words, and whatever you do will lead to origins of further suffering.”

B. The actual meditation on suffering [271]

1. Reflection on the universal suffering of cyclic existence [271]

A. Reflection on the eight types of suffering [271]

“Here, cultivating a sense of disenchantment with cyclic existence means reflecting on it as the origin of many sufferings...If you do not cultivate a genuine sense of disenchantment with cyclic existence – the nature of which is the appropriated aggregates – you will have no chance to develop a genuine mind intent on liberation, and there will be no way for you to develop great compassion for living beings wandering through cyclic existence. Hence this reflection is extremely important, regardless of which vehicle you enter.”

1. The suffering of birth [272]

“There are five points to contemplate: Birth is suffering because (1) it associated with pain, (2) it is associated with dysfunctional tendencies, (3) it is the origin of suffering, (4) it is the origin of afflictions, and (5) it is an unwanted separation...Among the eight types of sufferings, regard this first type, along with the eighth type, as the most crucial and meditate upon both of them. Therefore, as explained before, you should repeatedly investigate them with discerning wisdom and meditate on them.”

2. The suffering of old age [275]

“There are five points to contemplate: (1) a handsome body deteriorates, (2) physical strength and vigour deteriorate, (3) the senses deteriorate, (4) enjoyment of sense objects fades, and (5) the deterioration of life is painful...Think about these points again and again...Ga-ma-pa said: ‘It is well that aging happens little by little. If it happened all at once, it would be intolerable.’”

3. The suffering of illness [276]

“Here there are also five points: (1) illness changes the nature of the body, (2) pain and anguish increase and are seldom absent, (3) there is no desire for attractive things, (4) you must have recourse, however unwillingly, to unpleasant objects, and (5) you lose your vital energy...Reflect with care upon these points.”

4. The suffering of death [277]

“Again, there are five points to contemplate: You are separated from (1) objects, (2) close relatives, and (3) companions who are fine and attractive; (4) you are deprived of a body that is fine and attractive, and (5) as you die, you experience terrible pain and anguish...Reflect on these repeatedly, until you become disenchanted.”

5. The suffering of encountering what is unpleasant [278]

“Here there are also five points to contemplate: (1) merely encountering your enemies, for example, causes pain and anguish, (2) you dwell in fear of being punished by them, (3) you fear they will speak maliciously, without kind words, (4) you dread death, and (5) you worry that you will go to a miserable realm after death for having acted in ways contrary to the teaching... Reflect on these.”

6. The suffering of separation from what is pleasant [278]

“Again, there are five points to contemplate. When you are separated from a very dear relative, for example:(1) in your mind, sorrow arises, (2)in your speech, you lament, (3) you bring harm to your own body, (4) you are saddened, recalling and missing the good qualities of what you have lost, and (5) recourse is no longer available for what you have lost.”

7. The suffering of not getting what you want [278]

“Again, there are five points, similar to separation from what is pleasant.”

8. The suffering of the five appropriated aggregates [279]

“It is in the nature of the five aggregates appropriated by karma and afflictions to be: (1) vessels for future suffering, (2) vessels for suffering based on what presently exists, (3) vessels for the suffering of pain, (4) vessels for the suffering of change, and (5) vessels for the suffering of conditionality...Reflect on these again and again.”

B. Reflection on the six types of suffering [281]

“These six faults comprise three types: (1) in cyclic existence, there is no secure basis that you can count on [includes 1, 3, 5 and 6], (2) however much you may indulge in its pleasures, they will not bring you satisfaction in the end [2], and (3) you have been caught in cyclic existence from beginningless time [4].”

1. The fault of uncertainty [281]

“For those in cyclic existence there are no certainties because fathers become sons, mothers become wives, enemies become friends, and the converse happens as well...Be aware that among the phenomena of cyclic existence, absolutely nothing can be trusted. Become disenchanted.”

2. The fault of insatiability [282]

“You indulge in pleasures in pursuit of satisfaction, yet, with worldly pleasures, you are never satisfied no matter how much you enjoy them...Think about this...In this cyclic existence there are many turns of fortune for better and for worse; do not stake your hopes on them. Reflect until you give rise to this kind of thinking.”

3. The fault of casting off bodies repeatedly [284]

“For each living being, if the bones discarded from taking up new bodies did not disappear, they would tower over even Mount Meru.”

4. The fault of repeated rebirth [284]

“If you looked for the limit of mothers by counting with earthen pellets the size of juniper berries, the earth would not suffice.”

5. The fault of repeatedly descending from high to low [285]

“Considering all the ways that you can fall from high to low places you should be disenchanted with cyclic existence, because all of its wonders will collapse in the end.”

6. The fault of having no companions [286]

“You are born alone. Also you die alone.”

C. Meditation on the three types of suffering [289]

1. The suffering of change [289]

“Pleasant feelings experienced by beings in cyclic existence are like the pleasure felt when cool water is applied to an inflamed boil or carbuncle: as the temporary feeling fades, the pain reasserts itself...Pleasure, when it increases, is seen to change into pain; Pain, when it increases, does not likewise change into pleasure.”

2. The suffering of pain [290]

“When a painfully inflamed boil makes contact with an irritant such as salt water, it is agonizing. This is how you recognize the feeling of pain.”

3. The suffering of conditionality [290]

“Contaminated neutral feelings are like an inflamed boil which is in contact with neither soothing nor irritating substances...Though you have occasional moments when painful feeling is absent,...the suffering of conditionality is still present, and therefore myriad sufferings are just on the verge of arising in countless ways. Therefore, since the suffering of conditionality pervades all suffering and is the root of the other two types of suffering, meditate on it often in order to become disenchanted with it.”

2. Reflection on specific sufferings [292]

A. The suffering of human beings [292]

“You should understand that the suffering of human beings consists of the pain of hunger and thirst, unpleasant sensations of heat and cold, and the suffering of searching for sustenance and becoming fatigued. It is also birth, old age, illness, death, and so on – the seven that I have already explained before.”

B. The suffering of the demigods [292]

“They are tortured by their unbearable envy of the deities’ wealth. Because of this, they fight with the deities and endure many sufferings, such as having their bodies split apart.”

C. Reflection on the suffering of the deities [293]

1. The deities of the desire realm [293]

A. The sufferings of dying and falling [293]

1. The suffering of dying [293]

“Deities derive pleasure from indulging their sensual desires, yet greater than this is the tremendous suffering they experience while dying.”

2. The suffering of falling to lower realms [294]

“They must take leave of the divine worlds. If their merit has run out, then, powerless, they will become animals, hungry ghosts, or denizens of hell.”

B. The sufferings of anxiety [294]

“Deities with vast stores of merit gain the most desirable objects. Upon seeing them, deities of lesser merit become anxious and experience great anguish and pain.”

C. The sufferings of being cut, gashed, killed, and banished [294]

“When deities fight with the demigods, they undergo the pain of having their limbs cut off, having their bodies split apart, and being killed.”

2. The deities of the form and formless realm [295]

“Because they have no control over their future dwelling place, even they suffer on account of dysfunctional tendencies.”

2. Reflection on the process of cyclic existence in terms of its origin [298]

A. How the afflictions arise [298]

1. Identifying the afflictions [298]

“An affliction is defined as a phenomenon that, when it arises, is disturbing in character and that, through arising, disturbs the mind-stream... The ten afflictions are as follows:

(1) attachment, (2) hostility, (3) pride, (4) ignorance, (5) doubt, (6) the reifying view of the perishing aggregates, (7) an extremist view, (8) a belief in the supremacy of wrong views, (9) a belief in the supremacy of ethics and religious discipline, and (10) wrong view.”

2. The order in which the afflictions arise [300]

“Once there is a self, there is an idea of an other. On behalf of self and other, there is attachment and hostility. All of the faults come about in association with these.”

3. The causes of the afflictions [301]

These are sixfold: (1) basis, (2) object, (3) social context, (4) explanation, (5) habituation, and (6) attention.”

4. The faults of the afflictions [301]

“When an affliction arises, at first it completely afflicts the mind, causing you to err with regard to what you are observing, reinforcing your latent proclivities, and causing the same affliction to recur. It may harm you, others, or both; it leads to misdeeds in this life, in future lives, or in both. It creates experiences of pain and anguish, as well as the sufferings of birth, and the like... You die with regret, your aims unfulfilled, and after death you are reborn into a miserable realm.”

B. How you thereby accumulate karma [303]

1. Identifying the karma that you accumulate [303]

“In general, karma is of three types: virtuous, non-virtuous, and ethically neutral, but here we are concerned with only the first two.”

A. Karma that is intention [303]

“What is intention? It is mental karma that involves the mind; it acts to engage the mind in virtuous, non-virtuous, and ethically neutral activities.”

B. Karma that is the intended action [303]

“This is the physical and verbal action motivated by intention [according to the Vaibhasika school. According to higher schools] physical and verbal karma are intentions that work along with perceptible physical and verbal behaviour; thus, both forms of karma [intention and intended] are actually intentions.”

2. How you accumulate karma [304]

“As long as you operate under the influence of the conception of a self, you will accumulate karma that will impel you into cyclic existence... Once you have perceived reality – that is, selflessness – you will not accumulate any new karma that can impel such rebirth.”

A. Accumulating karma for pleasant feelings [306]

1. Accumulating karma for the pleasant that comes from enjoying desirable objects – sights, sounds, and the like [306]

“If your concern is mainly for the pleasures of this lifetime, prior to death, then you accumulate non-meritorious action; if your concern is primarily for the sensual pleasures of future lives, you accumulate meritorious action.”

2. Accumulating karma for gaining bliss in meditative concentration, after you have rejected attachment to external sensual pleasures [306]

“If you focus on a meditative object primarily for the sake of the blissful feelings that arise from concentration, you will accumulate invariable karma leading to rebirth at the level of the first, second, or third meditative stabilizations in the form realm.”

B. Accumulating karma for neutral feelings [306]

“You might have stopped attachment to sensual pleasure, become weary even of meditative bliss, and created karma to have neutral feelings. If so, you will accumulate invariable karma leading to rebirth in the fourth meditative stabilization of the form realm or in a higher level, up to and including the peak of cyclic existence.”

C. How you die and are reborn [307]

1. Causes of death [307]

“Death from the exhaustion of your life span means dying after you have used up all your life span that was projected by your previous karma; as the time has come, you die. Death from exhaustion of your merit means, for example, dying deprived of the necessities of life. There is also death from failure to avoid danger.”

2. The mind at death [307]

“All minds of death are ethically neutral after the onset of subtle discrimination.”

A. Dying with a virtuous mind [307]

“Those who have cultivated virtue seem to pass from darkness into light; as they die various pleasant and attractive images appear, as though in a dream. They die comfortably, and, at the time of point of death, intense feelings of suffering do not arise in their bodies.”

B. Dying with a non-virtuous mind [308]

“At the point of death, they experience intense physical pain. As if in a nightmare, many unpleasant images appear to them. They seem to pass from light to darkness.”

C. Dying with an ethically neutral mind [308]

“At death they have neither pain nor pleasure.”

3. Where heat gathers [309]

“Among those who are currently cultivating non-virtue, consciousness leaves the body coming down from the upper parts, which become cold first... The consciousness of someone currently cultivating virtue leaves coming up from the lower parts and the body becomes cold from the lower parts. In both cases consciousness leaves from the heart.”

4. How you reach the intermediate state after death [309]

“As the consciousness leaves from that spot, you die and reach the intermediate state immediately... As to its causes, the intermediate state is contingent upon (1) having become attached to your body and being filled with delight in your previous worldly activities, and (2) karma – whether virtuous or non-virtuous.”

5. How you then take rebirth [311]

“If a being of the intermediate state is to be born in a womb, it observes beings of the same type as itself at its future birthplace... It sees them lying together – and becomes attached... It draws closer and closer to the man and woman... eventually not seeing any part of their bodies except for their genitals. Angry at this sight, it dies and is reborn.”

B. Reflection from the viewpoint of the twelve dependent-arising [315]

1. The division into twelve factors [315]

“The twelve factors of dependent-arising are: (1) ignorance, (2) compositional activity, (3) consciousness, (4) name-and-form, (5) six sources, (6) contact, (7) feeling, (8) craving, (9) grasping, (10) potential existence, (11) birth, and (12) aging-and-death.”

2. Abbreviated classification of the factors [319]

“There are four types: (1) the projecting factors, (2) the projected factors, (3) the actualising factors, and (4) the actualised factors... The twelve factors, moreover, are subsumed under the three paths – those of afflictions, karma, and sufferings.”

3. The number of lifetimes required to complete all twelve factors [322]

“It is possible, at shortest, to complete all twelve factors in two lifetimes... Even at the longest, completion of all twelve factors will be delayed no longer than three lifetimes... When you reflect on your wandering in such a way through cyclic existence, the twelve factors of dependent-arising are the best method for generating disenchantment with cyclic existence.”

4. How their significance is summarized [324]

“You should understand well... in particular, how the wheel of existence turns in the context of the twelve factors. Understanding this and becoming familiar with it destroys the unbearable gloom of confusion – the root of all problems... It is what motivates you toward the path to liberation through exact knowledge of the characteristics of cyclic existence and intense disenchantment with them. It is the best means for activating the latent propensities by which you will attain the sublime state of a noble being.”

B. The measure of the determination to be free [327]

“Develop an attitude about cyclic existence like those who feel aversion for their confinement in a blazing house or a prison, and want to escape. Then progressively increase this feeling of aversion and desire to escape. If your ability to see the undesirability of true origins – the causes of cyclic existence – is superficial, then your search for liberation, the cessation of suffering and its origin, will be the same. Likewise, your desire to attain the path to liberation will be mere words.”

C. Dispelling misconceptions [328]

“The sutra passage that says, ‘Thus, bodhisattvas should not become disenchanted with cyclic existence,’ does not teach bodhisattvas not to be disgusted with the sufferings of birth, aging, illness, death, and so on – the result of our wandering through cyclic existence under the influence of our karma and afflictions. Rather, this sutra teaches joyous perseverance.”

D. Ascertaining the nature of the path leading to liberation [333]

“With a determination that transcends mere words, you must stop your birth in cyclic existence, the root of all harm.”

1. The kind of life through which you halt cyclic existence [335]

“For those who have attained a life of leisure and opportunity, dwelling in a household presents many obstacles to the practice of religion and has numerous shortcomings. However, the life of a renunciate, being the opposite of that, is the very best for stopping cyclic existence. The wise, therefore, should delight in such a life.”

2. The kind of path you cultivate to halt cyclic existence [339]

A. The certainty of the enumeration of the three trainings [339]

1. The stages of disciplining the mind [339]

“The training in ethical discipline makes a distracted mind undistracted. The training in concentration – or mental training – balances an unbalanced mind. The training in wisdom liberates an unliberated mind.”

2. Their results [340]

“The results of ethical discipline that have not degenerated are the two happy rebirths of the desire realm [either as a human or a deity]. The results of training the mind are the two happy rebirths of the higher [form or formless] realms. The result of training in wisdom is liberation.”

3. The objects that they eliminate [340]

“In relation to the objects they eliminate – the afflictions – the trainings are threefold, according to whether they eliminate afflictions by (1) weakening them, (2) suppressing their manifest forms, or (3) eradicating their seeds.”

B. The determination of the order of the three trainings [340]

“Ethical discipline is the root because the other two grow out of it. Concentration, the second of the three trainings, depends on ethical discipline and takes pleasure in putting the mind in meditative equipoise. Wisdom, the third of the three trainings, depends on meditative equipoise and acquires the view of noble beings in order to see reality exactly.”

C. The nature of the three trainings [341]

“I will explain the trainings in wisdom and in mind in the section on persons of great capacity...I will briefly discuss the training in ethical discipline here...In the beginning, reflect repeatedly on the benefits of ethical discipline and develop enthusiasm for it from the depths of your heart...There are very grave consequences for you if you undertake an ethical discipline and then fail to keep it...There are four causes of an infraction: (1) not knowing the precept, (2) carelessness, (3) disrespect, and (4) various afflictions. As a remedy for not knowing the precept, listen to and understand the precepts. As a remedy for carelessness, train in attitudes such as mindfulness, vigilance, shame, embarrassment and trepidation. As a remedy for disrespect, have respect for the Teacher, his rules, and your fellow practitioners. As a remedy for various afflictions, examine your mind and energetically apply the remedies for whatever afflictions predominate.”

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3. Training the mind in the stages of the path for persons of great capacity [15]

“Persons of great capacity, under the influence of great compassion, make Buddhahood their goal in order to extinguish all the sufferings of all living beings. They then train in the six perfections, the two stages, and the like...The Mahayana is the origin of all good of self and others; the medicine that alleviates all troubles; the great path travelled by all knowledgeable persons; nourishment for all beings who see, hear, remember, and come into contact with it; and that which has the great skill-in-means that engages you in others’ welfare and thereby indirectly achieves your own welfare in its entirety...Thus, enter the Mahayana after you have developed great respect for it induced by seeing its good qualities from various perspectives.”

A. Showing that developing the spirit of enlightenment is the only entrance to the Mahayana [16]

“The only entrance is the spirit of enlightenment. Once you have generated this spirit in your mind, you are recognized as a Mahayana practitioner even though you may not have generated any other good quality...This point is taught in many Mahayana scriptures and is also proved by reason...Hence, if you have only an intellectual understanding of this spirit, then you likewise have only an intellectual understanding of what it means to be a Mahayana practitioner. If the spirit is completely perfect, then the Mahayana practitioner is genuine, so strive for this.”

B. How to develop the spirit of enlightenment [21]

1. How the spirit of enlightenment depends on certain causes to arise [22]

“Rely on an excellent teacher and make an effort to practice – studying and reflecting etc. upon the Mahayana scriptural collection – and plant the root for the development of the spirit from the depths of your heart, not forced by others, nor mindlessly following others, nor through the habit of custom, but through your own strength. All the bodhisattva deeds are necessarily based on it”

A. The development of the spirit through the four conditions [22]

“(1) You develop the spirit of enlightenment either by seeing for yourself the inconceivable power of Buddhas or bodhisattva, or by hearing about them...(2) You can develop the spirit by listening to the scriptural collections...(3) You can develop the spirit by understanding that the excellent teaching of the bodhisattvas is about to disappear...(4) You generate the spirit of enlightenment through seeing the difficulty required to develop it...Without the desire to attain Buddhahood that comes from cultivating faith in a Buddha’s good qualities, you cannot overcome the sense of contentment that thinks peace [nirvana] alone is sufficient to fulfil your own aims.”

B. The development of the spirit through the four causes [24]

“You develop the spirit of enlightenment through relying on (1) a perfect lineage, (2) being sustained by a teacher, (3) compassion toward living beings, and (4) not being disheartened by the difficulties of cyclic existence.”

C. The development of the spirit through the four strengths [24]

“You develop the spirit through relying on the four strengths: (1) the strength of yourself, (2) the strength of others, (3) the strength of the cause, and (4) the strength of application.”

2. The stages of training in the spirit of enlightenment [27]

“Always rely on a teacher who gives this kind of teaching. Always associate with friends who are training their minds in this way.”

A. The training based on the seven cause-and-effect personal instructions in the lineage descended from the Great Elder [Atisha] [28]

“The seven causes and effects are: (7) the spirit of enlightenment from which perfect Buddhahood arises; this spirit arises from (6) the wholehearted resolve; this resolve arises from (5) compassion; compassion arises from (4) love; love arises from (3) the wish to repay your mothers’ kindness; the wish to repay your mothers’ kindness arises from (2) recollecting their kindness; and the recollection of their kindness arises from (1) recognizing all beings as your mothers.”

1. Developing certainty about the order of the stages [28]

A. Showing that the root of the Mahayana path is compassion [28]

“Once you become convinced that compassion is the excellent key to the path through such proof as reason and limitless scriptures, why would you not hold the spirit of enlightenment together with its root – compassion – to be the supreme instruction?”

1. The importance of compassion in the beginning [28]

“Once your mind is moved by great compassion, you will definitely make the commitment to free all living beings from cyclic existence. If your compassion is weak, you will not.”

2. The importance of compassion in the middle [29]

“When you see that living beings are innumerable and act improperly, that the training is very difficult and limitless, and that you need an immeasurable length of time, you may lose heart and fall into the Hinayana. However, by accustoming yourself to increasingly greater compassion that is not just a one-time development, you become less concerned with your own happiness or suffering and are not discouraged at providing others’ welfare.”

3. The importance of compassion at the end [29]

“Without compassion Buddhas would be like sravakas”.

B. How the six other personal instructions are either causes or effects of compassion [31]

1. How the first four personal instructions – recognition of all living beings as your mothers through the development of love – acts as causes of compassion [31]

“In general, if you repeatedly consider the sufferings of living beings, you of course develop a simple desire to free them from suffering. However, to develop this attitude easily, strongly, and firmly, you must first cherish these beings and have affection for them... Consequently, cultivate the view that they are close to you, like friends or relatives. Since your mother is the closest person to you, cultivate a recognition of all beings as your mothers.”

2. How wholehearted resolve and the spirit of enlightenment are the effects of compassion [32]

“It is not enough to think, ‘If only all living beings could have happiness and could be free from suffering.’ You must also wholeheartedly assume the responsibility of producing this yourself...If you think, ‘Who can fulfil all the temporary and final aims of limitless living beings?’ you will realize that only a Buddha has this ability. Then you will develop the desire to attain Buddhahood for the sake of these beings.”

2. The gradual training [35]

A. Training the mind to be intent on others’ welfare [36]

“If you train in these attitudes of impartiality, love and compassion without distinguishing and taking up specific objects of meditation, but only using a general object from the outset, you will just seem to generate these attitudes. Then, when you try to apply them to specific individuals, you will not be able to actually generate these attitudes toward anyone. This is an extremely important point.”

1. Establishing the basis for developing this attitude [36]
 - A. Achieving impartiality toward living beings [36]

“From the outset establish an even-minded attitude, eliminating the bias which comes from attachment to some living beings and hostility to others. Otherwise, any love or compassion you feel will be biased. There are three kinds of impartiality: (1) equanimity with respect to application, (2) the feeling of impartiality and (3) immeasurable impartiality. In this section, impartiality refers to the last one. Immeasurable impartiality is said to have two types: (1) wishing that living beings were free from such afflictions as attachment and hostility, and (2) being even-minded yourself after you have become free from attachment and hostility toward living beings. In this section, impartiality refers to the latter.”
 - B. Having affection for all beings [37]

“If you moisten your mind with the water of love which views all living beings with affection, and you then plant the healthy seed of compassion, you will easily generate great compassion. Understand this to be an extremely important point.”

 1. Cultivating a recognition that all beings are your mothers [38]

“Because cyclic existence is beginningless, your births are also without beginning... There is no person who has not been a relative such as your mother... Reflect upon this and become convinced that all beings have been your mothers... Once you develop this conviction, you will then easily remember their kindness and so forth. If you do not develop it, you will have no basis for remembering their kindness.”
 2. Cultivating a remembrance of their kindness [38]

“After you have recognized that all living beings are your mothers, you will quickly remember their kindness if at first you cultivate a remembrance of your mother’s kindness in this lifetime... In short, contemplate one-pointedly how your mother provided help and happiness and cleared away harm and suffering to the best of her knowledge and ability.”
 3. Cultivating the wish to repay your mothers’ kindness [39]

“Your mother is crazed, unable to remain composed. She is blind, has no guide, and stumbles with every step as she approaches a frightful precipice. If she cannot place hope in her child, in whom can she place hope? If her child does not take the responsibility for freeing her from this terror, who should take responsibility? Her child must set her free... Therefore, with this in mind, repay your mothers’ kindness by definitely causing them to emerge from cyclic existence.”
2. The development of the attitude of being intent on others’ welfare [42]
 - A. The cultivation of love [42]

“*The object of love* is living beings who do not have happiness. *The subjective aspects* are thinking, ‘How nice it would be if beings were happy,’ ‘May they be happy,’ and ‘I will cause them to be happy.’... Although love is difficult to develop, you must strive to do so.”
 - B. The cultivation of compassion [44]

“*The object of compassion* is living beings who experience misery through any of the three kinds of suffering. *The subjective aspects* are thinking, ‘How nice it would be if living beings were free from suffering,’ ‘May they be free from suffering,’ and ‘I will cause them to be free from suffering.’... When you spontaneously feel compassion for all beings commensurate with a mother’s compassion for her very dear and small suffering child, then you have completely perfect great compassion. Through this, understand the measure for the development of great love as well.”
 - C. The cultivation of wholehearted resolve [47]

“The thought that assumes responsibility shows that you must develop the compassion and love which have the power to induce the resolve, ‘I will provide happiness and benefit to all living beings.’”
- B. Training the mind to be intent on enlightenment [48]

“Once you have been inspired by the aforementioned process and have seen that you need enlightenment for the sake of others’ welfare, you develop a wish to attain it.”
- C. Identifying the spirit of enlightenment, the fruit of the training [48]

“The development of the spirit of enlightenment is the desire for perfect enlightenment for others’ welfare... As long as you have not taken the [bodhisattva] vows it is the aspirational spirit that is present, whether or not you are training in the deeds of generosity, etc... The engaged spirit is present once you have taken the vows and engaged in accumulating the collections of merit and sublime wisdom.”
- B. The training based on the teachings of the conquerors’ child Shantideva [51]
 1. Contemplating the benefits of exchanging self and other and the faults of not exchanging self and other [51]

“Whatever worldly joy there is arises from wishing for others’ happiness. Whatever worldly suffering there is arises from wishing for your own happiness... Consider how being self-centred is the door to all suffering and being other-centred is the basis of all excellence.”
 2. The ability to exchange self and other if you accustom yourself to doing so [52]

“Reflect thoroughly on the benefits of being other-centred and the faults of being self-centred. Thereby you will produce from the depths of your heart a great delight in meditating on the exchange of self and other. Then recognize that you can actually generate it once you have become habituated to it.”
 3. The stages of meditating on how to exchange self and other [53]

“The phrase ‘exchanging self and other’ indicates a change in the orientation of the two states of mind of cherishing yourself and neglecting theirs, wherein you develop the attitude of cherishing others as you presently do yourself and neglecting yourself as you presently do others... ‘With great effort, relying on mindfulness and vigilance, I will discontinue the present self-cherishing, my greatest enemy, and I will not allow any potential self-cherishing to arise’... Through affectionately viewing others as dear and beloved as much as you can, develop an attitude that cherishes others to the degree to which you previously cherished yourself. To produce the attitude that cherishes beings in this way, you must remember their kindness or recognize that they help you.”

3. The measure of producing the spirit of enlightenment [60]

“Understand the measure of producing the spirit of enlightenment as previously explained [page 45-46].”

4. How to adopt the spirit of enlightenment through its ritual [61]

“Once you have trained your mind in this way and have firm certainty about developing the spirit of enlightenment, take part in the ritual for adopting it.”

A. Attaining that which you have not attained [62]

1. The person before whom you adopt the spirit of enlightenment [62]

“It is not sufficient for the person before whom you adopt the spirit of enlightenment just to have the aspirational spirit of enlightenment and to be maintaining its precepts, but he or she must have the vows of engaged spirit of enlightenment... Although there is no master, there is a ritual for developing the spirit of enlightenment oneself.”

2. The persons who adopt the spirit of enlightenment [62]

“They are disgusted with cyclic existence, mindful of death, and have great wisdom and compassion. So the persons who adopt the spirit of enlightenment have trained their minds in the stages of the path explained earlier and have thereby gained some transformative experience with respect to the spirit of enlightenment.”

3. How to take part in the ritual of adopting the spirit of enlightenment [63]

A. The preparation of the ritual [63]

1. Performing the special practice of going for refuge [63]

A. After decorating the place of the ritual and setting up representations of the Three Jewels, arranging the offerings [63]

“If you have the resources, you must seek offerings earnestly and without deceit and arrange them in such a way that your friends will be astounded... The students wash, put on good clothes, and sit with hands joined respectfully... The guru then enjoins them to slowly perform the seven branches of worship.”

B. Supplications and going for refuge [65]

“Since it is said that you should have the idea that your guru is the Teacher [Buddha], bow down to your guru while believing that he or she is the Buddha, and then offer a mandala and other material offerings. With your right knee bent to the ground, join your hands respectfully and make a supplication for the spirit of enlightenment.”

C. Stating the precepts of refuge [66]

“The master should give here the precepts already explained in the context of teachings for the person of small capacity.”

2. Amassing the collection of merit [66]

“Practice the seven branches of worship.”

3. Purifying your attitude [66]

“Since you should first feel love in your heart and then generate the spirit of enlightenment upon seeing suffering living beings, vividly bring to mind the objects and the subjective aspects for love and compassion as explained previously.”

B. Actual ritual [66]

“In front of the master you should either kneel with your right knee on the ground or squat down on the balls of your feet and, after you join your hands respectfully, generate the spirit of enlightenment... Make the commitment, ‘I will not part from this determination to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all beings until I reach enlightenment.’... In the case of the aspirational spirit, these two ways of generating the spirit – for those capable of learning the precepts and with the commitment, and for those incapable of learning the precepts and without the commitment – are suitable, but when it comes to adopting the engaged spirit of enlightenment through the ritual, it is completely wrong to give it to those fully incapable of learning the precepts.”

C. The conclusion of the ritual [68]

“The master tells the student the precepts of the aspirational spirit of enlightenment.”

B. Maintaining and not weakening what you have attained [69]

“You need to know the precepts, so I will explain them.”

1. The training in the precepts that cause you not to weaken your spirit of enlightenment in this lifetime [70]

A. The training in the precept to recall the benefits of the spirit of enlightenment in order to increase the strength of your enthusiasm for it [70]

“The *Bodhisattva Levels* states two benefits (1) becoming a pure field for accumulating merit and (2) being fully endowed with protective merit... You seldom give rise to anger, jealousy, deceitfulness, concealment, and the like; if these do arise, they are not intense, do not last long, and quickly disappear. It is difficult for you to be reborn in miserable realms.”

B. The training in the precept to generate the spirit of enlightenment six times each day in order to increase the actual spirit of enlightenment [73]

1. Not giving up your development of the aspirational spirit of enlightenment [73]

“Think, ‘How wonderful that I have attained something like this,’ and never give it up. Devoting particular attention to this, vow over and over not to give it up for even an instant.”

2. The training to increase the aspirational spirit of enlightenment [74]

“It is not enough merely not to give up the aspirational spirit of enlightenment; increase it with great effort three times during the day and three times at night.”

C. The training in the precept not to mentally abandon the living beings for whose sake you develop the spirit of enlightenment [75]

“The measure of mentally abandoning living beings is when you produce the thought, ‘Now I will never work for this person’s welfare,’ based upon some conditions such as unacceptable actions, etc.”

D. The training in the precept to accumulate the collections of merit and sublime wisdom [75]

“Strive daily to accumulate the collections – making offerings to the Three Jewels, etc. – in order to increase the spirit of enlightenment.”

2. The training in the precepts that cause you to not separate from your spirit of enlightenment in future lifetimes as well [75]

A. The training in the precept to eliminate the four dark practices which weaken the spirit of enlightenment [76]

“The four dark practices are as follows: (1) deceiving abbots, masters, gurus, and those worthy of offerings, (2) making others feel regret about something that is not regrettable, (3) speaking disparagingly, etc., to beings who have correctly entered the Mahayana, and (4) in an absence of sincerity, using deceit and misrepresentation to get the service of others.”

B. The training in the precept to adopt the four light practices which keep the spirit of enlightenment from weakening [79]

“(1) Forsaking consciously lying to any living being whatsoever even in jest or even for the sake of your life, (2) not deceiving but remaining sincere to all living beings, (3) developing the idea that all bodhisattvas are the Teacher, and (4) causing the living beings that you are helping to mature to not want the modest vehicle but to adhere to perfect enlightenment... Furthermore, if you have these four – destruction of pride, elimination of jealousy, elimination of stinginess, and joy when you see the prosperity of others – you do not relinquish your aspirational prayer [aspirational spirit of enlightenment].”

C. The method of repairing the spirit of enlightenment if you do weaken it [80]

“If a cause of relinquishing it occurs, you must repeat the ritual for adopting the aspirational spirit of enlightenment, but for a mere weakening, you do not have to repeat it; making a confession suffices. If you should think, ‘I cannot accomplish Buddhahood,’ you immediately abandon the spirit of enlightenment... When you think, ‘I am not able to work for the welfare of this many beings,’ it is clear that you abandon the aspirational spirit of enlightenment.”

C. How to learn the bodhisattva deeds after developing the spirit of enlightenment [85]

1. The reason why you must learn the trainings after developing the spirit of enlightenment [85]

“You still have to practice the bodhisattva trainings. If you do not emphasize this practice, you will never become a Buddha. So learn the bodhisattva deeds.”

2. Demonstrating that you will not become a Buddha by learning method or wisdom separately [86]

“The goal for practitioners of Mahayana is a non-abiding nirvana. For this you have to achieve non-abiding in cyclic existence via the wisdom that knows reality, the stages of the path contingent on the ultimate, the ‘profound path,’ the collection of sublime wisdom, the so-called ‘factor of wisdom.’ You also have to achieve non-abiding in the peace that is nirvana via the wisdom that understands the diversity of phenomena, the stages of the path contingent on conventional truths, the vast path, the collection of merit, the so-called ‘factor of method.’”

3. Explanation of the process of learning the precepts [102]

A. How to train in the Mahayana in general [102]

1. Establishing the desire to learn the precepts of the spirit of enlightenment [102]

“In the discipline of individual liberation and in tantra it is inappropriate to study the precepts before you have first taken the vows, but these bodhisattva vows are different. First you understand the precepts well and then, after you are trained in them, if you have an enthusiasm for taking them, you are given the vows.”

2. Taking the vows of the conquerors’ children after establishing the desire to learn the precepts [103]

“I have already established in detail in my *Basic Path to Awakening* commentary on the *Bodhisattva Levels*’ chapter on ethical discipline first how to take the bodhisattva vows, immediately after that how to guard against fundamental transgressions and transgressions that constitute minor infractions, and then how to repair vows if they degenerate. It is most definitely necessary that you read this before you take the vows, so understand them from there.”

3. How to train after taking the vows [103]

A. What the precepts are based upon [103]

“There are limitless clear categorizations, but if you arrange the bodhisattva precepts by type, you can include them all within the six perfections.”

B. How all the precepts are included in the six perfections [104]

1. A discussion of the main topic, the fixed number of perfections [104]

“These explanations show that there is a fixed number of perfections. When you are convinced of this and astonished by it, you will understand the practice of the six perfections as the supreme instruction, so obtain such conviction... It is extremely crucial to gain conviction about the six perfections.”

A. The fixed number of perfections based on high status [104]

“The wise understand how these six – the four excellences [resources, body, companions, work], control of afflictions, and knowledge of what to adopt and what to cast aside – are the results of earlier virtuous actions, and they strive again at steadily increasing their causes... the perfections, fixed as six in number.”

B. The fixed number of perfections based on fulfilling the two aims [105]

“Those who strive for the aims of beings work at giving, non-harm, and patience; and completely fulfil their own aims with stabilization and liberation [wisdom], together with their basis [joyous perseverance].”

C. The fixed number of perfections based on perfecting the complete fulfilment of others’ aims [107]

“Through relieving others’ poverty, not harming them, being patient with their harm, not being dispirited with what they do, delighting them, and speaking well to them you fulfil others’ aims, which fulfils your own.”

D. The fixed number of perfections based on their subsuming the entire Mahayana [107]

“The entire Mahayana is summed up in not delighting in resources, reverence, not being dispirited in two ways [patience and joyous perseverance], and the yogis free of discursiveness [meditative stabilization and wisdom].”

E. The fixed number of perfections in terms of the completeness of paths or method [108]

“Non-attachment to objects [generosity] is a path; another is restraint from the distraction of obtaining them; not abandoning beings [patience], increasing virtues, and clearing away the obscurations [meditative stabilization and wisdom] are others.”

F. The fixed number of perfections based on the three trainings [109]

“Three [generosity, ethical discipline, patience] are the first [ethical discipline], two [meditative stabilization and wisdom] of the six are connected with the final two, one [joyous perseverance] is included in all three.”

2. An ancillary discussion of the fixed order of the perfections [111]

A. The order of arising [111]

“When you have a generosity that is disinterested in and unattached to resources, you take up ethical discipline. When you have an ethical discipline which restrains you from wrongdoing, you become patient with those who harm you. When you have the patience wherein you do not become dispirited with hardships, the conditions for rejecting virtue are few, so you are able to persevere joyously. Once you joyously persevere day and night, you will produce the meditative concentration that facilitates the application of your attention to virtuous objects of meditation. When your mind is in meditative equipoise you will know reality exactly.”

B. The order in terms of inferior and superior [111]

“Each preceding perfection is inferior to the superior one that follows it.”

C. The order in terms of coarse and subtle [111]

“Each subsequent perfection is more difficult than the preceding one to engage in and perform, so it is more subtle than the preceding one.”

C. The process of learning the perfections [113]

1. How to train in the bodhisattva deeds in general [114]

“In general, though the bodhisattva deeds are limitless, the six perfections and the four ways to gather disciples are their best summation.”

A. Training in the perfections that mature the qualities you will have when you become a Buddha [114]

“Nowadays, from among the six perfections – the centre post of both the sutra and tantra paths – there exist in slight measure the stages of practice of meditative stabilization, but the stages of the practice of the other five perfections have disappeared... These six perfections are to be known as the one path travelled by bodhisattvas of the past, present, and future. And because these six are the great ocean of all virtues, they are the perfect summary of the key points of practice.”

1. How to train in the perfection of generosity [114]

A. What generosity is [114]

“It is the virtue of a generous attitude, and the physical and verbal actions which are motivated by this... Thus the practice of the perfection of generosity entails generating in various ways the intention to give and steadily increasing this generosity, even though you may not be actually giving away something to others.”

B. How to begin the development of generosity [115]

“What is required is that you not only clear away stinginess’s tightfistedness, which prevents giving things away, but also that you develop from the depths of your heart the intention to give away to others all your possessions. For this you have to meditate on the faults of holding onto things and the benefits of giving them away... You focus on three things – your body, your resources, and your roots of virtue – and mentally give them away to all living beings.”

C. The divisions of generosity [120]

1. How everyone should practice it [121]

“Asanga’s *Mahayana Compendium* says that you practice generosity in association with six supremacies [Supreme (1) basis, (2) things, (3) aim, (4) skill-in-means, (5) dedication, and (6) purity]...Haribhadra’s *Long Explanation of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Eight Thousand Lines* says that you practice generosity with the six perfections present. When you are giving the teachings, for instance, it is extremely powerful if you practice all six perfections. You have ethical discipline when you restrain yourself from the considerations of sravakas and pratyekabuddhas; patience when you bear any hardship while you aspire to the qualities of omniscience and when you are patient with abuse from others; joyous perseverance when you yearn for the ever-greater increase of your generosity; meditative stabilization when you dedicate to complete enlightenment the virtue that you cultivate with one-pointed attention; and wisdom when you know that the giver, gift, and recipient are like a magician’s illusion.”

2. Divisions of generosity relative to particular persons [121]

“In general it is said that lay bodhisattvas make gifts of material things and renunciate bodhisattvas make gifts of the teachings.”

3. Divisions of actual generosity [122]

A. The gift of the teachings [122]

“The gift of teachings is teaching the sublime teaching without making mistakes, teaching the arts and the like, and involving others in upholding the fundamental precepts”

B. The gift of fearlessness [122]

“The gift of fearlessness is protecting living beings from fear of humans such as kings and robbers, from fear of non-human beings such as lions, tigers, and crocodiles, and from fear of the elements such as water and fire.”

C. Material gifts [122]

1. The generosity of actually giving material things [122]

A. How to give away material things [123]

1. Recipients of giving [123]

“There are ten of these: (1) friends and relatives who help you, (2) enemies who harm you, (3) ordinary people who neither harm nor help you, (4) those with good qualities such as ethical discipline, (5) those with flaws such as faulty ethical discipline, (6) those inferior to you, (7) those equal to you, (8) those superior to you, (9) the rich and happy, and (10) the miserable and destitute.”

2. The motivation for giving [123]

A. What kind of motivation is required [123]

“Your motivation should have three attributes: (1) a focus on purpose, which thinks, ‘Based on this I will complete the perfection of generosity’; (2) a focus on the thing to be given, which thinks, ‘The material goods that I am giving belong to others, and it is if they are receiving things kept in trust’; and (3) a focus on the recipient, which thinks, ‘Since these recipients bring to completion my perfection of generosity, they are my teachers’.”

B. What kind of motivation must be eliminated [124]

“(1) A motivation that believes in the supremacy of bad views, (2) a motivation that is arrogant, (3) a motivation for support, (4) a motivation of discouragement, (5) a motivation in which you turn your back on someone, (6) a motivation of expecting something in return, and (7) a motivation of expecting fruition.”

3. How to give [128]

A. How not to give [128]

“Cast aside these thirteen ways of giving because they are to be eliminated: (1) not giving right away but only after you have delayed, (2) giving under stress...”

B. How to give [128]

“First of all, smile with a beaming countenance and then give to any recipient, showing respect by speaking honestly. Give with your own hands, at the appropriate time, without hurting anyone else, and bearing the suffering of any hardship.”

4. Things to give [130]

A. Brief presentation of the things which are and are not to be given [130]

“Even if these things do not immediately bring happiness, they should give them if they are beneficial in the end. They should not give things which immediately produce pain and ultimately cause harm, or which are immediately pleasant but ultimately harmful.”

B. Detailed explanation of the things which are and are not to be given [130]

1. Detailed explanation about inner things which are and are not to be given [130]

“Once you understand how not to give inner things, you will know the opposite of that, what you should give. Therefore, I will first explain how not to give... Furthermore, there are two ways to give away your body: (1) sectioning out your limbs and so forth and then making a permanent gift, and (2) giving yourself over temporarily into someone else’s power as a servant, etc. in order to bring about their religious aims.”

A. Inappropriate giving from the viewpoint of time [131]

“Do not give away your body while your compassionate attitude is impure.”

B. Inappropriate giving from the viewpoint of purpose [131]

“Do not give away your body for some trifling purpose... If you are asked for your body, etc. for the purpose of engaging in wrongdoing such as killing and so forth that will harm yourself and others, do not give yourself away to another even temporarily.”

C. Inappropriate giving from the viewpoint of the one who asks for something [132]

“Do not give when asked by a mad person or by those whose minds are disturbed because their request is not well-considered.”

2. Detailed explanation about outer things which are and are not to be given [132]

A. How not to give outer things [132]

1. Inappropriate giving from the viewpoint of time [132]

“For instance, giving an afternoon meal to renunciates or those who have taken a one-day vow.”

2. Inappropriate giving from the viewpoint of the gift [133]

“For instance, giving garlic, onion, meat, alcohol, or something tainted by these to those who do not eat or drink these things or who have vows for which it is inappropriate to use these things, even though they may want to eat or drink them.”

3. Inappropriate giving from the viewpoint of the person [134]

“For instance, giving away a text to someone who asks for it while you have a desire to understand it – you still have not achieved the purpose of the text but are free from the defilement of stinginess about it.”

4. Inappropriate giving from the viewpoint of material things [135]

“For example, food and drink that have bugs.”

5. Inappropriate giving from the viewpoint of purpose [136]

“For instance, when you fulfil a request for poison, weapons, fire, or alcohol which is for harming either yourself or others.”

B. How to give outer things [136]

“You must give outer things if the timing is not prohibited by the Teacher with respect to the recipient, and if giving the gift to this person is appropriate and suitable.”

B. What to do if you are unable to give [137]

“If you are unable to give it away even though you reflect in this way, then inform the person who asks for it by means of the three things that they should know.”

C. Relying on the remedies for the hindrances to generosity [138]

1. The hindrance of not being used to generosity [139]

“The hindrance of not being used to generosity is when you do not want to give to those who ask for something, even though you have the material good to give... The remedy is... reflecting ‘If I do not make this gift, I will dislike generosity in my future life as well’. Then, be generous.”

2. The hindrance of declining fortune [139]

“The hindrance of declining fortune is when you do not feel generosity because of the sparseness of your resources... The remedy to this is to make a gift after you willingly accept the suffering of poverty, thinking, ‘Passing through cyclic existence I have not helped others and have experienced many unbearable sufferings...’”

3. The hindrance of attachment [139]

“The hindrance of attachment is when you do not feel generous inasmuch as you have become attached to extremely attractive and excellent material goods that are to be given... The remedy is to think, ‘This mistaken notion that thinks ‘I am happy’ with regard to what is by nature suffering will bring me suffering in the future’.”

4. The hindrance of not seeing the goal [139]

“The hindrance of not seeing the goal is when you do not have in view the benefit of reaching perfect enlightenment that is contingent on generosity, but instead consider the benefit of a great amount of resources and then give things away... The remedy is to consider how, in particular, your resources perish and leave you.”

2. The generosity which is just mental [140]

“The generosity which is just mental means that after you go to a quiet place and then withdraw your mind inward, with a pure motivation and faith from the depths of your heart, you construct with your thoughts an immeasurably vast quantity of diverse gifts, and you then imagine that you are offering them to all living beings.”

D. A summary [140]

“After you have taken the bodhisattva vows, make aspirational prayers with respect how to learn the practice of generosity on the high levels, and then train in these methods... Being mindful of the spirit of enlightenment – the basis of the bodhisattva deeds – cultivating it, aspiring to enlightenment, and making aspirational prayers to become enlightened form the root of all giving and the supreme kind of giving, so work hard at these.”

2. How to train in the perfection of ethical discipline [143]

A. What ethical discipline is [143]

“Ethical discipline is an attitude of abstention that turns your mind away from harming others and from the sources of such harm... Although ethical discipline does indeed have three divisions, it is explained in this context as the attitude of abstention in terms of the ethical discipline of restraint, the principal division.”

B. How to begin the cultivation of ethical discipline [144]

“Once you begin working for the welfare of others, value highly your ethical discipline. You need to sharply focus on safeguarding it and restraining your behaviour. Do not be lax... Develop a desire to safeguard your ethical discipline by meditating for a long time on the grave consequences of not safeguarding it and the benefits of safeguarding it.”

C. The divisions of ethical discipline [148]

“It is often said that the ethical discipline of restraint is the basis and source of the next two types of ethical discipline.”

1. The ethical discipline of restraint [148]

“The *Bodhisattva Levels* says the ethical discipline of restraint is the seven types of vows of individual liberation. [The seven types are according to the person receiving the vows: (1) fully ordained monk, (2) fully ordained nun, (3) novice monk, (4) novice nun, (5) novice about to become a nun, (6) layman, and (7) laywoman]”

2. The ethical discipline of gathering virtue [148]

“The ethical discipline of gathering virtue means that you focus on virtues such as the six perfections and then develop the virtues that you have not developed in your mind, do not spoil the ones that you have already developed, and increase both of these ever further.”

3. The ethical discipline of acting for the welfare of living beings [148]

“The ethical discipline of acting for the welfare of living beings means that you focus on the welfare of eleven sorts of living beings [see note 238], and then accomplish their aims in this and future lives in a suitable manner and without wrongdoing.”

D. How to practice [150]

“You practice the three types of ethical discipline in association with the six supremacies and the six perfections. When you practice in association with the six perfections, the generosity of ethical discipline is establishing others in ethical discipline after you have stabilized yourself in it. The remaining perfections are as presented before. [page 121]”

E. A summary [150]

“Not to weaken and to increase steadily the spirit of enlightenment – the basis of the bodhisattva deeds – is the root of engaging in deeds of ethical discipline and so forth. It is also the best way to desist from harming any living being. Aspire to practice the ethical discipline of those at high levels and then train your mind in it. Sincerely learn right now what to adopt and what to cast aside, starting with the ethical discipline of a beginning bodhisattva.”

3. How to train in the perfection of patience [152]

A. What patience is [152]

“Patience is disregarding harm done to you, accepting the suffering arising in your mind-stream, and being certain about the teachings and firmly maintaining belief in them.”

B. How to begin the cultivation of patience [153]

“Although there are many ways to cultivate patience, to begin I will explain the meditation on the benefits of patience and the faults of not being patient... When you rely on patience continually, you will not spoil your joyful attitude, so you are always happy even in this life. Moreover, patience stops miserable rebirths in future lives.”

C. The divisions of patience [159]

1. Developing the patience of disregarding harm done to do [159]

“These instructions provide techniques for defeating your greatest enemy, anger. They involve arguing with your own afflictions and looking within yourself. When you analyse well with discerning wisdom and stop anger with the many lines of reasoning, you prevent many different types of anger, and you become patient in many ways.”

A. Stopping impatience with those who harm you [159]

1. Stopping impatience with those who prevent your happiness and with those who cause you to suffer [160]

A. Showing that anger is unjustified [160]

1. On analysis of the object, anger is unjustified [160]

A. On analysis of whether the object has self-control, anger is unjustified [160]

“Your anger is unjustified because those who inflict harm do not have control over themselves, for, when the conditions and causes – seeds left by afflictions to which they were previously habituated, a nearby object, and erroneous conceptions – come together, they give rise to the thought to harm...Although many reasonings are set forth, it is easy to be certain of this one, and it is a very powerful remedy for anger.”

B. On analysis for either adventitiousness or inherency, anger is unjustified [162]

“The fault of doing harm to others either is or is not in the nature of living beings. If it is in their nature, it is wrong to get angry, just as it is wrong to get angry at fire for being hot and burning. Similarly, if it is adventitious, it is also wrong to be angry, just as when smoke and the like appear in the sky, it is wrong to be angry at the sky on account of these flaws of smoke and so forth. Thinking in this way, stop your anger.”

C. On analysis of whether the harm is direct or indirect, anger is unjustified [163]

“If you are angry at the agent of harm that directly inflicts the harm, you will have to be angry at the stick, etc. If you are angry at the harmdoer who indirectly inflicts harm, then, just as the person impels the stick and so forth to do the harm, so hostility impels the person. Therefore, get angry at the hostility.”

D. On analysis of the cause that impels the harmdoers, anger is unjustified [163]

“The experience of suffering produced by those who harm does not occur causelessly or from discordant causes, so it occurs from conventional causes; that is to say, from non-virtuous actions you have done in the past. Therefore, harmdoers are helplessly impelled to do harm by the power of your karma. Consequently, blame yourself, thinking, ‘This is my fault, and I am wrong to get angry at others,’ and stop your anger on all occasions.”

2. On analysis of the subject, anger is unjustified [164]

“The suffering generated by harm is the effect of previous bad karma; by experiencing it, you exhaust it. If you bear the suffering, you do not accumulate new sins and you greatly increase your merit. Therefore, view harmdoers as kind in that it is as though they are engaged in actions for the sake of clearing away your sins.”

3. On analysis of the basis, anger is unjustified [165]

A. Analysing the causes of harm and where the fault lies [165]

“If some people, out of confusion, harm others while others in confusion get angry with them, who is blameless and who is to blame?”

B. Analysing your commitment [165]

“It is wrong for even *sravakas*, who act for their own purposes alone, to be impatient and get angry. So of course it is wrong for me. I committed myself to achieving the benefit and happiness of all living beings when I generated the spirit of enlightenment.”

B. Showing that compassion is appropriate [166]

“Contemplate from the depths of your heart, ‘All living beings have been in cyclic existence since beginningless time, and there is not one who has not been my friend and relative – father, mother, etc. Being impermanent, they lose their lives and are miserable due to the three types of suffering. Crazed by the demon of the afflictions, they destroy their own welfare in this and future lives. I must generate compassion for them. How could it be right to get angry or to retaliate for harm?’”

2. Stopping impatience with those who prevent your praise, fame, or honour, and with those who have contempt for you, or say offensive or unpleasant things to you [166]

A. Stopping impatience with those who prevent three things – praise, fame, or honour [166]

1. Reflection on how praise and so forth lack good qualities [167]

“When others praise you and spread your fame, it serves neither of two purposes: for this life it does not bring you long life, health, and the like, and for future lives it does not bring merit and so forth.”

2. Reflection on how praise and so forth have faults [167]

“Develop disgust for praise and so forth, thinking, ‘Praise, fame, and honour distract my mind with the meaningless, destroy my disenchantment with cyclic existence, make me jealous of those with good qualities, and spoil my virtuous activities.’”

3. **The need to delight in those who prevent praise and so forth [167]**

“Stop anger and feel delight from the depths of your heart, thinking, ‘In that case, damage to my praise, fame, gain, and honour protects me from going to miserable realms, cuts the bonds of my attachment, and, like the Buddha’s blessing, blocks the door through which I am about to enter into suffering.’”

B. **Stopping impatience with those who do three things to you – have contempt for you, or say offensive or unpleasant things to you [168]**

“Prevent your unhappiness, thinking, ‘Since the mind is not material, it cannot be directly harmed by others. While the mind is indirectly harmed by directly harming the body, the body cannot be harmed by contempt, offensive speech, and unpleasant words. These harm neither body nor mind, so I should be delighted.’”

B. **Stopping both dislike for harmdoers’ attainments and delight in their troubles [170]**

“Contemplate as follows, ... ‘After I have said that I want all beings to become Buddhas, I get unhappy when harmdoers get even minimal prosperity or honour. This is extremely contradictory.’ You must eliminate your jealousy regarding any sort of attainment by other persons and delight in it from the depths of your heart. Otherwise your spirit of enlightenment and the achievement of the welfare and happiness of beings are nothing but words.”

2. **Developing the patience of accepting suffering [172]**

A. **The reason you must definitely accept suffering [172]**

“You must accept them when they arise, because if you do not do this, in addition to the basic suffering, you have the suffering of worry that is produced by your own thoughts, and then the suffering becomes very difficult for you to bear and since you are using a method to bring even basic sufferings into the path, you greatly lessen your suffering, so you can bear it. Therefore, it is very crucial that you generate the patience that accepts suffering.”

B. **The way to develop acceptance [173]**

1. **Rejecting the idea that when suffering occurs it is absolutely unpleasant [173]**

“If you can remedy a situation wherein suffering occurs, you do not need to feel that it is unpleasant. If you cannot remedy it, it is not helpful to find it unpleasant, so there is no need for, or effectiveness to, your displeasure; there is even a disadvantage. If you are very impatient, a slight suffering is extremely difficult to bear, whereas if you minimize your impatience, you can endure great suffering.”

2. **Showing that it is appropriate to accept suffering [173]**

A. **Reflecting on the good qualities of suffering [174]**

“Suffering has five good qualities: The good qualities of (1) spurring you on to liberation, (2) dispelling arrogance, (3) causing you to shun sin, (4) causing you to like cultivating virtue, and (5) producing compassion for those who wander in cyclic existence... From these five and what they indicate, recognize other good qualities on your own and then repeatedly train your mind to think, ‘This suffering is a condition that I want.’”

B. **Reflecting on the advantages of bearing suffering’s hardships [174]**

1. **Reflecting on the crucial benefits such as liberation, etc. [174]**

“Now that I know that I am engaged in virtue that will accomplish immeasurable benefits and happiness for myself and others, it is appropriate that I accept suffering a trillion times more than before – so of course I will accept sufferings smaller than that.”

2. **Reflecting on the benefit of dispelling immeasurable suffering [175]**

“Reflect well on the differences between short-term and long-term suffering, thinking ‘How excellent it would be if by means of this slight suffering of human hardship, I could permanently dispel the suffering of limitless cyclic existence in general and in particular the suffering of miserable rebirths such as the hells, etc.’ If you do this well, you produce fearless courage with respect to hardship.”

C. **How it is not difficult to bear suffering if you gradually grow accustomed to it, starting with the small [176]**

“There is nothing whatsoever that does not become easier through habituation... After you have conceived the armour-like thought to accept suffering, you gradually blend it with suffering, starting with small sufferings. When you do this, you steadily increase your capacity to accept suffering.”

C. **A detailed explanation from the viewpoint of the bases [177]**

“There are eight bases for accepting suffering: Acceptance of suffering that is based on (1) objects, (2) worldly concerns, (3) physical activities, (4) upholding the teaching, (5) living by begging, (6) fatigue due to perseverance, (7) acting for the welfare of living beings, and (8) current tasks.”

3. **Developing the patience of certitude about the teachings [178]**

“The patience of certitude about the teachings means generating the forbearance of conviction. It has eight objects: (1) the object of faith, (2) the object to be actualised, (3) the desired object, (4) the object to be adopted, (5) the object to be discarded, (6) the object of meditation that is the goal to be achieved, (7) the object of meditation that is the method for achieving the goal, and (8) the object of subsequent practice through study and reflection.”

D. **How to practice [179]**

“When practicing any kind of patience, you practice it in association with the six supremacies and all six perfections. These are the same as in the earlier explanation [page 121], except the generosity of patience means establishing others in patience.”

E. A summary [179]

“The recollection and cultivation of the spirit of enlightenment – the basis of the bodhisattva deeds – is the root of the wish to establish all beings in a patience wherein they have extinguished the contaminations. After you steadily increase this spirit, aspire to practice the patience of those at higher levels and then train your mind in it. . . Seeing that the essentials of the path are supreme, practice right now what you can, and inculcate the intention to practice even those you now cannot.”

4. How to train in the perfection of joyous perseverance [182]

A. What joyous perseverance is [182]

“When you have focused upon something virtuous, joyous perseverance is enthusiasm for it.”

B. How to begin the practice of joyous perseverance [182]

“Frequently reflect upon the benefits of joyously persevering and the faults of not doing so, for you will develop joyous perseverance if you habituate yourself to this reflection”

C. The divisions of joyous perseverance [184]

1. The actual divisions [184]

A. Armour-like joyous perseverance [184]

“The armour of being undaunted is the inexhaustible armour. . . If you can generate a single attitude such as this, you easily complete limitless accumulations and purify measureless obscurations. This becomes the most excellent cause for never turning back; by just being joyful no matter how long it takes, you quickly become a Buddha.”

B. Joyous perseverance of gathering virtue [185]

“The joyous perseverance of gathering virtue is applying yourself to the practice of the six perfections in order to properly accomplish them.”

C. Joyous perseverance of acting for the welfare of living beings [186]

“The joyous perseverance of acting for the welfare of living beings is properly applying yourself to the practice of the eleven activities for others’ welfare.”

2. The method of developing joyous perseverance [186]

“Since you produce, maintain, and increase all the virtues of the two collections in dependence upon joyous perseverance, the practice that develops it is very crucial.”

A. Eliminating unfavourable conditions that prevent joyous perseverance [186]

1. Identifying factors incompatible with joyous perseverance [186]

“There are two factors incompatible with entering the path: (1) not entering even though you see that you can do the practice, and (2) not entering because you become discouraged, thinking, ‘How can I do such a practice?’ . . . Within the first factor, there are two possibilities: (1) you have the laziness of procrastination, thinking, ‘There is still time’; and (2) you are not procrastinating but you are overwhelmed by your attachment to inferior and common activities.”

2. Employing the methods to eliminate the incompatible factors [187]

A. Stopping the laziness of procrastination [187]

“This involves the following three meditations: (1) you contemplate that the body you have at present is rapidly disintegrating, (2) that after death you will fall into miserable realms, and (3) that it will be difficult to find an excellent life such as this one again.”

B. Stopping attachment to ignoble activities [187]

“You see that the sublime teaching is the source of endless joy in this and future lives, and that you lose its great purpose when you are distracted in idle chatter and amusements which are the source of much pointless suffering later. Meditate on this and stop your attachment.”

C. Stopping discouragement or self-contempt [188]

“Since becoming discouraged and remaining so brings no benefit at all and only leads to further discouragement, understand well the methods for achieving enlightenment and uplift your mind. When you do this, the completion of your aims is as if in your hand.”

1. Stopping discouragement about the goal [188]

“Encourage yourself with this thought: ‘The Bhagavan – the authoritative person who speaks what is true and correct, never what is false or erroneous – said that even flies, etc. will attain enlightenment. That being so, why should I not attain it – so long as I do not give up persevering – inasmuch as human birth gives me an excellent basis and I have the mental capacity to analyse what to adopt and what to cast aside?’”

2. Stopping discouragement about the means to attain the goal [190]

“Some say that since practitioners of the perfection vehicle must give away their bodies and lives, they undergo torment and are on a path that is very difficult to follow. This text clearly refutes this, because you do not give away your body so long as you perceive it to be a difficult deed, but rather do so once it becomes very easy, like giving a vegetable.”

3. Stopping discouragement because wherever you are is a place to practice [191]

“Bodhisattvas have eliminated all sin; therefore, sin’s effect – the feeling of suffering – will not arise because they have stopped the cause... Given that their physical and mental bliss increases, they have no reason to become disheartened even though they are still in cyclic existence.”

B. Gathering the forces of the favourable conditions [195]

1. Developing the power of aspiration [195]

“As it is said that yearning acts as the basis for joyous perseverance, aspiration here refers to yearning... The way to develop aspiration is to meditate on how pleasant and unpleasant effects arise from virtuous and non-virtuous karma respectively. This is because it is taught that faith acts the basis for yearning.”

2. Developing the power of steadfastness [196]

“[This] means that you bring to conclusion, without turning back, anything at which you joyously persevere. First, do not try to do everything; examine the situation carefully. If you see that you can do it, you engage in it; whereas if you cannot do it, you do not engage in it. You should not even start in the first place things you will do for while and then discard... Committing yourself to do something but leaving it unfinished is a hindrance to your accomplishment of other projects.”

3. Developing the power of joy [199]

“The power of joy means that when you first engage in an activity, you do it joyfully, and once you have engaged, you have a sense of being insatiable in that you do not want to discontinue the activity... That is, you must be just as insatiable about what causes pleasurable results as you are about the results themselves.”

4. The power of relinquishment [201]

“If you become physically or mentally fatigued from your perseverance, you must rest for a while. Otherwise, you will become exhausted and very disheartened, thereby later preventing your joyous perseverance... The above presentation shows how to joyously persevere. Do not overexert yourself. You must avoid being overly intense and being overly relaxed, so make your effort continuous like a river.”

C. Based on the elimination of unfavourable conditions and the accumulation of favourable conditions, being intent on joyously persevering [201]

“You must study and discern well what bodhisattva training requires you to adopt and to cast aside, and then joyously persevere at continuously being mindful in all your conduct of what you have understood about what to adopt and what to cast aside. Hence, it is extremely important not to err about that which you are to persevere.”

D. How to use joyous perseverance to make the mind and body serviceable [205]

“The method for using joyous perseverance to make the mind and body serviceable is the power of mastery... Stopping all the inhibitions that prevent you from using your body and mind for virtuous activity, rise gladly to that task.”

D. How to practice [206]

“You must practice any kind of joyous perseverance in association with the six supremacies and all six perfections. The generosity of joyous perseverance is establishing others in joyous perseverance after you have stabilized yourself therein. The remaining perfections are in accord with the earlier explanation. [page 121]”

E. A summary [206]

“The recollection and cultivation of the spirit of enlightenment – the basis of the bodhisattva deeds – inspires you to train in order to set all living beings in joyous perseverance. So steadily increase this spirit, and then aspire to and train in the methods of joyous perseverance for those at high levels. Also, strive as you are able at the methods of learning joyous perseverance for a beginning bodhisattva. In particular, effectively stop the various forms of discouragement.”

5. How to train in the perfection of meditative stabilization [209]

A. What meditative stabilization is [210]

“Meditative stabilization is a virtuous, one-pointed state of mind that stays fixed on its object of meditation without distraction to other things.”

B. How to begin the cultivation of meditative stabilization [210]

“Think over the benefits of cultivating meditative stabilization and the faults of not cultivating it. I will explain this in the meditative serenity section.”

C. The divisions of meditative stabilization [210]

“If you subdivide meditative stabilization according to nature, there are two kinds: mundane and supramundane. . . If you subdivide it according to function, there are three kinds: (1) meditative stabilization that stabilises the body and mind in bliss within the present life, (2) meditative stabilization that achieves good qualities, and (3) meditative stabilization that carries out the welfare of living beings.”

D. How to practice [211]

“Whenever you practice any virtuous meditative stabilization, you do so in association with the six supremacies and all six perfections. The generosity of meditative stabilization is maintaining meditative stabilization yourself and then establishing others in it. Understand the other perfections from the earlier explanation. [page 121]”

E. A summary [211]

“The recollection and cultivation of the spirit of enlightenment – the basis of the bodhisattva deeds – is what inspires you to train in order to set all living beings in uncontaminated meditative stabilization. After you have increased the stability of this spirit, aspire to the high meditative stabilizations and train in these. Even if you are unable to fully develop the meditative stabilizations, you must strive to train from time to time in one-pointed concentration to whatever extent you are able.”

6. How to train in the perfection of wisdom [211]

A. What wisdom is [211]

“In general, wisdom is what thoroughly discerns the ontological status of the object under analysis, but in this context wisdom refers to proficiency in the five topics of knowledge and the like. [Buddhist knowledge, grammar, logic, technical arts and medicine]”

B. How to begin the cultivation of wisdom [211]

“The way to begin the generation of wisdom is to contemplate the benefits of generating wisdom and the faults of not generating it. Since I will explain the wisdom of reality – selflessness – in the insight section, I will not elaborate on it here. . . You must be convinced that wisdom and the study that causes it are indispensable for proper practice. Moreover, unless you reach certainty about the need for analytical meditation when you practice, you will have a very hard time getting anywhere.”

C. The divisions of wisdom [222]

1. Wisdom that knows the ultimate [222]

“Wisdom that knows the ultimate cognizes the reality of selflessness, either by means of a concept or in a direct manner.”

2. Wisdom that knows the conventional [222]

“Wisdom that knows the conventional is wisdom that is proficient at the five topics of knowledge.”

3. Wisdom that knows how to act for the welfare of living beings [222]

“Wisdom that knows how to act for the welfare of living beings knows the way to accomplish blamelessly the welfare of beings in their present and future lives.”

D. How to practice [223]

“When you develop the three types of wisdom, you do so in association with the six supremacies and all six perfections. The generosity of wisdom is establishing others in wisdom after you have stabilized yourself in it. The remaining perfections are as presented before. [page 121]”

E. A summary [223]

“Even if you have the wisdom that perceives emptiness, it does not become a bodhisattva deed without the spirit of enlightenment, so steadily increase the spirit of enlightenment – the basis of the bodhisattva deeds. Next, aspire to the wisdom of those at high levels and then train your mind in it. From this moment you must strive to produce the three types of wisdom – the method for completing the peerless, great collection of sublime wisdom – and you must study.”

B. Training in the four ways to gather disciples that help others to mature [225]

1. What the four ways to gather disciples are [225]

“(1) *Generosity* is as earlier explained in the section on this perfection. (2) *Pleasant speech* is teaching the perfections to disciples. (3) *Working at the aims* is setting disciples to work on the aims as they have been taught, or involving them in correctly taking up these aims. (4) *Consistency of behaviour* is stabilizing yourself in the very aims in which you have established others, and then training in them.”

2. The reason they are stipulated as four [226]

“Know the ways to gather disciples to be four: a method to give benefit, involving others in comprehending the teachings, involving them in engaging, and involving yourself.”

3. Their functions [226]

“By the first they become vessels; by the second they take interest; by the third they practice; by the fourth they train.”

4. The need for those who gather a following to rely on them [227]

“Because the Buddhas have declared these four ways to gather disciples to be what achieves the aims of all disciples and to be the superb method, those gathering a following must rely on them.”

5. A somewhat elaborate explanation [227]

“There are two types of pleasant speech. Pleasant speech associated with worldly customs, means that you first assume a clear expression free of anger, give a smile, and then please living beings in worldly ways, such as inquiring after their health, etc. Pleasant speech associated with presenting the perfect teaching, means that you instruct living beings in the teaching for their benefit and happiness...Consistency of behaviour means that you maintain practices equal to or superior to those in which you establish others.”

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2. In particular, how to train in the last two perfections [13]

A. The benefits of cultivating serenity and insight [13]

“All of the mundane and supramundane good qualities of the Mahayana and Hinayana are the result of serenity and insight... You must achieve all good qualities of the two vehicles through both (1) sustained analysis with discerning wisdom and (2) one-pointed focus on the object of meditation.”

B. How serenity and insight include all states of meditative concentration [15]

“Serenity and insight are the sublime core at which gathers all that the Buddha says about the limitless states of meditative concentration in Mahayana and Hinayana.”

C. The nature of serenity and insight [15]

“After you have quelled the distraction of external objects, you rest in a delighted and pliant mind which naturally and continuously engages an internal object of meditation. This is called meditative serenity. While you remain in serenity, any analysis of that very object is called insight...Meditative serenity (*zhi gnas*) is your mind quieting (*zhi*) movement toward external objects, and then abiding (*gnas*) on an internal object of meditation; insight (*lhag mthong*) is superior (*lhag pa*) ie. special, seeing (*mthong*).”

D. Why it is necessary to cultivate both [19]

“When looking for the profound meaning, you will clearly see reality if you have both the wisdom that unerringly discerns the meaning of reality and an unmoving attention that stays as you wish on the object of meditation... This is why you need both serenity and insight.”

E. How to be certain about their order [23]

“If you have not attained serenity, then no matter how much analytical meditation you do with discerning wisdom, in the end you will not be able to generate the delight and bliss of physical and mental pliancy. Once you have attained meditative serenity, then even the analytical meditation of discerning wisdom will culminate in pliancy. Hence, insight requires meditative serenity as a cause... This is the sequence in which you newly develop serenity and insight for the first time; later the sequence is indefinite.”

F. How to train in each [28]

1. How to train in meditative serenity [28]

A. Relying on the preconditions for meditative serenity [28]

“At the outset, the yogi should rely on the preconditions for serenity, which make it possible to achieve serenity quickly and comfortably. There are six... In particular, the most important ones are good ethical discipline, seeing desires as disadvantageous, and dwelling in an appropriate area.”

1. Dwelling in an appropriate area [28]

“The area should have five attributes: (1) easy access, (2) being a good place to live, (3) being on a good piece of ground, in that it does not breed sickness, (4) offering good companionship, and (5) being well-situated inasmuch as there are not many people about in the day and little noise at night.”

2. Having little desire [29]

“You do not strongly crave more or better robes, etc.”

3. Being content [29]

“You are always content to have even the poorest robes, etc.”

4. Completely giving up many activities [29]

“You give up base activities such as buying and selling; you also abandon excessive socializing with householders and renunciates.”

5. Pure ethical discipline [29]

“You do not violate precepts... If you do violate them through carelessness, you restore them promptly with regret in accordance with the teaching.”

6. Completely getting rid of thoughts of desire, etc. [29]

“Eliminate all thoughts of desire and such by meditating with the thought ‘Since it is certain that I will be shortly separated from all these things, why should I crave them?’”

B. How to cultivate serenity on that basis [30]

1. Preparation [30]

“Practice the six preparatory teachings explained above and especially cultivate the spirit of enlightenment for a long time.”

2. Actual practice [31]

A. Meditative posture [31]

“Take up an eight-point posture on a very soft and comfortable seat: (1) cross your legs using either the full-lotus or half-lotus posture as appropriate, (2) your eyes should be neither wide open nor too far closed, (3) sit with your awareness directed inward, keeping your body straight, (4) keep your shoulders straight and even, (5) do not raise or lower your head nor turn it to one side, (6) set your teeth and lips in their usual, natural positions, (7) draw your tongue up close to your upper teeth, and (8) let your inhalation and exhalation flow effortlessly, ever so gently, without any sense that you are moving it here or there.”

B. The meditative process [31]

“Broadly speaking, the ‘stages of the path’ tradition indicates that you achieve serenity by means of the eight antidotes which eliminate the five faults.”

1. How to develop flawless concentration [33]

A. What to do prior to focusing the attention on an object of meditation [33]

“If you cannot stop the laziness of being disinclined to cultivate concentration and of enjoying things that are not conducive to it, from the outset you will not gain entry into concentration...Therefore, it is most crucial to stop laziness in the beginning... You need a continuous, intense yearning that is intent on concentration. As a cause for this yearning you need steadfast confidence in and fascination with the good qualities of concentration.”

B. What to do while focusing on an object of meditation [34]

1. Identifying the object of meditation upon which your attention is set [34]

A. A general presentation of objects of meditation [35]

1. The objects of meditation themselves [35]

A. Universal objects of meditation [35]

1. Discursive images [35]

“When you carry out analysis while observing an object, then the image is discursive since analytical thinking is present.”

2. Non-discursive images [35]

“When you stabilize your mind without analysis while observing an object, the image is said to be non-discursive since analytical thinking is absent.”

3. The limits of existence [35]

“The limits of existence are posited with reference to the observed object. There are two: the diversity of phenomena and the real nature.”

4. Achievement of your purpose [36]

“[This] is posited in terms of the result... You direct your attention to the images of those objects of meditation. Then you stabilize on them, become accustomed to them, and, by virtue of repeated practice, you become free from your dysfunctional tendencies, undergoing a fundamental transformation.”

B. Objects of meditation for purifying your behaviour [36]

“[They] purify behaviour in which attachment or the like [hatred, delusion, pride, or discursiveness] is predominant. There are five such objects of meditation. Respectively they are: (1) ugliness, (2) love, (3) dependent-arising, (4) differentiation of constituents, and (5) inhalation and exhalation.”

1. Ugliness [36]

“The objects of meditation on ugliness consist of the thirty-six uglinesses pertaining to the body... When an aspect of impurity and ugliness arises in your mind, keep your attention on it.”

2. Love [36]

“Love involves focusing on friends, enemies, and persons toward whom you have neutral feelings, and having an attitude – at the level of meditative equipoise – of providing them with help and happiness... Love refers both to the subjective attitude and to the object.”

3. Dependent-arising [36]

“All there is in the past, the present, and the future is dependent-arising in which effects that are mere phenomenal factors simply arise based on mere phenomenal factors. Apart from these, there is no performer of actions or experiencer of their effects. Focus your attention on this fact, and hold it there.”

4. Differentiation of constituents [36]

“You differentiate the factors of the six constituents – earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness. Focus your attention on them, and hold it there.”

5. Inhalation and exhalation [36]

“Focus your attention without distraction by counting and watching the breath move in and out.”

C. Objects of meditation for expertise [36]

“When you use these for cultivating serenity, you keep your attention on just one of the perspectives in which the aggregates, etc. may be known.”

1. The aggregates [36]

“The five aggregates...Expertise in these is knowing that, apart from these aggregates, the self and what pertains to the self does not exist.”

2. The constituents [37]

“The eighteen constituents...Expertise in them is knowing the causal conditions by which those constituents arise from their own seeds.”

3. The sources [37]

“The twelve sources...Expertise in these is knowing that the six internal sources are the dominant condition for the six consciousnesses, that the six external sources are the object-conditions, and that the mind which has just ceased is the immediately preceding condition.”

4. Dependent-arising [37]

“The twelve factors...Expertise in them is knowing that they are impermanent, suffering, and devoid of self.”

5. What is and is not possible [37]

“Refers to such things as it being possible for a pleasant fruition to arise from a virtuous action, but not possible for a pleasant fruition to arise from a non-virtuous action. Expertise in this is knowing that things are this way.”

D. Objects of meditation for purifying afflictions [37]

“Purifying afflictions means either reducing the strength of the seeds of the afflictions or else utterly eradicating the seeds. In the former case, the objects of meditation are the comparative coarseness of each lower stage and comparative calmness of each higher stage... In the latter case, the objects of meditation are impermanence and the other of the sixteen aspects of the Four Noble Truths.”

2. Who should meditate on which objects [39]

“If you have a predominance of discursiveness, then you definitely have to meditate on the breath...If you are a person whose behaviour is balanced, or one whose afflictions are slight, then it suffices to keep your attention on whichever of the aforementioned objects of meditation you like.”

3. Synonyms of the object of meditation [41]

“Also that image is called ‘image’; it is also called ‘sign of concentration’, ‘door to concentration’, ‘basis of attention,’ and ‘appearing image’”.

B. Identifying objects of meditation for this context [42]

“There is no single, definite object; individuals require their particular object of meditation...To keep your attention on the physical form of the Buddha gives rise to limitless merit...It has advantages such as not losing your mindfulness of the Buddha as you die. And when you cultivate the mantra path, it heightens deity yoga, etc...If you cultivate concentration by moving to many dissimilar objects of meditation, it will be a great impediment to achieving serenity.”

2. How to focus your mind on the object of meditation [47]

A. The flawless method [47]

“The concentration that you will accomplish here has two special features: vivid intensity – an intense mental clarity – and non-discursive stability, staying one-pointedly on the object of meditation...Two things are needed for this: (1) a technique in which your attention is not distracted from whatever it had as its original object of meditation, and (2) an accurate awareness of whether you are distracted and whether you are becoming distracted. The former is mindfulness; the latter is vigilance...What is mindfulness? In regard to a familiar object, your mind is not forgetful and operates without distraction.”

B. Eliminating flawed methods [50]

“If you use an intense cognition that is too tight, you may have clarity, but excitement will predominate so that it will be hard to develop stability. If you sustain your meditation after becoming greatly relaxed, then you may have stability, but laxity will predominate so that there is no vivid

intensity. It is very hard to find the right balance of tension so as to be neither too taut nor too relaxed, and for this reason it is hard to develop a concentration free from laxity and excitement.”

C. The length of sessions [54]

“On this matter, all earlier gurus of the various Tibetan lineages say that you have to do numerous short sessions...If you have great forgetfulness ensuing from distraction, as well as vigilance so weak that it does not quickly recognize laxity and excitement, then your session must be short. If it is hard for you to forget the object and you can quickly notice laxity and excitement, it does not matter if the session is a little long.”

C. What to do after you focus on an object of meditation [57]

“What do you do to develop such concentration? It develops as a result of using the eight antidotes in order to eliminate the five faults...Among the remedies for those faults there are four remedies – confidence, yearning, effort, and pliancy. Then the remedies for forgetfulness, laxity and excitement, non-application, and application are, respectively, mindfulness, vigilance that recognizes laxity and excitement, the intention of application, and calmly established equanimity.”

1. What to do when laxity and excitement occur [57]

A. Using the remedy for failing to recognize laxity and excitement [58]

1. The defining characteristics of laxity and excitement [58]

“What is excitement? It is an unquiet state of mind, considered a derivative of attachment, which pursues objects and acts as an impediment to meditative serenity...As for its definition, most yogis among these snowy peaks seem to consider laxity to be a lethargic state of mind that stays on its object of meditation without scattering elsewhere but lacks limpid clarity. This is incorrect, for lethargy is said to cause laxity, so the two are distinct...What is lethargy? The heaviness of the body and the heaviness of the mind which are the unserviceability of the body and the unserviceability of the mind. Laxity means that your mind’s way of apprehending the object of meditation is slack, and it does not apprehend the object with much vividness or firmness.”

2. The method for developing vigilance that recognizes laxity and excitement [60]

“While you stay mindful as explained above, hold your attention on the object while continuously monitoring whether there is scattering elsewhere.”

B. Using the remedy for failing to try to eliminate them even when they are recognized [62]

“When you make no effort to stop those two as soon as they arise, your complacency or failure to apply yourself constitutes an extremely serious problem for your concentration. If you practice this way, your mind will form bad habits and it will be extremely difficult to develop a concentration free of laxity and excitement.”

1. Intention and the way it stops laxity and excitement [62]

“What is intention? It is the mental activity of applying your mind...It here refers to an intention that applies your mind to the elimination of laxity or excitement when one of them occurs...When your mind becomes lax, then meditate on the idea of light or bring to mind the most delightful things, such as the qualities of the Buddha...If excitement occurs, calm it by bringing impermanence to mind.”

2. The underlying causes of laxity and excitement [66]

“What are the signs of laxity? Not restraining the sensory faculties; not eating in moderation; not making an effort to practice; ongoing lack of vigilance; over-sleeping; being lazy...What are the signs of excitement? The first four points above; behaving with attachment; being distracted by any sort of exciting topic...”

2. What to do when laxity and excitement are absent [67]

“At this point, it is a fault of concentration to apply or exert yourself, so cultivate equanimity as a remedy for this...What is equanimity? As your mind attends to objects of meditation associated with serenity and insight, it is focusing with calm settling, spontaneous mental engagement, a sense of mental well-being, effortless mental functioning after becoming serviceable, and a mental balance free from the afflictions.”

2. The stages in which the mental states are thereby developed [73]

“After you have established yourself in the preconditions explained earlier, you will achieve serenity if you cultivate continual joyous perseverance for accomplishing concentration. But if after you practice this only a few times you discard the practice again, it is said that you will not accomplish serenity.”

A. The actual stages in which the mental states develop [73]

1. Mental placement [73]

“This entails thoroughly withdrawing your attention from all outside objects and directing it inwardly to the object of meditation.”

2. Continuous placement [74]

“Your attention that was initially directed to the object of meditation does not stray elsewhere, but is continuously set upon the object of meditation.”

3. Patched placement [74]

“If your attention is drawn away by forgetfulness and distracted outward, you recognize this and again fix it upon the object of meditation.”

4. Close placement [74]

“With this mental state you have eliminated distraction and with effort place your attention upon the object of meditation.”

5. Taming [74]

“Reflecting upon the advantages of concentration, you take delight in concentration.”

6. Pacification [74]

“Regarding distraction as a fault, you quell any dislike for concentration.”

7. Complete pacification [74]

“This entails the fine pacification of the occurrence of attachment, melancholy, lethargy, sleepiness, etc.”

8. One-pointed attention [75]

“This entails exerting effort so that you engage in the object of meditation effortlessly.”

9. Balanced placement [75]

“This refers to the equanimity that occurs when your mind becomes balanced.”

B. The process of achieving them with the six forces [75]

“There are six forces: the force of (1) hearing [accomplishes mental placement], (2) reflection [continuous placement], (3) mindfulness [patched placement and close placement], (4) vigilance [taming and pacification], (5) enthusiasm [complete pacification and one-pointed attention], and (6) acquaintance [balanced placement].”

C. How the four attentions are involved in this [78]

“There are four types of attention: (1) tight focus [in mental placement and continuous placement], (2) intermittent focus [in patched placement, close placement, taming, pacification and complete pacification], (3) uninterrupted focus [in one-pointed attention], and (4) spontaneous focus [in balanced placement].”

C. The measure of successful cultivation of serenity [79]

1. A presentation of the dividing line between accomplishing and not accomplishing meditative serenity [80]

A. A presentation of the actual meaning [80]

“If pliancy is not achieved, this would be an approximation of meditative serenity, but would not be genuine serenity... What is pliancy? It is a serviceability of the body and mind due to the cessation of the continuum of physical and mental dysfunctions, and it has the function of dispelling all obstructions.”

B. The marks associated with attention, and the elimination of qualms [85]

“These are the marks and signs... (1) achievement in small measure of the four: your mind belongs to the form realm, physical pliancy, mental pliancy, and one-pointedness of mind, (2) the ability to purify afflictions, (3) once your mind is established inwardly, meditative equipoise and physical and mental pliancy arise ever so swiftly, (4) the five obstructions, such as sensual desire, for the most part do not occur, and (5) when you rise from meditative equipoise, you still possess physical and mental pliancy to some extent... Do not regard every occurrence of bliss, clarity, and non-discursive awareness as meditation on emptiness.”

2. A general presentation of the way to proceed along the path on the basis of meditative serenity [91]

“Producing such concentration in your mind-stream is for the purpose of generating insight that overcomes afflictions... There are two kinds of insight: (1) the insight proceeding by the mundane path, which eliminates manifest afflictions, and (2) the insight proceeding by the supramundane path, which eradicates the seeds of afflictions. There is no means of proceeding on a higher path other than these two... So this serenity is extremely important as the basis for proceeding along the path of all yogis.”

3. A specific presentation of the way to proceed along the mundane path [96]

“Nowadays there is no one who uses these methods to accomplish the actual meditative stabilizations and so on, so there is no one to lead you astray.”

A. The need to achieve meditative serenity before proceeding on the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness [96]

“Without achieving serenity you have no way to produce access to the first meditative stabilization... If you adhere to the explanations in the classic texts, there are very few who achieve even serenity, let alone insight.”

B. On the basis of meditative serenity, the way to freedom from attachment to the desire realm [98]

“For the sake of freedom from the desire realm, diligent yogis use the seven types of attention... The seven types of attention are: the attention of (1) the discernment of characteristics, (2) arising from belief, (3) isolation, (4) delight or withdrawal, (5) analysis, (6) final application and (7) the result of final application.”

2. How to train in insight [107]

“As I have explained, meditative serenity has the features of (1) *non-discursiveness* – ie. when your attention is intentionally set on a single object, it stays there; (2) *clarity* – ie. it is free from laxity; and (3) *benefit* – ie. delight and bliss. However, you should not be satisfied with just this. Rather, developing the wisdom that properly determines the meaning of reality, you must cultivate insight...The darkness of confusion is not overcome until the knowledge of reality dawns, but it is overcome when that knowledge arises.”

A. Fulfilling the prerequisites for insight [111]

“You should listen to the stainless textual systems, relying on a scholar who accurately understands the key points of the scriptures...For without a decisive *view* of how things exist, you cannot develop *insight* that knows the real nature, emptiness.”

1. Identifying scriptures of provisional and definitive meaning [112]

“Those that teach the ultimate are considered scriptures of definitive meaning and those that teach conventionalities are considered scriptures of provisional meaning...A text is called definitive, or of definitive meaning, because it cannot be interpreted to mean something else...You should understand that a sutra or a treatise may still be definitive even if what it teaches in a few isolated phrases cannot be read literally when stripped from the context of the general system surrounding it in that scripture.”

2. The history of commentary on Nagarjuna’s intended meaning [115]

“The master Ye-shay-day explains that the masters – the noble [Nagarjuna] and his spiritual son [Aryadeva] – did not make clear in their Madhyamaka treatises whether external objects exist...Inasmuch as the commentaries of master Buddhapalita and the glorious Candrakirti are seen to be excellent explanations of the texts of the noble Nagarjuna and his spiritual son Aryadeva, I will follow them in making determinations about what the noble Nagarjuna intended.”

3. How to determine the philosophical view of emptiness [119]

A. The stages of entry into reality [119]

“First, having contemplated in dismay the faults and disadvantages of cyclic existence, you should develop a wish to be done with it. Then, understanding that you will not overcome it unless you overcome its cause, you research its roots. You will thereby become certain from the depths of your heart that the reifying view of the perishing aggregates, or ignorance, acts as the root of cyclic existence. Next, see that overcoming the reifying view of the perishing aggregates depends upon developing the wisdom that knows that the self, as thus conceived, does not exist. After you have thus arrived at the philosophical view that discerns that the self and that which belongs to the self lack even a shred of intrinsic nature, you should accustom yourself to that; this will lead to the attainment of the embodiment of truth.”

B. The actual determination of reality [125]

1. Identifying the object to be negated by reason [126]

A. Why the object of negation must be carefully identified [126]

“Without contacting the entity that is imputed, you will not apprehend the absence of that entity...Therefore, it is crucial to identify the object of negation carefully, for if it is not identified, you will certainly develop either a nihilistic view or an eternalistic view.”

B. Refuting other systems that refute without identifying the object to be negated [126]

“To avoid missteps in reaching the Madhyamaka view, it is most crucial to refute wrong ideas about the object of negation.”

1. Refuting an overly broad identification of the object to be negated [127]

A. Stating others’ assertions [127]

“Most of those who today claim to teach the meaning of Madhyamaka say that all phenomena ranging from forms through omniscient consciousness are refuted by rational analysis...Thus, they say that the argument refuting ultimate production also refutes conventional production.”

B. Showing that those assertions are wrong [129]

1. Showing that those systems contradict the unique feature of Madhyamaka [129]

A. Identifying the distinguishing feature of Madhyamaka [129]

“The distinguishing feature of Madhyamaka is the admissibility of all the teachings about cyclic existence and nirvana – the agents and objects of production, refutation, proof, and so forth – in the absence of even a particle of essential or intrinsic nature...Thus Nagarjuna says that it is precisely because of being dependent-arising that phenomena are empty of intrinsic existence...Since certainty about appearances and certainty about emptiness almost never develop together, it is extremely difficult to find the Madhyamaka view.”

B. How those systems contradict this distinguishing feature of Madhyamaka [139]

“In brief, if you claim that the absence of intrinsic existence contradicts bondage, freedom, production, cessation etc. then it will be impossible – in terms of either truth – to give the full and correct teachings on nirvana and cyclic existence within emptiness, the emptiness of intrinsic existence. You have therefore denied the unique feature of Madhyamaka.”

C. How a Madhyamika responds to those who negate the distinguishing feature of Madhyamaka [141]

“Nagarjuna the Protector responds that since the fallacy that the Madhyamikas were going to adduce has been advanced against them, they will turn it around and use it against the objectors...In taking these positions, they [the objectors] undeniably fall to both extremes of permanence and of annihilation.”

2. Showing that the Madhyamaka critique does not eradicate conventional existence [155]

“How does one determine whether something exists conventionally? We hold that something exists conventionally (1) if it is known to a conventional consciousness; (2) if no other conventional valid cognition contradicts its being as it is thus known; and (3) if reason that accurately analyses reality – that is, analyses whether something intrinsically exists – does not contradict it. We hold that what fails to meet those criteria does not exist.”

A. You cannot eradicate conventional phenomena by refuting them through investigating whether they are capable of withstanding rational analysis [156]

“*Question:* If these things cannot withstand rational analysis, then how is it possible for something to exist when reason has refuted it? *Reply:* You are mistakenly conflating the inability to withstand rational analysis with invalidation by reason...To ask whether something can withstand rational analysis is to ask whether it is found by a line of reasoning that analyses reality...The fact that this line of reasoning does not find them does not entail that it refutes them.”

B. You cannot eradicate conventional phenomena by refuting them through investigating whether valid cognition establishes them [163]

“*Qualm:* How can Candrakirti’s *Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’* be correct when it says, ‘The world is not valid in any way’? *Reply:* That passage refutes the notion that the world’s visual consciousness and such are valid with regard to reality. It does not refute their validity regarding all objects...What Candrakirti intended in [the other] passage is that the sensory consciousnesses are not valid with regard to the intrinsic character of the five objects because they are deceived in relation to the appearance of intrinsic character in the five objects...He need not refute the position that they are simply valid cognitions.”

C. You cannot eradicate conventional phenomena by refuting them through investigating whether they are produced in one of four alternative ways [185]

“Because we assert mere production, we do not assert real production. Since we do not assert real production, why would we use reasoning that analyses production as to which it is – production from self, other, and so forth? For, we are not required to assert that production withstands rational analysis.”

D. A refutation of all four parts of a tetralemma is not a legitimate critique of conventional phenomena [189]

“‘Thing’ has two meanings. Between these two, we refute the assertion that things essentially exist in terms of both truths; however, at the conventional level we do not refute things that can perform functions...Thus, you should understand that all methods for refuting the tetralemma are like this, involving some qualifier such as ‘essentially’.”

2. Refuting an overly restricted identification of the object to be negated [195]

“Make your principal task to determine that an object as conceived by innate ignorance does not exist...If you do not understand this, and fail to eradicate the perspective of innate ignorance, then, when you refute a personal self, you will only refute a self that is permanent, unitary, and independent. When you refute an objective self, you will only refute things that are imputed by the advocates of philosophical tenets – such as objects that are partless particles.”

C. How our system identifies the object of negation [203]

1. The actual identification of the object to be negated [203]

“In general, with regard to objects of negation, there are objects negated by the path and objects negated by reason. As to the first...these objects of negation do occur among objects of knowledge, for, if they did not exist, then all embodied beings would escape cyclic existence without exertion... Thus he [Nagarjuna] speaks of misconceptions as objects of negation and he also treats the intrinsic nature that they apprehend as an object of negation, making two kinds of objects to be negated. However, the primary object of negation is the latter. For, in order to stop an inaccurate consciousness, you must first refute the object which that consciousness apprehends...This latter object of negation cannot be among objects of knowledge because, if it did exist, then it could not be refuted.”

2. When to add qualifications to other objects of negation [215]

“In any other case whatsoever, where Madhyamikas do conventionally posit the object, if you fail to add a qualification when refuting it, then the fallacies you adduce will equally apply to your own critique, and hence it will be only a sham of a refutation. Thus, it must be added.”

3. Whether to add the qualification ‘ultimate’ to the object of negation [217]

“If you in no way accept the addition of the qualification ‘ultimately’ to the negation, then you will have no way to distinguish the two truths, and you will not be able to say ‘Ultimately, it is such and such; conventionally, it is such and such.’ There is no explanation of such a Madhyamika anywhere so it simply a wrong idea.”

2. Whether to carry out that refutation with a Svatantrika procedure or with a Prasangika procedure [225]

A. The meaning of Svatantrika and Prasangika [225]

“He states that Madhyamikas should employ *reductio ad absurdum* (*prasanga*) arguments, not autonomous (*svatantra*) arguments, as their method of instilling the Madhyamaka view in others. In this way Candrakirti elucidates the Prasangika position through a refutation of autonomous argument [the Svatantrika position].”

1. The refutation of others’ positions [226]

A. What others believe [226]

“There have been many ways of defining *reductio* and autonomous arguments; who could explain all of them? That is why I focus only on a few of them.”

[1. The first misinterpretation [226]]

“Even when you determine that you have established it by valid cognition, it is possible that you have been deceived. Therefore, since there are no validly established reasons, the debate is founded on what the parties accept as valid. Hence, it is proper to refute opponents in terms of what they accept, even though valid cognition does not establish anything for either party... This is what Jayananda says. Evidently he believes that if a proof uses a reason for which valid cognition has established the three criteria, then it is an autonomous argument; if a proof is made just on the basis of the parties accepting the fulfilment of the three criteria, then it is a *reductio* argument.”

[2. The second misinterpretation [228]]

“Evidently they [some followers of Jayananda] believe that even though they [Prasangikas] have nothing to prove from their own side, they can merely refute others’ positions; that even though they have beliefs, they have no theses; and that they have no position of their own, avoiding theses such as the absence of intrinsic existence when analysing the ultimate. Apparently, they consider as Svatantrikas those who do not believe that there is nothing at all that can be asserted and who therefore, when analysing the ultimate, assert the predicate ‘lacks intrinsic nature’ and establish that as their position. Those who do not assert such predicates, but engage only in the refutation of what others accept, they consider Prasangikas.”

[3. The third misinterpretation [230]]

“If you have such a thesis, then you have to accept the examples and reasons that prove it, and in that case you are a Svatantrika. Therefore, Prasangikas have no system of their own at all... So there is no such thing as even refuting some other position.”

[4. The fourth misinterpretation [231]]

“Accepting conventionally, without analysis, the valid cognitions and cognized objects familiar to the world, we Madhyamikas [some earlier Tibetan scholars] demonstrate that things lack true existence with sound reasoning by making a proof statement to the opponent. Even so, we are not Svatantrikas, for we posit the lack of true existence by means of valid cognitions that are familiar to the world, unanalysed.”

B. Refuting those positions [233]

1. Refuting the first misinterpretation [233]

“If you treat the mere acceptance of a position as justification for it, then you cannot refute the opponent, for the opponent’s assertion of a point would establish it, and neither side has any valid cognition that can refute it.”

2. Refuting the second misinterpretation [235]

“When you use a *reductio* argument to eliminate the tenets of the other party, then the refutation of the existence of intrinsic nature should itself establish the absence of intrinsic nature... There is no third alternative.”

3. Refuting the third misinterpretation [236]

“Those who claim that the Madhyamikas have no theses, even conventionally, have not properly identified the object that reason negates. Hence, they refute the opponent with arguments that refute intrinsic existence, and then, when the situation is reversed, they see those arguments as applying in exactly the same way to their own system as well. In setting forth their own system they have no idea of how to avoid error.”

4. Refuting the fourth misinterpretation [249]

“This fourth system... maintains that in the system of the master Candrakirti, when Madhyamikas use other-centred arguments to prove something to essentialist opponents, they use reasons that meet the three criteria and that are established for both systems. This is incorrect because (1) the *Clear Words* specifically refutes this view, and (2) if you hold such a view, even if you do not call that ‘a reason based on real fact’, it is inevitably an autonomous reason.”

2. Setting forth our own position [251]

“Explaining how Prasangikas set forth their own system via a refutation of Svatantrika brings about an understanding of both systems, so this is how I will proceed.”

A. The actual refutation of autonomous argument [252]

1. Demonstrating a fault that pertains to the position – namely, that the basis or subject of an autonomous syllogism is not established [252]

A. What Bhavaviveka believes [252]

“We must use the *mere* eye or *mere* form as the subject. Why? Because it must be established as commonly appearing to both parties, inasmuch it is the basis that both the Madhyamikas and essentialists analyse in order to see whether there is a specific quality, such as ‘being produced from itself’. This is what Bhavaviveka thinks. ‘To establish as appearing in common’ means that the proponent and the opponent use the same kind of valid cognition to establish it.”

B. Refuting that [253]

1. The meaning is incorrect [253]

“We Prasangikas say that the kind of valid cognition that establishes the subject for the essentialist opponent will not work for the Madhyamika opponent. Why? Since no phenomenon can, even conventionally, have a nature that is established by way of its intrinsic character, there is no valid cognition that establishes such a thing.”

2. The example cited is inappropriate [258]

“Here in the case of the syllogism proving that the eye is not ultimately produced, the advocates of emptiness and the advocates of non-emptiness do not both accept that eye, as a generality, exists only conventionally, nor do they both accept that it exists ultimately. That is why the example is inappropriate.”

2. Demonstrating that the reason also is not established [262]

“The reason, ‘because it exists’, is not established, for there is no valid cognition that can attest to its being established as appearing in common to both parties.”

B. Why the faults we find in autonomous arguments do not apply to us [267]

“The reason others have those faults lies in their acceptance of autonomous arguments. Since we do not accept autonomous arguments, we do not have those faults... So, when the reason that is used to prove the probandum is established for both parties with the kind of valid cognition explained previously, this is an autonomous [or ‘*svatantra*’] reason. When the reason is not established in that way and the probandum is proven using the three criteria that the other party, the opponent, accepts as being present, this constitutes the Prasangika method. It is quite clear that this is what the master Candrakirti intended.”

B. Which system to follow so as to develop the view in your mind-stream [274]

“The great Madhyamikas who follow the noble father Nagarjuna and his spiritual son Aryadeva split into two different systems: Prasangika and Svatantrika. Which do we follow? Here, we are followers of the Prasangika system... I accept that system.”

3. How to use that procedure to generate the right philosophical view within your mind-stream [277]

A. How to determine that there is no self in the person [278]

1. Actually determining that the self lacks intrinsic existence [278]

A. Giving the example [278]

“Taking as an example the imputation of a chariot in dependence upon its parts, such as its wheels, the Buddha states that the self or living being is also imputed in dependence upon the aggregates. Therefore, I will first explain the example of the chariot.”

1. Showing that the chariot exists imputedly, without intrinsic existence [278]

“A chariot is neither asserted to be other than its parts, nor to be non-other. It does not possess them. It does not depend on the parts and the parts do not depend on it. It is neither the mere collection of the parts, nor is it their shape... A chariot is a mere imputation since it does not exist in these seven ways.”

2. Eliminating objections to that [283]

“*Essentialists’ objection*: When you use reason to analyse the question of intrinsic nature, searching for the chariot in the seven ways just explained, and you do not find it, then the chariot must not exist. *Reply*: When reason fails to find it in those seven ways, does this refute the chariot? How could it? Reasoning that analyses whether things intrinsically exist does not establish the assertion of the chariot; rather, leaving reasoned analysis aside, it is established by a mere, unimpaired, ordinary, conventional – i.e. worldly – consciousness. Therefore, the way a chariot is posited is that it is established as existing imputedly.”

3. How to establish the chariot under various names [284]

“In relation to parts and components such as wheels, a chariot is established as the referent of the conventions ‘whole’ and ‘composite’. Likewise, it is designated with the nominal convention ‘agent’ with reference to its activity of appropriating wheels, etc. and with the nominal convention ‘appropriator’ in relation to the appropriated parts.”

4. The advantage that you find the view quickly by using this example [285]

“This means that it is through such analysis of the chariot that you quickly fathom the deepest meaning of reality – that there is no intrinsic nature... In brief, there are three advantages to presenting this topic as explained above, beginning with the chariot: (1) the advantage that it is easy to refute the eternalistic view that superimposes intrinsic existence on phenomena, (2) the advantage that it is easy to refute the nihilistic view that dependent-arising is invalid in the absence of intrinsic existence, and (3) the yogi’s investigative process, which establishes the first two advantages by carrying out analysis in just such a manner.”

B. Showing what the example illustrates [289]

1. The example illustrates how the person lacks intrinsic nature [289]

“Just as a chariot does not intrinsically exist in any of the seven ways, but is still posited in dependence upon its parts, the self does not intrinsically exist in any of the seven ways – one with the aggregates, different from the aggregates, and so forth – yet is still imputed in dependence upon the aggregates.”

A. The refutation of the position that the self is one with the aggregates [290]

“If the self were one with the aggregates, there would be six fallacies: (1) it would be pointless to assert a self; (2) there would be many selves; (3) object and agent would be one; (4) actions that were performed would perish; (5) the effects of actions not done would be encountered; (6) and the statements by the Buddha about remembering past lives would be invalid. So do not assert that the self and the aggregates are one.”

B. The refutation of the position that the self is different from the aggregates [296]

“If the self were essentially different from the aggregates, it would not have the aggregates’ characteristics of arising, remaining, and disintegrating... You should repeatedly practice so as to reach solid certainty that arguments such as these contradict the existence of a self that is essentially different from the aggregates. For, if you do not develop genuine certainty about the critique of the positions of one and different, then even though you may decide that the person lacks intrinsic existence, it will be just an unproved proposition; hence, you will not obtain the authentic view.”

C. How those arguments also refute each of the remaining positions [298]

“Since they are not intrinsically different, they do not exist as basis and dependent... Is a mere group of aggregates the self? This is also incorrect because the self is said to be imputed in dependence upon the five aggregates and it is not tenable for the basis of imputation to be the object imputed.”

D. How the person appears like an illusion based on that refutation [300]

“To be certain that the person is an illusory or false appearance, you need both the undeniable appearance of the person to a conventional consciousness and the ascertainment by reasoned knowledge that the person is empty of essential or intrinsic existence... If you understand this vital point, you will have solid understanding of how the force of cultivating space-like emptiness in meditative equipoise gives rise to illusion-like emptiness in the post-equipoise state.”

2. The example illustrates how the person is established under various names [307]

“When a self is imputed in dependence upon the five aggregates, the six constituents, and the six sources, they are the appropriated and the self is the appropriator... The self is the agent because it takes up the aggregates and so forth; the aggregates and so forth are the objects because they are what it adopts.”

2. Teaching that what the self owns is also thereby established as lacking intrinsic existence [307]

“When it has negated the intrinsic existence of the self, how could reason find ‘the eye that belongs to the self,’ etc.? Accordingly, what the self owns also lacks intrinsic existence.”

3. How to apply those lines of reasoning to other phenomena [309]

“When reasoning that searches for intrinsic nature searches in the seven ways by analysing whether pots and such are one with or different from their forms, they are not found in those seven ways in terms of either of the two truths. Instead, they are posited from the perspective of a non-analytical conventional consciousness.”

B. How to determine that there is no self in phenomena [311]

“There are many ways to determine that objects lack intrinsic self... I will give a brief explanation of the refutation of the four types of production.”

[1. Refutation of production from self [312]]

“If a seedling were produced from itself, its production would be pointless... a seedling would have already come into being... Production would also be endless because if an already-arisen seed were to arise again, the very same seed would have to arise repeatedly. In that case, there is the fallacy that since the seed itself is arising continuously, there is never a chance for the production of seedlings and such.”

[2. Refutation of production from another [313]]

“If effects were produced from intrinsically different causes, then thick darkness could arise even from a flame because those two are other. Furthermore, all things – whether or not they are effects – would be produced from all things – whether or not they are causes – because they are alike in their otherness.”

[3. Refutation of production from both self and another [314]]

“Since there is neither production from self alone nor production from another alone, there is no production from the two together.”

[4. Refutation of causeless production [315]]

“In brief, if something were produced causelessly, then it would have to be produced from everything, or else it would never be produced. Worldly beings, in order to obtain a desired effect, would not have to work to create the causes of that effect, and everything would be senseless.”

[5. How to infer that intrinsic production does not exist [315]]

“Thus, you establish that production from these four extremes does not exist. This entails the non-existence of intrinsic production, as proven above in the section on precluding other possibilities beyond these four. Therefore, you can use these [arguments] to become certain that things do not intrinsically exist... This indicates how, as an effect of having stated *reductio ad absurdum* arguments, you can develop an inference based on a syllogistic reason.”

C. How to eliminate obscurations by becoming accustomed to those views [320]

“After you have seen that the self and that which belongs to the self lack even the slightest particle of intrinsic nature, you can accustom yourself to these facts, thereby stopping the reifying view of the perishing aggregates. When you stop that view, you will stop the four types of grasping explained earlier. When you stop these, existence conditioned by attachment will not occur; hence, there will be an end to the rebirth of the aggregates conditioned by existence; you will attain liberation... What are cognitive obscurations in this [Prasangika] system? Certain latent propensities are firmly set in the mind-stream through its being beginninglessly suffused with strong attachment to things regarded as intrinsically existent; these latent propensities give rise to errors of dualistic appearance, so that things appear to be intrinsically existent when they are not. These errors are cognitive obscurations.”

B. Classifications of insight [327]

“Kamalasila’s second *Stages of Meditation* sets forth three requisites for insight: (1) reliance on an excellent being, (2) genuinely pursuing extensive study of explanations of reality, and (3) appropriate reflection. By relying upon these three, you will discover the view – the understanding of the two selflessnesses. The cultivate insight. What insights should you cultivate? For an ordinary being, complete insight is the cultivation of the fourfold, the threefold, and the sixfold insight.”

C. How to cultivate insight [330]

1. The refutation of other systems [330]

A. The first refutation [331]

“There are those who claim that one meditates on the meaning of selflessness by merely holding the mind in check and not allowing it to scatter to the two selves, yet without discovering the correct view which uses reason to refute the object of the conception of self. And there are those who claim that ordinary beings meditate on selflessness with a consciousness that is free from conceptual thought. Those who make these claims go far astray from the path of scripture and reason.”

B. The second refutation [337]

“Although you have found the view, when sustaining the view you must meditate on emptiness by remembering the meaning which the view previously determined. Simply placing your mind in a state of non-conceptual suspension does not constitute meditation on emptiness.”

C. The third refutation [338]

“After you have analysed the view, you stabilize your mind on the conclusion that phenomena do not intrinsically exist. If it then moves slightly, its placement on the view is lost. At that point, keeping your mind in a generalized condition of thoughtlessness does not constitute meditation on emptiness.”

D. The fourth refutation [338]

“To claim that [simply remembering the view and then performing only stabilizing meditation on the view] is meditation on emptiness is not correct because, if it were, there would be only serenity which performs stabilizing meditation on emptiness; there would be no analytical meditation, which is the method for sustaining insight.”

2. The presentation of our own system [339]

“You must find the view of selflessness. Mere understanding is not enough; when sustaining the view, you must remember it and analyse it, and you must meditate on what you have analysed. In order to do that, you must have both forms of meditation: non-analytical stabilization on the meaning and analysis with discriminating wisdom.”

A. Why both stabilizing meditation and analytical meditation are necessary [339]

“To achieve the non-conceptual sublime wisdom, you alternate (1) developing certainty, profound certainty, that there is not even a particle of true existence in any thing or non-thing whatsoever, and (2) stabilizing your mind on the conclusion thereby reached. You cannot achieve such wisdom by simply constricting mental activity without any analysis of an object... This is because it is merely not thinking of true existence; it is not knowledge of the absence of true existence... Therefore, you must distinguish between (1) not thinking about true existence, and (2) knowing the lack of true existence. Remember this critical point.”

B. Overcoming objections to that [344]

“In order to develop that sort of wisdom at a higher stage, your meditation must now precisely analyse the object of the conception of self and realise that it does not exist. Therefore, although this conceptual, it is a cause which is very conducive to the non-conceptual sublime wisdom... If you, like Ha-shang, claim that all thoughts whatsoever bind you in cyclic existence, then you must accept that you are bound in cyclic existence by all thoughts such as, ‘I have received personal instructions on the non-conceptual; I will meditate on this.’ I refuted this at length earlier.”

C. A summary of the key points for sustaining insight and serenity [351]

“You alternate between stabilising meditation and analysis with discriminating wisdom. If stability decreases due to excessive analytical meditation, do more stabilising meditation and restore stability. As stability increases under the influence of extensive stabilising meditation, if you lose interest in analysis and thus fail to analyse, then your ascertainment of reality will not become firm and powerful... Therefore, cultivate a balance of serenity and insight by doing extensive analytical meditation.”

D. The measure of achieving insight through meditation [354]

“Once you develop pliancy, it is genuine insight... Pliancy is also induced by a previously attained and continuing serenity, so insight is not simply a matter of having pliancy. What is it? Insight is when the power of analytical meditation itself is able to induce pliancy... Your meditation will constitute an insight that combines stabilizing meditation and analytical meditation on the real nature only when you meet the standard of having found an authentic, accurate understanding of the philosophical view of either of the two selflessnesses and after having focused and meditated upon this. This is what distinguishes genuine insight; it cannot be distinguished by any other means.”

3. How to unite serenity and insight [357]

“In order to unite them, you must definitely attain the two. Also, from the time that you first attain insight, you will have that union. So it is said that the way to attain that union is to perform analytical meditation based upon earlier serenity, sequentially developing the four attentions – such as tight focus – here at the time of insight. Thus, when you have developed the fourth attention [spontaneous focus] as explained above, this constitutes union.”

B. How to train specifically in the Vajrayana [363]

“After you have trained in this way in the paths common to both sutra and mantra, you must undoubtedly enter the mantra path because it is very much more precious than any other practice and it quickly brings the two collections to completion... If you are to enter it, you must first please the guru – even to a greater extent than explained earlier – with deeds such as respect and service and with practice that is in accordance with the guru’s words... Then, at the outset, your mind should be matured through the ripening initiation as explained in the source tantra. You should then listen to the pledges and vows to be taken, understand them, and maintain them... It says in the highest yoga tantra texts that those who do not maintain their vows, those who have inferior initiation, and those who do not understand reality do not achieve anything despite their practice... In order to cultivate the mantra path someone who keeps the pledges and vows should at the outset meditate on the stage of generation, the complete divine wheel as explained from a source tantra. The unique object to be eliminated on the tantric path is the conception of ordinariness which regards the aggregates, constituents, and sensory sources as common. It is the stage of generation itself that eliminates this and transforms the abodes, bodies, and resources so that they appear as special. The conquerors and their children continually bless the person who clears away the conception of ordinariness in this way; such a person easily brings to completion the limitless collections of merit, thereby becoming a suitable vessel for the stage of completion. This person should then meditate on what appears in the source tantras on the stage of completion... I have described a mere fraction of what is involved in entering into the mantra path. Understand this in detail by using works on the stages of the mantra path.”

“If you train in this way, you will train in the entirely complete corpus of the path, which includes all the vital points of sutra and mantra. As a result, your attainment of leisure in this lifetime will have been worthwhile, and you will be able to extend the Conqueror’s precious teaching within both your own and others’ minds.”

Colophon: All the above outlines and quotes were extracted from The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment translated by the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee (New York, Snow Lion Publications, 2000 (Volume 1), 2004 (Volume 2), 2002 (Volume 3)).