

# THE BLAZE OF NON-DUAL BODHICITTAS

STUDY AND MEDITATION MANUAL



Dedicated for the long life and swift fulfillment of the wishes of  
**HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA**



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TIBET HOUSE

*Cultural Centre of His Holiness the Dalai Lama*  
New Delhi

**THE BLAZE OF NON-DUAL  
BODHICITTAS**

**A MANUAL FOR STUDY, REFLECTION AND  
MEDITATION ON BODHICITTA AND THE  
WISDOM OF EMPTINESS**

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# CONTENTS

Preface	xi
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## I. Daily Recitation and Practice

1. Preliminary Prayers	3
2. Blessing the Speech [Tib. <i>ngag byin rlabs</i> ]	9
3. The Noble Sūtra Remembering the Three Jewels [Skt. <i>ārya ratnatraya anusmṛti sūtra</i> ; Tib. <i>'phags pa dkon mchog rjes su dran pa'i mdo</i> ]	12
4. Praise to Śhākyamuni Buddha [Tib. <i>rgyun chags gsum pa</i> ]	14
5. The Drumbeat of Truth: Supplication to Śhākyamuni Buddha [Tib. <i>bden pa'i rnga sgra</i> ]	16
<i>His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama</i>	
6. Sun Illuminating the Threefold Faith: Praise to the Seventeen Nālānda Masters [Tib. <i>dpal nalanda' pangrub bchu bdun gyi gsol 'debs</i> ]	19
<i>His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama</i>	
7. Meditation on the Four Immeasurables [Skt. <i>chatvāribrahmavihārāḥ</i> ; Tib. <i>tshad med bzhi</i> ]	26
8. The Heart Sūtra: The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra [Skt. <i>ārya bhagavati prajñāpāramitā hṛidaya sūtra</i> ; Tib. <i>shes rab snying po</i> ]	29
9. Seven Points for Training the Mind [Tib. <i>blo sbyong don bdun ma</i> ]	32

*Geshe Chekawa Yeshe Dorjé*

10. Eight Verses for Training the Mind 35  
 [Tib. *blo sbyong tshig brgyad ma*]  
*Geshe Langri Thangpa*
11. Seven Limb Puja: Excerpt from the King of Prayers - 37  
 The Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice of  
 Samantabhadrā  
 [Skt. *samantabhadrācaryā praṇidhānaraja*;  
 Tib. *'phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*]
12. Short Mandala Offering 40  
 [Tib. *man dal bsdu pa*]
13. The Foundation of All Good Qualities 42  
 [Tib. *yon tan gzhir gyur ma*]  
*Lama Tsongkhapa*
14. Generating the Mind of Consummate Yoga 45  
 [Tib. *thams cad rnal 'byor gyi sems bskyed pa*]
15. Mantra Recitations 54

## II. Selected Texts for Study, Reflection and Meditation

16. The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra 59  
 “Wisdom at the Hour of Death”  
 [Skt. *āryātyayajñānanāmamahāyānasūtra*;  
 Tib. *phags pa 'da' ka ye shes zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*]
17. The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “Dependent Arising” 61  
 [Skt. *āryapratītyasamutpādanāmamahāyānasūtra*;  
 Tib. *'phags pa rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*]
18. The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Rice Seedling” 63  
 [Skt. *āryasālistambhanāmamahāyānasūtra*;  
 Tib. *'phags pa sa lu'i ljang pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*]

19. Three Principal Aspects of the Path	77
[Tib. <i>lam gtso rnam gsum</i> ]	
	<i>Lama Tsongkhapa</i>
20. The Sūtra on Impermanence	80
[Skt. <i>anityatāsūtra</i> ; Tib. <i>mi rtag pa nyid kyi mdo</i> ]	
21. Heart-Spoon: Encouragement through Recollecting Impermanence	82
[Tib. <i>snying gi thur ma mi rtag dran bskul ma</i> ]	
	<i>Pabongka Rinpoche</i>
22. In Praise of Dharmadhātu	89
[Skt. <i>dharmadhātustava</i> ; Tib. <i>chos dbyings bstod pa</i> ]	
	<i>Aryā Nāgārjuna</i>
23. In Praise of Dependent Origination	104
[Tib. <i>rtan 'brel bstod pa</i> ]	
	<i>Lama Tsongkhapa</i>
24. Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way	113
[Skt. <i>mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> ; Tib. <i>dbu ma rtsa ba shes rab</i> ]	
	<i>Aryā Nāgārjuna</i>
Chapter 1 Examination of Conditions	113
Chapter 18 Examination of Self and Phenomena	115
Chapter 22 Examination of the Tathagata	117
Chapter 24 Examination of the Four Noble Truths	119
Chapter 25 Examination of Nirvana	125
Chapter 26 Examination of the Twelve Links of Samsaric Existence	126
25. A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment	129
[Skt. <i>bodhipathapradīpa</i> ; Tib. <i>byang chub lam sgron</i> ]	
	<i>Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna</i>
26. Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva	139
[Tib. <i>rgyal sras lag len so bdun ma</i> ]	
	<i>Gyalsé Thogmay Sangpo</i>
27. A Commentary on the Awakening Mind	147
[Skt. <i>bodhicittavivāraṇa</i> ; Tib. <i>byang chub sems 'grel</i> ]	
	<i>Aryā Nāgārjuna</i>

28. Hymn to [The Buddha] - The World Transcendent	164
[Skt. <i>lokātistava</i> ; Tib. <i>’jig rten las ’das pa’i bstod pa</i> ]	
<i>Aryā Nāgārjuna</i>	
29. A Compilation of Verses from Sutras and Treatises on the Benefits of Generating Bodhicitta	168
30. The Benefit of the Awakening Mind, Chapter One: A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life	170
[Skt. <i>bodhisattvacharyāvatāra</i> ; Tib. <i>byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa</i> ]	
<i>Bodhisattva Shantideva</i>	
31. Recognising the Mother: A Song on the Experience of the Middle Way View	176
[Tib. <i>lta mgur a ma ngos ’dzin</i> ]	
<i>Changkya Rolpai Dorjé</i>	
32. A Song of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment	181
[Tib. <i>lam rim nyams mgur</i> ]	
<i>Lama Tsongkhapa</i>	
33. Rain Shower of Feats: A Song of the Four Mindfulnesses as a Guide to the View of the Middle Way	189
[Tib. <i>lta mgur dran pa bzhi ldan</i> ]	
<i>His Holiness the VII Dalai Lama</i>	
34. Noble Pursuit: Revealing One’s Personal Realisations	191
[Tib. <i>rtogs brjod ’dun legs ma</i> ]	
<i>Lama Tsongkhapa</i>	
35. The Three Essential Points	200
[Tib. <i>snying po don gsum</i> ]	
<i>Yogi Mitra Joki</i>	
36. Summary of the Stages of Meditation: An Excerpt from the Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment, Vol III	202
<i>Lama Tsongkhapa</i>	

37. Dependent Origination and Emptiness: A Compilation of Excerpts from Sutras and Treatises	208
38. Ultimate Reality in Madhyamaka Philosophy: Excerpt from Illuminating the Clear Intention [Tib. <i>dbu ma dgongs pa rab gsal</i> ]	215
	<i>Lama Tsongkhapa</i>
39. The Ganga Mahāmudrā: Pith Instruction given by Master Tilopa to Naropa [Skt. <i>mahamudraupadhaysham</i> ; Tib. <i>phyag chen gang ga ma</i> ]	217
	<i>Saint Tilopa</i>
40. A Guide to the Two Truths [Skt. <i>satya-dvaya-avatara</i> ; Tib. <i>bden pa gnyis la 'jug pa</i> ]	223
	<i>Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna</i>

### III. Additional Prayers, Vows and Commitments

41. Guru Pūjā [Tib. <i>bla ma mchod pa</i> ]	231
	<i>Panchen Lobsang Choegyen</i>
42. Mahāyāna Eight Precept Ceremony [Tib. <i>theg chen gso sbyong</i> ]	253

### IV. Daily Dedication Prayers

43. Song of Immortality: Prayer for the Long Life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama [Tib. <i>rgyal ba'i zhabs rten rab 'byams rgyal ba ma</i> ]	261
	<i>Ling Rinpoche &amp; Trijang Rinpoche</i>
44. King of Prayers: The Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice of Samantabhadra [Skt. <i>samantabhadrācaryā praṇidhānaraja</i> ; Tib. <i>'phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po</i> ]	265

45. Dedication, Chapter Ten: A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life [Skt. <i>bodhisattvacharyāvatāra</i> ; Tib. <i>byang chub sems dpai' spyod pa la 'jug pa</i> ] <i>Bodhisattva Shantideva</i>	275
46. Lamrim Dedication Prayer [Tib. <i>lam rim smon lam</i> ] <i>Lama Tsongkhapa</i>	284
47. Ngag-rim Dedication Prayer [Tib. <i>sngags rim smon lam</i> ] <i>Lama Tsongkhapa</i>	286
48. Additional Dedication Prayers	288
49. Food Offering Prayers	292
<b>V. Appendix</b>	
50. The Staircase to Emptiness: Meditation on Ultimate Reality <i>Geshe Dorji Damdul</i>	297
51. Methods to Cultivate Bodhicitta	312
52. Categories of Bodhicitta	314
53. Wheel of Life: The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination [Skt. <i>bhavachakra</i> ; Tib. <i>srid pa 'khor lo</i> ] <i>Geshe Dorji Damdul</i>	319
54. Shamatha Meditation on the Breath	332
55. Shamatha Meditation: Nine Stages of Training the Mind	335
Glossary	341
Endnotes	358
Respect for Sacred Books	390

## PREFACE

His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama's profound veneration of the great Nalanda Buddhist tradition shines through in his ode to its saint-scholars, *Sun Illuminating the Threefold Faith: Praise to the Seventeen Nalanda Masters*<sup>1</sup> composed by him in 2001. In this beautiful offering, he recounts the specific and most important contributions of each of the masters who follow Buddha Shakyamuni, in the Sanskrit tradition. They include Arya Nagarjuna, followed by Bodhisattva Aryadeva, Acharyas Buddhapalita, Bhavaviveka and Chandrakirti, Bodhisattva Shantideva, Abbot Shantarakshita and others down the centuries. In this masterful rendition, His Holiness not only demonstrates his own command over the Nalanda Buddhist tradition by indicating key achievements of each master in a succinct and deeply insightful verse, but also, records it for posterity.

Reading this remarkable composition, one gains an understanding of the range and profundity of the areas in which the erstwhile Nalanda Buddhist tradition made discoveries and advancements of a significant nature, which continue to remain relevant in contemporary times in the areas of philosophy, science, logic, debate, epistemology and psychology. Uniquely, for centuries the *Nalanda university*<sup>2</sup> maintained a reputation not just as a centre of excellence for religious study, but also for academic learning, predating the emergence of famous universities in Europe. It is little wonder then that the effulgence of this intellectually rigorous, yet spiritually profound tradition, naturally radiated outwards from India, to China, Tibet, Vietnam, Korea, Japan and beyond, with living lineages thriving up until today.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama considers the Nalanda tradition to be a treasure that not only belongs to India, the place of its origin in



ancient times, but also, a treasure of and for the world. Amongst the many reasons he cites, two are especially pertinent for this publication. First, His Holiness maintains that whereas the practice element of any tradition is a deeply personal and private matter, the scientific and philosophical elements may be studied and adopted by anyone, including non-believers. This is especially true of the Nalanda tradition, with its rich legacy in philosophy, psychology, logic, debate and so on.

Second, His Holiness argues that much as we lay emphasis on the hygiene of the body, in today's troubled world, the hygiene of emotions is equally to be observed, maintained and prioritised. In order to do this, one needs a map of the mind, which – like some other ancient Indian traditions – the Nalanda School excels in providing. On a personal note, His Holiness has often shared with public audiences that although his life has been far from easy, he has maintained equanimity and retains a good night's sleep, due to his training in the teachings of the Nalanda masters. At an experiential level, he can therefore vouch for their efficacy and in this sense, the teachings of the Nalanda tradition are of an extremely practical and useful nature - neither out of date nor merely intellectual, rather a key to attaining ultimate happiness.

His Holiness has frequently mentioned that Indians were the Gurus and Tibetans the diligent *chelas*, who from the time of Abbot Shantarakshita's arrival in Tibet in the 8th century CE, faithfully adopted and took great care of this treasure, to this day. He is now deeply committed to the rejuvenation of the Nalanda tradition in its place of birth; because, to loosely paraphrase him - it is not out of attachment to the Nalanda tradition itself but because it provides to all those in whose fortunate ears it falls, the opportunity to be of immense service to others. In his view, this living treasure of the Nalanda tradition must be kept alive and once more take root in India, since like a wish-fulfilling tree, it dispels the sufferings of migratory beings circling in samsara. Indeed, being prescient as

ever, His Holiness would like to see its great gems taken out of the religious context where necessary and be placed within the reach of common people regardless of their religious or non-religious orientations and beliefs, so that it can be of greatest benefit to the maximum number of beings.

Tibet House is deeply honoured to participate in furthering His Holiness's exalted vision. To this end, it launched a Master's Course in Nalanda Buddhist Philosophy in December 2016, which aims to cover all the major topics of study undertaken in Tibetan monastic universities, albeit in a shorter time frame of six years. His Holiness inaugurated the Masters Course by gracing its opening ceremony held at Thyagaraj Stadium, New Delhi on 9 December 2016. We are immensely grateful for his blessings, marking an auspicious start to this unique endeavour which has been warmly welcomed and generated international interest attracting about 450 participants from 41 countries, largely comprised of people with very busy lives and yet, are deeply committed to the study and practice of the Nalanda Buddhist tradition.

Alongside the important task of introducing the Master's Course in Nalanda Buddhist Studies, this book is another attempt by Tibet House to bring the experiential aspect of the Nalanda Buddhist teachings to a broad audience, in order to bring them closer to its essence, as indicated in the *Heart Sutra mantra*:<sup>3</sup>

TADYATHĀ (OM) GATE GATE PĀRAGATE PĀRASAMGATE  
BODHI SVĀHĀ

The initial idea for this study, reflection and meditation manual took seed in 2004, when I first started to translate for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I found many of the Nalanda texts frequently taught by His Holiness to be very useful; it occurred to me that a compilation of these in the English language would greatly benefit many seekers who might otherwise lack the opportunity to access them. It is only now, after many years of sharing the

working drafts of this manual at Tibet House in New Delhi, as well as in many other places that the idea has finally come to fruition.

The book is divided into five parts:

- I. Daily Recitation and Practice
- II. Selected Texts for Study, Reflection and Meditation
- III. Additional Prayers, Vows and Commitments
- IV. Daily Dedication Prayers
- V. Appendix

Part I and Part IV serve as a useful guide for all, who have an inclination towards dharma practice, but do not know how to start and design a daily practice session. It is also useful for those seekers who might be misguided and surmise that dharma practice comprises only of mantra recitation and so forth, thereby missing its essence.

Part II helps strengthen the practitioner's dharma practice on the basis of selected compositions of great scholars and yogis. The actual breakthrough in the mental transformation happens through changes in the thought process, for which study and reflection are the cornerstones. Any of these profound texts and short extracts may be selected for study, reflection or meditation, on an on-going basis.

Part III reinforces and rejuvenates dharma practice and to that end, may be undertaken on a regular or occasional basis.

Part V introduces the reader to meditation practices, both shamatha (calm abiding) and vipasyana (special insight), including meditation on the breath, as well as methods to cultivate bodhicitta and the wisdom of emptiness. While there are many texts on the wisdom of emptiness, the meditation included here is designed for all those who are not thoroughly introduced to this subject and still want to familiarise and habituate themselves with the wisdom of emptiness.

Brief notes, Endnotes and Glossary have been added to help the readers unfold the meanings of the texts with ease.

In working on this manual, I would like to most importantly acknowledge the generous contributions of all the translators whose works are included herein. I would like to thank the editors who have worked tirelessly for the book: Tarani Mehta, Tia Sinha and Prof. Kaveri Gill. I would also like to thank the staff of Tibet House: Tenzin Pema, Tenzin Dhedon, Tsamchoe Dolma, Tenzin Choeden, Deepesh Thakar la and Ngawang Tenpa. The final version of this book is only possible due to the tremendous dedication and efforts of Pooja Dabral (PhD candidate), conjoined with the collective efforts of all the individuals mentioned above. I would like to thank Ravi Sabarval and Sidhartha Sabarval of Timeless Publication for the cover design and layout of the book. I thank all the people without whose precious contributions, this manual would have never come to completion, and be able to be of benefit to the wider public.

This book is dedicated to the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the swift fulfillment of all his wishes. May all sentient beings be benefitted!

Geshe Dorji Damdul  
Director  
Tibet House,  
Cultural Centre of His Holiness the Dalai Lama  
6th July 2017, Year of the Fire Rooster



# **DAILY RECITATION AND PRACTICE**



## PRELIMINARY PRAYERS

*Begin your practice by setting a proper motivation,<sup>4</sup> which consists of three parts, while being mindful of both aspects - the object being visualised and the manner in which you visualise it:*

- 1) Refuge field: In the space in front of you, visualise Buddha Shakyamuni, His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama and all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (or any other enlightened beings you regard with veneration). They are looking upon you with immense kindness and unconditional love, just as a mother looks upon her only child.*
- 2) Bodhicitta field: Visualise seated on either side of you, your kind parents - mother on the left and father on the right. Additionally, you are accompanied by all other dear mother sentient beings, leaving none aside and you are leading them in this practice.*
- 3) The Purpose of the Practice: To manifest the Buddha nature within you, which is the ultimate source of happiness, by removing the two mental obscurations - afflictive obscurations (consisting of the afflictions of negative emotions, contaminated karmas and their corresponding active seeds) and cognitive obscurations (the subtle stains i.e. inactive latencies of the afflictions and contaminated karmas).*

*Recite the following verses while mentally invoking their profound meaning and associated experiences:*

*Gang gi thugtsay nyer soong nay  
Tawa thamchay pangpay chir  
Dhampay choe ni ton zay pa  
Goutam dhay la chagtsel lo* (x3)

*Enthused by great compassion,  
You taught the immaculate Dharma  
To dispel all perverted views.  
To you, the Buddha Gautama, I pay homage.<sup>5</sup>* (x3)



## Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhicitta

*Sangghay choe dhang tsog ghi chog nam la*  
*Jangchub bhardhu dhag ni kyab soo chi*  
*Dhag ghi jin sog ghi pay tsok nam ki*  
*Dro la phen chir sangghay drup par shog.* (x3)

I go for refuge until I am enlightened  
To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.  
By my accumulations of the practice of giving and so forth,  
May I become a Buddha to benefit all sentient beings. (x3)

*Ghang gi ten ching drelwar jung*  
*Gagpa maypa khay maypa*  
*Chaypa maypa tak maypa*  
*Ongwa maypa dro maypa*  
*Thathay dhon min dhon chik min*  
*Troepa nyershi shi tenpa*  
*Zogpay sangghay ma nam ki*  
*Dhampa dhay la chagtsel lo*

In dependent origination,  
There is no ceasing, no arising,  
No annihilation, no permanence,  
No coming, no going,  
No separateness and no sameness.  
I prostrate to the consummate Buddha,  
The supreme among all teachers,  
The one who taught (this) peace,  
Which is freed of elaborations.<sup>6</sup>

*Nyenthoe shiwa tsol nam kunshay nyi ki nyershi tri zay gang yin dhang*  
*Dro la phenpar jay nam lamshay nyi ki jigten dhondrub zay pa ghang*  
*Gang dhang yangdhag dhen pay thub nam nampa kundhen natsog*  
*dhi soong pa*

*Nyenthoe jangchub sempay tsok chay sangghay ki ni yum dhay la  
chagtsel lo*

I prostrate to the mothers of the Hearers, the Bodhisattvas and the  
Buddhas,  
Who, through the knowledge of all, lead Hearers seeking  
pacification to complete peace,  
Who, through the knowledge of paths, cause those helping  
migrators to achieve the aims of the world,  
And who through the possession of Omniscience, help Subduers  
expound a variety of teachings.<sup>7</sup>

*Tsaymar gyurpa dro la phen shay pa  
Tonpa dhayshek kyob la chagtsel lo*

The One who has transformed into the Reliable Guide, motivated  
by altruism to benefit sentient beings,  
The Teacher, Sugata, and Protector, to You, I make prostrations.<sup>8</sup>

*Togpay drawa nam sel ching  
Zab ching gyachay ku ngawa  
Kuntu sangpo oser dhag  
Kun nay tro la chagtsel lo*

The One who has eliminated the web of conceptualisations,  
And is endowed with the divine bodies of the vast and the profound,  
Who eternally shines forth the forever noble light rays,  
To you [the Buddha] I make prostrations.<sup>9</sup>

Inspired by wisdom and compassion  
Today in the Buddha's presence  
I generate the mind of full awakening  
For the benefit of all sentient beings.

## The Essence of the Dependent Origination Mantra

[Skt. *pratityasamutpāda hridaya*; Tib. *rten 'brel snyingpo mantra*]

OM YE DHARMĀ HETU PRABHAVĀ HETUM TEṢĀM  
TATHĀGATO HYAVADAT TEṢĀM CHA YO NIRODHA  
EVAM VĀDÎ MAHĀ ŚRAMANA YE SVĀHĀ (x3)

### *Meaning of the Tendrel Nyingpo Mantra*

All phenomena arise from causes,  
The causes are taught by the Tathagata,  
The cessation of the causes, as well;  
Is taught by the Great Seer.

*Sab shi troedrel osel dhuema jay*  
*Dhue-tsi tab hue choe shig kho woe ngay*  
*Su la shay kyang gho war mi nue pay*  
*Mi ma nag ghi nag su nay par ja*

Profound, peaceful, elaboration-free, clear light, and non-composite;  
Such is the nectar-like Dharma I have discovered.  
Finding no one who can fathom this teaching,  
In silence I will retire into the woods.<sup>10</sup>

*Ma sam joemay sherab pharol chin*  
*Ma kay mi gag namkhai ngo wo nyid*  
*So so rang rig yeshe choe yul pa*  
*Dhue sum gyalway yum la chagtsel lo*

Beyond utterance, thought, and expression is the Perfection of  
Wisdom;  
Which is unborn, unceased and has the nature of space,  
It is the object of apprehension of self-realised wisdom;  
To you, the mother of the Buddhas of the three times, I pay  
obeisance.

## Four Seals of the Buddha's Teachings

[Skt. *chaturlaksana*; Tib. *dom shyi*]

*Dhujay thamchay mitakpa*  
*Sagchay thamchay dhug-ngyal-wa*  
*Choe thamchay tong shing dhag maypa*  
*Ngya-ngyen lay dhaypa shiwa o*

All composite things are impermanent;  
All contaminated things are of the nature of suffering;  
All phenomena are of the nature of emptiness and selflessness;  
Transcending sorrow is peace.<sup>11</sup>

*Lama sangghay lama choe*  
*Dheshin lama gedhun te*  
*Kun ghi jay po lama yin*  
*Lama nam la chag tsel lo*

The Guru is the Buddha; the Guru is the Dharma;  
Likewise the Guru is the Sangha;  
The Guru is the source of everything wholesome;  
I go for refuge in the Guru.

*Choe-nga chenpo dra yi ni*  
*Semchen dhug-ngyal thar ghi ching*  
*Kalpa jaywa samyey soo*  
*Choe-ton zay ching shug soo sol*

By the sound of the vibrant drum of Dharma,  
You liberate all beings of miseries.  
I beseech You to kindly remain and give teachings  
Until the end of the expanse of billions of aeons.

*Thub nam dhig pa choo yi mi tru shing*  
*Droway dhug ngyal chag ghi mi sel la*  
*Nyid ki togpa shen la po min tay*

*Choe-nyi dhen pa ten pay drol war ghur*

The Buddha does not wash the negativities of beings;  
Nor does He remove their miseries by His hands;  
His spiritual realisations are not transferred to them;  
It is by teaching the truth of suchness, that beings are liberated.<sup>12</sup>

*Chog nam kun ghi sang gay la*  
*Thel mo jar tay sol wa yi*  
*Semchen dhugngyal munthom la*  
*Choeghi dromay par tu sol*

With folded hands, I beseech the Buddhas  
Of all directions  
To shine the light of Dharma  
For all bewildered in misery's gloom.<sup>13</sup>

Instructions on Parting from the Four Attachments<sup>14</sup>

[Tib. *zhen pa bzhi bral*]

*Tse dhi la shyan na choepa min*  
*Khorwa la shyan na ngay-jung min*  
*Rang dhon la shyan na jangsem min*  
*Zinpa jung na tawa min*

If you are attached to this life, you are not a spiritual practitioner;  
If you are attached to samsara, you have no renunciation;  
If you are attached to your own self-interest, you have no  
Bodhicitta;  
If there is grasping, you do not have the View.

## BLESSING THE SPEECH

[Tib. *ngag byin rlabs*]

I take refuge in the Three Jewels.

May I become a Buddha to benefit all. (x3)

*Konchhog sum la kyab su chhi*

*Dro la phen chir sangghay shog.* (x3)

I arise as the Deity. On my tongue, the syllable AH transforms into a moon disc. On top of that appears a white OM syllable surrounded by white ALI (vowels), circling clockwise, red KALI (consonants) circling counter-clockwise, and the blue dependent-origination heart mantra, circling clockwise.

Light beams radiate out from the syllables and the garland of mantras and hook the blessings and power of both mundane and supramundane speech in the form of the three mantras, the sublime seven precious royal symbols<sup>15</sup> and the eight auspicious signs.<sup>16</sup>

*[This includes the power of speech (of those beyond samsara) of the Buddhas, Arya Bodhisattvas, those living in the three pure bhumis<sup>17</sup> and Arhats, as well as the power of speech (of those not yet beyond samsara) of those who are engaged in the path and also those Sages who have achieved the power of words, who have actualised the words of truth, and who have great power in their speech. Due to the power of abiding in silence, of living in the morality of abstaining from the negative karma of speech, the words of these sages have so much power. Whatever they pray for, is actualised. All the blessing powers of the holy speech from those who are beyond samsara and those who are not beyond - are hooked in the aspect of the three mantras, the seven precious objects of the king's reign, and the eight auspicious signs, and are then absorbed. Imagine that the whole sky is filled with these, together with the mantras, and that they are absorbed into the mantras on your tongue.]*

*While visualising the above, recite in succession:*

**ALI (Vowels)**

OM AAA I II U UU RI RII LI LII E AI O AU AM AH SVĀHĀ (x3)

*[As you recite the vowels, white nectar flows down from this mantra and fills your entire body, completely purifying all the negative karma collected within your body.]*

**KALI (Consonants)**

OM KA KHA GA GHA NGA/ CHA CHHA JA JHA NYA/ TA THA  
DA DHA NA / ṬA ṬHA DA DHA ṆA / PA PHA BA BHA MA / YA  
RA LA VA / ŚA ṢA SA HA KṢA SVĀHĀ (x3)

*[As you recite the consonants, red nectar beams are emitted, filling your whole body and purifying all the negative karmas collected by your speech from beginningless rebirths.]*

OM YE DHARMĀ HETU PRABHAVĀ HETUM TEṢĀM  
TATHĀGATO HYAVADAT TEṢĀM CHA YO NIRODHA EVAM  
VĀDĀ MAHĀ ŚRAMANA YE SVĀHĀ

*[As you recite the essence of the dependent origination mantra, blue nectar beams are emitted from the mantra, filling your whole body. You are completely purified of all the negative karmas collected by your mind.]*

*Then the essence of the dependent origination mantra, the vowels, the consonants, the OM and the moon disc dissolve into each other, one by one. The moon disc transforms into an AH syllable that transforms into pink-coloured nectar into your tongue. It becomes of vajra nature.*

*The tongue becomes of indestructible vajra nature. Nothing can harm, take away or destroy the power of the mantra, such as black foods. Then, generate very strong faith that all the power and blessings of the speech of all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, sages, yogis*

*and so on, have entered your speech and that your speech has been perfected.*

*Think: I have perfected my speech.*

*By thinking in this way, the power of your speech becomes marvellous and whatever you recite is multiplied greatly.*

*Some lamas have explained this practice as follows:*

*Visualise yourself as the Deity with the Deity's syllable such as HUM at your heart. Around this, visualise the three mantras, the same as before. Then, recite each of the mantras followed by the Deity's mantra.*

*Also, if you wish, you can recite the root Guru's mantras, because when you become the Deity, you are the root Guru. You are oneness with the purifying Deity, the Guru - all oneness - so you can recite the Guru's mantra.*

*Then, recite your own root Guru's mantra 3, 7, 21 or as many times as you like.]*

### **Dedication Prayer**

May my tongue have the power of the Ones Gone to Bliss.

By the power manifesting from these words,

May all sentient beings be subdued.

And may all suffering be immediately pacified.

Whatever words I say, may their meanings be accomplished.

**Note:** This practice is primarily to bless the words and the speech that one engages in throughout the day, making them virtuous.



# THE NOBLE SUTRA REMEMBERING THE THREE JEWELS

[Skt. *ārya ratnatraya anusmṛti sūtra*]

[Tib. 'phags pa dkon mchog rjes su dran pa'i mdo]

Homage to the Omniscient One.

Purified and Consummate, Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent, Thus-Gone, Foe-Destroying, Entirely Perfect Buddha, Full of Wisdom, the Blissfully Proceeding, the Knower of the World, Charioteer and Subduer of Beings, the Unsurpassable and Teacher of Gods and Humans: such is Buddha, Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent. He who is Thus-Gone exemplifies the merit which is His cause; In Him, no root of virtue is ever worn away. Through His manifold patience, He is excellently beautiful. He is the treasure-ground of merit, adorned with the tokens of Enlightenment. He is graced with the flowers of the *marks of Buddhahood*.<sup>18</sup> All He does is timely and opportune and nothing inharmonious mars the sight of Him. True joy, indeed, He gives to those who open up their hearts to Him in faith. Through the brilliance of His wisdom, He is unconfounded and against His power, there is no victory. He is the Teacher of all living beings, the Father of all Bodhisattvas, the King of all Supreme Ones; He is the guide for those who journey to the City Beyond Affliction. His wisdom is unbounded, His assurance is beyond imagination. His speech is altogether pure, well tuned and sweet to hear. Gazing on Him, one is never sated; His body is beyond compare. By the realm of desire, He is unstained and by the realm of form, He is wholly uncontaminated; He is not mingled with the formless. He is altogether free from misery, and from the aggregates, He is utterly and altogether liberated. The elements have no hold on Him; He has mastery over the sense powers. All His bonds are completely severed and from all pains He is perfectly and totally released. No craving does He have, He has passed beyond the Stream. Perfect is His wisdom and in the wisdom of

the Buddhas past, present and to come, He has made his dwelling. In nirvana, where all suffering is transcended, He does not abide; His abode is on the summit of perfection, whence He perceives all living beings. Such are the sublime qualities that are the greatness of the Buddha, Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent.

The sacred Doctrine is righteous in the outset, righteous in the middle, righteous in the end; in its meaning, excellent and in its words and syllables, likewise. It is integral and unalloyed; it is all sufficing, altogether pure and purifying.

Well spoken is this Dharma by the Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent. It is a perfect way of seeing and is devoid of flaws; it is perennial and leads us onward. To see this Dharma is to fulfill one's purpose; it produces in the wise, the wisdom all-distinguishing. The Dharma spoken by the Victorious, Virtuous and Transcendent is shown to be well-tempered to the instructions and to the needs of all. It drives one from samsara and causes one to go to perfect Buddhahood. It is free from contradiction and in it, all is summarised. It is to be relied upon totally; it is a cutting of the root.

The Sangha of the Mahayana comprises those who have well entered, wisely entered, entered with straightforwardness and aptitude. Right it is to join one's hands before them, and right to make prostrations. They are the glorious field of merit. They are the perfect recipient of gifts; they are the objects of offering; everywhere and always, they are the objects worthy of all offering.

**Note:** This sutra, as well as the following sutra, *Praise to the Śhākyamuni Buddha*, both highlight the qualities of the Three Jewels and the Buddha in particular. While reciting these sutras, practitioners are encouraged to aspire to such attributes themselves, and envision themselves as already endowed with all the qualities which they are trying to eventually accomplish.

Translated from Tibetan into English by the Padmakara Translation Group.

## PRAISE TO SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

[Tib. *rgyun chags gsum pa*]

To the Founder, the Endowed Transcendent Destroyer, the One Gone Beyond, the Foe Destroyer, The Completely Perfected, Fully Awakened Being, Perfect in Knowledge and in Good Conduct, Sugata, Knower of the World, Supreme Guide of human beings to be tamed, Teacher of gods and human beings; to You, the Completely and Fully Awakened One, the Endowed Transcendent Destroyer, the Glorious Conqueror, the Subduer from the Shakya Clan, I prostrate, make offerings and go for refuge. (x 3)

1. When, O Supreme amongst humans, You were born on this earth,  
You paced out seven strides,  
Then said, "I am supreme in this world."  
To You, who were wise then, I prostrate.
2. With pure bodies, form supremely pure;  
Wisdom ocean, like a golden mountain;  
Fame that blazes in the three worlds,  
Winner of the best – Lord, to You – I prostrate.
3. With the supreme signs, face like a spotless moon,  
Colour like gold – to You – I prostrate.  
Dust-free like You, the three worlds are not.  
Incomparable Wise One – to You – I prostrate.
4. The Saviour having great compassion,  
The Founder having all understanding,  
The Field of Merit with qualities like a vast ocean –  
To You – the Tathagata, I prostrate.
5. The purity that frees one from attachment,  
The virtue that frees one from the lower realms,  
The one path, the sublime pure reality,  
To the Dharma that pacifies, I prostrate.

6. Those who are liberated and also show the path to liberation,  
The holy field qualified with realisations,  
Who are devoted to the moral precepts -  
To you, the Sangha, I prostrate.
7. Do not commit any non-virtuous actions,  
Perform only perfect virtuous actions,  
Subdue your mind thoroughly—  
This is the teaching of the Buddha.<sup>19</sup>
8. A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a lamp,  
An illusion, a drop of dew, or a bubble,  
A dream, a flash of lightning, a cloud—  
See conditioned things as such!<sup>20</sup>
9. Through these merits, may sentient beings attain the rank of  
all seeing,  
Subdue the foe of faults,  
And be delivered from samsara's ocean,  
Perturbed by the waves of ageing, sickness and death.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by the Padmakara Translation Group.

# THE DRUMBEAT OF TRUTH

## Supplication to Śhākyamuni Buddha

[Tib. *bden pa'i rnga sgra*]

*His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama*

1. I bow down to you the liberator, Lion of the Shakyas,  
Who perfected all ultimate qualities of omniscience and  
compassion,  
Who has been praised as the White Lotus, the protector of all  
beings,  
Who dispels all sufferings through the teachings of dependent  
arising.
2. As you prophesied and foretold through your glorious speech  
That your teachings would spread in a northerly direction,  
The entirety of the teachings of the Conqueror spread  
throughout the Land of Snows,  
Becoming an ornament and (sign of) good fortune for the  
world.
3. However, due to the force of unwholesome deeds,  
Today the teachings of the Conqueror have declined.  
O Greatly Compassionate One! The time has come to bestow  
protection with compassion.  
The environment and beings, spent and drained through  
unending suffering, are on the brink of extinction.
4. Thus, the entire human and celestial population of the Land  
of Snows  
Is drawn together out of intense faith, solidarity and altruism,  
To offer this (ornamental) crown protrusion of refined gold,  
This supreme alms bowl (of a sage), and these fine saffron  
robes.

5. Whatever extensive collection of merit and wisdom results  
from these offerings,  
As well as all the heaps of virtue of the three times,  
I dedicate to the Conqueror's teachings, the source of all  
peace and happiness for all beings including the celestials,  
So the teachings will not decline but will abide for a very  
long time.
6. For all sentient beings within the expanse of space  
And in particular, all beings of this continent called  
Jambudvīpa,  
May loving and compassionate thoughts and deeds prosper,  
And violent conflict cease forever.
7. Having dispelled all inner and outer obstacles and downfalls,  
Such as poverty, despair, oppression, cruelty,  
Epidemics, and natural disasters, due to environmental  
degradation,  
May all beings forever enjoy the glory of peace and happiness.
8. Inseparable from the precious radiance of appreciating others'  
good qualities,  
Recognising mutually close ties and friendship,  
And maintaining an unbiased attitude towards all who follow  
Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions,  
May I voluntarily enact deeds solely for the benefit of all  
sentient beings.
9. Especially in the Refreshingly Cool Land,  
May the degenerated teachings of the Conqueror be restored  
and prosper without decline,  
And with the renewed peace and joy of spiritual and temporal  
freedom,  
May the immediate and long-term aspirations of the Tibetan  
people be quickly fulfilled.

10. May all those individuals whose service has contributed to keeping  
The banner of spiritual and temporal deeds aloft in the Land  
of Snows,  
Continue to shoulder (their responsibility) with a dedicated  
spirit and informed mind;  
May they be looked after in life after life by the Holder of the  
Lotus.
11. In the realm of the Dharma, may the heaps of irreligious  
deeds  
Be dispelled by the Truth and all positive temporal and  
spiritual activities,  
Which are altruistically motivated, be quickly fulfilled in  
accord with the Dharma.  
By the truth of the Dharma, may everything sacrilegious come  
to an end.

**Colophon:** This supplication prayer I offer before the supreme Buddha image at the supremely sacred place of Bodhgaya. I have here focussed upon the general and specific matters concerning the well-being of sentient beings and the flourishing of the teachings. Composed by the Buddhist Bhikshu Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama, in the Tibetan Year 2131, 15th day of the 12th month of the Wood Monkey Year. May it be thus fulfilled.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Lhakdor in Bodhgaya on 24 January, 2005 at the request of Professor Samdhong Rinpoche; edited by Dr. Barry Kerzin and Jeremy Russell.

# SUN ILLUMINATING THE THREEFOLD FAITH

## Praise to the Seventeen Nalanda Masters

[Tib. *dpal nalanda'i panchen bcu bdun gyi gsol 'debs*]

*His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama*

1. Born from great compassion aspiring to help all beings,  
God of gods, You have attained the Saviour's state of  
abandonment and realisation,  
And you guide beings through the discourse of dependent  
origination.  
O Buddha, the Sun of Speech, I bow my head to you.
2. I implore you at your feet, O Nagarjuna [Tib. *gonpo lu drub*],  
Most skilled in elucidating suchness free of elaborations—the  
meaning of Sutras—the Mother of Conquerors<sup>21</sup>—  
Through the profound reasoning of dependent origination.  
In accord with the Conqueror's prophecy, you initiated the  
Middle Way – the supreme vehicle.
3. I implore you, O Bodhisattva Aryadeva [Tib. *phags pa lha*], the  
chief disciple of Arya Nagarjuna,  
Most learned and realised,  
Who has crossed the ocean of Buddhist and non-Buddhist  
tenet systems,  
And is the crown jewel among those who uphold Nagarjuna's  
treatises.
4. I implore you, O Buddhapalita [Tib. *sangye kyang*],  
Who has reached the supreme adept's state and who has  
clearly elucidated Arya (Nagarjuna's) intent,  
The final meaning of dependent origination,  
The profound point of mere designation and as mere label.



5. I implore you, O Master Bhavaviveka [Tib. *lopon lekden je*],  
most accomplished pandita,  
You initiated the philosophical tradition  
Wherein while negating the extremes of truly existing things –  
arising and so forth,  
You uphold commonly verified knowledge and external reality.
6. I implore you, O Chandrakirti [Tib. *lopon dawa drakpa*],  
Who disseminated all the paths of sutra and tantra.  
You are most skilled in teaching the profound and the vast  
aspects of the Middle Way -  
The union of appearance and emptiness dispelling the two  
extremes - by means of dependent origination, that is mere  
conditionality.
7. I implore you, O Bodhisattva Shantideva [Tib. *gyalsay shiwa lha*],  
Skilled at revealing to the assembly of fortunate spiritual  
trainees,  
The excellent path of compassion that is greatly wondrous,  
Through a multitude of reasoning most profound and vast.
8. I implore you, O Master Abbot Shantaraksita [Tib. *khenchen shiwa tsho*],  
Who initiated the tradition of the Non-dual Middle Way in  
accordance with the trainee's mental disposition.  
You are versed in the reasoning modes of both Middle Way  
and logic,  
And you disseminated the Conqueror's teaching in the Land of  
Snows.
9. I implore you at your feet, O Kamalasila [Tib. *peme ngang tshul*], you who, having explained excellently  
The stages of meditation of the Middle Way view free of  
elaborations,  
And the union of tranquility and insight in accordance with  
sutra and tantra,

Flawlessly elucidated the Conqueror's teachings in the Land of  
Snows.

10. I implore you at your feet, O Asanga [Tib. *phags pa thokme*],  
you who, sustained by Maitreya,  
Were versed in disseminating excellently all Mahayana  
scriptures  
And taught the vast path and who, in accord with the  
Conqueror's prophecy,  
Initiated the tradition of Mind Only.
11. I implore you at your feet, O Master Vasubandhu [Tib. *lopon yik  
nyen*],  
You who, while upholding the systems of the seven  
Abhidharma treatises as well as Non-duality,  
Illuminated the tenets of Vaibhashika, Sautrantika and Mind  
Only.  
Foremost among learned ones, you are renowned as a second  
Omniscient One.
12. I implore you at your feet, O Dignaga [Tib. *lopon chok kyī  
langpo*], the logician,  
You who, in order to present the Buddha's way through  
evidence-based reasoning,  
Opened hundredfold gateways of the system of logic,  
And offered as a gift to the world, the eyes of critical  
intelligence.
13. I implore you at your feet, O Dharmakirti [Tib. *lopon chok kyī  
drakpa*],  
You who, understanding all the essential points of both  
Buddhist and non-Buddhist epistemology,  
Brought conviction in all the profound and vast paths of  
Sautrantika and Mind Only by means of reasoning.  
You were most versed in teaching the excellent Dharma.
14. I implore you at your feet, O Arya Vimuktisena [Tib. *phags pa  
nam drol de*],

You, who lit the lamp that illuminates the meaning of the  
Ornament treatise  
Wherein the themes of the Perfection of Wisdom stemming  
from Asanga and his brother were expounded  
In accord with the Middle Way view, free of existence and non-  
existence.

15. I implore you, O Master Haribhadra [Tib. *lopon senge zangpo*],  
Who were prophesied by the Conqueror as expounder of the  
meaning of the Mother, the Perfection of Wisdom.  
You elucidated the excellent treatise on the Perfection of  
Wisdom, the three mothers,  
In perfect accord with the instruction of the Saviour Maitreya.
16. I implore you at your feet, O Gunaprabha [Tib. *lopon  
yonten ö*], most excellent in both integrity and scholarship,  
Who, having excellently distilled the intent of one hundred  
thousand disciplinary teachings,  
Expounded the Individual Liberation vows flawlessly  
According to the tradition of the Sarvastivada school.
17. I implore you at your feet, O Shakyaprabha [Tib. *lopon  
shakya ö*], supreme upholder of discipline,  
Who reigned over the treasury of the qualities of the  
three trainings.  
In order to disseminate the stainless Vinaya teachings for a  
long time,  
You excellently expounded the meaning of the vast (discipline)  
treatises.
18. I implore you, O Jowo Atisha,  
You who, having taught all the profound and vast traditions  
related to the words of the Buddha  
Within the framework of the path of the persons of  
three capacities,  
Were the most kind master disseminating the Buddha's

teaching in the Land of Snows.

19. Having thus entreated these most learned ornaments of the world,  
The excellent sources of wondrous and insightful teachings,  
May I be blessed so that my mind becomes ripened and free  
Through the entreaty I have made, with a mind unwavering  
and pure.
20. By understanding the two truths, the ontological reality,  
Will we ascertain how, through the four truths, we enter and  
leave samsara;  
Will we make firm the faith in the Three Jewels, that is born of  
valid reason.  
May I be blessed so that the root of the Path of Liberation is  
firmly established within me.
21. May I be blessed to perfect the training in renunciation –  
An aspiration for liberation, the total pacification of suffering  
and its origin –  
As well as in an uncontrived Bodhicitta  
That is rooted in an infinite compassion that wishes to protect  
all sentient beings.
22. May I be blessed so that I may easily develop conviction in all  
the paths  
Pertaining to the profound points of the Perfection [skt: *paramitayana*] and Vajra Vehicles [Skt. *vajrayana*]  
By engaging in study, reflection and meditation  
On the meaning of the treatises of the great trailblazers.
23. May I, in life after life, obtain excellent births that support the  
three trainings<sup>22</sup> and  
Contribute to the teachings that equal the great trailblazers  
In upholding and disseminating the teaching of scripture and  
realisation,  
Through engaging in exposition and meditative practice.

24. May the members of all spiritual communities  
Spend their time in learning, reflection and meditation,  
shunning wrong livelihood.  
Through the proliferation of sublime masters,  
May the great face of the earth be beautified throughout  
all time.
25. Through the power of this supplication, may I traverse all  
the paths of sutra and tantra  
And swiftly attain the state of Conquerors' Omniscience,  
Characterised by spontaneous realisation of the two purposes.  
May I work for the welfare of sentient beings as long as space  
remains.

**Colophon:** Thus, with respect to the profound and vast aspects of the excellent Dharma taught by the blessed Buddha, these great masters of India, the land of the Aryas, referred to in the above lines, composed excellent treatises that opened the eyes of intelligence of numerous discerning individuals. These writings survive without degeneration to this day - now approaching 2,550 years (following the Buddha's Mahaparinirvana) - still serving as treatises for study, critical reflection and meditation. Therefore, remembering the kindness of these learned masters, I aspire with unwavering devotion to follow in their footsteps.

Today, in an age when science and technology have reached a most advanced stage, we are incessantly preoccupied with mundane concerns. In such an age, it is crucial that we who follow the Buddha

acquire faith in his teachings on the basis of genuine understanding. It is with an objective mind endowed with a curious scepticism that we should engage in careful analysis and seek reasons.

Then, on the basis of seeing the reasons, we engender a faith that is accompanied by wisdom. For this, the excellent treatises on the profound and vast aspects (of the path) by the great masters, such as the well-known *Six Ornaments and Two Supreme Masters*,<sup>23</sup> as well as Buddhapalita, Vimuktisena and so on, remain indispensable. Even in the past, there was a tradition to have paintings of the Six Ornaments and the Two Supreme Masters made on thangka scrolls. To these, I have added nine more lineage masters of the profound and vast aspects of the path, commissioning a thangka painting of seventeen great panditas of the glorious Nalanda monastery.

In conjunction with this, I wanted to compose a prayer that expresses my heartfelt reverence for these most excellent learned beings, and in addition, some devoted individuals and spiritual colleagues also encouraged me to write such a piece. Thus, this supplication to the seventeen masters of glorious Nalanda, entitled *Sun Illuminating the Threefold Faith*, was written by the Buddhist monk Tenzin Gyatso, someone who has found an uncontrived faith in the excellent writings of these great masters and sits among the last rows of individuals engaged in the study of these excellent works.

This was composed and completed at Thekchen Choeling, Dharamsala, Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh, India, in the 2,548th year of Buddha's Parinirvana according to the Theravada system, on the first day of the eleventh month of the Iron-Snake year in the seventeenth Rabjung cycle of the Tibetan calendar that is December 15, 2001 of the Common Era. May goodness prevail!

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by Thupten Jinpa, PhD, in *Middle Way: Faith Grounded in Reason*. An earlier translation of the prayer was undertaken in 2006, by Geshe Lhakdor Lobsang Jordan and edited by Jeremy Russell, published under the title, *Illuminating the Threefold Faith: An Invocation of the Seventeen Scholarly Adepts of Glorious Nalanda*, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath.

Further edited by Geshe Dorji Damdul on 21st June 2017 for the purpose of easy recitation and reflection by the students of the Master's Course in Nalanda Buddhist Philosophy, Tibet House, New Delhi.

# MEDITATION ON THE FOUR IMMEASURABLES

[Skt. *chatvāribrahmavihārāḥ*; Tib. *tshad med bzhi*]

## 1. Immeasurable Loving Kindness

[Skt. *maitrī*; Tib. *jampa tsaymay*]

How good would it be if all beings were endowed with happiness and the causes of happiness, primarily bodhicitta (which cherishes others more than oneself) and the wisdom of emptiness and dependent origination.

May all beings be endowed with happiness and the causes of happiness.

I take the responsibility that all beings are endowed with happiness and the causes of happiness.

Gurus, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, please bless me that I be able to do so.

(x3)

*[Visualise: The Gurus, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas are so pleased with your commitment, they send forth nectars and soothing lights from their compassionate Omniscient minds; upon touching you and all other sentient beings, everyone is granted immeasurable happiness and its causes. Out of great joy upon seeing all beings benefitted, take three deep breaths exhaling with a sigh of relief at the end of each breath.]*

## 2. Immeasurable Compassion

[Skt. *karunā*; Tib. *nyingjei tsaymay*]

How good would it be if all beings were free from suffering and the causes of suffering, primarily self-grasping ignorance and the self-

cherishing attitude.

May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

I take the responsibility to free all beings from suffering and the causes of suffering.

Gurus, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, please bless me that I be able to do so.

(x3)

*[Visualise: The Gurus, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas are so pleased with your commitment, they send forth nectars and soothing lights from their compassionate Omniscient minds; upon touching you and all other sentient beings, everyone is freed from miseries and their causes. Out of great joy upon seeing all beings benefitted, take three deep breaths exhaling with a sigh of relief at the end of each breath.]*

### 3. Immeasurable Joy

[Skt. *muditā*; Tib. *gawa tsaymay*]

How good would it be if all beings were never separated from happiness and the causes of happiness.

May all beings never be separated from happiness and the causes of happiness.

I take the responsibility that all beings are never separated from happiness and the causes of happiness.

Gurus, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, please bless me that I be able to do so.

(x3)

*[Visualise: The Gurus, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas are so pleased with your commitment, they send forth nectars and soothing lights from their compassionate Omniscient minds; upon touching you and all*



*other sentient beings, everyone is granted the stability of joy and its causes that they are already endowed with. Out of great joy upon seeing all beings benefitted, take three deep breaths exhaling with a sigh of relief at the end of each breath.]*

#### **4. Immeasurable Equanimity**

[Skt. *upekshā*; Tib. *tang nyom tsaymay*]

How good would it be if all beings could abide in the state of equanimity, which is free of the biased attitude of excessive attachment towards some and aversion towards others.

May all beings abide in the state of equanimity, which is free of the biased attitude, of excessive attachment towards some and aversion towards others.

I take the responsibility that all beings abide in the state of equanimity, free of the biased attitude of excessive attachment towards some and aversion towards others.

Gurus, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, please bless me that I be able to do so.

(x3)

*[Visualise: The Gurus, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas are so pleased with your commitment; they send forth nectars and soothing lights from their compassionate Omniscient minds; upon touching you and all other sentient beings, everyone is granted a sense of equanimity towards all beings, embracing them equally, leaving none aside. Out of great joy upon seeing all beings benefitted, take three deep breaths exhaling with a sigh of relief at the end of each breath.]*

# THE HEART SUTRA

## The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra

[Skt. *ārya bhagavati prajñāpāramitā hṛidaya sūtra*]

[Tib. *shes rab snying po*]

I prostrate to the Arya Triple Gem.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Buddha was dwelling on Mass of Vultures Mountain in Rajagriha, together with a great community of monks and a great community of Bodhisattvas. At that time, the Buddha was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called *Profound Illumination*.<sup>24</sup> Also at that time, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara looked upon the very practice of the profound illumination of wisdom and beheld those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

Then, through the power of the Buddha, the Venerable Shariputra said this to the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara: “How should any child of the lineage who wishes to practise the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom train?”

He said that and the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara said this to the Venerable Śharadvatiputra: “Shariputra, any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who wishes to practise the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom should look upon it like this, correctly and repeatedly beholding those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

Form is empty.

[*Pause for a while at this point to meditate on emptiness*]

Emptiness is form.

Emptiness is not other than form.

Form is also not other than emptiness.

In the same way, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness are empty. Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are empty; without characteristic; unproduced, unceased; stainless, not without stain; not deficient, not fulfilled. Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness, there is no form, no feeling, no discrimination, no compositional factors, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no visual form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no object of touch and no phenomenon. There is no eye element and so on up to and including no mind element and no mental consciousness element. There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to and including no ageing and death and no extinction of ageing and death. Similarly, there is no suffering, origination, cessation and path; there is no exalted wisdom, no attainment and also no non-attainment.”

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

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

The *mantra of the perfection of wisdom*<sup>25</sup> is declared:

TADYATHĀ (OM) GATE GATE PĀRAGATE PĀRASAMGATE  
BODHI SVĀHĀ

Shariputra, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like that.”

Then the Buddha arose from that concentration and commended the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara saying: “Well

said, well said, son of the lineage, it is like that. It is like that. One should practise the profound perfection of wisdom just as you have indicated. Even the Tathagatas rejoice.”

The Buddha having thus spoken, the Venerable Sharadvatiputra, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara, those surrounding in their entirety, along with the world of gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas were overjoyed and highly praised that spoken by the Buddha.

[This completes the Arya Bhagavati Prajnaparamita Hridaya Sutra.]

TADYATHĀ (OM) GATE GATE PĀRAGATE PĀRASAMGATE  
BODHI SVĀHĀ (x7)

By the teachings of the three Supreme Jewels possessing the power of truth,

May inner and outer hindrances be transformed.

May they be dispelled. [*Clap hands once*]

May they be non-existent. [*Clap hands once*]

May they be pacified. [*Clap hands once*]

May all negative forces opposed to the Dharma be completely pacified.

May the host of eighty thousand obstacles be pacified.

May we be separated from problems and conditions harmful to the Dharma.

May all enjoyments be in accord with the Dharma.

May auspiciousness and perfect happiness pervade this place now.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by the Foundation for the Preservation of Mahayana Tradition [FPMT].

# SEVEN POINTS FOR TRAINING THE MIND

[Tib. *blo sbyong don bdun ma*]

Geshe Chekawa Yeshé Dorjé

## I. Presentation of the preliminaries, the basis

First, train in the preliminaries.

## II. Training in the awakening mind, the main practice

A. Training in ultimate awakening mind

Train to view all phenomena as dreamlike.

Examine the nature of the unborn awareness.

The remedy, too, is freed in its own place.

Place your mind on the basis-of-all, the actual path.

In the intervals be a conjurer of illusions.

B. Training in conventional awakening mind

Train alternately in the two—giving and taking.

Place the two astride your breath.

There are *three objects, three poisons, and three roots of virtue*.<sup>26</sup>

In all actions, train by means of the words.

## III. Taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment

When the world and its inhabitants boil with negativity,

transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment.

Banish all blames to the *single source*.<sup>27</sup>

Toward all beings contemplate their great kindness.

With the *three views*<sup>28</sup> and *treasury of space*,<sup>29</sup>

the yoga of protection is unexcelled.

By meditating on illusions as the *four Buddha bodies*,<sup>30</sup>

emptiness is protection unsurpassed.

The *fourfold practice*<sup>31</sup> is the most excellent method.  
Relate whatever you can to meditation right now.

#### **IV. Presentation of a lifetime's practice in summary**

In brief the essence of instruction is this:

Apply yourself to the *five powers*.<sup>32</sup>

As Mahayana's transference method is  
the five powers alone, their practice is vital.

#### **V. Presentation of the measure of having trained the mind**

The intent of all teachings converges on a *single point*.<sup>33</sup>

Of the *two witnesses*<sup>34</sup> uphold the principal one.

Cultivate constantly the joyful mind alone.

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

#### **VI. Presentation of the commitments of mind training**

Train constantly in the *three general points*.<sup>35</sup>

Transform your attitudes but remain as you are.

Do not speak of the defects [of others].

Do not reflect on others' shortcomings.

Discard all expectations of reward.

Discard *poisonous food*.<sup>36</sup>

Do not maintain inappropriate loyalty.

Do not torment with malicious banter.

Do not lie in ambush.

Do not strike at the heart.

Do not place the load of a dzo onto an ox.

Do not sprint to win a race.

Do not abuse this [practice] as a rite.

Do not turn the gods into demons.

Do not seek misery as a means to happiness.

#### **VII. Presentation of the precepts of mind training**

Accomplish all yogas through a *single means*.<sup>37</sup>

Overcome all errors through a single means.

There are *two tasks*<sup>38</sup>—one at the start and one at the end.

Whichever of the *two*<sup>39</sup> arises, be patient.  
Guard the *two*<sup>40</sup> even at the cost of your life.  
Train in the *three difficult challenges*.<sup>41</sup>  
Adopt the *three principal conditions*.<sup>42</sup>  
Contemplate *the three that are free of degeneration*.<sup>43</sup>  
Be endowed with the *three inseparable factors*.<sup>44</sup>  
Train constantly toward the chosen objects.

Do not depend on other conditions.  
Engage in the principal practices right now.  
Do not apply misplaced understanding.  
Do not be sporadic.  
Train with decisiveness.  
Be released through the two: investigation and close analysis.  
Do not boast of your good deeds.  
Do not be ill-tempered.  
Do not be fickle.  
Do not be boisterous.  
Through this proliferation of the five degenerations transform  
[every event] into the path of enlightenment.

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

**Note:** Inspired by Geshe Langri Thangpa's words, "May I take upon myself the defeat and offer to others the victory," from the *Eight Verses for Training the Mind*, Geshe Chekawa (1101-1175) travelled to central Tibet to learn more about this practice from their author. To his disappointment Geshe Langri Thangpa had already passed away, but he was able to receive teaching from Geshe Sharawa (9170-1141), who also held the instructions. Geshe Chekawa wrote down these instructions in the *Seven Points of Training the Mind*.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Thubten Jinpa, PhD.

## EIGHT VERSES FOR TRAINING THE MIND

[Tib. *blo sbyong tshigs rkang brgyad ma*]

*Geshe Langri Thangpa*

1. With a determination to achieve the highest aim  
For the benefit of all sentient beings,  
Which surpasses even the wish-fulfilling gem,  
May I hold them dear at all times.
2. Whenever I interact with someone,  
May I view myself as the lowest amongst all,  
And, from the very depths of my heart,  
Respectfully hold others as superior.
3. In all my deeds, may I probe into my mind,  
And as soon as mental and emotional afflictions arise,  
As they endanger myself and others,  
May I strongly confront them and avert them.
4. When I see beings of unpleasant character,  
And those oppressed by strong negativity and suffering,  
May I hold them dear - for they are rare to find -  
As if I have discovered a jewel treasure!
5. When others, out of jealousy,  
Treat me wrongly with abuse, slander and scorn,  
May I take upon myself the defeat  
And offer to others the victory.
6. When someone whom I have helped  
Or in whom I have placed great hopes,  
Mistreats me in extremely hurtful ways,  
May I regard them still as my precious teacher.



7. In brief, may I offer benefit and joy  
To all my mothers, both directly and indirectly,  
May I quietly take upon myself  
All hurts and pains of my mothers.
8. May all this remain undefiled  
By the stains of the *eight mundane concerns*,<sup>45</sup>  
And may I, recognising all things as illusions,  
Devoid of clinging, be released from bondage.

*Lama Tsongkhapa's Lamrim Dedication Prayer, Verse I*

From my *two collections*,<sup>46</sup> vast as space, that I have amassed  
From working with effort at this practice for a great length of  
time,  
May I become the chief leading Buddha for all those  
Whose mind's wisdom eye is blinded by ignorance.

**Note:** From the famous genre of *Lojong* or mind-training Mahayana Buddhist root texts, *Eight Verses for Mind Training*, composed by Geshe Langri Thangpa, is extremely well-known. In this context, it is very important for the reader to distinguish between a self-centred attitude, which the teachings exhort us to crush and self-confidence, which is to be firmly established. The additional last stanza has been added here, from Lama Tsongkhapa's *Lamrim Dedication Prayer* for the latter expressed purpose. His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama has shared during his teachings that he recites and reflects on these verses daily which indicates the import and value of this text for our own daily practice.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Thupten Jinpa, PhD.

## SEVEN LIMB PUJA

### Excerpt from the King of Prayers: The Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice of Samantabhadra

[Skt. *samantabhadrācaryā praṇidhānaraja*]

[Tib. *'phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*]

I bow down to the youthful Arya Manjushri.

1. You (the Buddhas), the lions amongst humans,  
Gone to freedom in the present, past and future  
In the worlds of ten directions,  
To all of You, with body, speech and sincere mind,  
I bow down.
2. With the energy of aspiration for the Bodhisattva way,  
With a sense of deep respect  
And with as many bodies as atoms of the world,  
To all You Buddhas visualised as real, I bow down.
3. On every particle are Buddhas numberless as atoms,  
Each amidst a host of Bodhisattvas,  
And I am confident the sphere of all phenomena  
Is entirely filled with Buddhas in this way.
4. With infinite oceans of praise for You  
And oceans of sound from the aspects of my voice,  
I sing the breathtaking excellence of Buddhas  
And celebrate all of you Sugatas.
5. Beautiful flowers and regal garlands,  
Sweet music, scented oils and parasols,  
Sparkling lights and sublime incense,  
I offer to you, Victorious Ones [the Buddhas].

6. Fine dress and fragrant perfumes,  
Sandalwood powder heaped high as Mount Meru,  
All wondrous offerings in spectacular array,  
I offer to you, Victorious Ones.
7. With transcendent offerings peerless and vast,  
With profound admiration for all the Buddhas,  
With strength of conviction in the Bodhisattva way,  
I offer and bow down to all Victorious Ones.
8. Every harmful action I have done  
With my body, speech and mind,  
Overwhelmed by attachment, anger and confusion,  
All these I openly lay bare before you.
9. I lift up my heart and rejoice in all the merit  
Of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in ten directions,  
Of solitary realisers, hearers still training, and those beyond,  
And of all ordinary beings.
10. You who are the bright lights of worlds in ten directions,  
Who have attained a Buddha's Omniscience through the  
stages of awakening,  
All you who are my guides,  
Please turn the supreme wheel of Dharma.
11. With palms together, I earnestly request  
You who may actualise parinirvana,  
Please stay with us for aeons numberless as atoms of the world,  
For the happiness and well-being of all wanderers in samsara.
12. Whatever slight merit I may have accumulated  
By making prostrations, offering and confessing,  
Rejoicing and requesting that the Buddhas stay and teach,  
I now dedicate all this for the full awakening of all beings.

**Note:** In order to proceed towards the goal of Enlightenment, one's mind should be energised with the accumulation of merit and wisdom and the path should be free of obstacles. After reflecting on the ways to attain such conditions, all the Buddhas unanimously saw that the *Seven Limb Puja* is the most efficacious preliminary. It is a prerequisite for any practice to be done fruitfully.

Translated by Jesse Fenton in Seattle, Washington in 2002, at the request of her teacher, Venerable Thubten Chodrön.

## SHORT MANDALA OFFERING

[Tib. *man dal bsdus pa*]

This ground, anointed with perfume, strewn with flowers,  
Adorned with Mount Meru, the four continents, the sun and the  
moon,

I imagine this as a Buddhafield and offer it;  
May all sentient beings enjoy this Pure Land.

*Sa zhi po kyi jug shing maytok tram*  
*Ri rab ling shi nyi dhay gyan pa di*  
*Sangghay shing du mig tay bul wa yi*  
*Dro kun nam dag shing la cho par shog*

### The Four Dharmas of Venerable Gampopa

1. May I be blessed that my mind is directed towards the Dharma.
2. May I be blessed that my Dharma practice is on the proper path.
3. May I be blessed that the path is freed of flaws.
4. May I be blessed that the flaws are seen in the light of exalted wisdom.

### The Four Dharmas of Venerable Bhikshu Mahasattva

1. Becoming utterly frustrated with the ignorance that grasps at true existence, please bless me to generate genuine renunciation, seeing all aspects of samsara as viciously repulsive.
2. Please bless me that my mind stream overflows with the precious bodhicitta that cherishes others more than myself.
3. Please bless me to have an immaculate experience of the wisdom of emptiness that does not see even an atom of intrinsic reality, on the basis of understanding how things come into being by dependent origination through mere conditioning.

4. Please bless me that my mind stream overflows with the precious wisdom of the non-duality of bliss and emptiness.<sup>47</sup>

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYĀMÎ

**Note:** Mandala offering is one of the most efficacious methods to accumulate merit and to cultivate devotion to the Guru, Buddha and Bodhisattvas. The two sets of requests: *The Four Dharmas of Venerable Gampopa* and *The Four Dharmas of Venerable Bhikshu Mahasattva*, are requests for one's swift progress in the practice of Dharma, in its complete form, to be recited after making the mandala offering.

# THE FOUNDATION OF ALL GOOD QUALITIES

[Tib. *yon tan kun gzhir gyur ma*]

*Lama Tsongkhapa*

1. The foundation of all good qualities is the kind and perfect pure Guru;  
Correct devotion to him is the root of the path.  
By clearly seeing this and applying great effort,  
Please bless me to rely upon him with great respect.
2. Understanding that the *precious freedom of this rebirth*<sup>48</sup> is found only once,  
Is greatly meaningful and is difficult to find again,  
Please bless me to generate the mind that unceasingly,  
Day and night, takes its essence.
3. This life is as impermanent as a water bubble;  
Remember how quickly it decays and death comes.  
After death, just like a shadow follows the body,  
The results of virtuous and non-virtuous karma follow.
4. Finding firm and definite conviction in this,  
Please bless me always to be careful,  
To abandon even the slightest negativity  
And accomplish all virtuous deeds.
5. Samsaric splendours are unsatisfying and unreliable;  
Seeking them is the door to all suffering.  
Recognising these shortcomings,  
Please bless me to generate a strong wish for the bliss of liberation.
6. Led by this pure thought,  
Mindfulness, alertness and great caution arise.  
The root of the teachings is keeping the *pratimoksha* vows.<sup>49</sup>

Please bless me to accomplish this essential practice.

7. Just as I have fallen into the sea of samsara,  
So have all mother migratory beings.  
Please bless me to see this, train in supreme bodhicitta,  
And bear the responsibility of freeing migratory beings.
8. Even if I develop bodhicitta, but I don't practise the *three types of morality*,<sup>50</sup>  
I will not achieve Enlightenment.  
With my clear recognition of this,  
Please bless me to practise the *Bodhisattva vows*<sup>51</sup> with  
great energy.
9. Once I have pacified distractions to wrong objects  
And correctly analysed the meaning of reality,  
Please bless me to generate quickly within my mindstream,  
The unified path of calm abiding and special insight.
10. Having become a pure vessel by training in the general path,  
Please bless me to enter  
The holy gateway of the fortunate ones:  
The supreme *Vajra vehicle*.<sup>52</sup>
11. At that time, the basis of accomplishing the *two attainments*<sup>53</sup>  
Is keeping *pure vows and samaya*.<sup>54</sup>  
As I have become firmly convinced of this,  
Please bless me to protect these vows and pledges like my life.
12. Then, having realised the importance of the *two stages*,<sup>55</sup>  
The essence of Vajrayana,  
By practising with great energy, never giving up the four  
sessions,  
Please bless me to realise the teachings of the holy Guru.
13. Like that, may the Gurus who show the noble path  
And the spiritual friends who practise it have long lives.



Please bless me to pacify completely,  
All outer and inner hindrances.

14. In all my lives, never separated from perfect Gurus,  
May I enjoy the magnificent Dharma.  
By completing the qualities of the stages and paths,  
May I quickly attain the state of Vajradhara.

### **Migtsema Mantra**

MIG MAY TSEY WAI TER CHHEN CHEN RAY SIG  
DRI MAY KYEN PAI WANG PO JAM PEL YANG  
DU PUNG MA LU JOM DZE SANG WAI DAG  
GANG CHEN KHAY PAI TSUG GYEN TSONG KHA PA  
LOSANG DRAG PAI ZHAB LA SOL WA DEB

#### *Meaning of the Mantra*

You are Avalokiteshvara, great treasure of non-referential  
compassion,  
And Manjushri, master of flawless wisdom,  
As well as Vajrapani, destroyer of hordes of demons without  
exception,  
Tsongkhapa, crown jewel of the sages of the Land of Snows,  
Losang Dragpa, at your feet I make prostrations.

**Note:** The *Migtsema Mantra* was originally composed by Lama Tsongkhapa as a praise to his teacher, Venerable Jetsun Rendawa Shonu Lodoe, by seeing his teacher in the light of the three Bodhisattvas - Arya Avalokiteshvara (the Buddha of compassion), Arya Manjushri (the Buddha of wisdom) and Arya Vajrapani (the Buddha of power). Upon reading it, his teacher replaced his own name with the name of Lama Tsongkhapa and gave it back to him saying that the praise suited Lama Tsongkhapa more. Since then, this praise is commonly recited across Tibet.

Translated from Tibetan into English by the Foundation for the Preservation of Mahayana Tradition [FPMT].

# GENERATING THE MIND OF CONSUMMATE YOGA

[Tib. *thams cad rnal 'byor gyi sems bskyed pa*]

## Visualisation

*[In the space in front of you visualise your Guru in front of Buddha Shakyamuni, smaller in size than the Buddha. They are surrounded by all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and you are seated with your two parents on either side and are accompanied by all mother sentient beings. Begin with Shamatha meditation followed by meditation on the three principal points of the path—renunciation, bodhicitta and the wisdom of emptiness as outlined below:]*

## Shamatha

*[Meditate for five minutes following the instructions on page 332.]*

## Renunciation

*[Meditate on the Four Seals of the Buddha's Teachings]*

All composite things are impermanent;

All contaminated things are of the nature of suffering;

Everything is of the nature of emptiness and selflessness;

*[At this point, meditate on emptiness using any method you are familiar with, such as the Reasoning of the Four Essentials to Discern Emptiness (page 300) or the Staircase to Emptiness (page 297).]*

Transcending sorrow is peace.

*[Reinforce renunciation – a strong desire to renounce all sufferings, particularly self-grasping ignorance, which is the root cause of all miseries.]*

## **Bodhicitta**

*[It would be helpful to read Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of Bodhisattva Shantideva's, A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life as a preliminary to meditating on bodhicitta.]*

*Meditate on bodhicitta using any of the three methods:*

- 1. The Method of the Seven Fold Cause-Effect Relationship*
- 2. The Method of Equalising and Exchanging Oneself with Others*
- 3. The Synthesised Version of the above Two Methods*

*[Note: The three methods are outlined in the Appendix - Methods to Cultivate Bodhicitta, page 312.]*

*[At the end of the meditation on bodhicitta, abide in the experience of unconditional love and the commitment to become a Buddha for the benefit of all mother sentient beings.]*

## **Wisdom of Emptiness**

*To unveil one's Buddha nature, one needs to meditate on the wisdom of emptiness, which removes the two mental obscurations (afflictive obscurations and cognitive obscurations). Unlike the meditation on emptiness in the section on renunciation, here it is specifically meant to cleanse the mental obscurations of self-grasping ignorance and the self-centered attitude, so as to achieve complete Enlightenment as part of the practice of bodhicitta.*

*[Meditate on emptiness using any method, you are familiar with, such as the Reasoning of the Four Essentials to Discern Emptiness (page 300) or the Staircase to Emptiness (page 297).]*

*In accordance with His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama's advice, a few verses from Bodhisattva Shantideva's A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, Chapter 9: Wisdom, are to be reflected upon at this stage:*

150. (Therefore) sentient beings resemble dreams.  
Upon analysis, they are like plantain trees.  
Whether they are released or not from sorrow,  
In the ultimate sense, there is no distinction.
151. What is there to gain and what is there to lose  
With things that are empty of (true existence) in this way?  
Who is there to pay respect,  
And who is there to abuse?
152. From what are pleasure and pain derived?  
What is there to be happy or unhappy about?  
When one searches for the ultimate nature,  
Who is there to crave and what is there to crave for?
153. Upon analysis, this world of living beings (is found to  
have no true existence),  
Therefore who can die here?  
What is there to come and what has been?  
Who are friends and who are relatives?
154. O you (who are investigating reality),  
Please recognise, as I have done, that all is just like space!  
Those who wish to be happy  
Are greatly disturbed by causes for conflict  
And overjoyed by the causes for pleasure.
155. But, not finding happiness, they suffer,  
And in order to find it, they exert themselves.  
They argue with others, cut and stab one another;  
With many wrong deeds, they live in a state of great hardship.
156. Even though they repeatedly come to happy existences  
And experience much pleasure there,  
Upon dying, they fall for a long time  
Into the unbearable sufferings of lower realms.

157. Within conditioned existence, the chasms (of suffering) are many  
And the (liberating comprehension of) ultimate truth is rare.  
Furthermore (the apprehension of true existence and the  
understanding of emptiness), mutually contradict one another.  
Yet, if while in conditioned existence, one does not (realise)  
this ultimate truth,
158. One will (continue to experience) a limitless ocean of misery,  
Unbearable and beyond analogy.  
Likewise, (through not having realised emptiness), I have  
little strength (for virtue)  
And one's human life (of leisure and endowment) is indeed  
very short.
159. Also, one strives hard to live long and avoid illness,  
One is (concerned with) hunger, rest and sleep;  
One is injured by others  
And keeps meaningless company with the childish.
160. Therefore, this life swiftly passes with no meaning,  
And it is very hard to find the chance to investigate reality.  
In this state, where is there the means to reverse  
This beginningless habit of grasping at true existence?
161. Furthermore, devils are exerting themselves  
To cast us into vast unfortunate realms,  
There are many mistaken paths  
And it is hard to resolve doubts about the perfect way.
162. It will be hard to find the leisure (of a human life) again,  
And extremely difficult to find the presence of the Buddhas.  
It is hard to forsake this flood of afflictions.  
Alas, sentient beings will continue to suffer!
163. O indeed, it is worth feeling sorrow  
For those adrift in the river of pain, who  
Although they experience great misery

Are unaware of the sufferings they go through.

164. For example, some (ascetics) wash themselves again and again  
And others repeatedly enter fire,  
But although they thereby suffer greatly  
They assume themselves as being happy.
165. Similarly, those (who mistake their suffering for joy)  
And live as though there were no ageing or death  
Are first of all killed (by the lord of death),  
And then experience the unbearable misery of falling into  
lower realms.
166. When shall I be able to extinguish  
(The pains of) those tormented by the fires of suffering  
With the rain of my accumulated happiness  
That has sprung from the clouds of my merits?
167. And by having, in the manner of not objectifying (true existence)  
Intensely will I gather the accumulation of merit,  
When will I be able to reveal emptiness  
To those who are wretched and sad by the view (of true  
existence)?

### **Ceremony to Generate the Mind of Consummate Yoga<sup>56</sup>**

*[Reinforce the bodhicitta that you have generated through the earlier meditation. Visualise this bodhicitta transforming into a spotless white moon disc that rests horizontally at your heart. Then reinforce the wisdom of emptiness that transforms into a spotless white vajra sitting vertically on the moon disc that you have visualised at your heart. Multiply the vajra and the moon that you have generated at your heart, an infinite number of times, and share them with all mother sentient beings.]*



*Visualise all sentient beings joining you in all the steps of this practice. This set of the two bodhicittas—conventional bodhicitta (moon) and ultimate bodhicitta (vajra)—also rests in the hearts of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.*

*As a gesture of inviting them to the ceremony of taking the aspirational Bodhisattva vows, make three prostrations to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Then, kneeling on your right knee, with hands folded in supplication, recite the following three verses:]*

I go for refuge to the Triple Gem;  
I confess the negativities individually;  
I rejoice in the virtues of all the beings;  
I hold the precious Buddhahood in my heart. (x3)

Gurus, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, please pay heed to me.  
Just as the previous Buddhas  
Have generated the mind of bodhicitta,  
And just as they successively dwelt  
In the Bodhisattva practices,

Likewise, for the benefit of all sentient beings,  
I will generate the mind of bodhicitta,  
And likewise, shall I, too,  
Successively follow the Bodhisattva practices.<sup>57</sup> (x3)

*[At the end of the third repetition imagine that you have received the aspirational Bodhisattva vow and feel a sense of deep joy about this. Your gesture of taking the aspirational Bodhisattva vow pleases the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that you have visualised before you, thereby invoking their Omniscient minds and wisdom to manifest an infinite number of replicas of the sets of the moon and vajra at their hearts. Like a deluge of rainshower, these replicas of the moon and vajra descend and merge with the moon and vajra that you have visualised at your heart and at the hearts of all sentient beings. This stabilises and blesses the two bodhicittas within you and within all sentient beings.*

*As a gesture of thanking all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for making this ceremony possible, make three prostrations to them and then take your seat. Make a commitment that you and all mother sentient beings will never relinquish the two bodhicittas throughout this lifetime and future lifetimes, by reciting the following verse:]*

Throughout my future lifetimes,  
May I always be guided by the compassionate Buddha,  
And be able to uphold the two precious bodhicittas,  
Even at the cost of my life.<sup>58</sup> (x3)

*[To reinforce your aspiration and commitment, and to rejoice in having generated bodhicitta, while sitting on your cushion, recite the following verses:<sup>59</sup>]*

25. In order to further increase this (bodhicitta) from now on,  
Those with discernment who have lucidly seised  
An Awakening Mind (of bodhicitta) in this way,  
Should highly praise it in the following manner:
26. Today my life has (borne) fruit;  
(Having) well obtained this human existence,  
I have been born in the family of the Buddha  
And now am one of Buddha's Children.
27. Thus, whatever actions I do from now on,  
Must be in accord with the family.  
Never shall I disgrace or pollute  
This noble and unsullied race.
28. Just like a blind person  
Discovering a jewel in a heap of rubbish,  
Likewise, by some coincidence,  
An Awakening Mind has been born within me.
29. It is the supreme ambrosia  
That overcomes the sovereignty of death,



It is the inexhaustible treasure  
That eliminates all poverty in the world.

30. It is the supreme medicine  
That quells the world's disease.  
It is the tree that shelters all beings  
Wandering and tired on the path of conditioned existence.
31. It is the universal bridge  
That leads to freedom from unhappy states of birth.  
It is the dawning moon of the mind  
That dispels the torment of disturbing conceptions.
32. It is the great sun that finally removes  
The misty ignorance of the world.  
It is the quintessential butter  
From the churning of the milk of Dharma.
33. For all those guests travelling on the path of  
conditioned existence,  
Who wish to experience the bounties of happiness,  
This will satisfy them with joy  
And actually place them in supreme bliss.
34. Today in the presence of all the Protectors,  
I invite the world to be guests  
At (a festival of) temporary and ultimate delight,  
May gods, demi-gods and all be joyful.

## **Dedication Prayers**

I dedicate the merit thus gathered,  
Toward the realisation of the deeds and the prayers,  
Of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times,  
And to the upholding of the doctrine of scripture and insight.

May I in all lives, through the force of this merit,  
Never separate from the *four wheels of the Mahayana vehicle*,<sup>60</sup>  
And accomplish all the stages of the path,  
Renunciation, bodhicitta, perfect view and the two stages.<sup>61</sup>

From my *two collections*,<sup>62</sup> vast as space, that I have amassed  
From working with effort at this practice for a great length of time,  
May I become the chief leading Buddha for all those  
Whose mind's wisdom eye is blinded by ignorance.<sup>63</sup>

**Note:** If one is constrained for time or in a difficult situation where one is finding it hard to complete a daily practice, it is advisable that this particular practice is maintained as it contains the final legacy of the Buddha's appearance on this earth. If the practitioner has time, it may be extended to one-two hours or even longer.

## MANTRA RECITATIONS

### **Buddha Shakyamuni**

OM MUNI MUNI MAHĀ MUNIYE SVĀHĀ

### **Mantra of His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama**

OM AḤ GURU VAJRADHARA BHATTĀRTAK MANJUŚHRĪ  
VĀGĪNDRA SUMATI GYĀNA ŚĀSANDHARA SAMUNDARA ŚRĪ  
BHADRA SARVA SIDDHI HUNG HUNG

### **Arya Avalokiteshvara [The Buddha of Compassion]**

OM MAṆI PADME HŪNG

### **Arya Manjushri [The Buddha of Wisdom]**

OM A RA PA CHA NA DHÎH

### **Arya Tara [The Female Buddha of Swift Deeds]**

OM TĀRE TUTTĀRE TURE SVĀHĀ

### **Medicine Buddha [Long Mantra]**

NAMO BHAGAVATE BHAIṢAJYA GURU VAIDŪRYA PRABHA-  
RĀJĀYA TATHĀGATĀYA ARHATE SAMYAKSAMBUDDHĀYA  
TADYATHĀ: OM BHAIṢAJYE BHAIṢAJYE MAHA BHAIṢAJYA  
BHAIṢAJYA RĀJĀYA-SAMUDGATE SVĀHĀ.

### **Medicine Buddha [Short Mantra]**

TADYATHĀ, OM BHAIṢAJYE BHAIṢAJYE MAHĀBHAIṢAJYE  
BHAIṢAJYARĀJE SAMUDGATE SVĀHĀ.

### **Guru Padmasambhava**

OM ĀH HŪNG VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HŪNG

## Lama Tsongkhapa

OM AḤ GURU VAJRADHARA SUMATI KÎRTI SIDDHI HUNG  
HUNG

### Vajrasattva 100-Syllable Mantra

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANUPĀLAYA VAJRASATTVA  
TVENOPATIṢṬHA DṚḌHO ME BHAVA SUTOṢYO ME BHAVA  
SUPOṢYO ME BHAVA ANURAKTO ME BHAVA SARVA SIDDHIṢ  
ME PRAYACCHA SARVA KARMA SU CA ME CITTAṢ ŚREYAḤ  
KURU HŪṢ HA HA HA HA HOḤ BHAGAVAN SARVA  
TATHĀGATAVAJRA MĀ ME MUÑCA VAJRĪ BHAVA MAHĀ  
SAMAYA SATTVA AḤ (HŪṢ PHAṬ)

**Note:** To invoke the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, recall their qualities (in particular - perfect love, perfect knowledge and perfect power) and recite any of these mantras. They may be recited loudly, so all sentient beings (not just human beings but animals, insects, pretas etc.) may be benefited and develop a connection to Buddha's teachings, as well as to different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. There are some mantras to be recited inaudible to others.



**SELECTED TEXTS FOR  
STUDY, REFLECTION AND MEDITATION**



## THE NOBLE MAHAYANA SUTRA

### “WISDOM AT THE HOUR OF DEATH”

[Skt. *aryātyayajñānanāmamahāyānasūtra*]

[Tib. *phags pa 'da' ka ye shes zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*]

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. While the Blessed One was residing in the palace of the king of the gods in the Akanistha realm, He taught the Dharma to the entire assembly.

The Bodhisattva Mahasattva Akasagarbha then paid homage to the Blessed One and asked, “Blessed One, how should we think about the mind of a Bodhisattva who is about to die?”

The Blessed One replied, “Akasagarbha, when a Bodhisattva is about to die, he should cultivate the wisdom of the hour of death. The wisdom of the hour of death is as follows:

All phenomena are naturally pure. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding that there are no entities.

All phenomena are subsumed within the mind of Enlightenment. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding of great compassion.

All phenomena are naturally luminous. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding of non-apprehension.

All entities are impermanent. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding of non-attachment to anything whatsoever.

When one realises mind, this is wisdom. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding of not seeking the Buddha elsewhere.”

The Blessed One then spoke the following verses:

“Since all phenomena are naturally pure,  
One should cultivate the clear understanding that there are no entities.”

“Since all phenomena are connected with the enlightened mind,  
One should cultivate the clear understanding of great compassion.”



“Since all phenomena are naturally luminous,  
One should cultivate the clear understanding of non-apprehension.”

“Since all entities are impermanent,  
One should cultivate the clear understanding of non-attachment.”

“Since the mind is the cause for the arising of wisdom,  
Do not look for the Buddha elsewhere.”

After the Blessed One had spoken, the whole assembly, including the Bodhisattva Akasagarbha and others, were overjoyed and full of praise for the Buddha’s words.

This concludes the *Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “Wisdom at the Hour of Death.”*

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by Tom Tillemans’ class in the University of Vienna’s program of Buddhist Translation Studies in 2014. It has been completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

# THE NOBLE MAHAYANA SUTRA

## “DEPENDENT ARISING”

[Skt. *āryapratītyasamutpādanāmamahāyānasūtra*]

[Tib. *'phags pa rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*]

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was in the Realm of the Thirty-Three Gods, seated on the throne of Indra. With Him were great hearers such as the venerable Asvajit; Bodhisattva Mahasattvas such as noble Maitreya, noble Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani, who were adorned with immeasurable precious qualities; as well as various gods such as the great Brahma, who is the lord of the Saha world, Narayana, the great Isvara, Sakra, who is the chief of the gods, and Pancasikha, who is the king of the gandharvas.

On that occasion, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokitesvara rose from his seat and, having draped his upper robe over one shoulder, knelt down with his right knee on the peak of Mount Meru. His palms together, he then bowed toward the Blessed One and addressed these words to him:

“Blessed One, these gods all really wish to build a stupa. Now that they are present in this entourage, please teach them the Dharma in such a way so that their merit of Brahma will increase, and the merit of the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen will increase much more than that of all types of beings in the world of gods, maras, and Brahma, including renunciants and brahmins.”

At this, the Blessed One spoke the verses of dependent arising:

YE DHARMĀ HETU PRABHAVĀ HETUM TEṢĀM TATHĀGATO  
HYAVADAT TEṢĀM CHA YO NIRODHA EVAM VĀDÎ MAHĀ  
ŚRAMANAḤ YE SVĀHĀ<sup>64</sup>

All phenomena arise from causes,  
The causes are taught by the Tathagata,  
The cessation of the causes, as well;  
Is taught by the Great Seer.

“Avalokitesvara, it is like this: This dependent arising is the dharmakaya of all the Buddhas. One who sees dependent arising, sees the Tathagata. Avalokitesvara, if a faithful son or daughter of a noble family builds, in a remote place, a stupa the size of a gooseberry fruit, with a central pillar the size of a needle and a parasol the size of a flower of the bakula tree, and inserts this verse of dependent arising which is the dharmadhatu, he or she will generate the merit of Brahma. When such persons pass on from here and die, they will be reborn in the world of Brahma. When they pass on from there and die, they will be reborn with fortunes equaling those of the gods of the Pure Abodes.”

After the Blessed One had spoken these words, the hearers, Bodhisattvas, the whole assembly, and the universe of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised his teaching.

**Colophon:** This concludes the *Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra on Dependent Arising*. Translated and edited by the Indian scholar Surendrabodhi and the principal editor-translator, Venerable Yeshe Zhang De.

**Note:** This translation from Tibetan into English was undertaken by the Buddhavacana Translation Group, Vienna, (Rolf Scheuermann and Casey Kemp with the aid of Tom Tillemans) under the supervision of Khenpo Konchok Tamphel and completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

# THE NOBLE MAHAYANA SUTRA

## “THE RICE SEEDLING”

[Skt. *āryasālistambhanāmamahāyanasūtra*]

[Tib. *'phags pa sa lu'i ljang pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*]

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!

Thus have I heard at one time. The Bhagavan was residing on Vulture Peak mountain in Rajagriha with a large sangha of 1,250 bhiksus and with a great many Bodhisattva Mahasattvas. At that time, Venerable Sariputra went to the place frequented by the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya and, after they had exchanged courtesies upon meeting each other, they both sat down on a flat rock.

Venerable Sariputra then said to the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya, “Maitreya, here today, the Bhagavan, gazing at a rice seedling, spoke this *aphorim*<sup>65</sup> to the bhiksus: ‘Bhiksus, whoever sees dependent arising sees the *Dharma*.<sup>66</sup> Whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha.’ Having said this, the Bhagavan fell silent. Maitreya, what is the meaning of this aphorism spoken by the Sugata? What is dependent arising? What is the Dharma? What is the Buddha? How does one see the Dharma by seeing dependent arising? How does one see the Buddha by seeing the Dharma?”

The Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya then replied to the Venerable *Sharadvatiputra*,<sup>67</sup> “Venerable Sariputra, you want to know what dependent arising is in the statement made by the Bhagavan, the Lord of Dharma, the Omniscient One: ‘Bhiksus, whoever sees dependent arising sees the Dharma. Whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha?’ Well, the phrase dependent arising means that something arises because something else already exists; something is born because something else was already born. That is to say, ignorance causes formations. *Formations*<sup>68</sup> cause consciousness. Consciousness causes name and form. Name and form cause the six sense sources. The six sense sources cause contact. Contact causes

feeling. Feeling causes craving. Craving causes *appropriation*.<sup>69</sup> Appropriation causes becoming. Becoming causes birth. And birth causes aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, despair, and anxiety. Thus does this entire great heap of suffering arise.”

“When ignorance ceases, formations cease. When formations cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense sources cease. When the six sense sources cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, appropriation ceases. When appropriation ceases, becoming ceases. When becoming ceases, birth ceases. And when birth ceases, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, despair, and anxiety cease. Thus does this entire great heap of suffering cease. This is what the Bhagavan has called dependent arising.”

“What is the Dharma? The Dharma is the eightfold path of the noble ones: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This eightfold path of the noble ones, combined with the attainment of its results and nirvana, is what the Bhagavan has called the Dharma.”

“Who is the Bhagavan Buddha? A Buddha, so-called because of comprehending *all dharmas*,<sup>70</sup> is endowed with the wisdom eye of the noble ones and the *body of Dharma*,<sup>71</sup> and thus perceives the *dharmas*<sup>72</sup> of those still in training and those beyond training.”

“How does one see dependent arising? On this point the Bhagavan said, ‘One who sees dependent arising as *constant*,<sup>73</sup> without life force, devoid of life force, true, unmistaken, unborn, not arisen, uncreated, uncompounded, unobstructed, imperceptible, *tranquil*,<sup>74</sup> fearless, incontrovertible, inexhaustible, and by nature never *stilled*,<sup>75</sup> and who likewise sees the Dharma to also be constant, without life force, devoid of life force, true,

unmistaken, unborn, not arisen, uncreated, uncompounded, unobstructed, imperceptible, tranquil, fearless, incontrovertible, inexhaustible, and never stilled, clearly understands the Dharma of the nobles ones, and by thus acquiring such right knowledge, sees the Buddha, the body of the unsurpassable Dharma.”<sup>76</sup>

“Why is it called dependent arising? It is called dependent arising because it is causal and conditional, not non-causal and non-conditional. In this connection, the Bhagavan concisely taught the characteristics of dependent arising as follows: ‘Results come from their own specific conditions. Whether Tathagatas appear or not, this true nature of *things*<sup>77</sup> will remain. It is the true nature; the constancy of *Dharma*<sup>78</sup>; the immutability of *Dharma*,<sup>79</sup> consistent with dependent arising, suchness, unmistaken suchness, unchanging suchness, actuality, and truth; unmistaken; and unerring.”

“Moreover, dependent arising emerges from two principles. From what two principles? From a causal relation and a conditional relation. Furthermore, it should be understood as twofold: outer and inner.”

“What is the causal relation in outer dependent arising? It is as follows. From a seed comes a sprout, from a sprout a leaf, from a leaf a stem, from a stem a pedicel, from a pedicel a pistil, from a pistil a flower, and from a flower comes a fruit. If there is no seed, the sprout cannot arise and so on, until finally, without the flower, the fruit cannot arise. If there is a seed, the sprout will form and so on, until finally, if there is a flower, then the fruit will form.”

“In that process, the seed does not think, ‘I form the sprout.’ Nor does the sprout think, ‘I am formed by the seed.’ Likewise, the flower does not think, ‘I form the fruit.’ Nor does the fruit think, ‘I am formed by the flower.’ Yet, if there is a seed, the sprout will take form and arise, and so on, until finally, likewise, if there is a flower, the fruit will take form and arise. Thus is the causal relation in outer dependent arising to be seen.”

“So how is the conditional relation in outer dependent arising to be seen? As due to the coming together of six elements. As due to the coming together of which six elements? Namely, conditional dependent arising is to be seen as due to the coming together of the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and *season*.<sup>80</sup> The earth element functions as the support for the seed. The water element moistens the seed. The fire element ripens the seed. The air element opens the seed. The space element performs the function of not obstructing the seed. And season transforms the seed. Without these conditions a sprout cannot form from a seed. But when the outer element of earth is not deficient, and likewise water, fire, air, space, and season are not deficient, then from the coming together of all these factors, a sprout forms as the seed is ceasing.”

“The earth element does not think, ‘I support the seed.’ Nor does the water element think, ‘I moisten the seed.’ Nor does the fire element think, ‘I ripen the seed.’ Nor does the air element think, ‘I open the seed.’ Nor does the space element think, ‘I make sure the seed is not obstructed.’ Nor does the season think, ‘I transform the seed.’ Nor does the seed think, ‘I form the sprout.’ Nor does the sprout think, ‘I am formed by these conditions.’ Yet when these conditions are present and the seed is ceasing, the sprout forms. Likewise, when finally there is a flower, the fruit forms.”

“The sprout is not created by itself, not created by another, not created by both, not created by *Isvara*,<sup>81</sup> not transformed by *time*,<sup>82</sup> not derived from *prakṛti*,<sup>83</sup> and not born without any cause. Nevertheless, through the coming together of the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and season, the sprout forms as the seed is ceasing.”

“Thus is the conditional relation in outer dependent arising to be seen.”

“Here, outer dependent arising is to be seen in terms of five aspects. Which five? As not permanent, as not discontinuous, as not

involving transmigration, as the formation of a large result from a small cause, and as a continuity of similar type.”

“How is it not permanent? It is not permanent because the sprout and the seed are different. The sprout is not the seed. The sprout does not come from the seed after it has ceased, nor does it come from the seed while it has not yet ceased.<sup>84</sup> Rather, the sprout is born precisely as the seed ceases.”

“How is it not discontinuous? It is not discontinuous because a sprout is not born from a seed that has already ceased, nor from a seed that has not yet ceased. Rather, like the beam of a scale tilting from up to down, a sprout is born precisely when the seed has ceased.”

“How does it not involve transmigration? It does not involve transmigration because the sprout and the seed are different; that which is the sprout is not the seed.”

“How does it entail the formation of a large result from a small cause? A large fruit forms from planting a small seed. Therefore, it entails the formation of a large result from a small cause.”

“Lastly, fruit forms precisely according to the type of seed planted. Therefore, it involves a continuity of similar type.”

“Thus is outer dependent arising to be seen in terms of five aspects.”

“Similarly, inner dependent arising also arises from two principles. From what two principles? From a causal relation and a conditional relation.”

“What, then, is the causal relation in inner dependent arising? It starts with ignorance causing formations and so on, until finally, birth causes aging and death. If ignorance does not arise, then formations do not manifest and so on, until finally, if birth does not arise, then aging and death do not manifest. Likewise, from the existence of ignorance, formations occur and so on, until finally,



from the existence of birth, comes aging and death.”

“Ignorance does not think, ‘I produce formations.’ Nor do formations think, ‘We are produced by ignorance,’ and so on. Finally, birth does not think, ‘I produce aging and death.’ Nor do aging and death think, ‘I am produced by birth.’ Nevertheless, formations take form and arise through the existence of ignorance and so on, until finally aging and death take form and arise through the existence of birth.”

“Thus is the causal relation in inner dependent arising to be seen.”

“How is the conditional relation in inner dependent arising to be seen? As due to the coming together of six elements. As due to the coming together of which six elements? Namely, the conditional relation in inner dependent arising is to be seen as due to the coming together of the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness.”

“Here, what is the earth element in inner dependent arising? That which assembles to form the solidity of the body is called the earth element. That which provides cohesion in the body is called the water element. That which digests whatever the body eats, drinks, chews, and tastes is called the fire element. That which performs the function of the body’s inhalation and exhalation is called the air element. That which allows the body to have hollow spaces inside is called the space element. That which produces the *sprouts*<sup>85</sup> of name and form like reeds in a sheaf—the combination of the five collections of consciousness, together with the defiled mental consciousness — is called the consciousness element. Without these conditions the body cannot be born. But when the inner earth element is not deficient, and likewise the elements of water, fire, air, space, and consciousness are not deficient, then from the coming together of all these factors, the body forms.”

“In this process, the earth element does not think, ‘I provide the solidity of the body by assembling.’ Nor does the water element

think, ‘I provide cohesion for the body.’ Nor does the fire element think, ‘I digest whatever the body eats, drinks, chews, or tastes.’ Nor does the air element think, ‘I perform the function of the body’s inhalation and exhalation.’ Nor does the space element think, ‘I create hollow spaces inside the body.’ Nor does the element of consciousness think, ‘I produce the name and form of the body.’ Nor does the body think, ‘I am produced by these conditions.’ Yet, when these conditions are present, the body is born.”

“The earth element is not a self, not a being, not a life force, not a creature, not a human, not a person, not female, not male, not neuter, not me, not mine, and not anybody else’s.”

“Similarly, the water element, the fire element, the air element, the space element, and the consciousness element are also not a self, not a being, not a life force, not a creature, not a human, not a person, not female, not male, not neuter, not me, not mine, and not anybody else’s.”

“Here, what is ignorance? That which perceives these same six elements to be unitary, whole, permanent, constant, eternal, pleasurable, a self, a being, a life force, a creature, a *soul*,<sup>86</sup> a man, an individual, a human, a person, me, and mine, along with the many other such variations of misapprehension, is called ignorance. The presence of such ignorance brings desire, aversion, and delusion toward objects. Such desire, aversion, and delusion towards objects are the formations caused by ignorance. That which distinguishes between individual objects is consciousness. The four aggregates for appropriation that emerge in conjunction with consciousness, [along with the aggregate of material form], are name and *form*.<sup>87</sup> The faculties based on name and form are the six sense sources. The conjunction of the *three factors*<sup>88</sup> is contact. The experience of contact is feeling. Attachment to feeling is craving. The intensification of craving is appropriation. Action that comes from appropriation and causes rebirth is becoming. The emergence of the aggregates from such a cause is birth. The maturation of the aggregates after

birth is aging. The perishing of the decrepit aggregates is death. The inner torment of the deluded, attached, dying person is sorrow. The utterance that comes from sorrow is lamentation. The experience of discomfort associated with the collection of the five consciousnesses is suffering. The mental suffering accompanied by *attention*<sup>89</sup> is despair. Moreover, any other subtle defilements of this kind are called anxiety.”

“They are called ignorance in the sense of obscuring, formations in the sense of forming, consciousness in the sense of causing to know, name and form in the sense of mutual support, the six sense sources in the sense of *entryways*,<sup>90</sup> contact in the sense of contact, feeling in the sense of experience, craving in the sense of thirst, appropriation in the sense of appropriating, becoming in the sense of giving birth to repeated becoming, birth in the sense of the emergence of the aggregates, aging in the sense of the maturation of the aggregates, death in the sense of perishing, sorrow in the sense of grieving, lamentation in the sense of wailing, suffering in the sense of bodily torment, despair in the sense of mental torment, and anxiety in the sense of *subtle defilement*.<sup>91</sup>”

“Furthermore, not knowing reality, in the sense of not apprehending it and misapprehending it, is ignorance.”

“If such an ignorance is present, three types of formations develop: those that lead to meritorious states, those that lead to unmeritorious states, and those that lead to immovable states. This is what is meant by ‘ignorance causes formations.’”

“From formations that lead to meritorious states comes consciousness that leads to meritorious states. From formations that lead to unmeritorious states comes consciousness that leads to unmeritorious states. And from formations that lead to immovable states comes consciousness that leads to immovable states. This is what is meant by ‘formations cause consciousness.’”

“The four immaterial aggregates emerging together with consciousness, along with physical form, is what is meant by ‘consciousness causes name and form.’”

“Due to the development of name and form, the performance of actions through the entryways of the six sense sources occurs. This is what is meant by ‘name and form cause the six sense sources.’”

“From the six sense sources arise the six collections of contact. This is what is meant by ‘the six sense sources cause contact.’”

“Feelings occur precisely according to the type of contact that occurs. This is what is meant by ‘contact causes feeling.’”

“Relishing those different kinds of feelings, taking delight in them, clinging to them, and having that clinging remain is what is meant by ‘feeling causes craving.’”

“From relishing, taking delight, clinging, and having that clinging remain comes an unwillingness to let go, with the repeated wish: ‘May I never part from these dear and delightful forms!’ This is what is meant by ‘craving causes appropriation.’”

“Such wishing gives rise to rebirth-producing actions by means of body, speech, and mind. This is what is meant by ‘appropriation causes becoming.’”

“The formation of the five aggregates born from such actions is what is meant by ‘becoming causes birth.’”

“The maturation of the development of the aggregates formed from birth, and their disintegration, is what is meant by ‘birth causes aging and death.’”

“Thus, this twelvefold dependent arising—which comes from several different causes and from several different conditions, is neither permanent nor impermanent, is neither compounded nor uncompounded, is not without any cause or condition, is

not an experiencer, and is not something exhaustible, something destructible, or something that ceases— has proceeded from time immemorial, without interruption, like the flow of a river.”

“This twelvefold dependent arising—which comes from several different causes and from several different conditions, is neither permanent nor impermanent, is neither compounded nor uncompounded, is not without any cause or condition, is not an experiencer, and is not something exhaustible, something destructible, or something that ceases—has indeed proceeded from time immemorial, without interruption, like the flow of a river. Nevertheless, there are four links that serve as the cause for assembling this twelvefold dependent arising. Which four? Namely, ignorance, craving, karma, and consciousness.”

“Consciousness functions as a cause by having the nature of a seed. Karma functions as a cause by having the nature of a field. Ignorance and craving function as causes by having the nature of afflictions.”

“Karma and afflictions cause the seed of consciousness to grow. Here, karma functions as the field for the seed of consciousness. Craving moistens the seed of consciousness. Ignorance sows the seed of consciousness. Without these conditions, the seed of consciousness does not develop.”

“In this process, karma does not think, ‘I function as the field for the seed of consciousness.’ Nor does craving think, ‘I moisten the seed of consciousness.’ Nor does ignorance think, ‘I sow the seed of consciousness.’”

“Nor does the seed of consciousness think, ‘I am produced by these conditions.’ Yet when the seed of consciousness grows, planted in the field of karma, moistened by the water of craving, and strewn with the manure of ignorance, the sprout of name and form manifests within whichever mother’s womb one will take rebirth through.”

“And this sprout of name and form is not created by itself, not

created by another, not created by both, not created by *Isvara*, not transformed by time, not derived from *prakṛti*, not dependent on a single factor, and not born without any cause. Nonetheless, from the combination of the union of the parents, the period of ovulation, and other conditions, the seed of consciousness, filled with appetite, produces the sprout of name and form within whichever mother’s womb one will take rebirth through. For although things are devoid of owner, devoid of ownership, ungraspable, space-like, and their nature is the mark of illusion, there is no deficiency of requisite causes and conditions.”

“For instance, the eye consciousness arises by way of five principles. Which five? Namely, the eye consciousness arises based on the eye on which it depends, form, light, space, and the appropriate attention. Here, the eye functions as the basis for the eye consciousness. Form functions as the object of perception for the eye consciousness. Light functions as visibility. Space functions by not obstructing. Appropriate attention functions as mental reflection. Without these conditions, the eye consciousness cannot arise. But when the inner sense source, the eye, is not deficient, and likewise, when form, light, space, and appropriate attention are not deficient, then from the coming together of all these factors, the eye consciousness arises.”

“The eye does not think, ‘I serve as the basis for the eye consciousness.’ Nor does form think, ‘I serve as the object of perception for the eye consciousness.’ Nor does light think, ‘I function as the visibility for the eye consciousness.’ Nor does space think, ‘I do not obstruct the eye consciousness.’ Nor does appropriate attention think, ‘I provide mental reflection for the eye consciousness.’ Nor does the eye consciousness think, ‘I am produced by these conditions.’ Yet, the eye consciousness is born from the presence of these conditions. Similarly, a corresponding analysis should be applied to the rest of the faculties.”

“Here, there is nothing whatsoever that transmigrates from this

existence to the next. And yet, because there is no deficiency of requisite causes and conditions, the result of karma nonetheless manifests. It is like the appearance of the reflection of a face on the surface of a well-polished mirror. The face has not shifted onto the surface of the mirror, but because there is no deficiency of requisite causes and conditions, the face nonetheless appears there.”

“Similarly, there is nobody at all who transmigrates from here after death and is born elsewhere. And yet, because there is no deficiency of requisite causes and conditions, the result of karma nonetheless manifests. It is like how the orb of the moon travels at a distance of forty-two thousand yojanas above earth, and yet its reflection nonetheless appears in small vessels filled with water. It is not that the moon moves from its position and enters the small vessels filled with water. Yet, because there is no deficiency of requisite causes and conditions, the orb of the moon nonetheless appears there.”

“Likewise, that there is nobody at all who transmigrates from here after death and is born elsewhere, and yet, because there is no deficiency of requisite causes and conditions, the result of karma nonetheless manifests, is like how a fire ignites from the assemblage of its requisite causes and conditions, and not when deficient of its requisite causes and conditions.”

“In the same way, although things are devoid of owner, devoid of ownership, ungraspable, space-like, and their nature is the mark of illusion, because there is no deficiency of requisite causes and conditions, the seed of consciousness born of karma and afflictions will nonetheless produce the sprout of name and form within whichever mother’s womb one will take rebirth through.”

“Thus is the conditional relation in inner dependent arising to be seen.”

“Here, inner dependent arising is to be seen in terms of five aspects. Which five? As not permanent, as not discontinuous, as not

involving transmigration, as the formation of a large result from a small cause, and as a continuity of similar type.”

“How is it not permanent? It is not permanent because the final aggregates at death are one thing and those at birth are another; that is, the final aggregates at death are not the ones at birth. And yet, only when the final aggregates at death cease do the aggregates at birth arise.”

“How is it not discontinuous? It is not discontinuous because the aggregates at birth do not arise from the final aggregates at death either when they have already ceased, or when they have not yet ceased. Like the beam of a scale tilting from up to down, the aggregates at birth arise precisely when the final aggregates at death have ceased.”

“How does it not involve transmigration? It does not involve transmigration because beings from different classes of existence bring about their rebirth in a common form of birth.”

“How does it entail the formation of a large result from a small cause? The ripening of a large result is experienced from having performed a minor action. Thus, it entails the formation of a large result from a small cause.”

“It involves a continuity of similar type because the ripening of an action is experienced precisely according to the action performed.”

“Venerable Sariputra, whoever sees with perfect wisdom this dependent arising, perfectly taught by the Bhagavan, as it actually is—as always and *forever*<sup>92</sup> without life force, devoid of life force, true, unmistaken, unborn, not arisen, uncreated, uncompounded, unobstructed, imperceptible, tranquil, fearless, incontrovertible, inexhaustible, and by nature never stilled— whoever fully and truly sees it as unreal, vain, hollow, unsubstantial, as a sickness, a boil, a thorn, as miserable, impermanent, painful, empty, and self-less, such a person does not reflect on the past thinking, ‘Did I exist in



the past, or not? What was I in the past? How was I in the past?' Nor does such a person reflect on the future thinking, 'Will I exist in the future, or not? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the future?' Nor does such a person reflect on the present thinking, 'What is this? How is this? Being what, what will we become? Where does this being come from? Where will it go when transmigrating from here at death?'"

"Whichever dogmas mendicants and brahmins hold throughout the world, whether they involve belief in a self, belief in a being, belief in a life force, belief in a person, or belief in ceremonies and festivities, such dogmas, prone to agitation and dullness, are all abandoned at that time. Fully understood as false, these dogmas are severed at the root and wither like the head of a palm tree,<sup>93</sup> never to arise or cease in the future."

"Venerable Sariputra, whoever is endowed with such acceptance of the Dharma and thus perfectly understands dependent arising is prophesied for unexcelled, perfect, and complete awakening by the Tathagata, the Arhat, the Perfectly and Completely Awakened One, the One with Perfect Knowledge and Conduct, the Sugata, the Knower of the World, the Incomparable Charioteer of those who need taming, the Teacher of gods and humans, the Bhagavan, the Buddha, in this way: 'Such a person will become a perfect and complete Buddha!' "

After the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya had thus spoken, Venerable Sariputra, together with the world of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised what the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya had taught.

This concludes the noble Mahayana sutra, *The Rice Seedling*.

**Note:** Translated from the Tibetan, with comparison to Sanskrit editions by the Dharmasāgara Translation Group: Raktrul Ngawang Kunga Rinpoche, Rebecca Hufen, Jason Sanche, Arne Schelling and Sonam Spitz, under the patronage and supervision of 84000.co

# THREE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF THE PATH

[Tib. *lam gtso rnam gsum*]

Lama Tsongkhapa

I bow down to the Venerable Lamas.

1. As well as I am able I will explain  
The essence of all the teachings of the Buddha,  
The path praised by the Conqueror's children,  
The entrance for those who desire liberation.
2. Listen with a clear mind, you fortunate ones  
Who are not attached to the joys of cyclic existence,  
Strive to make good use of *leisure and opportunity*,<sup>94</sup>  
And direct your minds to the path that pleases the Buddhas.
3. Without pure *renunciation*,<sup>95</sup>  
An end to attraction for the pleasures of cyclic existence  
is unattainable.  
The craving for existence also binds beings.  
Thus, from the outset, seek renunciation.
4. Reverse attraction to this life  
By reflecting on how leisure and opportunity are difficult  
to find and how life is ephemeral and without span.  
Reverse attraction to future lives  
By repeatedly thinking of the infallibility of *karma*<sup>96</sup> and its  
effects, and the *miseries of samsara*.<sup>97</sup>
5. Contemplating thus, when for an instant, you do not,  
Admire the splendours of cyclic existence,  
And remain intent on liberation day and night,  
Renunciation is born in you then.

6. However, renunciation, if not tempered by a pure mind of bodhicitta,  
Will not bring forth the perfect bliss  
Of unsurpassed Enlightenment;  
Therefore, the wise ones generate the excellent mind of bodhicitta.
7. Swept up in the current of the *four powerful rivers*,<sup>98</sup>  
Tied by strong bonds of karma, so hard to undo,  
Caught in the iron net of *self-grasping*,<sup>99</sup>  
Completely enveloped by the darkness of ignorance,
8. Born and reborn in limitless cyclic existence,  
Ceaselessly tormented by the *three miseries*,<sup>100</sup>  
Thinking of your mothers in this condition,  
Generate the supreme mind (of bodhicitta).
9. Although you train in renunciation and the mind of bodhicitta,  
Without wisdom that realises the ultimate reality,  
You cannot cut the root of cyclic existence.  
Therefore, strive to understand *dependent arising*.<sup>101</sup>
10. One who sees the infallible cause and effect  
Of all phenomena in samsara and nirvana,  
And destroys all focuses of apprehension,  
Has entered the path, which pleases the Buddhas.
11. Appearances are infallible dependent arising;  
Emptiness is the understanding that is free of assertions.  
As long as these two are seen as distinct,  
You have not yet realised the intent of the Buddhas.
12. When these two realisations are concurrent,  
Where the mere sight of infallible dependent origination  
Concurrently destroys all modes of grasping through  
definite discernment,  
At that time the analysis of the (profound) view is perfected.

13. Furthermore, appearances refute the *extreme of existence*;<sup>102</sup>  
Emptiness refutes the *extreme of non-existence*.<sup>103</sup>  
When you understand that emptiness arises in the form of  
cause and effect,  
You are not captivated by the view of extremes.
14. O my child, once you have thus realised,  
The points of the three principal paths,<sup>104</sup>  
Seek solitude and cultivate strong determination  
And quickly reach the final aspired goal.

**Brief note:** Composed by Lama Tsongkhapa, this famous composition lays out the three principal aspects of the path – renunciation, bodhicitta and the wisdom of emptiness. It clearly expounds the meaning of each aspect, the factors required for cultivating an experience of each of them, and the measure of having achieved success in them. A Dharma practitioner can assess their own progress along these three key aspects of the path against this text.

Geshe Dorji Damdul has revised the English translation rendered here.

## THE SUTRA ON IMPERMANENCE

[Skt. *anityatāsūtra*; Tib. *mi rtag pa nyid kyi mdo*]

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavan was dwelling in Anathapindada's park, in the Jeta Grove in Sravasti, along with a large monastic assembly. The Bhagavan addressed the monks as follows:

“Monks, four things are appealing, singled out, considered valuable, pleasant, and highly appreciated by everyone. What are those four?”

“Monks, good health is appealing, singled out, considered valuable, pleasant, and highly appreciated by everyone. Good health, however, ends with sickness. Monks, sickness is neither appealing, nor is it singled out, considered valuable, pleasant, or highly appreciated by anyone.”

“Monks, youth is appealing, singled out, considered valuable, pleasant, and highly appreciated by everyone. Youth, however, ends with the ageing of the body. Monks, the ageing of the body is neither appealing, nor is it singled out, considered valuable, pleasant, or highly appreciated by anyone.”

“Monks, prosperity is appealing, singled out, considered valuable, pleasant, and highly appreciated by everyone. Prosperity, however, ends with its decline. Monks, the decline of prosperity is neither appealing, nor is it singled out, nor considered valuable, pleasant, or highly appreciated by anyone.”

“Monks, life is appealing, singled out, considered valuable, pleasant, and highly appreciated by everyone. Life, however, ends in death. Monks, death is neither appealing, nor is it singled out, considered valuable, pleasant, or highly appreciated by anyone.”

Thus spoke the Bhagavan, the Sugata, and having spoken the Teacher added these words:

“Good health is impermanent,

Youth does not last.

Prosperity is impermanent,

And life, too, does not last.

How can beings, afflicted as they are by impermanence,

Take delight in desirable things like these?”

When the Bhagavan had thus spoken, the monks rejoiced and praised his words.

This completes the Sutra on Impermanence.

**Colophon:** Translated and edited by the Indian scholar Surendrabodhi and the principal editor-translator, Venerable Zhang Yeshe De.

**Note:** Translation courtesy of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

## HEART-SPOON: ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGH RECOLLECTING IMPERMANENCE

[Tib. *snying gi thur ma mi rtag dran bskul ma*]

*Pabongka Rinpoche*

Ah, the hurt!

Kind Lama, look to this pitiful one—

How I behave and how I have cheated myself my entire life.

Please, look upon this mindless one with compassion.

The essential advice to give yourself—*Heart-Spoon*—

Keep it deep within your heart.

Don't be distracted; don't be distracted!

Reflect upon the state of your life from the essential drop at your heart.

Since beginningless cyclic existence, which has not ended up to now,

Though you have experienced countless cycles of rebirths—

Just so many variations on happiness and pain—

You have achieved not the slightest of benefit from them.

And though at present you have attained leisure and fortune so difficult to find,

Always till now, they have finished and been lost, have been empty and without meaning.

Now, if you care about yourself,

The time has come to practice the essence of future happiness—virtuous actions.

You appear so capable, smart, and clever, but you are a fool

As long as you cling to the child's play of the appearances of this life.

Suddenly you are overwhelmed by the fearful Lord of Death

And, without hope or means to endure, there is nothing you can do.

—This is going to happen to you!

Because you think, “I am not going to die for some time, I am not going to die for some time,”

While you are distracted by the never-ending activities of this life,

Suddenly the fearful Lord of Death arrives,

Announcing, “Now it’s time to die.”

—This is going to happen to you!

Though you make arrangements, saying “tomorrow” and “tomorrow,”

Just then, suddenly, you have to go.

—This is going to happen to you!

And without choice, leaving behind in disarray

Your left-off work, left food and drink, you have to depart.

—This is going to happen to you!

There is no time other than today to spread [your bedding] and go off to sleep;

Upon your last bed you fall like an old tree,

And others, unable to turn you with their [lily] soft hands,

Tug at your clothes and blanket.

— This is going to happen to you!

Even if you completely wrap [your body] in last under and outer clothes,

Still you have no freedom to wear them other than just today,

And when [that body] becomes as rigid as earth and stone,

You behold for the first time your own corpse.

—This is going to happen to you!

Though you struggle to speak your last words,

Your will and expressions of sorrow,

Pitifully your tongue dries up, and you can’t make yourself clear—

An intense sadness overwhelms you.

—This is going to happen to you!



Though others put your final food, holy substances, and relics  
With a trickle of water into your mouth,  
You are unable to swallow even a single drop,  
And it overflows from the corpse's mouth.  
—This is going to happen to you!

Though surrounded by a circle of close relatives, heart-friends, and  
those near to your heart,  
And even though they are loving and distressed at the ending of  
your being together,  
While crying and clinging,  
Just then, you have to separate forever.  
—This is going to happen to you!

Though you [experience] horrific hallucinations like a turbulence  
of waves  
And are overcome by unbearable, excruciating pain,  
Pitiful though you may be, there is nothing to be done;  
The appearances of this life are setting [like the sun].  
—This is going to happen to you!

Though with unbearable compassion your lama and vajra-friends  
Plead in your ear for a critical virtuous thought to arise,  
And even though they do so with loving minds,  
There's no hope; it's unthinkable.  
—This is going to happen to you!

With an [expelled rasping] sound, “sor...sor...,” [at the time  
of death]  
The movement of your breath builds faster and faster,  
Then breaks like the string of a violin  
And the end of your life has come to its close.  
—This is going to happen to you!

There will come a time when your cherished and sadly lost  
lovely body  
Is called “corpse”—disgusting and rotten,

And a time when your body, which can't bear even rough  
bedding and mattress,  
Is laid out on bare ground.  
—This is going to happen to you!

There will come a time when your body, which can't bear  
even a thorn,  
Is chopped to pieces and [from the bone] its flesh is torn,  
And a time when your body, which can't stand even fleas and lice,  
Is devoured by birds and dogs till nothing's left.  
—This is going to happen to you!

Though you [go to so much trouble blowing] “pur...pur...,” in  
dressing your body in the finest of clothes,  
There will come a time when that body is placed within a burning  
house,  
And your body, which can't tolerate even the fire of [a glowing stick  
of] incense,  
Must be burned in the midst of a fiery conflagration.  
—This is going to happen to you!

There will come a time when, entering into roaring flames, all your  
flesh and bones are burned  
And [reduced to] a pile of ash;  
Or a time when your body, which can't bear even heavy cloth,  
Is wedged tight in a hole in the ground.  
—This is going to happen to you!

There will come a time of the announcing, “the deceased, \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
him or herself,”  
At the beginning and end of your sweet name.  
—This is going to happen to you!

And a time when the area is filled with the sobbing sounds  
Of your affectionate, close companions and circle of servants.  
—This is going to happen to you!

There will come a time when your clothes, hats, possessions, and  
livestock will be divided up  
With nothing left in the four directions and corners,  
And there will come a time when, in total despair, alone,  
You reach the passage to the intermediate state.  
—This is going to happen to you!

The terrors of the four fearful enemies descending upon you are  
going to come:  
The appearance of being trapped under a mountain of packed rock  
and rubble,  
And buried beneath a furious avalanche of earth—what to do?  
The appearance of being set adrift on the surface of a vast sea  
And carried away by violent, swirling waves—what to do?  
The experience of your heart and ears being split open  
By the sizzling and crackling sounds of a fiery conflagration—  
what to do?  
The fearful experience of being enveloped and swept away  
By the swirling dark winds of the end of an aeon—what to do?

When you are driven by the powerful red winds of karma  
And swallowed up by a terrifying darkness—what to do?

When you are bound with a lasso by the messengers of Yama  
And, in total despair, are led away—what to do?

When you are tortured in so many detestable ways  
By ox and scorpion-headed karmic agents—what to do?

When you are before the Yama king, the Lord of Death,  
As he weighs up the whites and blacks—your virtuous and non-  
virtuous actions—what to do?

When Yama exposes your lie of having spent  
Your human life in attachment, hatred, and deceit—what to do?

When at Yama's court the punishment that is the ripening effect  
Of your negative actions [is meted out]—what to do?

When your naked body is stretched out on the glowing  
red-hot iron ground in the fires of hell—what to do?

Though your body is cut to pieces by a rain of weapons,  
Still you must experience it without dying—what to do?

Though you are cooked in molten iron until your flesh falls  
away and your bones disintegrate,  
Still you must experience it without dying—what to do?

Though your body and fire burn inseparably,  
Still you must experience it without dying—what to do?

When your body is pierced by a freezing cold wind  
And cracks into a hundred thousand pieces—what to do?

Having fallen into the miserable state of a hungry ghost with  
its hunger and thirst,  
You have to starve for many years—what to do?

When you have become one of those stupid, dumb, unfortunate  
animals  
That eat each other alive—what to do?

When the unbearable sufferings of the evil-gone realms  
Have actually befallen you—what to do?

Now! Don't be distracted!  
[With the sounds of hurrying] "la...ur...la...ur...,"  
Right this moment is the time to steel your will.

It's not only time—it's almost too late.  
Right now! Right now!  
"La...ur...la...ur...," [apply yourself with]  
great force!

Holy precept of the lama, kind father;  
Heart of the authoritative scriptures of the Victorious Losang;

Practice of the pure path of complete sutra and tantra;  
It's time to place real experience upon your mindstream.

Who's the faster:

Yama, the Lord of Death,

Or you in your practice of realising the essence of your  
eternal dream—

The welfare of both yourself and others—as much as you can  
each day?

Unifying the three doors [of your body, speech, and mind],  
Put the whole of your effort into your practice.

**Colophon:** In response to a request in the past from Ngawang Nyandrag, who single-pointedly dedicated his life to practice, and a recent request from the manager of the Potala, Pelshi Kunngo Sönam Kunga, I was persuaded [to compose] for myself and all others “*Heart-Spoon: Encouragement through Recollecting Impermanence*.” I, with the incarnation name of Pabongka, wrote this text at Tashi Dechen Monastery at Drula in the district of Kong.

**Translator's Dedication:** Whatever merit may have been accumulated through the translation of these profound holy vajra-words of Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo — Heruka in human form — may they immediately and completely fulfill all his vast and profound wishes. And may anyone who touches this text, sees, hears, recalls, or practices it receive the blessings of holy Pabongka upon their mindstream and may they and all other sentient beings have the realisation of impermanence in terms of death—the basis of the Lesser, Perfection, and Vajra Vehicles—and, quickly actualising bodhicitta, may they all swiftly reach Buddhahood. May goodness and virtue flourish!

**Note:** Translated into English from Tibetan by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Gelong Jampa Gendun at Chenrezig Institute on the auspicious occasion of its twentieth anniversary, September 1994.

## IN PRAISE OF DHARMADHATU

[Skt. *dharmadhātustava*; Tib. *chos dbyings bstod pa*]

Ārya Nāgārjuna

I pay homage to the youthful Arya Manjushri.

1. I bow to the *Dharmadhatu*,<sup>105</sup>  
Which resides in every sentient being.  
But if they are not aware of it,  
They circle through the *three realms*.<sup>106</sup>
2. Due to just that being purified  
What is such samsara's cause,  
This very purity is then nirvana.  
Likewise, *Dharmakaya*<sup>107</sup> is just this.
3. While it is blended with milk,  
Butter's essence appears not.  
Likewise, in the afflictions' mix,  
Dharmadhatu is not seen.
4. Once you have cleansed it from the milk,  
Butter's essence is without a stain.  
Just so, with the afflictions purified,  
The Dharmadhatu becomes stainless.
5. Just as a lamp that is sitting inside a vase  
Does not illuminate at all,  
While dwelling in the vase of the *afflictions*,<sup>108</sup>  
The Dharmadhatu is not seen.
6. From whichever of its sides  
You punch some holes into this vase,  
From just these various places then,  
Its light rays will beam forth.

7. Once the vajra of samadhi  
Has completely smashed this vase,  
To the very limits of all space,  
It will shine just everywhere.
8. Unarisen is the Dharmadhatu,  
And never will it cease.  
At all times without afflictions,  
Stainless through beginning, middle and end.
9. A vaidurya, that precious gem,  
Is luminous at all times,  
But if confined within its ore,  
Its light is not visible.
10. Just so, the Dharmadhatu free of stain,  
While it is obscured by the afflictions,  
In samsara, doesn't shine its light,  
But in nirvana, it will beam.
11. If this element exists, through our work,  
We will see the purest of all gold.  
Without this element, despite our toil,  
Nothing but misery will we produce.
12. Just as grains, when covered by their husks,  
Are not considered rice that can be eaten,  
While being shrouded in afflictions,  
It is not named Buddhahood.
13. Just as rice itself appears  
When it is free from all its husks,  
The Dharmakaya clearly manifests,  
Once it is free from the afflictions.
14. 'Banana trees don't have a pith'—  
That is used as an example in the world.

But their fruits, their very pith,  
In all their sweetness we do eat.

15. Just so, when samsara, without pith,  
Is released from the afflictions' peel,  
Its fruition, Buddhahood itself,  
Turns into nectar for all beings.
16. Likewise, from all the seeds that there are,  
Fruits are born that match their cause.  
By which person could it then be proved  
That there is a fruit without a seed?
17. This basic element, which is the seed,  
Is held to be the basis of all phenomena.  
Through its purification step by step,  
The state of Buddhahood we will attain.
18. Spotless are the sun and moon,  
But obscured by fivefold stains.  
These are clouds and smoke and mist,  
*Rahu's* face and dust as well.
19. Similarly, the luminous mind  
Is obscured by fivefold stains.  
They are desire, malice, laziness,  
Excitation and doubt too.
20. A garment that was purged by fire  
May be soiled by various stains.  
When it is put into a blaze again,  
The stains are burned, the garment not.
21. Likewise, mind that is so luminous  
Is soiled by stains of craving and so forth.  
The afflictions burn in wisdom's fire,  
But its luminosity does not.



22. The sutras that teach emptiness,  
However many spoken by the Victors,  
They all remove afflictions,  
But never undermine this *Dhatu*.<sup>109</sup>
23. Water dwelling deep within the earth  
Remains untainted through and through.  
Just so, wisdom in afflictions  
Stays without a single stain.
24. Since Dharmadhatu's not a self,  
Neither a woman nor a man,  
Free from all that could be grasped,  
How could it be labelled 'self'?
25. In all the Dharma that is without desire,  
You see neither a woman nor a man.  
'Men' and 'women' are just taught  
For guiding those plagued by desire.
26. 'Impermanence,' 'suffering,' and 'empty,'  
These three, they purify the mind.  
The Dharma unparalleled in purifying the mind  
Is the emptiness of intrinsic nature.
27. In a pregnant woman's womb,  
A child exists but is not seen.  
Just so, Dharmadhatu is not seen,  
When it is covered by afflictions.
28. Through conceptions of a 'I' and 'mine',  
Discriminations of names and reasons,  
The four conceptions will arise,  
Based on the elements and their outcome.
29. Even the Buddhas' aspiration prayers  
Lack appearance and characteristics.

Immersed in their very own awareness,  
Buddhas have the nature of permanence.

30. Any horns there are on a rabbit's head  
Are just imputed and do not exist.  
Just so, all phenomena as well  
Are just imputed and do not exist.
31. Also the horns of an ox do not exist  
As having the nature of particles.  
Just as before, so it is after—  
What's to be thought there?
32. Since (things) dependently originate  
And in dependence too will cease,  
If not even one (of them) exists,  
How can the childish think of them?
33. How the Dharmas of the Sugata  
Are established as the very middle  
Is through the ox and rabbit-horn examples.
34. The forms of the sun, the moon and the stars  
Are seen as reflections upon water  
Within a container that is pure—  
Just so, the characteristics are complete.
35. Virtuous throughout beginning, middle, end,  
Undeceiving and so steady,  
What's like that is just the lack of self—  
So how can you conceive it as a 'I' and 'mine'?
36. About water at the time of spring,  
What we say is that it is 'warm'.  
Of the very same (thing), when it is chilly,  
We just say that it is 'cold'.

37. Covered by the web of the afflictions,  
It is called a 'sentient being'.  
Once it is free from the afflictions,  
It is referred to as 'Buddha'.
38. In dependence upon eye and form,  
Appearances without a stain occur.  
From being unborn and unceasing,  
The Dharmadhatu will be utterly known.
39. In dependence upon sound and ear,  
Pure consciousness (comes forth),  
All three Dharmadhatu without signs.  
Linked with thought, this will be heard.
40. Smelling, in dependence upon nose and smell  
Is an example of the lack of form.  
Likewise, it is the nose consciousness  
That Dharmadhatu is given thought to.
41. The nature of the tongue is emptiness,  
And the element of taste is void.  
Being of the Dharmadhatu's nature,  
Consciousness is devoid of abiding.
42. From the nature of a body pure  
And the characteristics of the tangible conditions,  
What is free from such conditions  
Is referred to as 'Dharmadhatu'.
43. Once conception and its analysis are abandoned  
With regard to phenomena where the mind is principal,  
It is the very lack of the nature of phenomena  
That you should meditate upon as Dharmadhatu.
44. What you see and hear and smell,  
What you taste and touch, phenomena as well—

Once yogins realise them in this way,  
The characteristics are complete.

45. Eyes and ears and also nose,  
Tongue and body and the mind as well—  
The six sources fully pure,  
This is true reality's own nature.
46. Mind as such is seen as two:  
Worldly and beyond the world.  
Clinging (to it) as a self, it is samsara—  
Seeing one's own nature is the true reality.
47. Since desire is extinguished, it is nirvana.  
Hatred and ignorance are extinguished (too).  
Since these have ceased, it is Buddhahood itself,  
The very refuge for all beings.
48. Due to realisation and its lack,  
All is in this very body.  
Through our own conceptions, we are bound,  
But when knowing our nature, we are free.
49. Enlightenment is neither far nor near,  
And neither does it come nor go.  
Whether it is seen or not, it is  
Right in the midst of our afflictions.
50. By dwelling in the lamp of wisdom,  
It turns into peace supreme.  
So, the collection of the sutras says:  
"By exploring your self, you should rest!"
51. Children blessed by *tenfold power's*<sup>uo</sup> force,  
Are like the crescent of the moon,  
But those beings with afflictions,  
Do not see Tathagatas.

52. Just as hungry ghosts  
See the ocean to be dry,  
Those obscured by ignorance  
Think that Buddhas don't exist.
53. What can the Bhagavan do  
For inferiors and those whose merit is low?  
It is just like the supreme of jewels  
Put in the hand of one who is blind.
54. But for beings who have acquired merit,  
The Buddha dwells before their eyes,  
With the *thirty-two marks*<sup>111</sup> shining bright  
In their luminous and glorious light.
55. Though the Protector's *Rupakaya*<sup>112</sup>  
May remain for many aeons,  
To guide those in need of guidance,  
It is just this Dhatu that is different.
56. Ascertaining the object of the mind,  
Consciousness will engage in it.  
Once your very own awareness becomes pure,  
You will dwell right in the bhumi's nature.
57. The great and mighty ones' supreme abode,  
*Akanishtha*<sup>113</sup> that's so beautiful,  
And consciousness, all three of them,  
Fuse into a single one, I say.
58. As for knowing all among the childish,  
The diversity among the *noble*,<sup>114</sup>  
And the great and mighty, infinite in time—  
What is the cause of time in aeons?
59. For sustaining the duration,  
During aeons truly infinite, of (all) beings' outer realms

And for creatures' life force to remain,  
This is what is the inexhaustive cause.

60. In that whose fruition's inexhaustible,  
Through the special trait of non-appearance,  
Engage in full for wisdom's sake.
61. Don't think Enlightenment is far away,  
And don't conceive of it as close by.  
With the *sixfold objects*<sup>15</sup> not appearing,  
It is awareness of reality just as it is.
62. Just as from a mix of milk and water  
That is present in a vessel,  
Geese just sip the milk but not the water,  
Which remains just as it is.
63. Just so, being covered by afflictions,  
Wisdom dwells within this body, one (with them).  
But yogins just extract the wisdom  
And leave the ignorance behind.
64. As long as we still cling to 'I' and 'mine',  
We will conceive of outer (things) through this.  
But once we see the *two selflessnesses*,<sup>16</sup>  
The seeds of samsara will come to an end.
65. Since it is the ground for Buddhahood, nirvana,  
Purity, permanence and virtue too,  
The two are fabricated by the childish,  
The yogins abide in the absence of the two.
66. Generosity's multiple hardships,  
Ethics gathering beings' welfare,  
And patience benefitting beings—  
Through these three, the Dhatu blooms.

67. Enthusiastic vigour for all dharmas,  
Mind that enters meditative poise,  
Wisdom as your resort at all times—  
These too enhance Enlightenment.
68. Wisdom that is joined with means,  
Aspiration prayers very pure,  
A firm stand in power, wisdom too—  
These four Dharmas make the Dhatu flourish.
69. “To bodhicitta, I pay no homage,”  
Saying such is evil speech.  
Where there are no Bodhisattvas,  
There will be no Dharmakaya.
70. Some dislike the seeds of sugarcane,  
But still wish to relish sugar.  
Without seeds of sugarcane,  
There will be no sugar.
71. When these seeds of sugar cane  
Are well guarded, fostered and cultivated,  
Molasses, sugar, sweets too  
Will then come forth from them.
72. With bodhicitta, it is just the same:  
When it is well guarded, fostered and cultivated,  
Arhats, conditioned realisers, Buddhas too  
Will then arise and spring from it.
73. Just as farmers protect  
Seeds of rice and others,  
Thus, the Protectors protect all those  
Who are aspiring to the supreme yana.
74. Just as, on the fourteenth day of waning,  
A sliver of moon is seen,

Those aspiring to the supreme yana  
Will see Buddhakaya in brief.

75. Just as when the waxing moon  
Is seen more in every moment,  
Those who have entered the *bhumis*,<sup>17</sup>  
See its increase step by step.
76. On the fifteenth day of waxing,  
Eventually, the moon is full.  
Just so, when the *bhumi*'s end is reached,  
The Dharmakaya is consummated and blazing.
77. Having generated this mind truly  
Through continuous firm aspiration  
For the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha,  
Irreversibility shows time and again.
78. Through the ground of darkness all relinquished  
And the ground of brightness firmly seised,  
It is ascertained right at this point.  
Therefore, it is designated 'Thoroughly Joyous' [Skt. *pramuditā*; Tib. *rabtu gawa*].
79. What has been tainted through all times  
By the stains of passion and so forth  
And is pure (now), without stains,  
That is called 'The Stainless' [Skt. *vimalā*;  
Tib. *drima maypa*].
80. Once the afflictions' web pulls back,  
Stainless wisdom brightly shines.  
This dispels all boundless darkness,  
And thus is 'The Luminous' [Skt. *prabhākari*; Tib. *ö jepa*].
81. It always gleams with light so pure  
And is engulfed by wisdom's shine,  
With (all) bustle being fully dropped.



Hence, this bhumi's held to be 'The Radiant' [Skt. *archiṣmati*;  
Tib. *ö tro wa*].

82. It triumphs in science, sports and arts and crafts,  
The full variety of samadhi's range,  
And over afflictions very hard to master.  
Thus, it is considered 'Difficult to Overcome' [Skt. *sūdurjayā*;  
Tib. *shintu jankawa*].
83. The *three kinds of Enlightenment*,<sup>118</sup>  
The gathering of all that is excellent,  
Arising, ceasing ended,  
This bhumi's held to be 'The Close Approach' [Skt. *abhimukhi*;  
Tib. *ngöntu gyurpa*].
84. Since it is ever playing with a web of light  
That is configured in a circle  
And has crossed samsara's swampy pond,  
This is labeled 'Gone Afar' [Skt. *durangama*;  
Tib. *ringtu songwa*].
85. Being cared for by the Buddhas,  
Having entered into wisdom's ocean,  
Being without effort and spontaneous,  
By the hordes of maras, it is 'Immovable' [Skt. *achala*;  
Tib. *miyowa*].
86. Since those yogins have completed  
Their discourses teaching Dharma  
In all awarenesses discriminating perfectly,  
This bhumi is considered 'Good Intelligence' [Skt. *sādhumati*;  
Tib. *lekpé lodrö*].
87. The Kaya with this wisdom's nature,  
Which is stainless, equal to the sky,  
Holds (the Dharma) of the Buddhas.

From it, the 'Cloud of Dharma' forms [Skt. *dharmamegha*;  
Tib. *chökyi trin*].

88. The abode of Buddha dharmas  
Fully bears the fruit of practice.  
This fundamental change of state  
Is called the 'Dharmakaya'.
89. Free from latent tendencies, You are inconceivable.  
Samsara's latent tendencies, they can be conceived.  
You're completely inconceivable.  
Through what could You be realised?
90. Beyond the entire sphere of speech,  
Outside the range of all senses,  
To be realised by mental knowing,  
I bow to and praise whatever is suitable.
91. In this manner of gradual engagement,  
The highly renowned children of the Buddhas,  
Through the wisdom of the cloud of Dharma,  
See phenomena's empty nature.
92. Once their minds are cleansed completely,  
They have gone beyond samsara's depths.  
They rest calmly on a throne  
Whose nature is a giant lotus.
93. Everywhere, they are surrounded  
By lotuses that number billions,  
In their many-jewelled petals' light,  
And with anthers of enthralling beauty.
94. They overflow with tenfold power,  
Immersed within their fearlessness,  
Never straying from the inconceivable  
Buddha dharmas without reference point.

95. Through all their actions of outstanding conduct,  
Their merit and their wisdom are complete.  
This full moon is surrounded  
By the stars that are its retinue.
96. In the sun that is the Buddhas' hands,  
Stainless jewels shine their light.  
Through empowering their eldest children,  
They bestow empowerment on them.
97. Abiding in this yoga that is so great,  
With divine eyes, they behold  
Worldly beings debased by ignorance,  
Distracted and terrified by suffering.
98. From their bodies, without effort,  
Light rays are beaming forth,  
And open wide the gates for those  
Who are engulfed in ignorance's gloom.
99. It is held that those in *nirvana with remainder*<sup>119</sup>  
Into *nirvana without remainder*<sup>120</sup> pass.  
But here, the actual nirvana  
Is mind that is free from any stain.
100. The non-being of all beings—  
This nature is its sphere.  
The mighty bodhicitta seeing it  
Is fully stainless Dharmakaya.
101. In the stainless Dharmakaya,  
The sea of wisdom finds its place.  
Like with variegated jewels,  
Beings' welfare is fulfilled from it.

**Note:** Composed by Arya Nagarjuna, this text speaks of *Tathagatha-garbha* or Buddha nature, and the ten bhumis or grounds. Buddha nature is the hidden treasure of full Enlightenment that exists within each and every sentient being, including the tiniest of the insects. The text explains how to activate the Buddha nature, the phases of the ten bhumis and expounds the enlightened qualities of the Buddhas. It has been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by the Indian Pandita Upadhyaya Krishna and the Tibetan translator Tsültrim Gyalwa Rinpoche.

# IN PRAISE OF DEPENDENT ORIGATION

[Tib. *rten 'brel bstod pa*]

*Lama Tsongkhapa*

1. He who speaks on the basis of seeing,  
This makes him a knower and teacher unexcelled,  
I bow to you, O Conqueror, you who saw  
Dependent origination and taught it.
2. Whatever degenerations there are in the world,  
The root of all these is ignorance,  
You taught that it is dependent origination,  
The seeing of which will undo this ignorance.
3. So how can an intelligent person  
Not comprehend that this path  
Of dependent origination is  
The essential point of your teaching?
4. This being so, who will find, O Saviour,  
A more wonderful way to praise you  
Than (to praise you) for having taught  
This origination through dependence?
5. "Whatsoever depends on conditions,  
That is devoid of intrinsic existence."  
What excellent instruction can there be  
More amazing than this proclamation?
6. By grasping at it, the childish  
Strengthen bondage to extreme views;  
For the wise, this very fact is the doorway  
To cut free from the net of elaborations.
7. Since this teaching is not seen elsewhere,

You alone are the teacher;  
Like calling a fox a lion, for a *Tirthika*<sup>121</sup>  
It would be a word of flattery.

8. Wondrous teacher! Wondrous refuge!  
Wondrous speaker! Wondrous saviour!  
I pay homage to that teacher  
Who taught well, dependent origination.
9. To help heal sentient beings,  
O Benefactor, you have taught  
The peerless reason to ascertain  
Emptiness, the heart of the teaching.
10. This way of dependent origination,  
Those who perceive it  
As contradictory or as unestablished,  
How can they comprehend your system?
11. For you, when one sees emptiness  
In terms of the meaning of dependent origination,  
Then being devoid of intrinsic existence and  
Possessing valid functions do not contradict.
12. Whereas when one sees the opposite,  
Since there can be no function in emptiness,  
Nor emptiness in what has functions,  
One falls into a dreadful abyss, you maintain.
13. Therefore, in your teaching,  
Seeing dependent origination is hailed;  
That too not as an utter non-existence  
Nor as an intrinsic existence.
14. The non-contingent is like a sky flower,  
Hence, there is nothing that is not dependent.  
If things exist through their essence, their dependence on

Causes and conditions for their existence is a contradiction.

15. "Therefore, since no phenomena exist  
Other than origination through dependence,  
No phenomena exist other than  
Being devoid of intrinsic existence," you taught.
16. "Because intrinsic nature cannot be negated,  
If phenomena possess some intrinsic nature,  
Nirvana would become impossible  
And elaborations could not be ceased," you taught.
17. Therefore who could challenge you?  
You who proclaim with lion's roar  
In the assembly of learned ones repeatedly  
That everything is utterly free of intrinsic nature?
18. That there is no intrinsic existence at all  
And that all functions as "this arising  
In dependence on that," what need is there to say  
That these two converge without conflict?
19. "It is through the reason of dependent origination  
That one does not lean towards the extreme;"  
That You, the Saviour, have declared this excellently,  
Is the source of your unexcelled speech.
20. "All of this is devoid of essence,"  
And "From this arises that effect" –  
These two certainties complement  
Each other with no contradiction at all.
21. What is more amazing than this?  
What is more marvellous than this?  
If one praises you in this manner,  
This is real praise, otherwise not.

22. Being enslaved by ignorance  
Those who fiercely oppose you,  
What is so astonishing about their being  
Unable to bear the sound of no intrinsic existence?
23. But having accepted dependent origination,  
The precious treasure of your speech,  
Then not tolerating the roar of emptiness –  
This I find amazing indeed!
24. The door that leads to no intrinsic existence,  
This unexcelled (door of) dependent origination,  
Through its name alone, if one grasps  
At intrinsic existence, now this person
25. Who lacks the unrivalled entrance,  
Well-travelled by the Noble Ones,  
By what means should one guide him  
To the excellent path that pleases you?
26. Intrinsic nature, uncreated and non-contingent,  
Dependent origination, contingent and created –  
How can these two converge  
Upon a single basis without contradiction?
27. Therefore, whatever originates dependently,  
Though primordially free of intrinsic existence,  
Appears as if it does (possess intrinsic existence);  
So you taught all this to be illusion-like.
28. Through this very fact I understand well  
The statement that, in what you have taught,  
Those opponents who challenge you  
Cannot find faults that accord with reason.
29. Why is this so? Because by declaring these  
Chances for reification and denigration



Towards things seen and unseen  
Are made most remote.

30. Through this very path of dependent origination,  
The rationale for your speech being peerless,  
Conviction arises in me (also)  
That your other words are valid too.
31. You who speak excellently by seeing as it is,  
For those who train in your footsteps,  
All degenerations will become remote;  
For the root of all faults will be undone.
32. But those who turn away from your teaching,  
Though they may struggle with hardship for a long time,  
Faults increase ever more as if being called forth;  
For they make firm the view of self.
33. Aha! When the wise comprehend  
The differences between these two,  
Why would they not at that point  
Revere you from the depths of their being?
34. Let alone your numerous teachings,  
Even in the meaning of a small part,  
Those who find ascertainment in a cursory way,  
This brings supreme bliss to them as well.
35. Alas! My mind was defeated by ignorance;  
Though I've sought refuge for a long time,  
In such an embodiment of excellence,  
I possess not a fraction of His qualities.
36. Nonetheless, before the stream of this life  
Flowing towards death has come to cease,  
That I have found slight faith in you –  
Even this, I think, is fortunate.

37. Among teachers, the teacher of dependent origination,  
Amongst wisdoms, the knowledge of dependent origination –  
You, who are most excellent like the kings of the worlds,  
Know this perfectly well, not others.
38. All that you have taught  
Proceeds by way of dependent origination;  
That too is done for the sake of Nirvana;  
You have no deeds that do not bring peace.
39. How amazing! Your teaching is such,  
In whomsoever's ears it falls,  
They all attain peace, so who would not be  
Honoured to uphold your teaching?
40. It overcomes all opposing challenges;  
It is free from contradictions between earlier and latter parts;  
It grants fulfilment of beings' two aims –  
For this system, my joy increases ever more.
41. For its sake, you have given away,  
Again and again, over countless aeons,  
Sometimes your body, at others your life,  
As well as your loving kin and resources of wealth.
42. Seeing the qualities of this teaching  
Pulls (hard) at your heart,  
Just like what a hook does to a fish;  
Sad it is not to have heard it from you.
43. The intensity of that sorrow  
Does not let go of my mind,  
Just like the mind of a mother  
(Constantly) goes after her dear child.
44. - 45. Here too, as I reflect on your words, I think,  
“Blazing with the glory of noble marks  
And hallowed in a net of light rays,

This teacher, in a voice of pristine melody,  
Spoke thus in such a way.”  
The instant such a reflection of the Sage’s form  
Appears in my mind, it soothes me,  
Just as moonbeams heal a fever’s pain.

46. This excellent system, most marvellous,  
Some individuals who are not so learned  
Have entangled it in utter confusion,  
Just like the tangled balbaza grass.
47. Seeing this situation, I strove  
With a multitude of efforts  
To follow after the learned ones  
And sought your intention again and again.
48. At such times, as I studied the numerous works  
Of both our own (Middle Way) and other schools,  
My mind became tormented ever more,  
Constantly by a network of doubts.
49. The night-lily grove of Nagarjuna’s treatises—  
Nagarjuna, whom you prophesied  
Would unravel your unexcelled vehicle as it is,  
Shunning extremes of existence and non-existence.
50. Illuminated by the garland of white lights  
Of Chandra’s well-uttered insights—  
Chandra, whose stainless wisdom orb is full,  
Who glides freely across scriptures’ space,
51. Who dispels the darkness of extremist hearts  
And outshines the constellations of false speakers—  
When, through my teacher’s kindness, I saw this,  
My mind found rest at last.

52. Of all your deeds, your speech is supreme;  
Within that too, it is this very speech;  
So the wise should remember the Buddha  
Through this (teaching of dependent origination).
53. Following such a teacher and having become a renunciate,  
Having studied the Conqueror's words not too poorly,  
This monk who strives in the yogic practices,  
Such is (the depth of) his reverence to the Great Seer!
54. Since it is due to my teacher's kindness  
I have met with the teaching of the unexcelled teacher,  
I dedicate this virtue too towards the cause  
For all beings to be sustained by sublime spiritual mentors.
55. May the teaching of this Beneficent One till world's end  
Be unshaken by the winds of evil thoughts;  
May it always be met by innumerable beings who  
find conviction  
In the teacher by understanding the teaching's true nature.
56. May I never falter even for an instant  
To uphold the excellent way of the Sage,  
Which illuminates the principle of dependent origination,  
Through all my births, even giving away my body and life.
57. May I spend day and night carefully reflecting,  
"By what means can I enhance  
This teaching achieved by the Supreme Saviour  
Through strenuous efforts over countless aeons?"
58. As I strive in this with pure intention,  
May Brahma, Indra and the world's guardians  
And protectors such as Mahakala  
Unswervingly, always assist me.

**Note:** The background to this hymn is as follows: Lama Tsongkhapa entreated Arya Manjushri through Lama Umapa, to confirm whether his understanding of the wisdom of emptiness had fidelity to the Prasangika School's view. Arya Manjushri responded, that if Lama Tsongkhapa practiced most ardently with three causal factors, then soon he would have immaculate insight into emptiness. These three causal factors were: 1) Fervent supplication to the Guru, perceived as inseparably one with the patron deity; 2) Serious pursuit of the practices of purification and accumulation of merit; 3) Consistent studying, reflection and meditation on authoritative writings on emptiness by Indian masters. Following his advice, Lama Tsongkhapa accompanied by a group of his students, left for retreat to a hermitage at Olga. After eleven months of intensive practice incorporating the three causal factors, he had a profound experience of emptiness. Enveloped in its wonder, on the morning of this realisation, Lama Tsongkhapa composed this text as an eulogy to the Buddha for having taught the wisdom of emptiness and dependent origination to liberate sentient beings from the vicious cycle of samsara. Here, Lama Tsongkhapa emphasises the efficacy of functionality on the basis of dependent origination in conformity with emptiness.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Thupten Jinpa, PhD.

# FUNDAMENTAL WISDOM OF THE MIDDLE WAY

[Skt. *mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; Tib. *dbu ma rtsa ba shes rab*]

*Ārya Nāgārjuna*

## Chapter 1

### Examination of Conditions

1. Neither from itself nor from another,  
Nor from both,  
Nor without a cause,  
Does anything whatsoever, anywhere ever arise.
2. There are four conditions: causal condition,  
Perceptive condition, immediate condition,  
Dominant condition, just so.  
There is no fifth condition.
3. The self-nature of functional things  
Is not present in the conditions, etc.  
If there are no self-functional things,  
There can be no functional things at all.
4. There is no action, which possesses conditions.  
There is no action without possessing conditions.  
It is not a condition (if) it does not possess an action.  
For dependent upon this, production occurs.
5. These give rise to those,  
So these are called conditions.  
Inasmuch as there is no (process of) production,  
Why are these not non-conditions?

6. For neither a non-existent nor an existent thing  
Is a condition appropriate.  
If a thing is non-existent, whose condition would it be?  
If a thing is (already) existent, what (purpose) would a  
condition serve?
7. When neither exists nor non-exists,  
Nor existent and non-existents are established,  
How could one propose the producer as a causal (condition)?  
It would be pointless (to define a causal condition) as such.
8. An existent entity (such as a mental event)  
Has no object, (yet you) insist upon speaking (of it).  
If this entity (a mental event) is without an object,  
How is it possible that there is an object of perception?
9. Since things are not produced,  
Cessation is not acceptable.  
Therefore, an immediate (condition) is not tenable.  
If something ceases, how could it act as a condition?
10. In the things that lack self-nature,  
How does (the cause) exist if (its result) does not exist?  
The phrase, "Because this exists, that will arise"  
Would not be acceptable.
11. Neither in the individual (conditions) nor in the collection  
(of conditions)  
Can the result be found.  
How could (the result), which the conditions (are deprived of),  
Arise from the conditions?
12. However, despite the result being non-existent,  
If it arises from these conditions,  
Why does the result not arise  
From non-conditions?

13. (If you say) the result is of the nature of the conditions,  
But the conditions do not have their own self-nature,  
(Then) how could a result (be derived) through a non-self  
thing (conditions),  
Which is the self-nature of conditions?
14. Therefore, there is no result  
Which is of the nature of the conditions or non-conditions.  
And since the result is non-existent,  
How can something be (its) condition or non-condition?

## Chapter 18

### Examination of Self and Phenomena

1. If the self were the aggregates,  
It would have arising and ceasing (as properties).  
If it were different from the aggregates,  
It would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.
2. If there were no self,  
Where would the self's (possessions) be?  
From the pacification of the self and what belongs to it,  
One is freed from grasping onto 'I' and 'mine'.
3. One who does not grasp onto 'I' and 'mine',  
That one does not exist.  
One who views non-grasping onto 'I' and 'mine'—  
Does not perceive (the reality).
4. When views of 'I' and 'mine' are extinguished,  
Whether with respect to the internal or external,  
The appropriated ceases.  
This having ceased, birth ceases.



5. Ceasing of karmas and afflictions leads to nirvana.  
Karmas and afflictions arise from conceptual thought.  
These arise from (mental) elaboration (grasping at true existence).  
Elaboration ceases by (or into) emptiness.
6. That there is a self has been taught,  
And the doctrine of no-self,  
By the Buddhas, as well as the  
Doctrine of neither self nor non-self.
7. What language expresses is non-existent.  
The apprehension of mind is non-existent.  
(Because of being) unarisen and unceased, like nirvana  
Is the nature of things.
8. Everything is real and is not real,  
Both real and not real,  
Neither real nor not real.  
This, the Lord Buddha taught accordingly,  
Neither nihilism nor eternalism.
9. Not dependent upon another, peaceful and  
Not elaborated by elaboration,  
Not thought, without distinctions,  
These are the characteristics of thatness.
10. Whatever comes into being, dependent upon another,  
Is not identical to that thing.  
Nor is it different from it.  
Therefore it is neither nihilistic nor eternalistic.
11. This nectar of the teachings  
Of the Buddhas, Patrons of the World,  
Is (understood as) without identity, without distinction,  
Neither nihilism nor eternalism.

12. When the fully Enlightened Ones do not appear,  
And when the Hearers have disappeared,  
The wisdom of self-Enlightenment  
Will arise completely, without dependence.

## Chapter 22

### Examination of the Tathagata

1. Neither the aggregates, nor different from the aggregates  
(is the Tathagata);  
The aggregates are not in him, nor is he in the aggregates.  
The Tathagata does not possess the aggregates.  
What is the Tathagata?
2. If the Buddha depended on the aggregates,  
He could not exist through his self-nature.  
That which does not exist through its self-nature,  
How could it exist through (the power of) other things?
3. Whatever is dependent upon another entity,  
Its selfhood is not feasible.  
How could it be a Tathagata  
Which lacks a self?
4. If there is no self-nature,  
How could there be an other-thing?  
What is the Tathagata  
Other than the self-nature or other (than that)?
5. If, without depending upon the aggregates,  
There were a Tathagata,  
Then now (it should be feasible that) he would be  
depending upon them.  
Therefore, he would exist through dependence.

6. In as much as there is no Tathagata  
Not dependent upon the aggregates,  
Since there is not anything which is not dependent,  
How can it be appropriating (others)?
7. Where there is no appropriation,  
How is it not the (case) with the appropriated  
(then, of its absence)?  
Without the appropriated,  
How can there be a Tathagata?
8. Having searched through the *fivefold means*,<sup>122</sup>  
And finding it neither identical nor different  
(from the appropriated),  
(Then) how can the Tathagata  
Be designated through (the power of) the appropriated?
9. All those appropriated  
Do not exist through self-nature.  
When something does not exist through itself,  
It cannot possibly exist through other things.
10. Thus (both) the appropriated and the appropriator  
Are empty in every respect.  
How can one posit a Tathagata who is empty  
Since (both appropriated and appropriator) are also empty?
11. 'Emptiness' (of Tathagata) is not asserted,  
Nor is 'non-emptiness' asserted.  
Neither both nor neither are asserted—  
They are (merely) asserted on the basis of labelling.
12. How can the *tetralemma*<sup>123</sup> of permanent, impermanent, etc.,  
Be true in this peacefulness (of inherent existence)?  
How can the tetralemma of finite, infinite, etc.,  
Be true in this peacefulness (of inherent existence)?

13. The one who is caught up in strong grasping  
At the existence of the Tathagata,  
Will conceptualise, in their thought,  
The non-existence of (Tathagata) at nirvana.
14. In that which is empty of self-nature,  
The thought that the Buddha  
Exists or does not exist  
After nirvana is inappropriate.
15. Those (beings) who develop (mental) fabrications  
towards the Buddha,  
Who is free of fabrications, and devoid of exhaustion;  
Those who are undermined by (obsession to) fabrication,  
Will fail to see the Tathagata.
16. Whatever is the nature of the Tathagata,  
Is (also) the nature of migrators.  
The Tathagata has no self-nature;  
Migrators (also) have no self-nature.

## Chapter 24

### Examination of the Four Noble Truths

1. "If all of this is empty,  
Neither would arising nor ceasing exist.  
Then for you, it follows that  
*The Four Noble Truths*<sup>124</sup> would not exist."
2. "If the Four Noble Truths do not exist,  
Then knowledge, abandonment,  
Meditation and actualisation—  
Would not be feasible."

3. "If these things do not exist,  
The four fruits as well will not arise.  
Without the four fruits, there will be no abiders in the fruits.  
Nor will there be the enterers."
4. "If the *eight persons*<sup>125</sup> do not exist,  
The Sangha will be non-existent.  
If the Noble Truths do not exist,  
There will be no true Dharma."
5. "If there is no true Dharma and Sangha,  
How can there be a Buddha?  
If one conceives (the idea) of emptiness,  
The Three Jewels are contradicted."
6. "Hence it contradicts everything—  
The (tenability of) fruits,  
Dharma and non-Dharma,  
And the conventional norms of the world."
7. We say that this understanding of yours:  
Of emptiness and the purpose of emptiness,  
And of the meaning of emptiness, is incorrect.  
Thus you (perceive) contradictions (in us).
8. The Buddha's teaching of the Dharma  
Is based on two truths:  
A truth of worldly convention  
And an ultimate truth.
9. Those who do not understand  
The distinction drawn between these two truths  
Do not understand  
The Buddha's teaching of the profound suchness.
10. Without dependence upon the convention,  
The meaning of the ultimate cannot be expressed.

Without understanding the meaning of the ultimate,  
Liberation is not achieved.

11. Through misperception of emptiness,  
A person of little intelligence is ruined.  
Like a snake incorrectly seised  
Or like a spell incorrectly cast.
12. For the reason that He knows this teaching to be  
Difficult to fathom to the depths, by the less intelligent,  
The Buddha's mind turned away  
From giving teachings.
13. These refutations are not relevant  
To (the advocates of) emptiness.  
Your denigration of emptiness  
Do not hold true for me.
14. For one to whom emptiness is tenable,  
Everything becomes tenable.  
For one to whom emptiness is not tenable,  
Nothing becomes tenable.
15. When you foist upon us  
All of your errors,  
You are like a person who has mounted their horse  
And has forgotten that very horse.
16. If you perceive the existence of all things  
In terms of their self-nature,  
This existence of things,  
You will have to view as absent of causes and conditions.
17. Effects and causes  
And agent and action  
And conditions and arising and ceasing  
And effects will be rendered impossible.

18. Whatever is dependently arisen,  
That is explained to be emptiness.  
That, being a dependent designation,  
Is itself the middle way.<sup>126</sup>
19. Since there is no phenomenon,  
That is not dependently originated,  
Therefore, there is no phenomenon,  
That is not empty.
20. If all these were non-empty,  
Neither would arising nor ceasing exist.  
Then for you, it follows that  
The Four Noble Truths would not exist.
21. If it is not dependently arisen,  
How could suffering come to be?  
Impermanent, which suffering is taught to be,  
Does not exist in its self-nature.
22. When something does exist from its own nature,  
How could it ever arise?  
It follows that if one denies emptiness,  
There can be no origin (of suffering).
23. If suffering exists as self-nature,  
Its cessation could not exist.  
If self-nature is posited,  
One denies cessation.
24. If the path had self-nature,  
Meditation would not be tenable.  
If this path is indeed meditated upon,  
Your (position of) self-nature would not hold true.
25. If suffering, origin and  
Cessation are non-existent,

By meditation upon which path could one seek  
To obtain the cessation of suffering?

26. If non-identification comes to be  
Is through its self-nature,  
How will identification arise?  
Doesn't it (non-identification) exist by virtue of self-nature?
27. Just as the identification (of suffering) is said to  
be (unfeasible),  
Abandoning, actualising and meditating  
And the Four Truths  
Also would not be possible for you.
28. For a propounder of self-nature,  
Since the fruits, that, through their self-nature,  
Are not attained,  
In what way could one attain them?
29. Without the fruits, there are no abiders of the fruits,  
Nor the enterers.  
If the eight kinds of persons did not exist,  
There would be no Sangha.
30. From the non-existence of the Noble Truths  
Would follow the non-existence of the true Dharma.  
If there is no Dharma and no Sangha,  
How could a Buddha exist?
31. For you it would follow that a Buddha  
Arises not in dependence upon Enlightenment.  
For you, Enlightenment would arise  
Not in dependence upon a Buddha.
32. For you, in all those who are not Buddhas  
Due to their self-nature,  
Enlightenment could not be achieved  
Even through enlightened practices to obtain Enlightenment.



33. Moreover, one could never perform  
Dharma and non-Dharma (actions).  
If this were all non-empty, what could one do?  
That with self-nature, action does not exist.
34. For you the fruit arises,  
Even in absence of Dharma and non-Dharma (actions).  
You will be deprived of the fruits  
Which arose from Dharma and non-Dharma (actions).
35. If, for you, a fruit arose  
From Dharma or non-Dharma (actions)  
Then how could that fruit of Dharma or non-Dharma  
Be non-empty?
36. If emptiness (by virtue of)  
Dependent arising were denigrated,  
This would contradict  
All worldly conventions.
37. If emptiness itself is rejected,  
No action will be tenable.  
There would be action that did not begin,  
And there would be an agent without action.
38. If there were self-nature,  
Migrators would not arise nor cease, (and hence)  
Would assume a static state.  
There would be absence of all varieties.
39. If it (the world) were not empty,  
Then the unachieved would not be achieved.  
The act of ending suffering and  
Abandoning afflictions would not exist.
40. Whoever sees dependent arising  
Also sees suffering,  
Its origin,

Its cessation and the path.

## Chapter 25

### Examination of Nirvana

1. If all this is empty,  
Then there is neither arising nor passing away.  
Through the abandonment or cessation of what  
Does one aspire to nirvana?
2. If all this is non-empty,  
Then there is neither arising nor passing away,  
Through the abandonment or cessation of what  
Does one aspire to nirvana?
3. Unrelinquished, unattained,  
Unannihilated, non-permanence,  
Unarisen, unceased—  
This is how nirvana is described.
4. Nirvana is not a thing.  
It would then have the characteristics of ageing and death.  
No thing exists  
Without ageing and death.
5. If nirvana were a thing,  
Nirvana would be compounded.  
A non-compounded thing  
Does not exist anywhere.
6. If nirvana were a thing,  
How could nirvana be non-dependent?  
A non-dependent thing  
Does not exist anywhere.

7. If nirvana were a non-thing,  
How could it be feasible for it to not be a thing?  
Where nirvana is not a thing,  
It cannot be a non-thing.
8. If nirvana were a non-thing,  
How could nirvana be non-dependent?  
Whatever is non-dependent  
Is not a non-thing.

## Chapter 26

### Examination of the Twelve Links of Samsaric Existence

1. The obscuring *Ignorance* propels (one) into (samsaric) birth.  
*The three Compositional Factors*<sup>127</sup>  
Enhance the formation (of births).  
These actions impel (one) into the state of migrators.
2. Having composition as its condition,  
*Consciousness* enters transmigration.  
Once consciousness has entered transmigration,  
*Name-and-form* come into being.
3. Once name-and-form come to be,  
The six *Sense Sources* come into being.  
Depending on the six sense sources,  
*Contact*, unwaveringly, comes into being.
4. Arising is only dependent  
Upon eye, form and attention.  
Thus, depending on name-and-form  
Consciousness is produced.

5. That which is assembled from the three--  
Eye, form and consciousness--  
Is contact,  
From contact arises *Feeling*.
6. Conditioned by feeling, arises *Craving*,  
Craving arises because of feeling.  
When it arises, there is *Grasping*  
Which comprises the four.
7. When there is grasping,  
The *Existence*<sup>128</sup> of the one who craves comes into being.  
If there is no grasping,  
Then being freed, one would not take (samsaric) *Birth*.
8. This birth is comprised of *five aggregates*.<sup>129</sup>  
From existence arises birth,  
Then *Ageing-and-Death* and misery,  
Moaning and suffering
9. Grief and confusion.  
All these arise entirely because of birth.  
In this way, this very mass of suffering  
Comes into being.
10. The root of cyclic existence is compositional (factors).  
Therefore, the wise do not engage in compositional (factors).  
Thus, the unwise are the agents.  
The wise see reality.
11. With the cessation of ignorance,  
Compositional (factors) will not arise.  
The cessation of ignorance occurs through  
Insight and meditation.

12. Through the cessation of these,  
Those will not be manifest.  
The entire mass of suffering  
Indeed, thereby, completely ceases.

**Note:** Of the six major works of Arya Nagarjuna, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* is the most significant. The work has Twenty-Seven Chapters. His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama has often given teachings on selective chapters considered the most important in the text: these five chapters are thereby included here [Chapter 1 - *Examination of Conditions*; Chapter 18 - *Examination of Self and Phenomena*; Chapter 22 - *Examination of the Tathagatha*; Chapter 24 - *Examination of the Four Noble Truths*; and Chapter 26 - *Examination of the Twelve Links of Samsaric Existence*]. Also presented here is Chapter 25 - *Examination of Nirvana*, as it is a part of the syllabi of some universities in India and gives a complete explanation of what is meant by Enlightenment.

Translation from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul.

# A LAMP FOR THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT

[Skt. *bodhipathapradīpa*; Tib. *byang chub lam sgron*]

Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna

Homage to the Bodhisattva, the youthful Manjushri.

1. I pay homage with great respect to all the Victorious Ones  
of the three times,  
To their teaching and to those who aspire to virtue.  
Urged by the noble disciple Jangchup Wö,  
I shall illuminate the lamp for the path to Enlightenment.
2. Understand there are *three kinds of persons*<sup>130</sup>  
Because of their small, middling and supreme capacities.  
I shall write, clearly distinguishing  
Their individual characteristics.
3. Know that those who by whatever means  
Seek for themselves no more  
Than the pleasures of cyclic existence  
Are *persons of the least capacity*.<sup>131</sup>
4. Those who seek peace for themselves alone,  
Turning away from on worldly pleasures  
And avoiding destructive actions  
Are said to be of *middling capacity*.<sup>132</sup>
5. Those who, through their personal suffering,  
Truly want to end completely  
All the suffering of others  
Are *persons of supreme capacity*.<sup>133</sup>
6. For those excellent living beings,  
Who desire supreme Enlightenment,  
I shall explain the perfect methods  
Taught by the spiritual teachers.

7. Facing paintings, statues and so forth  
Of the completely Enlightened One,  
Reliquaries and the excellent teaching,  
Offer flowers, incense - whatever you have.
8. With the *seven part offering*<sup>134</sup>  
From the (*Prayer of*) *Noble Conduct*,<sup>135</sup>  
And with the thought never to turn back  
Till you gain ultimate Enlightenment,
9. With strong faith in the Three Jewels,  
Kneeling with one knee on the ground  
And your hands pressed together,  
First of all take refuge three times.
10. Next, beginning with an attitude  
Of love for all living creatures,  
Consider beings, excluding none,  
Suffering in the *three bad rebirths*<sup>136</sup>—  
Suffering such as birth, death and so forth.
11. Then, since you want to free these beings  
From the suffering of pain,  
From suffering and the causes of suffering,  
Arouse immutably the resolve  
To attain Enlightenment.
12. The qualities of developing  
Such an aspiration are  
Fully explained by Maitreya  
In the *Array of Trunks Sutra*.<sup>137</sup>
13. Having learned about the infinite benefits  
Of the intention to gain full Enlightenment  
By reading this sutra or listening to a teacher,  
Arouse it repeatedly to make it steadfast.

14. The *Sutra Requested by Viradatta*<sup>138</sup>  
Fully explains the merit therein.  
At this point, in summary,  
I will cite just three verses.
15. If it possessed physical form,  
The merit of the altruistic intention  
Would completely fill the whole of space  
And exceed even that.
16. If someone were to fill with jewels  
As many Buddhafields, as there are grains  
Of sand in the Ganges,  
To offer to the Protector of the World,
17. This would be surpassed by  
The gift of folding one's hands  
And inclining one's mind to Enlightenment,  
For such is limitless.
18. Having developed the aspiration for Enlightenment,  
Constantly enhance it through concerted effort.  
To remember it in this and also in other lives,  
Keep the precepts properly as explained.
19. Without the vow of the engaged intention,  
Perfect aspiration will not grow.  
Make effort definitely to take it,  
Since you want the wish for Enlightenment to grow.
20. Those who maintain any of the seven  
*Kinds of Individual Liberation vows*,<sup>139</sup>  
Have the ideal (prerequisite) for  
The *Bodhisattva vow*,<sup>140</sup> not others.
21. The Tathagata spoke of seven kinds  
Of Individual liberation vow.



The best of these is glorious pure conduct,  
Said to be the vow of a fully ordained person.

22. According to the ritual described in  
The chapter on discipline in the *Bodhisattva Stages*,<sup>141</sup>  
Take the vow from a good  
And well-qualified spiritual teacher.
23. Understand that a good spiritual teacher  
Is one skilled in the vow ceremony,  
Who lives by the vow and has  
The confidence and compassion to bestow it.
24. However, in case you try but cannot  
Find such a spiritual teacher,  
I shall explain another  
Correct procedure for taking the vow.
25. I shall write here very clearly,  
As explained in the *Ornament Of Manjushri's  
Buddha Land Sutra*,<sup>142</sup>  
How, long ago, when Manjushri was Ambarâja,  
He aroused the intention to become enlightened.
26. "In the presence of the protectors,  
I arouse the intention to gain full Enlightenment.  
I invite all beings as my guests  
And shall free them from cyclic existence."
27. "From this moment onwards  
Until I attain Enlightenment,  
I shall not harbour harmful thoughts,  
Anger, avarice or envy."
28. "I shall cultivate pure conduct,  
Give up wrongdoing and desire  
And with joy in the vow of discipline

Train myself to follow the Buddhas.”

29. “I shall not be eager to reach  
Enlightenment in the quickest way,  
But shall stay behind till the very end,  
For the sake of even a single being.”
30. “I shall purify limitless  
Inconceivable lands  
And remain in the ten directions  
For all those who call my name.”
31. “I shall purify all my bodily  
And my verbal forms of activity.  
My mental activities, too, I shall purify  
And do nothing that is non-virtuous.”
32. When those observing the vow  
Of the active altruistic intention have trained well  
In the three forms of discipline,  
Their respect for these three forms of discipline grows,  
Which causes purity of body, speech and mind.
33. Therefore, through effort in the vow made by  
Bodhisattvas for pure, full Enlightenment,  
The collections for complete Enlightenment  
Will be thoroughly accomplished.
34. All Buddhas say the cause for the completion of the  
collections,  
Whose nature is  
Merit and exalted wisdom,  
Is the development of *higher perceptions*.<sup>143</sup>
35. Just as a bird with undeveloped wings  
Cannot fly in the sky,  
Those without the power of higher perception

Cannot work for the good of living beings.

36. The merit gained in a single day  
By one who possesses higher perception  
Cannot be gained even in a hundred lifetimes  
By one without such higher perception.
37. Those who want swiftly to complete  
The collections for full Enlightenment,  
Will accomplish higher perception  
Through effort, not through laziness.
38. Without the attainment of calm abiding,  
Higher perception will not occur.  
Therefore make repeated effort  
To accomplish calm abiding.
39. While the conditions for calm abiding  
Are incomplete, meditative stabilisation  
Will not be accomplished, even if one meditates  
Strenuously for thousands of years.
40. Thus maintaining well the conditions  
Mentioned in the *Collection for Meditative Stabilisation*  
*Chapter*,<sup>145</sup>  
Place the mind  
On any one virtuous focal object.
41. When the practitioner has gained calm abiding,  
Higher perceptions will also be gained;  
But without practice of the perfection of wisdom,  
The obstructions will not come to an end.
42. Thus, to eliminate all obstructions  
To liberation and omniscience,  
The practitioner should continually cultivate  
The perfection of wisdom with skilful means.

43. Wisdom without skilful means  
And skilful means, too, without wisdom  
Are referred to as bondage,  
Therefore do not give up either.
44. To eliminate doubts concerning  
What is wisdom and what skilful means are,  
I shall make clear the difference  
Between skilful means and wisdom.
45. Apart from the perfection of wisdom,  
All virtuous practices such as  
The perfection of giving are described  
As skilful means by the Victorious Ones.
46. Whoever, under the influence of familiarity  
With skilful means, cultivates wisdom,  
Will quickly attain Enlightenment—  
Not just by meditating on selflessness.
47. Understanding emptiness of inherent existence  
Through realising the aggregates, constituents  
And the sources are not produced  
Is described as wisdom.
48. Something existent cannot be produced,  
Nor something non-existent, like a sky flower.  
These errors are both absurd  
And thus both of them will not occur either.
49. A thing is not produced from itself,  
Nor from another, also not from both,  
Nor causelessly either, thus it does not  
Exist inherently by way of its own entity.
50. Moreover, when all phenomena are examined  
As to whether they are one or many,

They are not seen to exist by way of their own entity,  
And thus are ascertained as not inherently existent.

51. The reasoning of the *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness*,<sup>146</sup>  
The *Treatise on the Middle Way*<sup>147</sup> and so forth  
Explain that the nature of all things  
Is established as emptiness.
52. Since there are a great many passages,  
I have not cited them here,  
But have explained just their conclusions  
For the purpose of meditation.
53. Thus, whatever is meditation  
On selflessness, by not observing  
An inherent nature in phenomena,  
Is the cultivation of wisdom.
54. Just as wisdom does not see  
An inherent nature in phenomena,  
Having analysed wisdom itself by reasoning,  
Meditate on that non-conceptually.
55. The nature of this worldly existence,  
Which has come from conceptualisation, is conceptuality.  
Thus the elimination of conceptuality  
Is the highest state of nirvana.
56. That the great ignorance of conceptuality  
Makes us fall into the ocean of cyclic existence.  
Resting in non-conceptual stabilisation,  
Space-like non-conceptuality manifests clearly.
57. When Bodhisattvas non-conceptually contemplate  
this excellent teaching,  
They will transcend Conceptuality, so hard to overcome,  
And eventually reach the non-conceptual state.

58. Having ascertained through scripture  
And through reasoning that phenomena  
Are not produced nor inherently existent,  
Meditate without conceptuality.
59. Having thus meditated on suchness,  
Eventually, after reaching '*heat*'<sup>148</sup> and so forth,  
The '*Thoroughly Joyous*'<sup>149</sup> and the others are attained  
And, before long, the enlightened state of Buddhahood.
60. If you wish to create with ease  
The collections for Enlightenment  
Through activities of pacification, increase and so forth,  
Gained by the power of mantra,
61. And also through the *force of the eight*<sup>150</sup>  
And other great attainments like the 'good pot'—  
If you want to practise secret mantra,  
As explained in the *action and performance tantras*,<sup>151</sup>
62. Then, to receive the preceptor initiation,  
You must please an excellent spiritual teacher  
Through service, valuable gifts and the like  
As well as through obedience.
63. Through full bestowal of the preceptor initiation  
By a spiritual teacher who is pleased,  
You are purified of all wrong-doing  
And become fit to gain powerful attainments.
64. Because the *Great Tantra of the Primordial Buddha*<sup>152</sup>  
Forbids it emphatically,  
Those observing pure conduct should not  
Take the secret and wisdom initiations.
65. If those observing the austere practice of pure conduct  
Were to hold these initiations,  
Their vow of austerity would be impaired

Through doing that which is proscribed.

66. This creates transgressions that are a defeat  
For those observing discipline.  
Since they are certain to fall to a bad rebirth,  
They will never gain accomplishments.
67. There is no fault if one who has received  
The preceptor initiation and has knowledge  
Of suchness listens to or explains the tantras  
And performs burnt offering rituals,  
Or makes offerings of gifts and so forth.
68. I, the Elder Dipamkarashrijnana, having seen it  
Explained in sutra and in other teachings,  
Have made this concise explanation  
At the request of Jangchup Wö.

**Colophon:** This concludes the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* by the great master Dipamkarashrijnana. It was translated, revised and finalised by the eminent Indian abbot himself and by the great reviser, translator and fully ordained monk Geway Lodro. This teaching was written in the Temple of Tholing in Zhang Zhung.

**Note:** *A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* was composed by the great master Atisha Dipamkara Shrijnana, as a response to the scholars of Nalanda University beseeching him to return from Tibet, as he was meant to, within three years time but was unable to do so due to the unavoidable circumstance of war in Nepal. This pioneering text comprises the root of the whole genre of *Lamrim* practice, which came to form the core of Buddhist practice for all traditions in Tibet.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Ruth Sonam, Dharamshala in January 1997.

# THIRTY-SEVEN PRACTICES OF A BODHISATTVA

[Tib. *rgyal sras lag len so bdun ma*]

*Gyalsé Thogmay Sangpo*

Namo Lokeshvaraya.

You see that all phenomena neither come nor go,  
Still you strive solely for the benefit of beings:  
Supreme Guru and Protector Avalokiteshvara,  
To you I continually bow with body, speech and mind.

The perfect Buddhas—the sources of benefit and happiness—  
Arise from practising the genuine Dharma,  
Which in turn depends on knowing how to practise;  
So I will explain the Bodhisattva practices.

1. Now that you have obtained this precious human body,  
The great boat so difficult to find,  
In order to free yourself and others from the ocean of samsara,  
Listening, reflecting and meditating with diligence, day and  
night, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
2. Passion towards friends churns like water,  
Hatred towards enemies burns like fire,  
Through the darkness of ignorance, one forgets what to adopt  
and what to reject—  
To abandon one's homeland, is the practice of a Bodhisattva
3. Giving up inhospitable places, mental afflictions gradually  
decrease;  
With no distractions, virtuous activities naturally increase;  
When mind becomes clear, conviction in the Dharma is  
born—  
(Therefore) seeking solitude, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.



4. Friends and relatives acquainted for long will separate,  
Possessions gained with exertion will be left behind,  
Consciousness, a guest, will leave the guesthouse of the body—  
To let go of this life, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
5. When, due to friendship with someone, the three  
poisons increase,  
Degrading the activities of listening, reflecting and meditating,  
And destroys loving kindness and compassion—  
To give up such a friendship, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
6. When, relying on someone, your negativities diminish,  
And your positive qualities grow like a waxing moon—  
To cherish such a spiritual friend  
More than your own body, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
7. Themselves captives in the prison of samsara,  
Whom can the worldly gods protect?  
Therefore, to seek refuge in the Three Jewels,  
Who do not betray you, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
8. The suffering of the lower realms, so difficult to bear,  
Is what the Buddha taught to be the fruit of negative actions.  
Therefore, even at the cost of your life,  
Never to commit negative actions, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
9. Happiness in the three realms, like dew on a blade of grass,  
Is subject to instantaneous fading away.  
To strive for the supreme state of liberation  
That never wavers is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
10. From beginningless time your mothers have cherished you,  
If they suffer now, what good is your own happiness?  
Therefore, in order to liberate an infinite number of  
sentient beings,  
Cultivating bodhicitta is the practice of a Bodhisattva.

11. All suffering comes from yearning for your own happiness,  
The perfect Buddhas are born from the intention to  
benefit others.  
Therefore, to truly exchange  
Your own happiness for the suffering of others, is the practice  
of a Bodhisattva.
12. Even if someone driven by excessive desire steals all  
your wealth  
Or incites someone else to steal it,  
To dedicate to this person your body, possession  
And all your virtues of the three times is the practice of a  
Bodhisattva.
13. If someone cuts off your head  
Even when you have not done the slightest wrong,  
Through the power of compassion,  
To take their misdeeds upon yourself is the practice of a  
Bodhisattva.
14. Should someone slander you  
And proclaim it in a billion worlds,  
In return, with a loving heart,  
To proclaim their good qualities is the practice of a  
Bodhisattva.
15. If, in the midst of a crowd,  
Someone exposes your hidden faults and abuses you for them,  
To bow to them with respect,  
Seeing them as a spiritual friend is the practice of a  
Bodhisattva.
16. If someone whom you cherish as dearly as your own child  
Takes you for an enemy,  
Then, like a mother who loves her sick child,  
To love that person even more, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.

17. Even when someone who is your equal or inferior,  
Driven by arrogance seeks to disparage you,  
To place them on the crown of your head  
With the same respect as you would accord your Guru is the  
practice of a Bodhisattva.
18. Though gripped by acute poverty and constantly scorned by  
others,  
Stricken by terrible illness and possessed by evil spirits,  
To take upon yourself the negativities and suffering of  
every being  
And never to get discouraged is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
19. Though you maybe famous and prominent, someone to whom  
others bow,  
Though you amass riches like that of the god of wealth,  
To see that worldly splendour has no essence,  
And thus to be without arrogance, is the practice of a  
Bodhisattva.
20. If you have not pacified the enemy of your own anger,  
Combating outer opponents will only make them multiply.  
Therefore, with the army of loving kindness and compassion,  
To tame your own mind is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
21. Sensual pleasures are like salt water.  
The more you partake of them, the more your  
craving will increase.  
Therefore, when something arouses attachment,  
To abandon it immediately is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
22. All appearances are your own mind,  
And mind itself primordially transcends all  
mental fabrications.  
Knowing this, and to remain free from apprehending  
The signs of subject and object is the practice of a Bodhisattva.

23. When you encounter objects that please your mind,  
Like rainbows in the summer,  
Though they seem beautiful, not to view them as real  
And to give up attachment to them is the practice of a  
Bodhisattva.
24. All suffering is like the death of your child in a dream:  
To take such delusive appearances as true, how exhausting!  
Therefore, whenever you encounter unpleasant circumstances,  
To see them as deceptions is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
25. If those who aspire to Enlightenment willingly  
give up their bodies,  
What need is there to mention external objects?  
Therefore, with no hope of reward or benefit,  
To give with generosity is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
26. If lack of discipline prevents you from benefitting yourself,  
Then your wish to benefit others is just a joke.  
Therefore, to observe discipline,  
With no longing for worldly existence is the practice of a  
Bodhisattva.
27. For a Bodhisattva who seeks a wealth of virtue,  
Every perpetrator of harm is like a precious treasure.  
Therefore, without feeling irritation towards any,  
To cultivate patience is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
28. If Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas who strive for  
their benefit alone,  
Exert efforts as if to extinguish a fire burning on their heads,  
To cultivate joyous effort, the wellspring of positive qualities  
Is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
29. Special Insight perfectly endowed with shamatha,  
Completely conquers all afflictions.  
Knowing this and cultivating meditative concentration

That transcends the *four formless states*<sup>153</sup> is the practice of a Bodhisattva.

30. The practice of the *first five perfections*<sup>154</sup>  
But without wisdom cannot achieve perfect Enlightenment.  
Equipped with skilful means, and cultivating the wisdom  
Of non-conceptualising the *three spheres*<sup>155</sup> is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
31. If you do not analyse your own faults,  
You might put on a dharmic facade while behaving  
in a non-dharmic way.  
Therefore, to continually analyse your faults  
And then discarding them is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
32. If compelled by your own afflictions, you  
speak of the faults of other Bodhisattvas,  
You yourself will degenerate.  
Therefore, never citing the faults of those  
Who have entered the Mahayana path is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
33. Desire for gain and services leads to mutual arguments,  
And activities of listening, reflecting and meditating decline.  
Therefore, to relinquish attachment  
To the households of friends, relatives and benefactors, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
34. Harsh words disturb the minds of others  
And degenerate a Bodhisattva's conduct.  
Therefore, to give up harsh and unpleasant speech  
Towards others is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
35. Once you become accustomed to afflictions,  
They are hard to undermine with antidotes.  
Therefore, with the remedial weapons of mindfulness

and introspection,  
To forcefully eliminate afflictions such as attachment, the  
moment they arise, is the practice of a Bodhisattva.

36. In brief, wherever you are and whatever you do,  
Always examine the state of your mind.  
Continuously working for the welfare of others  
Is the practice of a Bodhisattva.
37. To dedicate the merits thus accumulated  
Through these efforts towards Enlightenment,  
With the wisdom free of concepts of the three spheres,  
In order to eliminate the suffering of all infinite beings is the  
practice of a Bodhisattva.

By relying on the words of genuine masters,  
I explained the meanings taught in the sutras, tantras and  
treatises,  
In the form of these Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva  
To benefit those who wish to train on the Bodhisattva path.

Because my intelligence is small and my studies few,  
I lack linguistic skills to please the scholars;  
Yet, since they are based on sutras and the teachings of the  
genuine masters,  
I believe these practices of a Bodhisattva are flawless.

Nevertheless, since the vastness of Bodhisattva conduct is difficult  
to fathom,  
By someone like me with an inferior intellect,  
I pray to the genuine masters to consider with patience  
All my flaws such as contradictions, incoherence and so forth.

By virtue of the merit gathered here,  
And by the power of conventional and ultimate bodhicitta,  
May all sentient beings become like the benefactor Avalokiteshvara  
Who dwells neither in the extreme of samsara, nor in that of  
solitary peace.

**Note:** From childhood itself, Gyalsé Thogmay Sangpo, the composer of this text, displayed remarkable qualities of unconditional love and affection towards other sentient beings, including tiny insects and birds. Of his numerous contributions to Dharma, well-known is his commentary on Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. The summary of his lifelong practice on the path is contained in the present text.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul.

## A COMMENTARY ON THE AWAKENING MIND

[Skt. *bodhicittavivarana*; Tib. *byang chub sems 'grel pa*]

Ārya Nāgārjuna

Homage to the Glorious Vajrasattva!

It has been stated:

Devoid of all (substantive) entities;  
Utterly discarding all objects and subjects,  
Such as *aggregates*,<sup>156</sup> *elements*<sup>157</sup> and *sense sources*,<sup>158</sup>  
Due to sameness of selflessness of all phenomena,  
One's mind is primordially unborn;  
It is in the nature of emptiness.

Just as the blessed Buddhas and the great Bodhisattvas have generated the mind of great awakening, I too shall, from now until I arrive at the heart of awakening, generate the awakening mind in order that I may save those who are not saved, free those who are not free, relieve those who are not relieved, and help thoroughly transcend sorrow, those who have not thoroughly transcended sorrow.

Those Bodhisattvas who practise by means of the secret mantra, after having generated the awakening mind in terms of its conventional aspect in the form of an aspiration, must (then) produce the ultimate awakening mind through the force of meditative practice. I shall therefore explain its nature.

1. Bowing to the glorious Vajra Holder  
Who embodies the awakening mind,  
I shall explain here the meditative practice  
Of awakening mind that destroys cyclic existence.



2. The Buddhas maintain the awakening mind  
To be not obscured by such conceptions  
As consciousness of 'self', 'aggregates' and so on;  
It is always characterised by emptiness.
3. It is with a mind moistened by compassion  
That you must cultivate (awakening mind) with effort.  
The Buddhas who embody great compassion  
Constantly develop this awakening mind.
4. The self, postulated by the extremists,  
When you thoroughly analyse it with reasoning,  
Within all the aggregates (of body and mind),  
Nowhere can you find a locus for it.
5. Aggregates exist (but) are not permanent;  
They do not have the nature of selfhood.  
A permanent and an impermanent cannot  
Exist as the support and the supported.
6. If the so-called self does not exist,  
How can the so-called agent be permanent?  
If there were things, then one could  
Investigate their attributes in the world.
7. Since a permanent cannot function (to cause)  
In gradual or instantaneous terms,  
So both without and within,  
No such permanent entity exists.
8. If it were potent, why would it be dependent?  
For it would bring forth (everything) at once.  
That which depends upon something else  
Is neither eternal nor potent.
9. If it were an entity, it would not be permanent,  
For entities are always momentary;

And with respect to impermanent entities,  
Agency has not been negated.

10. This world devoid of self and so on  
Is utterly vanquished by the notions  
Of aggregates, elements and the sense-fields,  
And that of object and subject.
11. (Thus the Buddhas) who seek to help others  
Have taught to the Disciples  
The five aggregates: form, feelings, discrimination,  
Compositional factors and consciousness.
12. The excellent among the bipeds  
Always taught as well, "Forms appear as a mass of foam;  
Feelings resemble bubbles in water;  
And perception is like a mirage;
13. Mental formations are like plantain trees;  
Consciousness is like a magical illusion."  
Presenting the aggregates in this manner,  
(The Buddhas) taught thus to the Bodhisattvas.
14. That which is characterised by the four great elements  
Is clearly taught to be the aggregate of form.  
The rest are invariably established  
Therefore as devoid of material form.
15. Among these, the eyes, visible forms and so forth,  
Which are described as the elements,  
These should be known also as (the twelve) sources,  
And as the objects and the subjects as well.
16. Neither atom of form exists nor is sense power elsewhere;  
Even more, no sense power as agent exists;  
So the producer and the produced  
Are utterly unsuited for production.

17. The atoms of form do not produce sense perceptions,  
For they transcend the realm of the senses.  
(If asserted) that they are produced through aggregation,  
(Production through) collection too is not accepted.
18. Through division in terms of spatial dimensions,  
Even the atom is seen as possessing parts;  
That which is analysed in terms of parts,  
How can it logically be (an indivisible) atom?
19. With respect to a single external object,  
Divergent perceptions can arise.  
A form that is beautiful to someone,  
For someone else it is something else.
20. With respect to the same female body,  
Three different notions are entertained  
By the ascetic, the lustful and a (wild) dog,  
As a corpse, an object of lust, or food.
21. "It is the sameness of the object that functions," (if asserted)  
Is this not like being harmed in a dream?  
Between the dream and wakeful state, there is no difference  
Insofar as the functioning of things is concerned.
22. In terms of objects and subjects,  
Whatever appears to the consciousness,  
Apart from the cognitions themselves,  
No external objects exist anywhere.
23. So there are no external objects at all  
Existing in the mode of entities.  
The very perceptions of the individual consciousnesses  
Arise as appearances of the forms.
24. Just as a person whose mind is deluded  
Sees magical illusions and mirages,

And the cities of *gandharva*<sup>159</sup> spirits,  
So, too, forms and so on are perceived.

25. To overcome grasping at selfhood  
(The Buddha) taught aggregates, elements and so on.  
By abiding in the (state of) mind only,  
The beings of great fortune even renounce that (teaching).
26. For those who propound consciousness (only),  
This manifold world is established as mind (only).  
What might be the nature of that consciousness?  
I shall now explain this very point.
27. “All of this is but one’s mind,”  
That which was stated by the Able One  
Is to alleviate the fear of the childish;  
It is not (a statement) of (final) truth.
28. The imputed, the dependent,  
And the consummate – they have  
Only one nature of their own, emptiness;  
Their identities are constructed upon the mind.
29. To those who delight in the great vehicle,  
The Buddha taught in brief  
Selflessness in perfect equanimity;  
And that the mind is primordially unborn.
30. The proponents of yogic practices assert  
That a purified mind (effected) through  
Mastery of one’s own mind  
And through utter transformation of its state  
Is the object of its own reflexive awareness.
31. That which is past is no more;  
That which is yet to be, is not obtained;  
As it abides, its locus is utterly transformed,

So how can there be (such awareness in) the present?

32. Whatever it is, it's not what it appears as;  
Whatever it appears as, it is not so;  
Consciousness is devoid of selfhood;  
(Yet) consciousness has no other basis.
33. By being close to a lodestone  
An iron object swiftly moves forward;  
It possesses no mind (of its own),  
Yet it appears as if it does.
34. Likewise, the *foundational consciousness*<sup>160</sup> too  
Appears to be real, though it is false;  
In this way, it moves to and fro  
And retains (the three realms of) existence.
35. Just as the ocean and the trees  
Move about though they possess no mind;  
Likewise, foundational consciousness too  
Moves about in dependence upon the body.
36. So, if it is considered that  
Without a body there is no consciousness,  
You must explain what this awareness is,  
That is the object of one's own specific knowledge.
37. By calling it specific awareness of itself,  
You are asserting it to be an entity;  
Yet by stating "it is this,"  
You are asserting it also to be powerless.
38. Having ascertained oneself  
And to help others ascertain,  
The learned proceeds excellently  
Always without error.

39. The cognisant perceives the cognisable;  
Without the cognisable, there is no cognition;  
Therefore why do you not admit  
That neither object nor subject exists (at all)?
40. The mind is but a mere name;  
Apart from its name it exists as nothing.  
So, view consciousness as a mere name;  
Name too has no intrinsic nature.
41. Either within or likewise without,  
Or somewhere in between the two,  
The Conquerors have never found the mind;  
So the mind has the nature of an illusion.
42. The distinctions of colours and shapes,  
Or that of object and subject,  
Of male, female and the neuter –  
The mind has no such fixed forms.
43. In brief, the Buddhas have never seen  
Nor will they ever see (such a mind);  
So how can they see it as having intrinsic nature,  
That which is devoid of intrinsic nature?
44. 'Entity' is a conceptualisation;  
Absence of conceptualisation is emptiness;  
Where conceptualisation occurs,  
How can there be emptiness?
45. The mind, in terms of the perceived and perceiver,  
This the Tathagatas have never seen;  
Where there is the perceived and perceiver,  
There is no Enlightenment.
46. Devoid of characteristics and origination,  
Devoid of substantive reality and transcending speech,

Space, awakening mind and Enlightenment  
Possess the characteristics of non-duality.

47. Those abiding in the heart of Enlightenment,  
Such as the Buddhas, the great beings,  
And all the great compassionate ones  
Always understand emptiness to be like space.
48. Therefore constantly meditate on this emptiness:  
The basis of all phenomena,  
Tranquil and illusion-like,  
Groundless and destroyer of cyclic existence.
49. As 'non-origination' and as 'emptiness',  
Or as 'no-self', (grasping at) emptiness (as such),  
One who meditates on a lesser truth,  
That is not (true) meditation.
50. The notions of virtue and non-virtue  
Characterised by being (momentary and) disintegrated;  
The Buddha has spoken of their emptiness;  
Other than this, no emptiness is held.
51. The abiding of a mind which has no object  
Is defined as the characteristic of space;  
(So) they accept that meditation on emptiness  
Is (in fact) a meditation on space.
52. With the lion's roar of emptiness,  
All pronouncements are frightened;  
Wherever such speakers reside,  
There, emptiness lies in wait.
53. To whom consciousness is momentary,  
To them it cannot be permanent;  
So if the mind is impermanent,  
How could it be inconsistent with emptiness?

54. In brief, if the Buddhas uphold  
The mind to be impermanent,  
How would they not uphold  
That it is empty as well?
55. From the very beginning itself,  
The mind never had any (intrinsic) nature;  
It is not being stated here that an entity  
Which possesses intrinsic existence (somehow) lacks this.
56. If one asserts this, one abandons  
The locus of selfhood in the mind;  
It is not the nature of things  
To transcend one's own intrinsic nature.
57. Just as sweetness is the nature of molasses  
And heat the nature of fire,  
Likewise we maintain that  
The nature of all phenomena is emptiness.
58. When one speaks of emptiness as the nature (of phenomena),  
One in no sense propounds nihilism;  
By the same token, one does not  
Propound eternalism either.
59. Starting with ignorance and ending with ageing,  
All processes that arise from  
The twelve links of dependent origination,  
We accept them to be like a dream and an illusion.
60. This wheel with twelve links  
Rolls along the road of cyclic existence;  
Outside this, there cannot be sentient beings  
Experiencing the fruits of their deeds.
61. Just as in dependence upon a mirror,  
A full image of one's face appears,



The face did not move onto the mirror;  
Yet, without it, there is no image (of the face).

62. Likewise, aggregates recompose in a new existence;  
Yet the wise always understand  
That no one is born in another existence,  
Nor does someone transfer to such existence.
63. In brief, from empty phenomena,  
Empty phenomena arise;  
Agent, karma, fruits and their enjoyer –  
The Conqueror taught these to be (only) conventional.
64. Just as the sound of a drum, and a shoot  
Are produced from a collection (of factors),  
We accept the external world of dependent origination  
To be like a dream and an illusion.
65. That phenomena are born from causes  
Can never be inconsistent (with facts);  
Since the cause is empty of cause,  
We understand it to be empty of origination.
66. The non-origination of all phenomena  
Is clearly taught to be emptiness;  
In brief, the five aggregates are denoted  
By (the expression) 'all phenomena'.
67. When the (ultimate) truth is explained as it is,  
The conventional is not obstructed;  
Independent of the conventional,  
No (ultimate) truth can be found.
68. The conventional is taught to be emptiness;  
Emptiness itself is the conventional;  
One does not occur without the other,  
Just as (being) produced and impermanent.

69. The conventional arises from afflictions and karma;  
And karma arises from the mind;  
The mind is accumulated by the propensities;  
When free from propensities, it is happiness.
70. A happy mind is tranquil indeed;  
A tranquil mind is not confused;  
To have no confusion is to understand the truth;  
By understanding the truth one attains freedom.
71. It is described as suchness and as the reality-limit,  
As signlessness and as the ultimate truth,  
As the supreme awakening mind;  
It is described also as emptiness.
72. Those who do not understand emptiness  
Are not receptive vehicles for liberation;  
Such ignorant beings will revolve  
In the prison of existence of the *six classes of beings*.<sup>161</sup>
73. When this emptiness (as explained)  
Is thus meditated upon by yogis,  
No doubt there will arise in them  
A sentiment attached to other's welfare.
74. "Towards those beings who have  
Bestowed benefits upon me in the past,  
Such as through being my parents or friends,  
I shall strive to repay their kindness."
75. "To those beings who are being scorched  
By the fire of afflictions in existence's prison,  
Just as I have given them sufferings (in the past),  
It is befitting (today) that I give them happiness."
76. The fruits that are desirable or undesirable  
In the form of fortunate or unfortunate births in the world,  
They come about from helping sentient beings

Or harming them.

77. - 78. If, by relying upon the sentient beings,  
The unexcelled state (of Buddhahood) is brought about,  
So what is so astonishing about the fact  
That whatever prosperities there are in gods and humans,  
Such as those enjoyed by Brahma, Indra and Rudra,  
And the (worldly) guardians of the world,  
There is nothing in this triple world system  
That is not brought forth by helping others!
79. As hell beings, as animals and as hungry ghosts,  
The different kinds of sufferings,  
Which sentient beings experience,  
These come about from harming others.
80. Hunger, thirst and attacking each other,  
And the agony of being tormented,  
Which are difficult to avert and unending –  
These are the fruits of harming others.
81. (Just as) there is Buddhahood and awakening mind  
And the fortunate birth (on the one hand)  
And the unfortunate birth (on the other)  
Know that the (karmic) fruition of beings too is twofold.
82. Support others with all possible factors;  
Protect them as you would your own body.  
Detachment towards other sentient beings  
Must be shunned as you would poison.
83. Because of their detachment,  
Did the Disciples not attain lesser awakening?  
By never abandoning the sentient beings,  
The fully awakened Buddhas attained awakening.
84. Thus, when one considers the occurrence of  
The fruits of beneficial and non-beneficial deeds,

How can anyone remain even for an instant  
Attached (only) to one's own welfare?

85. Rooted firmly because of compassion,  
And arising from the shoot of awakening mind,  
The (true) Awakening that is the sole fruit of altruism –  
This, the Conqueror's children cultivate.
86. When, through practice, it becomes firm,  
Then, alarmed by other's suffering,  
The (Bodhisattvas) renounce the bliss of concentration  
And plunge even to the depths of relentless hells.
87. This is indeed amazing, praiseworthy it is;  
This is the excellent way of the sublime;  
That they give away their own flesh  
And wealth, is not surprising at all.
88. Those who understand this emptiness of phenomena  
Yet (also) conform to the law of karma and its results,  
That is more amazing than amazing!  
That is more wondrous than wondrous!
89. Those who wish to save sentient beings,  
Even if they are reborn in the mires of existence,  
They are not sullied by the stains of its events;  
Just like the petals of a lotus born in a lake.
90. Though Bodhisattvas such as Samantabhadra  
Have burned the wood of afflictions  
With the wisdom fire of emptiness,  
They still remain moistened by compassion.
91. Those under the power of compassion  
Display acts of departing, birth and merriment,  
Renouncing kingdom, engaging in ascetic penance,  
Great awakening and defeating the maras;

92. Turning the Wheel of Dharma,  
Entering the realm of all gods,  
And likewise display the act of going  
Beyond the bounds of sorrow.
93. In guises of Brahma, Indra and Vishnu,  
And that of fierce Rudra forms,  
They perform the compassionate dance  
With acts bringing peace to the beings.
94. For those disheartened on existence's road,  
For their respite, the two wisdoms that lead  
To the great vehicle had been taught;  
They are (however) not ultimate.
95. As long as not exhorted by the Buddhas,  
So long the Disciples will remain  
In a bodily state of wisdom,  
In a swoon and intoxicated by absorption.
96. When exhorted, then, in diverse forms,  
They will become attached to others' welfare;  
And if they gather stores of merit and wisdom,  
They will attain the Buddha's (full) awakening.
97. Because the propensities for two (obscurations) exist,  
These propensities are referred to as seeds (of existence);  
From the meeting of the seeds with conditions  
The shoot of cyclic existence is produced.
98. (The paths) revealed by the Saviours of the world,  
That follow the pattern of beings' mentalities,  
Differ variously among the diverse people  
Due to the diverse methods (employed by the Buddhas).
99. (The instructions) differ as the profound and as the vast;  
On some occasions (an instruction) is characterised by both;

Though such diverse approaches are taught,  
They are (all) equal in being empty and non-dual.

100. The retention powers and the (Bodhisattva) levels,  
As well as the perfection of the Buddhas,  
The Omniscient Ones taught these to be  
Aspects of the awakening mind.
101. Those who fulfil others' welfare in this way  
Constantly through their body, speech and mind,  
Who advocate the dialectic of emptiness,  
There is no dispute at all of being nihilistic.
102. Neither in cyclic existence nor in nirvana  
Do the great beings reside;  
Therefore the Buddhas taught here  
The *non-abiding nirvana*.<sup>162</sup>
103. The single taste of compassion is merit;  
The taste of emptiness is most excellent;  
Those who drink (the elixir of emptiness) to realise  
Self and other's welfare are Conqueror's children.
104. Bow to them with your entire being;  
They are always worthy of honour in the three worlds;  
These guides of the world reside  
As representatives of the Buddhas.
105. This awakening mind is stated  
To be the highest (ideal) in the great vehicle;  
So, with an absorbed (determined) effort  
Generate this awakening mind.
106. To accomplish self and others' welfare  
No other means exist in the world;  
Apart from the awakening mind,  
To date the Buddhas saw no other means.

107. The merit that is obtained  
From mere generation of the awakening mind,  
If it were to assume a form,  
It will fill more than the expanse of space.
108. A person, who, for an instant,  
Meditates on the awakening mind,  
The heap of merit (obtained from this),  
Not even the Conquerors can measure.
109. A precious mind that is free of afflictions,  
This is the most unique and excellent jewel;  
It can be neither harmed nor stolen by  
Such robbers as the mara of afflictions.
110. Just as aspirations of the Buddhas  
And the Bodhisattvas are unswerving,  
Likewise, those who immerse themselves in bodhicitta,  
Must hold firm their thought.
111. Even with wonder you should strive  
As explained here (in the preceding lines);  
Thereafter, you will yourself realise  
Samantabhadra's (great enlightened) deeds.
112. By praising the awakening mind hailed by the  
excellent Conquerors,  
The incomparable merits I have obtained today from this act,  
Through this, may all sentient beings submerged in the  
waves of the ocean of existence,  
Travel on the path trodden by the leader of the bipeds.

**Note:** This text composed by Arya Nagarjuna is a commentary on a verse from Chapter Two of the root tantra of *Guhyasamaja*. It was translated and edited by the Indian Abbot Gunakara and the translator Rapshi Shenyen, and was later revised by the Indian Abbot Kanakavarma and the Tibetan translator Patsap Nyima Drak.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Thupten Jinpa, PhD.



## HYMN TO [THE BUDDHA] - THE WORLD TRANSCENDENT

[Skt. *lokānistava*; Tib. *'jig rten las 'das pa'i bstod pa*]

*Ārya Nāgārjuna*

Homage to Manjushri!

1. I bow to You, The World Transcendent,  
You who are versed in the gnosis of absence.  
For the benefit of the world  
You have suffered long with great compassion.
2. That apart from the mere aggregates  
No sentient being exists, You uphold.  
Yet, Great Sage, You continue to remain  
Perfectly immersed in the welfare of beings.
3. Wise One, You have declared to the intelligent ones  
That aggregates too are comparable  
To an illusion, a mirage,  
A city of gandharvas and a dream.
4. Those which originate from a cause,  
Without that (cause), they do not exist;  
So why would you not uphold  
That clearly they are just like reflections!
5. The (four great) elements are imperceptible to the eye,  
So how can entities be perceptible to the eye?  
Clearly rejecting the apprehension of matter itself,  
You speak of matter in this manner.
6. Since without the felt there is no feeling;  
Feeling itself is devoid of self;  
So You uphold that what is felt too  
Is devoid of intrinsic existence.

7. If a word and its referent are not different,  
(The word) fire would burn one's mouth;  
If they are different, there will be no comprehension.  
This, You, the speaker of truth, have stated.
8. An agent is autonomous and his action too;  
This You have expressed conventionally.  
You uphold that they are established  
Only in terms of mutual dependence.
9. There exists no agent, no subject too;  
No merit (exists), they arise through dependence.  
"Though dependently arisen, they are unborn;"  
So You have proclaimed, O Master of Words.
10. Without being known, it's not an object of knowledge;  
Without that, there is no consciousness as well.  
Therefore, the knower and the known  
Possess no intrinsic reality, You have said.
11. If the characteristic is different from the characterised,  
The characterised would exist without the characteristic;  
You have clearly stated (also) that neither exists  
If they are (conceived of as) non-different.
12. Devoid of characteristic and the characterised,  
And free from utterances of words,  
With your eyes of (perfect) gnosis,  
You bring tranquility to beings.
13. An existent thing does not arise;  
Nor does a non-existent as well, nor do both;  
Neither from itself nor from another,  
Nor from both; how can there be arising?
14. It is logical for an existent to endure;  
Not so for (such a thing) to disintegrate.

Since it's logical for a non-existent not to endure,  
It cannot come to disintegrate.

15. First of all, it is illogical for an effect to emerge  
From a cause that is itself destructed;  
(It) does not (arise) from an undestructed (too).  
You accept a dream-like arising.
16. The emergence of effects from a cause  
Through destruction or non-destruction,  
This origination is like the occurrence of an illusion;  
You taught that everything is likewise as well.
17. Therefore you fully understood  
This world to have emerged from ideation,  
And even when emerging, You have declared,  
“There is no arising and no disintegration.”
18. In permanence there is no samsara;  
In impermanence too there is no samsara.  
You, supreme among those who have realised suchness,  
You have declared samsara to be like a dream.
19. Dialecticians assert that suffering is created by itself;  
Created by another, by both self and another,  
Or that they have no cause (at all).  
You have stated it to be dependent origination.
20. That which originates through dependence,  
This You maintain to be empty;  
That no independent entity exists,  
You, the Peerless, (proclaimed) in a lion's roar.
21. Since You teach the ambrosia of emptiness  
To help abandon all conceptualisations,  
He who clings to this (i.e. emptiness).  
This You have strongly condemned.

22. Since they are inert, dependent, empty,  
Like an illusion, and arisen out of conditions,  
You have made it familiar (to the world)  
That all phenomena lack reality.
23. There is nothing that You have brought forth;  
There is nothing that You have negated;  
You have comprehended that suchness,  
As it was before, so it is afterwards.
24. Without entering the meditation  
As shown by the Noble Ones,  
Can consciousness ever become signless?
25. Without entering signlessness  
There is no liberation, You have declared;  
So You presented this (signlessness)  
In its entirety in the great vehicle (sutras).
26. By praising You, a vessel worthy of praise,  
Whatever merits I may have obtained,  
Through this, may all beings without exception  
Become free from bondage to signs.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by Thupten Jinpa, PhD.

# **BENEFITS OF GENERATING BODHICITTA**

## **A Compilation of Excerpts from Sutras and Treatises**

### *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life [Excerpts]*

The moment an Awakening Mind arises  
In those fettered and weak in the jail of cyclic existence,  
They will be named a 'Child of the Sugatas',  
And will be revered by both humans and gods of the world.

It is like the supreme gold-making elixir,  
For it transforms the unclean body we have taken  
Into the priceless jewel of a Buddha-Form  
Therefore firmly seize this Awakening Mind.

So, having mounted the horse of an Awakening Mind  
That dispels all discouragement and weariness,  
Who, when they know of this mind that proceeds  
from joy to joy,  
Would ever lapse into despondency?

For as long as space endures  
And for as long as living beings remain,  
Until then may I, too, abide  
To dispel the miseries of the world.

Just as they intended,  
May the Bodhisattvas fulfill the welfare of the worlds,  
And may all sentient beings receive  
Whatever the Buddhas have intended for them.

May all the pains of living creatures  
Ripen (solely) upon myself,  
And through the might of the Bodhisattva Sangha,  
May all beings experience happiness.

Whatever joy there is in this world  
All comes from desiring others to be happy,  
And whatever suffering there is in this world  
All comes from desiring myself to be happy.

*Questions of the Householder Viradatta Sutra [Excerpt]*

If whatever merit there is  
In the spirit of bodhicitta, had form,  
It would fill the entire vault of the sky  
And then exceed it.

Were someone to fill the Buddha-realms  
With jewels as numerous as  
The grains of sand of the Ganges  
And offer this to the protector of the world,  
Far superior is the merit  
In the offering of one who, joining his or her hands,  
Reverently generates the mind of bodhicitta.  
There is no limit to the merit in this.

*The Precious Garland [Excerpt]*

From giving there arises wealth, from ethics happiness,  
From patience radiance, from enthusiasm elegance,  
From concentration peace, from wisdom liberation,  
From loving kindness all aims are achieved.

The Bodhisattvas through their compassion  
Lead these limitless sentient beings  
Out of suffering and establish  
Them definitely in Buddhahood.

# THE BENEFITS OF THE AWAKENING MIND

## Chapter One: A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life

[Skt. *bodhisattvacharyāvatāra*]

[Tib. *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*]

*Bodhisattva Shantideva*

- 1a. Respectfully I prostrate myself to the Sugatas  
Who are endowed with the Dharmakaya,  
As well as to their Noble Children  
And to all who are worthy of veneration.
- 1b. Here I shall explain how to engage in the  
vows of the Buddha's Children,  
The meaning of which I have condensed  
in accordance with the scriptures.
2. There is nothing here that has not been explained before  
And I have no skill in the art of rhetoric;  
Therefore, lacking any intention to benefit others,  
I write this in order to acquaint it to my mind.
3. For due to acquaintance with what is wholesome,  
The force of my faith may increase because of these (words).  
If, however, these (words) are seen by others  
Equal in fortune to myself, it may be meaningful (for them).
4. Leisure and endowment are very hard to find;  
And, since they accomplish what is meaningful for humanity,  
If I do not take advantage of then now,  
How will such a perfect opportunity come about again?
5. Just as a flash of lightening on a dark, cloudy night  
For an instant brightly illuminates all,

Likewise in this world, through the might of Buddha,  
A wholesome thought rarely and briefly appears.

6. Hence virtue is perpetually feeble,  
The great strength of immortality being extremely intense,  
And except for a Fully Awakening Mind  
By what other virtue will it be overcome?
7. All the Buddhas who have contemplated for many aeons  
Have seen it to be beneficial;  
For by it the limitless masses of beings  
Will quickly attain the supreme state of bliss.
8. Those who wish to destroy the many sorrows of  
(their) conditioned existence,  
Those who wish (all beings) to experience  
a multitude of joys,  
And those who wish to experience much happiness  
Should never forsake the Awakening Mind.
9. The moment an Awakening Mind arises  
In those fettered and weak in the jail of cyclic existence,  
They will be named a 'Child of the Sugatas',  
And will be revered by both humans and gods of the world.
10. It is like the supreme gold-making elixir,  
For it transforms the unclean body we have taken  
Into the priceless jewel of a Buddha-Form  
Therefore firmly seize this Awakening Mind.
11. Since the limitless mind of the Sole Guide of the World  
Has upon thorough investigation seen its preciousness,  
All beings wishing to be free from worldly abodes  
Should firmly take hold of this precious Awakening Mind.
12. All other virtues are like plantain trees;  
For after bearing fruit, they simply perish.



Yet the perennial tree of the Awakening Mind  
Unceasingly bears fruit and thereby flourishes without end.

13. Like entrusting myself to a brave person when greatly afraid  
By entrusting myself to this (Awakening Mind),  
I shall be swiftly liberated  
Even if I have committed extremely unbearable wrongs.  
Why then do the conscientious not devote themselves to this?
14. Just like the fire at the end of an age,  
It instantly consumes all great wrongdoing.  
Its unfathomable advantages were taught  
To the disciple Sudhana by the wise Lord Maitreya.
15. In brief, the Awakening Mind  
Should be understood to be of two types --  
The mind that aspires to awaken  
And the mind that ventures to do so.
16. As is understood by the distinction  
Between aspiring to go and (actually) going,  
So the wise understand in turn  
The distinction between these two.
17. Although great fruits occur in cyclic existence  
From the mind that aspires to awaken,  
An uninterrupted flow of merit does not ensue  
As it does with the venturing mind.
18. And for those who have perfectly seised this mind,  
With the thought never to turn away  
From totally liberating  
The infinite forms of life,
19. From that time hence,  
Even while asleep or unconcerned,  
A force of merit equal to the sky  
Will perpetually ensue.

20. For the sake of those inclined towards the lesser (vehicle),  
This was logically asserted  
By the Tathagata himself  
In the *Sutra Requested by Subahu*<sup>163</sup>
21. If even the thought to relieve  
Living creatures of merely a headache  
Is a beneficial intention  
Endowed with infinite goodness,
22. Then what need is there to mention  
The wish to dispel their inconceivable misery,  
Wishing every single one of them  
To realise boundless good qualities?
23. Do even fathers and mothers  
Have such a benevolent intention as this?  
Do the gods and sages?  
Does even Brahma have it?
24. If those beings have never before  
Even dreamt of such an attitude  
For their own sake,  
How would it ever arise for the sake of others?
25. This intention to benefit all beings,  
Which does not arise in others even for their own sake,  
Is an extraordinary jewel of the mind,  
And its birth is an unprecedented wonder.
26. How can I fathom the depths  
Of the goodness of this jewel of the mind,  
The panacea that relieves the world of pain  
And is the source of all its joy?
27. If merely a benevolent intention  
Excels veneration of the Buddhas,

Then what need to mention striving to make  
All beings, without exception, happy?

28. Although wishing to be rid of misery,  
They run towards misery itself.  
Although wishing to have happiness,  
Like an enemy they ignorantly destroy it.
29. For those who are deprived of happiness  
And burdened with many sorrows,  
It satisfies them with all joys,  
Dispels all suffering,
30. And clears away confusion.  
Where is there a comparable virtue?  
Where is there even such a friend?  
Where is there merit similar to this?
31. If whoever repays a kind deed  
Is worthy of some praise,  
Then what need to mention the Bodhisattvas  
Who do good without it being asked of them?
32. The world honours as virtuous  
One who sometimes gives a little, plain food  
Disrespectfully to a few beings,  
Which satisfies them for only half a day.
33. What need be said then of one  
Who eternally bestows the peerless bliss of the Sugatas  
Upon limitless numbers of beings,  
Thereby fulfilling all their hopes?
34. The Buddha has said that whoever bears a harmful thought  
Against a benefactor such as a Bodhisattva  
Will remain in hell for as many aeons  
As there were harmful thoughts.

35. However, if a virtuous attitude should arise (in that regard),  
Its fruits will multiply far more than that.  
When Bodhisattvas greatly suffer they generate no  
negativity,  
Instead their virtues naturally increase.
36. I bow down to the body of those  
In whom the sacred precious mind is born.  
I seek refuge in that source of joy  
Who brings happiness even to those, who bring harm.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by Stephen Batchelor,  
courtesy of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives [LTWA].

## RECOGNISING THE MOTHER

### A Song on the Experience of the Middle Way View

[Tib. *lta mgur a ma ngos 'dzin*]

*Changkya Rolpai Dorjé*

E Ma Ho!

1. He who reveals in bare  
The wonder of profound dependent arising nature,  
O my Guru, your kindness is indeed boundless.  
Kindly reside in my heart  
As I utter these extemporaneous words  
From the thoughts flashing in my mind.
2. This hapless child  
Who lost his old mother so long ago  
Is about to realise coincidentally  
What he has not recognised,  
That she has been with him all along!
3. She is perhaps the one that 'is and is not'  
As told to me quietly by my brother, the dependent arising.  
The diverse subject-object duality is my mother's benign  
smile,  
This cycle of birth and death, her deceptive words.
4. O my undeceiving mother, you have betrayed me!  
So I hope to be saved by my brother, the dependent arising.  
Yet it is ultimately through your kindness alone, O mother,  
That I can hope to be freed.
5. If subject-object duality is as they seem to be,  
Then not even the Buddhas of all three times can save us.  
But this diversity of changes  
Is in reality my unchanging mother's expressions.

Hence there is indeed a way out.

6. Things not established (objectively),  
Is the inexpressible mother;  
Mutual dependency is the play of deception,  
Just (merely) this is how we should understand.
7. Not finding the father when sought  
Is, in fact, the finding of mother,  
And the father is found on mother's lap.  
That is how the kind parents save me, their child, I am told!
8. It seems that my brother's mirror  
Reflects ungrasped my mother's face,  
Which is neither one nor multiple,  
Yet a hapless one like me had no idea of it!
9. Based on the 'instructions sent through wind'  
By Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti,  
Which Manjushrigarbha has sent a bird to pass it on (to us),  
Averts the hardships of a long and tiring search.  
Hence, I hope to see the accompanying old mother!
10. There seem to be amongst today's scholars  
Those who, being caught in the web of terms  
'Thoroughly withstanding', 'true existence', etc.,  
Seek only something with horns to be negated  
While leaving intact this solid appearance.
11. But on my mother's unveiled face,  
Such vivid duality is not found, I believe!  
Through excessive discussions off the mark,  
My old mother is likely to run away!
12. Things exist, though not in this mode  
Of chaos and contradictions.  
For the inseparable bond of our loving parents

Seems that of harmony and tenderness.

13. Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Vijnanavadin and the  
*three eastern masters*,<sup>164</sup>  
Though label this mother with names so divergent -  
Limestone-like white elephant,  
Marked with beaming tiger stripes in the form of  
physical matter,  
A foolish lunatic monkey, (an intrinsic) subject,  
A ferocious bear, the inherency devoid of duality -  
Yet they all lost the old mother.
14. Likewise, many scholars and meditators  
Amidst Sakya, Nyingma, Karma and Drukpa,  
Pride themselves in diverse terminologies -  
'Self-awareness of non-subjective Emptiness and Clarity,'  
'Primordial purity and spontaneity, the true  
face of Samantabhadra,'  
'Mahamudra, the unfabricated innate (mind),'  
'Neither existent nor non-existent, a mere  
absence of any thesis' -  
It is all well if the target is hit  
But I wonder what you are all pointing at!
15. As external matter is not dismantled,  
Vaibhasikas, worry not and be pleased.  
Though without self-cognizance, cognition and  
cognised are tenable,  
All Vijnanavadin, O be pleased.  
Though without intrinsic nature, dependent  
relation starkly remains,  
Be pleased too, the three eastern masters.
16. As clarity and emptiness can be held as uncontradictory,  
Upholders of pupil-instructions hold doubts no more.  
Though primordially pure, good and bad are feasible,

The knowledge-bearers need no clinging to purity.

17. Though one meditates through contrivance, the innate  
dawns,  
The elderly meditators need no insistence.  
As the absence of elaboration of 'existence and  
non-existence' can be accepted,  
The stubborn logicians need not fret.
18. All these occurred perhaps due to  
Unfamiliarity with the standard conventions  
For those lacking extensive study.  
It is not that I have no respect for you.  
Please pardon, if offended!
19. Though I am not an all-knower,  
Yet have expertise in the ways of riding  
The well-bred horse of my ancestors' works  
Through an enduring, persistent exertion,  
I hope to get over the impossible cliff.
20. No search is required for the seeker, is it?  
Never grasp as true, for it is false.  
Yet this falsity should not be dispelled, for it is real.  
Well-deserved is the respite,  
The freedom from the extreme of eternalism and nihilism.
21. Though lacking the coveted experience  
Of (directly) seeing the mother,  
I feel as though I am seeing right in front of me  
The kind parents lost for so long.
22. Great indeed is the kindness  
Of Nagarjuna and his disciples.  
Great indeed is the kindness of Venerable Losang Dragpa,  
Great indeed is my Guru's kindness.  
In return, I revere the mother.



23. By the joyous celebration of all noble deeds,  
Through the meeting of the young child of awareness  
With his unproduced and inexpressible old mother,  
May all mother beings be led to the lasting joy.
24. Ah! I, Rolpai Dorjé  
Perform here at this joy  
A dance of ecstatic joy  
To please the Three Jewels.

**Colophon:** These few deceptive lines describing the recognition of a mother entitled '*The Melodies of an Echo*' have been written by Changkya Rolpai Dorjé, someone with a deep admiration for the great Middle Way, on the mystical mountain of five peaks, Wutai Shan.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul.

# A SONG OF THE STAGES OF THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT

[Tib. *lam rim nyams mgur*]

*Lama Tsongkhapa*

Namo Guru Manjughoshaya.

*Paying homage to the lineage of Gurus*

1. Homage to the Buddha, a Supreme of the Shakya lineage,  
Whose body is born from a million virtues and excellences,  
Whose speech satisfies the hopes of infinite beings,  
Whose mind sees all things as they are.
2. Homage to Maitreya and Manjushri,  
Supreme disciples of the peerless Master,  
Bodhisattvas assuming the responsibilities of the Buddha's deeds  
By magically sending forth emanations in countless realms.
3. Homage to Nagarjuna and Asanga,  
Who are (widely) famed throughout the *three worlds*,<sup>165</sup>  
Ornaments among the commentators who precisely elucidate  
the Mother of the Buddhas,  
The depth of which is so difficult to fathom.
4. Homage to Dipamkara,  
The holder of the quintessential treasure of instructions,  
Consisting of the paths of profound view and vast deeds,  
The sublime lineages of the two great trailblazers.

You are the eyes to see all the teachings,  
The supreme gate to liberation for the fortunate ones.  
Moved by compassion you elucidate (the Dharma)  
with skilful means;  
To you, the spiritual masters, I pay homage.

*The exceptional qualifications of the Lamrim Tradition*<sup>166</sup>

- 6-7. Through Nagarjuna and Asanga, banners unto all humankind,  
Ornaments amongst the wise ones of the world,  
Was transmitted the sublime Lamrim (teaching).  
Fulfilling all aspirations of sentient beings,  
It is the wish-fulfilling gem.  
Being the confluence of a thousand streams of teachings,  
It is also an ocean of eloquent speech.
8. (Through it) all doctrines are perceived as non-contradictory,  
All teachings arise as personal advice,  
The intent of the Buddha is swiftly realised,  
One is protected from the precipice of great negativity.
9. Therefore, the wise and fortunate ones of India and Tibet  
Have relied upon this supreme instruction  
(Known as) the stages of the path of the three beings.  
Which wise person would not be greatly drawn to it?
10. Even hearing or teaching this tradition just once,  
That embodies the essence of all the Buddha's words,  
Gathers waves of merit equal to hearing or teaching  
All the doctrines of the Buddha.

*The importance of relying upon a spiritual master*

- 11-12. The root of all causes giving rise to happiness  
now and in the future,  
Is the practice of relying in thought and action  
Upon a genuine spiritual guide who reveals the path.  
Seeing this, follow them even at the cost of your life  
And please them with the offering of practice of  
the teachings.  
I, a practitioner, did that myself;  
You, O Seeker of Liberation, should do likewise.

*The practices of a person of the small scope*

- 13-14. This birth of leisure is more precious than a wish-fulfilling gem.  
Found but once, it is as brief as a flash of lightning.  
Hard to obtain, it is easily lost.  
Reflecting thus, realise that worldly activities  
Are merely like the husk of a grain,  
And strive day and night to take its essence.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.
- 15-16. There is no certainty that after death, lower rebirth  
does not await.  
But it is certain that the Three Jewels have the power to  
protect you from these fears.  
Therefore, taking refuge resolutely,  
Do not let the refuge instructions degenerate.  
By reflecting well on positive and negative karmas  
and their results,  
Rely on properly engaging in abandoning (negativities)  
and practising (virtues).  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.
- 17-18. Should you not find a suitable rebirth,  
Swift progress along the supreme path will not occur.  
Cultivate its causes in their entirety.  
Of vital importance is purification,  
Particularly of *karmic defilements of the three doors*,<sup>167</sup>  
Tainted by stains of negativities and infractions.  
Relying on the *four powers*<sup>168</sup> regularly is thus essential.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

*The practices of a person of the intermediate scope*

- 19-20. If you do not strive to contemplate the demerits of  
the truth of suffering,  
A genuine wish for liberation will not arise.  
If you do not contemplate the cause of suffering –  
the door to samsara,  
Knowledge of cutting the root of samsara will not arise.  
Generating renunciation characterised by a feeling of  
despondency towards samsara,  
As well as having knowledge of what binds you to  
samsara is imperative.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

*The general practices of a person of the highest scope*

- 21-22. Bodhicitta the central pillar of the path of the  
supreme vehicle,  
Is the foundation of all the great deeds (of Bodhisattvas).  
A gold-making-elixir of the two collections,  
It is a treasure trove of merit,  
For collecting the vast accumulation of virtues.  
Knowing this, heroic Bodhisattvas cherish this precious  
mind as their supreme practice.  
The venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

*The practice of the six perfections*

- 23-24. Generosity, the wish-fulfilling gem which satisfies  
the hopes of beings,  
Is the best weapon to cut the knot of miserliness,  
And is the Bodhisattva deed that gives rise to unfailing  
determination,

It is the basis of the spread of fame throughout  
the ten directions.

Realising this, the wise ones practise the noble path  
Of giving everything, their body, possessions and virtues.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

- 25-26. Ethical discipline, the water that washes away the  
stains of negativity,  
Moonlight that cools the scorching heat of afflictions,  
Elegant like Mount Meru amongst beings,  
It is the power before which all beings bow,  
minds free from fear.  
Realising this, noble ones protect the vows they  
have received,  
As they would their very eyes.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

- 27-28. Patience, the supreme ornament for the powerful,  
Is an exemplary fortitude against the torment of afflictions.  
A Garuda to destroy the enemy of the snake of hatred,  
It is an impenetrable shield against the weapon  
of harsh words.  
Realising this, familiarise yourself in every way,  
With the armour of supreme patience.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

- 29-30. By donning the armour of unrelenting, stable perseverance,  
Qualities of learning and realisation increase like  
the waxing moon,  
All actions become meaningful,  
All work embarked upon, reaches fruition as intended.  
Realising this, the Bodhisattvas dispel indolence,  
And engage with intense perseverance.

The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

- 31-32. Meditative concentration is the sovereign that  
rules the mind.  
When stabilised, it stands unwavering, like the  
king of mountains.  
When directed, it engages in all virtuous objects,  
Giving rise to the great bliss that makes the body  
and mind pliant.  
Realising this and always resorting to meditative  
concentration,  
Great yogis dispel the enemy of mental wandering.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

- 33-34. Wisdom is the eye to see the profound reality,  
The means to pull out samsara's root,  
The treasure of excellences praised in all scriptures,  
The supreme lamp that dispels the darkness of ignorance.  
Realising this, the wise, seeking freedom, strive to  
generate it.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

*The practice of concentration and wisdom combined*

- 35-36. The power to cut samsara's root,  
Lies not in single-pointed concentration alone.  
However deeply analysed,  
Wisdom devoid of the path of calm abiding  
reverses not the delusions.  
Wisdom that precisely discerns reality,  
Should ride the horse of unwavering calm abiding,  
And use the sharp weapon of Madhyamaka reasoning,  
devoid of extremes,

To completely destroy all references of grasping  
at extremes.

With this expansive insight that unerringly analyses,  
The wisdom realising reality will flourish.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

- 37-38. What need is there to mention that single-pointed  
meditation accomplishes samadhi?  
Seeing that proper analysis grounded on discretion,  
Also gives rise to very stable samadhi,  
(But that) which unwaveringly focuses on reality.  
Amazing are those who strive to achieve  
This union of calm abiding and special insight.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

- 39-40. Praise be to you who meditate  
On *space-like emptiness*<sup>169</sup> during meditative equipoise,  
And *illusion-like emptiness*<sup>170</sup> during post-meditation.  
Through this union of method and wisdom,  
you reach the culmination of the Bodhisattva deeds.  
Realising this, not remaining complacent over  
incomplete paths,  
Is the tradition of the fortunate ones.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

*Entering the path of tantra*

- 41-42. Having properly generated the path,  
Required by both the excellent causal and resultant  
Mahayana vehicles,  
Rely upon the guidance of a wise adept,  
And enter the great ocean of Mantrayana.  
Embracing the pith instructions in their entirety,



Give meaning to this birth of leisure that you have obtained.  
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

*Dedication*

43-44. In order to acquaint my mind (with the path),  
And also to benefit other fortunate beings,  
I have herein explained in simple terms,  
The complete path that pleases the Buddhas.  
I pray that by the power of this virtue,  
All sentient beings are never separated from the  
sublime and noble path.  
The Venerable Guru prayed in this manner;  
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

*Additional prayers by the disciples of Lama Tsongkhapa*

Through the kindness of my Guru,  
I met with the teachings of the unexcelled Guide.  
May this virtue be dedicated  
Towards all beings to be guided by noble Gurus.

Whichever Pure Land it may be, such as  
Tushita or Sukhavati,  
Where Venerable Losang Dragpa, my teacher resides,  
May that be the place where others and I are born,  
As his very first disciples.

Initially, strive to gain vast learning;  
In the middle, all the teachings are reflected  
as pith instructions;  
In the end, practise diligently day and night;  
Dedicate all (virtues) to the proliferation of the Dharma.

**Note:** In terms of the length of Lamrim texts, of the three versions written by Lama Tsongkhapa, this one is the most succinct.

## RAIN SHOWER OF FEATS

### A Song of the Four Mindfulnesses as a Guide to the View of the Middle Way

[Tib. *lta mgur dran pa bzhi ldan*]

*His Holiness the VII Dalai Lama*

#### *Mindfulness of the Spiritual Mentor*

1. On the unwavering cushion of the union of method and wisdom,  
Sits the kind Lama who is the nature of all Protectors.  
There is a Buddha in the state of the culmination of  
realisations and cessations.  
Beseech him in the light of admiration, by casting away  
cynical thoughts.  
Don't let your mind go astray, but place it within  
admiration and reverence.  
Through not losing mindfulness, hold it within  
admiration and reverence.

#### *Mindfulness of Compassion*

2. In unending samsara, the prison of suffering,  
Wander sentient beings of the six realms, bereft of happiness.  
They are your parents who reared you with  
affectionate kindness.  
Meditate on compassion and affection by relinquishing  
attachment and aversion.  
Don't let your mind go astray, but place it within compassion.  
Through not losing mindfulness, hold it within compassion.

#### *Mindfulness of Your Body as a Divine Body*

3. In the celestial mansion of great bliss, joyous to sustain,  
There exists the divine form of your body,  
which is a pure state of the aggregates.

There is a deity in the nature of union of the three divine bodies.  
Don't view it as ordinary, but train in divine dignity and  
immaculate appearance.

Don't let your mind go astray, but place it within  
profundity and clarity.

Through not losing mindfulness, hold it with an  
attitude of profundity and luminosity.

*Mindfulness of the View of Emptiness*

4. The sphere of appearing and existing phenomena  
Is pervaded by the space of the ultimate clear light of suchness.  
There is an ineffable ultimate reality.  
View this nature of emptiness through abandoning  
mental contrivances.  
Don't let your mind go astray, but place it within  
the ambience of reality.  
Through not losing mindfulness, hold it within  
the ambience of reality.
5. At the crossroads of the six collections (of consciousness),  
which have diverse perceptions,  
Are seen the hazy dualistic phenomena, which are baseless.  
Here is a magical show, which by nature, is deceptive.  
Don't believe it to be true, but view it as having the  
nature of emptiness.  
Don't let your mind go astray, but place it within  
the nature of appearance-emptiness.  
Through not losing mindfulness, hold it within  
the nature of appearance-emptiness.

**Note:** Lama Tsongkhapa passed down this teaching to Jetsun Sherab  
Senge. His Holiness the VII Dalai Lama, Kalsang Gyatso wrote it down.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul.

# NOBLE PURSUIT: REVEALING ONE'S PERSONAL REALISATIONS

[Tib. *rtogs brjod 'dun legs ma*]

*Lama Tsongkhapa*

Om! May virtue prevail.

1. The Guru, the eyes to see favourable states,  
A respite for those wandering in samsaric paths,  
The root of virtues and happiness,  
I prostrate at your feet, Venerable Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.
2. Rejoicing in virtue is said to be supreme.  
By generating an overflowing sense of rejoicing over past  
virtues, without the rise of ostentatiousness,  
The Buddha said, "The virtues of the past will proliferate."  
With conviction in the Buddha's words, and upon seeing  
other benefits, it is worthwhile that one practises rejoicing.
3. At the outset, I pursued vast learning.  
In the middle, all scriptures resounded to me as  
pith instructions.  
In the end, I practised day and night.  
And I dedicated all my virtues towards proliferating  
the Dharma.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.
4. If not lit by the genuine lamp of learning,  
The path will not be seen, let alone lead one to the  
supreme city of nirvana.  
Knowing this, freed of complacency over partial and

superficial understanding,

I diligently studied all the texts by Maitreya, and the *Six Ornaments and the Two Supremes*.<sup>171</sup>

Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.

Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.

5. Particularly, with effort, I learned assiduously,  
The difficult points of philosophical treatises,  
Which alone are the gateway for ordinary beings to establish ultimate reality.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.
6. Despite the great amount of effort I put into learning the treatises of sutra and tantra,  
By no means was I more advanced than those who are untrained and illiterate,  
In terms of the practice and explanation of the profound meaning.  
Therefore, relying on writings on subtle logical ways to discern the profound, particularly by Arya Nagarjuna,  
I thoroughly learned all the points that lead to the right view.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.
7. For the journey, to complete Enlightenment,  
There are two vehicles – Sutra and Mantra.  
As widely renowned as the sun and the moon,  
Is the amazing superiority of Mantra (yana) over Sutra (yana).
8. While agreeing that this expression is true,  
If a scholar fails to enquire into this profound vehicle,  
yet claims that he is intelligent,

Where on earth can one find a more unwise person?  
Alas! It is deplorable to abandon the sublime path that  
is so rare to find.

Realising this, I diligently strove for long in the Vajra vehicle,  
the supreme vehicle of the Victors,

The profound treasure trove of the two feats, rarer than  
the Buddhas.

Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.

Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.

9. For those ignorant of the modes of the path of the  
*three lower tantric schools*,<sup>172</sup>  
Decisively proclaiming the superiority of Highest Yoga  
Tantra over all other tantric schools, is mere belief.  
Realising this well, I familiarised myself for long,  
With the general and specific expositions of the three  
lineages of Action Tantra, like *Sangwa Chi-Gyued* [*The Secret  
General Tantra*], *The Sutra Requested by Subahu* and *Samten  
Chima* [*Latter Concentration*].  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.
10. I learned *Vairochana Sambodhi*,<sup>173</sup> the foremost of the second  
tantric school - Performance Tantra.  
I gained good insight into it.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.
11. I practiced the tantra of *Palden Dhe-Nyid Dhue-Pay Gyued*<sup>174</sup>  
[*The Glorious Tantra of the Compendium of Reality*], the  
supreme of the third tantric school – Yoga Tantra, and the  
Commentarial Tantras, *Dorji Tsemo*<sup>175</sup> [*Vajra-peak Tantra*]  
and so forth.

By training in the above texts I experienced the joyous feat of Yoga Tantra.

Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.

Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.

12. I learned *Guhyasamaja*, the Father tantra, the Mother Yoga Tantras *Hevajra* and *Chakrasamvara*, as well as their Root and Commentarial Tantras.

I also learned *The Stainless Light*, which illuminates the *Kalachakra Tantra*, a great tradition which differs in exposition from the other tantras.

These, the Highest Yoga Tantra – the fourth, Are as widely known as the sun and the moon to the masters of (India) the Arya Land.

Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.

Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.

*This concludes the section where, initially, I strove extensively in studies.*

13. Next, I strove to gather of all the conducive factors. For long, I made fervent supplications with unwavering faith in Manjushri, The supreme being who eliminates the mental darkness of disciples, That the texts might resound within me as pith instructions. Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble. Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.

14. Through this effort, I was able to immaculately discern the infallibility of the Lamrim, that is transmitted by Nagarjuna and Asanga. Thereby the Perfection (Paramita) texts, the most sublime of

all the profound, resonated as pith instructions.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.

15. In this land of the northern direction, among the  
learned and the not learned,  
There is unanimous proclamation that the genre of  
epistemology – *Compendium of Valid Cognition*<sup>176</sup> and the  
seven treatises on epistemology<sup>177</sup> – contain no exposition on  
the stages of experience along the journey to Enlightenment.  
Yet, the approving advice given by Manjushri to Dignaga,  
“You compose this (*Compendium of Valid Cognition*),  
this will be an eye to all sentient beings in the future,” is  
considered valid by them.
16. Seeing this to be the greatest contradictory statement,  
I especially explored and analysed this subject.  
I studied the forward and reverse reasoning to bring  
confidence in the Reliable Authority (a guide to  
Enlightenment), the content of the supplicatory words of  
the *Compendium of Valid Cognition*.  
(Thus) a profound conviction arose in me in the infallibility  
of the Buddha for those seeking complete liberation.  
This, in turn, engendered an indepth conviction in  
His teachings, which alone are the gateway to  
the aspired liberation.
17. There arose in me an unexcelled joy, over (seeing) that  
this reasoning gave birth to an understanding of how to  
synthesise all the salient aspects of the path of the two vehicles.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.
18. Then, by putting effort into the comparative study of the  
*Bodhisattva Grounds*<sup>178</sup> and the *Sutra Alankara* [*Ornament of*



*Sutra*]<sup>179</sup>

All the teachings of Maitreya and his followers appeared to me as practical instructions.

Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.

Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.

19. Through *Sikshasamuccaya* [*Compendium of Training*]<sup>180</sup> in particular,  
Which is a compilation of numerous texts of vastness and profundity, giving insight into the vital aspects of the path, I understood well how to integrate texts such as the *Sutrasamuccaya* [*Compendium of Sutras*] by Nagarjuna into practice.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.
20. Through the pith instructions eloquently spoken by *Sangghay Sangwa*,  
I am able to understand well all the salient points of the path of *Samten Chima* [*Latter Concentration*] and *Vairochana Sambodhi* as pith instructions.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.
21. Though it is relatively easier to understand that the principal features of the paths of *Palden Dhe-Nyid Dhuepa* are subsumed under the Three Meditative Concentrations, Because of Master *Sangghay Sangwa*'s succinct explanation of the profound practices by intertwining the three – Root, Commentarial and the associated tantric texts, And because of his explanation of the profound practices of the three tantras in conformity with (Kamalasila's) *Bhavana Krama* [*The Stages of Meditation*]<sup>181</sup>, my mental darkness was dispelled.

Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.

Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.

22. The ultimate of all the sublime teachings of the Buddha is the Highest Yoga Tantra.

Exceptionally profound among them is *Sri Guhyasamaja*, the king of tantras.

In relation to this tantra, the immaculate teacher Nagarjuna said thus: "It is through the Guru's oral instructions and by following the Commentarial Tantras that one will gain insight into the features of the path outlined in the Root Tantras, as set forth and sealed in the (explanation system, known as) *six corners*<sup>182</sup> and *four modes*."<sup>183</sup>

23. Viewing this as essential, I familiarised myself with the ultimate instructions of the Arya's tradition *Guhyasamaja-Dhorjay* [Summary Exposition], *Choedue* [Compendium of Conducts]<sup>184</sup>, *Namshak*<sup>185</sup> [An Exposition] and so forth.

With great effort, with the help of (Chandrakirti's) *Pradipaodotanam* [Clear Lamp], I practised the Root Tantra by synthesising the *five great commentarial treatises*.<sup>186</sup>

As a result of training (thus), I accomplished the two stages of *Guhyasamaja* in general and all the themes of the completion stage in particular.

Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.

Immensely grateful I am to you, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.

24. By virtue of this, the salient points of many sets of tantras, like *Kalachakra* and *Dhay-ghay* appeared as pith instructions.

I have already explained this in other compositions,

Here I am merely mentioning it for the wise ones.

Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.

Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure of wisdom.

*This concludes the second section on how in the middle,  
all treatises appeared as pith instructions.*

25. Having become a treasure source of pith instructions,  
I endeavoured to familiarise myself with the comprehensive  
path of the common paths of the *two Mahayanas*<sup>187</sup> and with  
the *two stages of the uncommon path*.<sup>188</sup>  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.
26. Since it is said that the Ganges river of Bodhisattva's prayers  
is subsumed in the prayer to uphold the Buddha Dharma,  
I dedicate all roots of virtues accumulated, towards the  
proliferation of the Buddha Dharma.  
Reflecting thus, the aspired goal turns noble.  
Immensely grateful to you I am, Manjushri, the treasure  
of wisdom.

*This concludes the third section on how, in the end, I  
practised day and night and dedicated all virtues towards the  
proliferation of Dharma.*

I composed this to reveal my realisations,  
To extensively multiply my virtues and properly guide the many  
intelligent and fortunate ones to the unmistakable gateway.  
By the power of the collection of virtues obtained thus,  
May all sentient beings uphold the unsurpassable actions of  
the Buddha, by following these stages,  
And enter the path that pleases the Buddhas.

**Note:** Lama Tsongkhapa's biography reveals three clear phases: an initial phase of extensive learning, a middle phase of reflecting on all that was studied, and a final phase of single-pointed practice of meditation on what was previously learned and reflected upon. This composition of Lama Tsongkhapa lays bare the salient texts he studied and learned, the points he reflected upon, and the meditative practices he engaged in, all in sequential order, so that it may be considered a comprehensive outline for any practitioner wishing to follow in his footsteps.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul.

## THE THREE ESSENTIAL POINTS

[Tib. *snying po don gsum*]

*Yogi Mitra Joki*

Practise consistently the deity meditation (while still) alive.  
Practise the instruction of transference of mind when close to death.

Practise the mixing during the intermediate state.  
Above all others, is consistency in practice.

1. *Practise consistently the deity meditation (while still) alive.*  
By being mindful of impermanence and suffering,  
Concertedly generate great compassion.  
(Visualise) the Guru on the crown of your head and the deity at your heart.  
Meditate upon your mind as unborn.
2. *Transference (of mind) – the heart practice at the time when one is close to death.*  
By giving away your body,  
Abandon all (thoughts) of the dependents.  
By the practice of the light-ray cylindrical channel,  
Eject your mind to the realm of Tushita.
3. *The mixing – the heart practice in the intermediate state*  
By knowing this as the intermediate state,  
Transform the external, internal and secret.  
Through the essential yoga of emptiness and compassion,  
The wise, learned ones connect (themselves) to their next lives.

*The quintessence of view, meditation and conduct underlie all essential points.*

Identifying all that appears is the quintessence of view.  
Not wavering is the quintessence of meditation.

Acting mindfully in the same taste is the quintessence of conduct.  
This is the instruction of a greatly realised yogi.

**Note:** This instruction was a spiritual gift by the great seer Mitra Joki, to the translator Jampa Pel. A profound yet easy practice, it aids the practitioner to prepare for the journey to the next life. For the five powers of reflection on death, refer to *The Noble Mahayana Sutra on Wisdom at the Hour of Death*, also presented in this book.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul.

## SUMMARY OF THE STAGES OF MEDITATION

### An Excerpt from the Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment, Volume III

Lama Tsongkhapa

Now I will give a brief summation of the general meaning of the path. At the outset, the root of the path derives from your reliance upon a teacher, so consider this seriously. Then, once you have developed an uncontrived desire to take advantage of your leisure, this desire will spur you to practise continually. Therefore, in order to develop this, meditate on the topics connected with leisure and opportunity. Unless you then stop the various sentiments which seek the aims of this life, you will not diligently seek the aims of future lives. So, work at meditating on how the body you have is impermanent in the sense that it will not last for long, and on how, after death, you will wander in the miserable realms. At that time, by creating a genuine awareness which is mindful of the horrors of the miserable realms, build certainty from the depths of your heart about the qualities of the three refuges. Be constant in the common vow of going for refuge and train in its precepts. Then, from a range of perspectives develop faith, in the sense of conviction, in karma and its effects - this being the great foundation of all positive qualities. Make this faith firm. Strive to cultivate the *ten virtues*<sup>189</sup> and to turn away from the *ten non-virtues*<sup>190</sup> and always stay within the path of the *four powers*.<sup>191</sup>

When you have thus trained well in the teachings associated with a person of small capacity and have made this practice firm, you should contemplate often the general and specific faults of cyclic existence, and in general, turn your mind away from cyclic existence as much as you can. Then, having identified the nature of karma and the afflictions - the causes from which cyclic existence arises - create an authentic desire to eliminate them. Develop broad

certainly about the path that liberates you from cyclic existence, i.e., the *three trainings*,<sup>192</sup> and particularly make effort at whichever of the vows of individual liberation you have taken.

When you have thus trained well in the teachings associated with a person of medium capacity and have made this practice firm, consider the fact that just as you yourself have fallen into the ocean of cyclic existence, so have all beings, your mothers. Train in the spirit of Enlightenment which is rooted in love and compassion, and strive to develop this as much as you can. Without it, the practices of the six perfections and the two stages are like storeys built on a house with no foundation. When you develop a little experience of this spirit of Enlightenment, confirm it with *the rite*.<sup>193</sup> By making effort in this training, make the aspiration as solid as you can. Then study the great waves of the Bodhisattva deeds, learning the boundaries of what to discard and what to adopt, and make a strong wish to train in those Bodhisattva deeds. After you have developed these attitudes, take the vow of the *engaged spirit of Enlightenment*<sup>194</sup> through its rite. Train in the *six perfections*<sup>195</sup> that mature your own mind and the *four ways of gathering disciples*<sup>196</sup> which mature the minds of others.

In particular, risk your life in making a great effort to avoid the root infractions. Strive not to be tainted by the small and intermediate contaminants and faults, and even if you are tainted, work to repair it. Then, because you must train specifically in the final two perfections, become knowledgeable in the way to sustain meditative stabilisation and then achieve concentration. As much as you can, develop the view of the two selflessnesses, a purity free from permanence and annihilation. After you have found the view and stabilised your mind upon it, understand the proper way to sustain the view in meditation, and then do so. Such stabilisation and wisdom are called serenity and insight, but they are not something separate from the last two perfections. Therefore, after you have taken the Bodhisattva vows, they come about in the context of the training in its precepts.



You have reached a critical point when, while meditating on the lower levels, you increasingly wish to attain the higher levels, and when studying the higher levels, your wish to practise the lower levels becomes stronger and stronger. Some say to expend your energy only to stabilise your mind and to understand the view, ignoring all earlier topics, but this makes it very difficult to get the vital points. Therefore, you must develop certainty about the whole course of the path. When you meditate on these topics, train your understanding and then go back to balance your mind.

So, if it seems that your faith in the teacher who instructs you on the path is decreasing, since this will cut the root of everything good that has come together, work on the methods for relying on the teacher.

Similarly, if your joy in your practice loses strength, make meditation on the topics connected with leisure and opportunity your primary focus.

If your attachment to this life increases, make meditation on impermanence and the faults of the miserable realms your primary focus.

If you seem to be lazy about the proscriptions you have accepted, consider that your certainty about karmic cause and effect is meager and make meditation on karma and its effects your primary focus.

If your sense of disenchantment with all of cyclic existence decreases, your desire to seek liberation will become just words. Therefore, contemplate the faults of cyclic existence.

If your intention to benefit living beings in whatever you do is not strong, then you will sever the root of the Mahayana. Therefore, frequently cultivate the aspirational spirit of Enlightenment together with its causes.

Once you have taken the vows of a Conqueror's Child and are training in the practices, if the bondage of the reifying conception

of signs seems strong, use reasoning consciousnesses to destroy all objects which are apprehended by the mind which conceives of signs, and train your mind in the space-like and illusion-like emptiness.

If your mind is enslaved to distraction and does not remain on a virtuous object, you should primarily sustain one-pointed stability, as former teachers have said. From these illustrations, you should understand the cases I have not explained. In brief, without being partial, you have to be able to use the whole spectrum of virtues.

Among the stages of the path of a person of great capacity, I have explained how one who trains in the Bodhisattva path practises insight, which is wisdom.

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, then as Atisha's *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* says, 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. And you must do this for a Guru who meets at least the minimum qualifications of a teacher explained there.

Then, at the outset, your mind should be matured through the ripening initiation as explained in a source tantra. You should then listen to the pledges and vows to be taken, understand them, and maintain them. If you are stricken by root infractions, you may make these commitments again. However, this greatly delays the development of the good qualities of the path in your mind. Make a fierce effort not to be tainted by those root infractions. Strive not to be tainted by the gross infractions, but in the event that you are tainted, use the methods for restoring your vows. Since these are the basis of the practice of the path, without them you will

become like a dilapidated house whose foundation has collapsed. *Manjushri-mula-tantra* [*The Root Tantra of Manjushri*] says, “The Master of the Sages does not say that faulty ethical discipline achieves the tantric path,” meaning that those with faulty ethical discipline have none of the great, intermediate, or low attainments. And 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. Therefore, someone who talks about practising the path without maintaining the pledges and vows has completely strayed from the tantric path. 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. Neither the tantras nor the scholars who explain their intended meanings hold that you should discard the first stage and merely classify it within the latter stage, training only in individual portions of the path. Therefore, you must bear in mind the vital points of the two stages of the complete corpus of the path of Highest Yoga Tantra.

Considering only the terms, I have described a mere fraction of what is involved in entering the mantra path. Therefore, 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 other's minds.

**Note:** This text is extremely helpful to practitioners in their pursuit of setting up and stabilising a daily practice, especially if one perceives a lacunae or a lack of progress. It helps the practitioner discern the areas where emphasis could be strengthened and what factors can give the practice more power, practically.

Translated from Tibetan into English by the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee, whose editor-in-chief is Joshua W. C. Cutler and editor is Guy Newland.

# DEPENDENT ORIGATION AND EMPTINESS

## A Compilation of Excerpts from Sutras and Treatises for Meditation

### *Gift of Youth Ratna Sutra [Excerpt]*

[Skt. *ārya satpuruṣ sūtra*]

Manjushri, whoever listens (even) with doubt to this teaching (on emptiness) generates much greater merit than a Bodhisattva who, lacking skill in means, practises the six perfections for a hundred thousand aeons. This being so, what need is there to say anything about a person who listens to (this teaching) without doubt! What need is there to say anything about a person who imparts the scripture in writing, memorises it, and also teaches it thoroughly and extensively to others!

### *The Treasury of the One Thus Gone Sutra [Excerpt]*

[Skt. *ārya tathāgatagarbhanāma sūtra*]

Any person, who, possessing all these (ten great non-virtues), enters into the teaching of selflessness and has faith and conviction that all phenomena are from the beginning pure (of true existence), does not go to a bad rebirth.

### *Chapter on Subduing Devils Sutra [Excerpt]*

[Skt. *māradamana sūtra*]

If any Bhikshu realises that all phenomena are absolutely pacified (of inherent existence) and the beginning of defilements is devoid of self-nature, it will remove the guilt of having defilements and make unstable (the defilements), thus deeming even the immeasurable negativities dysfunctional, let alone the secondary wrongs done associated with ethics and rituals.

*Aryadeva's Four Hundred Verses on the Middle Way [Excerpt]*

[Skt. *chatuhśaṭaka śāstra nāma kārikā*; Tib. *bzhi brgya pa*]

Those with less merit will not even have a doubt  
In this Dharma (of ultimate reality).  
Should an enquiry ever arise in someone,  
It will shatter samsara into pieces.

*Acharya Chandrakirti's Entry into the Middle Way, Verse 6.4*

[Skt. *madhyamakāvatāra*; Tib. *dbu ma la 'jug pa*]

Even as an ordinary being, when hearing about emptiness,  
If one experiences within, utter joy, again and again,  
Tears flowing from such pure joy moisten one's eyes  
And one's hair stands on end,  
One has the seed of the wisdom of full awakening.

*Upali Requested Sutra [Excerpt]*

[Skt. *upālipariprcchanāmamahāyāna sūtra*]

The various delightful flowers blossom  
And the sparkling supreme golden abodes stand, so alluring.  
For none of these is there a creator.  
They are posited by the power of thought.  
It is through conceptualisation that the world is imputed.

*Bhikhuni Vajīra's Utterance in a Fundamental Vehicle Sutra [Excerpt]*

The mind is demonic (which views) a (true) self.  
You have a wrong view.  
These compositional aggregates are empty;  
There is no being in them.

Just as one designates a cart,  
In dependence upon a collection of parts.

So we assert a conventional sentient being,  
In dependence upon the aggregates.

*Venerable Shawara's writings [Excerpt]*

Searching for reality throughout space,  
One finds not the periphery nor the center.  
All perceptions cease completely.  
Likewise, through a thorough search of mind and phenomena,  
One finds not even an atom of essence.  
Since the searching mind is not found,  
Not seeing anything is seeing the reality.

*Saint Sarahā's writings [Excerpt]*

By entering into emptiness but devoid of compassion,  
One will not find the supreme path.  
By meditating upon compassion alone,  
One will not attain liberation, but remain in samsara.  
The one capable of grasping the unity of the two,  
Will not remain in samsara nor abide in (personal) nirvana.

*King of Concentration Sutra [Excerpt]*

[Skt. *samādhirāja sūtra*; Tib. *ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po'i mdo*]

Just as in the dream of a young girl,  
She met with a boy and saw his death,  
Joyous was she at the meeting and in anguish at his death.  
View all phenomena as thus.

*Arya Nagarjuna's Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*

[Skt. *mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; Tib. *dbu ma rtsa ba shes rab*]

*Verse 18.5*

Ceasing of karmas and afflictions leads to nirvana.  
Karmas and afflictions arise from conceptual thought.

These arise from (mental) elaboration (grasping at true existence).  
Elaboration ceases by (or into) emptiness.

*Verse 22.1*

Neither the aggregates, nor different from the aggregates,  
The aggregates don't (depend) on him, nor is he (dependent)  
on them.

The Tathagata does not possess the aggregates.

What is the Tathagata? [*Replace with your name*]

*Verse 24.18 - 19*

That which dependently originates,  
Is posited to be empty (of independent existence).  
That being dependently designated,  
This is the Middle Way.

Since there is no phenomenon,  
That is not dependently originated,  
Therefore, there is no phenomenon,  
That is not empty.

*Arya Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, Verse 1:80 - 81*

[skt: *ratnāvalī*; Tib. *rin chen phreng ba*]

If the person is not earth, not water,  
Not fire, not air, not space,  
Not also consciousness, and not all (of them),  
Where is the person out of those?

Just as a person is not truly existent,  
Because of being an aggregation of the six elements.  
Each element also is not truly existent,  
As they are aggregations (of their own constituents).



*Dharmasamgitisutra [Excerpt]*

Form is like a mass of foam;  
Feeling is like a water bubble;  
Perception is like a mirage;  
Mental formations are like plaitain trees;  
Consciousness is like an illusion;  
So taught Suryamitra.

*Arya Nagarjuna's Commentary on Bodhichitta, Verse 88*

[skt: *bodhichittavivaraṇa*; Tib. *byang chub sems kyi 'grel ba*]

Those who understand this emptiness of phenomena,  
Yet (also) conform to the law of karma and its results,  
That is more amazing than amazing!  
That is more wondrous than wondrous!

*Aryadeva's Four Hundred Verses on the Middle Way [Excerpt]*

[skt: *chatuḥśataka śāstra nāma kārikā*; Tib. *bzhi brgya pa*]

When dependent arising is seen,  
Ignorance does not occur.  
Thus through all efforts,  
Strive to find this subject.

*His Holiness the VII Dalai Lama's Rain Shower of Feats – A Song of the Four Mindfulnesses as a Guide to the View of the Middle Way [Excerpt]*

At the crossroads of the six collections (of consciousness)  
that have diverse perceptions,  
Are seen the hazy dualistic phenomena which are baseless.  
There is a magical show that is by nature deceptive.  
Don't believe them to be true, but view them as having the  
nature of emptiness.  
Don't let your mind go astray, but place it within  
the nature of appearance-emptiness.

Through not losing mindfulness, hold it within  
the nature of appearance-emptiness.

The sphere of appearing and existing phenomena  
Is pervaded by the space of the ultimate clear light of suchness.  
There is an ineffable ultimate reality.  
View this nature of emptiness through abandoning mental  
contrivances.

Don't let your mind go astray, but place it within  
the ambience of reality.  
Through not losing mindfulness, hold it within  
the ambience of reality.

*His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama's Prayer for Proliferating the  
Dharma of the Land of Snows [Excerpt]*

Venerable Marpa Lotsawa, Shaypa Dorji (Jetsun Milarepa) and so  
on,  
The host of the precious Kagyu, the sources of blessings,  
The chain of the unexcelled masters of this outstanding tradition,  
To you all I pray,  
May the Buddha Dharma of the Land of Snows blaze  
forever more.

All phenomena encompassing samsara and nirvana,  
Are but the radiance of spontaneous awareness.  
The awareness itself, devoid of elaborations,  
Is realised in the nature of Dharmakaya.  
Pervading all existences and appearances of samsara and nirvana,  
Is the Great Mahamudra.  
May the Buddha Dharma of the Land of Snows blaze  
forever more.

*Arya Nagarjuna's In Praise of Dharmadhatu [Excerpt]*

[skt: *dharmadhātustava*; Tib. *chos kyi dbyings su bstod pa*]

'Impermanence', 'suffering' and 'empty',  
These three, they purify the mind.  
The Dharma that is unsurpassed in purifying the mind,  
Is the lack of intrinsic nature.

*Concluding Prayer in Lama Tsongkhapa's Commentary on  
Arya Nagarjuna's Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way,*  
[Tib. *gompa rabse*]

Throughout my future lifetimes,  
May I always be guided by Arya Manjushri  
And be able to uphold the Dharma in general and the teachings  
on dependent origination in particular,  
Even at the cost of my life.

*Sadhana of Shree Hey-Ru-Ka [Excerpt]*

**SHREE HEY-RU-KA**

(x3)

**HEY** is the Selflessness of Phenomena – the emptiness of the mind which is the source of everything, as it is imputed to be of causal nature.

**RU** is the Selflessness of Person – the emptiness of the Self that is fabricated by the web of conceptual thought that grasps at the self of person.

**KA** is the ultimate reality – the absence of the dissonant duality of subject and object.

**SHREE** is the non-dual exalted wisdom that abides in congruence with the emptiness of the object. This is the meaning of AY-WAM.

# ULTIMATE REALITY

## IN MADHYAMAKA PHILOSOPHY

### An Excerpt from Illuminating the Clear Intention

[Tib. *dbu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*]

*Lama Tsongkhapa*

I will now concisely explain the way to generate within us an insight into the illusion-like appearance of all phenomena.

Objects of knowledge can be divided into two categories: functional and non-functional things. The former can further be divided into forms and non-forms. As explained in other (text, Acharya Vasubhandu's *Twenty Stanzas*\*), (the existence of) directionally partless particles, in the case of forms, and temporally partless moments, in relation to minds, must be refuted. Establish that all functional things necessarily have parts.

Given that the whole and parts will be unrelated if they have distinct entities, reject (the distinctness of the two) to show that the whole and parts are of the same nature. However much we may reflect upon their (relationship), while in reality (the two) exist as same nature, (they) undeniably appear as distinct entities. Like a magical illusion, this then discerns the union of (their) appearance in one way, (but) the emptiness (of the object existing) in the (other) way.

(While) this (union) finds no inconsistency with a deceptive mode of existence where (things) are posited through the power of (their) appearance to a mind, it is absolutely not feasible for an object whose mode of existence is not through the power of the object's appearance to a mind. In the case of true existence, which is explained earlier, it is not permissible to have inconsistencies between the appearance and the mode of existence (of the object), as it is in the utter absence of falsities that true existence should exist. Moreover, their being of the same nature becomes untenable,

as the mind perceiving them as distinct natures becomes non-mistaken otherwise.

Through this understanding, one refutes true existence with respect to non-functional objects as well, using similar reasoning. How? Even in the case of non-composite space, we have to accept that there are some forms where it pervades (and not to others.) Within that, some pervade the east and others pervade other directions. In the same light, the ultimate reality also has many pervading parts and has many parts in the sense of being objects of realisation of various temporal (moments) of the mind. This, likewise, can be extended to other non-composite objects.

(Establish) that the whole and its multiple parts are of the same entity as they cannot be different entities. This is tenable for a deceptive nature and not for a truly existent one. Thus by rejecting (true existence) as done earlier, all phenomena are established to be empty of true existence.

*\*Acharya Vasubandhu's "Twenty Stanzas" [Excerpt]*

Because of being simultaneously surrounded by six  
(other particles),  
The (central) subtle particle is found to have six parts.  
If these six (parts) have the same spatial dimension,  
A massive (object) will conflate into (the size of) just a minute  
particle.

**Note:** *Illuminating the Clear Intention* is Lama Tsongkhapa's commentary to Acharya Chandrakirti's *Entry Into the Middle Way*.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul at Sravasti Abbey, Spokane, US on September 20, 2008.

# GANGA MAHAMUDRA

## Pith Instruction given by Master Tilopa to Naropa

[Skt. *mahamudrapadhaysham*; Tib. *phyag chen gang ga ma*]

*Saint Tilopa*

Supplications to the Glorious Innately Born [wisdom]!

1. Although Mahamudra cannot be revealed,  
Since you delve into penance,  
Bearing the pains, with faith in the Guru,  
The intelligent Naropa, you the fortunate one,  
keep the following close to your heart.
2. Hey! With prudence, observe all the worldly things;  
They are ephemeral like dreams and illusions.  
Dreams and illusions exist not in reality  
Thus generate disillusionment and caste aside the worldly ends.
3. Abandon all - your servants and close ones,  
Relatives and friends, (the causes of) attachment and aversion.  
Meditate in solitude, in the mountains and in the forests.  
Abide in the state devoid of meditation.  
Mahamudra is attained, if the non-achievable is achieved.
4. Samsaric objects are the causes of meaningless desire  
and aversion.  
View the ultimate, since things accomplished have no  
meaning.  
The entities of mind cannot see the meanings,  
which transcend (the comprehension of) the mind.  
Actions accomplished cannot attain what transcends actions.
5. If one aspires to achieve the meaning,  
Which transcends the mind and which is beyond all actions,

Explore one's mind, and place the awareness  
In its naked form.

6. Let the murky water of thoughts settle to clarity;  
Neither reject nor establish the appearances,  
Place them in their natural state.  
If freed of abandonment and adoption,  
One is liberated into Mahamudra.
7. Just as a tree blossoming with leaves, fruits and branches,  
With its root severed, all tens and hundred thousands of its  
leaves and branches, dry up,  
Just as the darkness accumulated even over thousands of  
aeons,  
Will be dispelled by a single light,  
An instant of one's Clear Light mind, will likewise eliminate  
All the negativities and obscurations accumulated over aeons.
8. The beings of lower caliber,  
If cannot apprehend the essence,  
Practise the technique of the breath,  
tame the awareness and release it in its natural state.  
Through various eye gazes and means to concentrate one's  
mind,  
Tame the awareness inwardly, when it does not abide in its  
natural state.
9. Just as when the centre of the sky is examined,  
Viewing its periphery and the centre will come to cease,  
Likewise when mind examines the mind,  
Thoughts and feelings will come to cease,  
And (will) transform into the state of non-thought;  
Thus one will perceive the nature of the unexcelled bodhicitta.
10. Just as the cloud formed by the vapor rising from the earth  
towards the sky,

Nowhere does it go, nor abide anywhere,  
The host of thoughts which arise from the mind,  
The waves of thought vanish as one sees one's own mind.

11. Just as the space is beyond colours and shapes,  
Untainted by white and black (stains) and is immutable,  
One's own mind too is beyond all colours and shapes,  
And is freed of being defiled by virtues or vice.
12. Just as the substrate of the Sun, which is pure and clear,  
Cannot be obscured by the darkness that endures even for a  
thousand aeons,  
Likewise the luminosity - the essence of one's own mind,  
Cannot be obscured by aeons of samsaric (state).
13. When empty space is examined,  
Nothing can be found such as space, to be described.  
Likewise, even if one utters anything about the luminosity of  
the mind,  
One will not find any analytical basis, on which one can posit  
as the reference of the label.  
For space as the example - what exists there? What depends  
on what?  
Likewise one's own mind of Mahamudra has no basis of  
dependence.  
Free of contrivances, release and abide in the primordial state.  
What is shackled, when released, no doubt, will be liberated.
14. The nature of mind is like space;  
There is no phenomenon which this (nature of mind) does not  
pervade.  
Discard all the actions of the body, and abide in a proper  
state.  
Never exceed verbal utterances, they are like echoes.  
Mentally think not; view all things as such, like those that are  
passed by alongside mountain passes.



15. The body is devoid of essence; it is like the stem of a bamboo shoot.  
Mind is like the center of space; it is beyond conceptualisation.  
Release and abide your mind (in this state), free of engagement and rest.  
When the mind is free of reference, it is Mahamudra.  
Meditating on this, one will achieve the unexcelled Enlightenment.
16. In the absence of perceiving object, the nature of the mind manifests.  
In the absence of the path to traverse, one gets to the path of Buddhahood.  
Meditating on the state free of meditation, one attains the sublime Enlightenment.
17. Transcending all subjects and objects is the king of the views.  
It is the king of meditation, when free of distractions;  
It is the king of conducts, when free of actions and efforts.  
When free of hopes and doubts, the fruit is manifested.  
The unborn *Kunshi* – the Foundational Consciousness - is free of imprints and veils.
18. Abide in the quintessence of the unborn state,  
By not engaging in the equipoise and post meditation.  
Seeing appearances as self reflections,  
Dissolves the objects (contrived by) the mind.
19. When completely freed from the center and the periphery, it is the king of views.  
Infinite width and bottomless depth is the supreme king of meditations.  
Abiding in one's (natural state), free of actions, is the supreme king of the conducts.  
Settled in one's (natural state), free of expectations, is the

supreme king of the results.

20. The beginners are like the waterfall on the rocky cliffs;  
Those in the middle, are like river Ganges flowing gently;  
The final is like merging of the child and the mother streams.  
With the teachings such as Mantras, Perfection and the  
Treatises of Discipline,  
And those of one's own treatises and the tenets, one cannot  
realise the clear light - Mahamudra.
21. Attend not; be freed of all beliefs and desires.  
Like the water waves, it is self-born and self-pacified.  
With beliefs and desires, one will not see but obscure  
the clear light;  
It degenerates the vows and pledges of realisations.
22. By not abiding, not viewing, and not overlooking the meaning,  
You are noble;  
This is the light of practice to dispel the darkness.  
If freed from all apprehensions, and not abiding in  
the extremes,  
Will one see all the Dharmas of the treatises.
23. If one embraces this meaning, one will be freed from  
the prison of samsara.  
Equipose on this essence, burns all negativities and  
obscurations.  
This is proclaimed as the light of the Dharma.
24. Those unintelligent beings who are not inspired by  
this meaning,  
Will be constantly flooded by the torrents of samsara;  
They undergo unbearable suffering of lower realms,  
What a pity!
25. Those aspiring for freedom from suffering,  
Seek a knowledgeable Guru.

Through receiving blessings, one's mind will be liberated.  
By dependence on Karma mudra, the wisdom of  
bliss-emptiness arises.

26. In the act of blessing of the unison of method and wisdom,  
Descends gradually (bodhicittas) and displays the mandala;  
Take them to the intended spots and disperse across the body.  
Without clinging, the primordial wisdom of bliss-emptiness  
manifests.
27. Longevity devoid of white hair will thrive like (a waxing)  
moon;  
One will exude radiance and elegance and have the  
strength of a lion,  
One will swiftly achieve the common attainments,  
And will proceed through, for the supreme (*siddhis*).

May this quintessential teaching of Mahamudra,  
Abide in the hearts of the fortunate beings.

This ends the teaching given by Shri Tilopa to Naropa near  
Ganges river.

**Note:** Oral instructions on Mahamudra given by Saint Tilopa to Naropa  
on the banks of the Ganges river. Translated from the Sanskrit into  
Tibetan by Chokyi Lodro Marpa, the Translator.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul.

## A GUIDE TO THE TWO TRUTHS

[Skt. *satya-dvaya-avatara*; Tib. *bden pa gnyis la 'jug pa*]

*Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna*

1. The Dharma taught by the Buddhas  
Is based upon the doctrine of the two levels of truths:  
The conventional truth that deceives the world  
And the ultimate level, the truth of highest significances.
2. Two kinds of conventional truth are asserted:  
distorted and valid.  
The first of these is also of two types:  
That likened to a moon reflected in water  
And that formed by wrong philosophy.
3. As for valid conventional truth,  
This refers to functional phenomena,  
Things which are created and destroyed,  
As experienced without deep analysis.
4. Ultimate truth is singular, Conventional truth is multiple.  
How can one speak of a second or third (ultimate truth)  
When it (the ultimate) refers to the  
*Dharmata*<sup>197</sup> not produced in any way?
5. The Dharmata is indicated by doctrinal words such as  
'unborn' and 'undying'.  
Because ultimately it is beyond duality,  
There is no division into basis and essential nature.
6. There is no multiplicity  
In emptiness (the ultimate truth):  
When one realises in the manner of non-realisation,  
We conventionally say, 'emptiness is seen'.

7. In the Sutra on profound emptiness  
It is said that no seeing is itself seeing.  
In this there is neither seeing nor seen,  
No beginning, no end; all things at rest.
8. The ultimate level of truth is beyond simile.  
In it there is neither phenomena nor non-phenomena,  
No realisation, no object of realisation,  
No abiding and no place in which to abide,  
No coming and no going.
9. It is inexpressible, unimaginable,  
Unchanging and non-composite,  
And the yogi who realises it  
Destroys the obscuring delusions and obscurations  
to knowledge.
10. Buddhists speak of two types of perception:  
Direct and inferential.  
Ignorant people of mundane view say  
That emptiness is perceived through these two.
11. (However, if this is correct) it will follow  
That Tirthikas and Shravakas also see Dharmata.  
Why even mention the Vijñānavādins?  
And of course (emptiness) does not contradict the  
Madhyamikas.
12. In that case we would have to agree  
That all schools are correct and in harmony.  
But as their views in fact are diverse,  
If we accept all as valid,  
Won't we end up with too many ultimates?
13. Therefore there is no need to speak of  
Direct and inferential perception in reference to emptiness  
The masters have spoken like this

Merely to turn away Non-Buddhist criticism.

14. It is clearly stated in the scriptures  
That one cannot apprehend emptiness  
With either the conceptual or non-conceptual mind.  
The great master Bhavaviveka said this.
15. How then does one apprehend emptiness?  
This was clarified by Nagarjuna, who  
Was prophesied by Buddha himself  
And who saw the truth of Dharmata.  
It was further clarified by his student Chandrakirti.  
One gains insight into the Dharmata truth  
Through the tradition coming from them.
16. All Eighty-Four Thousand aspects of the teachings  
Lead to and fall upon this Dharmata.  
All other meditations are practiced to supplement it,  
For realisation of emptiness brings final liberation.
17. However, if one ignores the valid conventional level of truth  
While meditating on profound emptiness,  
One will mishandle conventional truths such as  
Good and bad, cause and effect, etc.,  
And will suffer in this and future lives.
18. To practice with insufficient learning  
Will not produce realisation of the final meaning of emptiness.  
Also, people who do not generate positive spiritual energy  
Become lost to the world of negativity.
19. Those of little wisdom apprehend emptiness incorrectly  
And as a consequence are destroyed.  
Acharya Chandrakirti himself wrote that  
All methods belong to conventional truth.

20. Ultimate truth is what arises from them.  
Anyone not understanding this distinction  
Generates mistaken awareness and  
Falls into the lower realms of being.
21. If one does not rely upon conventional truth,  
One will not gain insight into the ultimate truth.  
Without ascending the steps of (understanding)  
valid conventional truth,  
It is impossible to enter into the mansion of perfect  
understanding.
22. If we look for the nature of the objects  
Appearing on the conventional level of truth,  
We find nothing whatsoever.  
This not finding of the unfindable  
Is the experience of the ultimate truth,  
The Dharmata pure since the beginning.
23. Things existent on the conventional level  
Are established as they appear  
Because of their causes and conditions.  
If it is not correct that they are so established,  
Then, who created the moon's reflection in water?
24. Therefore it is said that conventional things exist  
Because they have their causes and conditions.  
When the stream of conditions supporting  
A conventional phenomenon is broken,  
That phenomenon no longer arises.
25. Because of this (nature of relativity),  
One avoids falling into wrong paths  
And ascends to the highest state  
By means of unconfused view  
And by abiding in pure practice.

26. This life is short and the objects of knowledge are many.  
Moreover, how long our lives will last is unknown to us,  
Therefore, be like the swan, who when drinking milk,  
Can extract the desired cream  
And spit out the unrequired water.
27. It is said to be improper to speak of  
The two levels of truth to confused worldly people.  
However, relying upon the teachings of my Gurus,  
I have penned this presentation of Nagarjuna's tradition  
on the two truths  
At the request of the king of Indonesia.
28. Should anyone have an interest in it,  
They should scrutinise it carefully.  
To accept it out of faith  
Without scrutiny is inappropriate.
29. The Indonesian king Guruphala  
Sent the bhikshu Devamati to me  
With the request for a brief work  
On the two levels of truth.  
Therefore this was written for him;  
Contemporary scholars may judge it for themselves.

**Note:** Composed by the Acharya and Mahapandita *Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna*. It was translated into Tibetan (from the original Sanskrit) edited and finalised by the master himself and the translator Lotsawa Gya Tsundrue Sengge.





**ADDITIONAL PRAYERS,  
VOWS AND COMMITMENTS**



# GURU PUJA

[Tib. *bla ma mchod pa*]

*Panchen Losang Choegyen*

1. From within great bliss, I manifest as a Guru-deity;  
From my body, a profusion of light rays radiates forth in  
the ten directions,  
Transforming the environment and the beings therein.  
All becomes most perfectly arrayed with only infinitely  
pure qualities.
2. From the state of an exalted, white virtuous mind,  
All infinite sentient beings, my old mothers and I,  
From this moment until supreme Enlightenment,  
Go for refuge to the Gurus and the Three Jewels.

NAMO GURUBHYAH NAMO BUDDHAYA  
NAMO DHARMAYA NAMO SANGHAYA

(x3)

3. For the sake of all mother sentient beings,  
I shall become a Guru-deity,  
And thus place all sentient beings  
Into the supreme state of a Guru-deity.
4. For the sake of all mother sentient beings,  
I shall quickly, quickly, in this very life,  
Attain the state of a primordial Buddha, Guru-deity.
5. I shall liberate all mother sentient beings from suffering  
And lead them to the great bliss of Buddhahood.  
To this end, I shall now practise  
The profound path of Guru-deity yoga.

OM AH HUM

(x3)

6. Pure clouds of outer, inner and secret offerings,  
And rich offerings of ritual requirements spread inconceivably,  
Pervading the reaches of space, earth and sky.  
In essence, they are pristine awareness.  
In aspect, inner offerings and the various objects of offering.  
Their function, as objects to be enjoyed by the six senses,  
Is to generate the extraordinary pristine awareness of  
emptiness and bliss.
7. In the vast space of indivisible emptiness and bliss,  
Amidst billowing clouds of Samantabhadra offerings,  
At the crest of a wish-granting tree embellished with leaves,  
flowers and fruit,  
Is a lion-throne ablaze with precious gems, on which rests a  
lotus, a sun and a full moon.
8. On this, sits my root Guru, who is *kind in three ways*.<sup>198</sup>  
In essence, all Buddhas, in aspect, a saffron-robed monk,  
With one face, two arms, radiant with a bright smile.  
His right hand is in the gesture of expounding the Dharma,  
His left in meditative pose holds an alms bowl filled with nectar.  
He is draped with three lustrous saffron robes  
And his head is graced by a pundit's golden hat.
9. In his heart, sits all-pervading Lord Vajradhara,  
with a blue-coloured body,  
One face and two arms, holding vajra and bell  
And embracing Vajradhatu Iswari;  
They delight in the play of innate bliss and emptiness,  
Are adorned with jewelled ornaments of many designs,  
And are clothed in garments of heavenly silks.
10. Radiant with thousands of light rays, adorned with the  
major and minor signs,  
The Guru sits in the vajra position, haloed by a  
five-coloured rainbow.

His purified aggregates are the *five Buddhas*<sup>199</sup> Sugata;  
His four elements, the four consorts;  
His sense powers, energy channels.  
Sinews and joints are in actuality Bodhisattvas;  
The hairs of his pores are twenty-one thousand Arhats;  
His limbs are wrathful Protectors;  
The light rays are directional Guardians, lords of wealth  
and their attendants;  
While worldly gods are but cushions for his feet.

11. Surrounding him in their respective order sit the direct  
and lineage Gurus, Yidams, hosts of Mandala Deities,  
Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Heroes and Dakinis,  
Encircled by an ocean of Dharma Protectors.
12. The three doors of each are marked with the *three vajras*;<sup>200</sup>  
From their HUM syllables, hooked light rays radiate  
And draw forth the wisdom beings from their natural abodes  
And they become inseparably joined.
13. O sources of goodness and well-being throughout  
the three times;  
O root and lineage Gurus, Yidams, Three Jewels of Refuge,  
Heroes, Dakinis, Dharma Protectors, and hosts of Guardians;  
By the power of your compassion, come forth and  
abide steadfast!
14. Though all things are totally free of inherent coming  
and going,  
Still You, the embodiment of wisdom, loving kindness  
and deed, arose in myriads of manifestations  
According to the dispositions of the varied disciples;  
O Holy Saviours, please come forth with your entourages.

OM GURU BUDDHA BODHISATTVA DHARMAPALA  
SAPARIWARA E HYE HIH.  
DZA HUM BAM HO!

*[The wisdom beings and commitment beings become non-dual.]*

15. You, whose compassion grants even the sphere of great bliss,  
The supreme state of the three bodies in an instant,  
O Guru with a jewel-like-body, Vajradhara,  
At your lotus feet, I prostrate.
16. You are the pristine awareness of all infinite conquerors  
Appearing with supreme skilful means in anyway that tames,  
Such as manifesting in the appearance of a saffron-robed  
monk;  
I prostrate at your feet, O Holy Saviour.
17. Principal source of benefit and bliss without exception,  
You eliminated all faults and their imprints  
And are a treasure of a myriad jewel-like qualities;  
I prostrate at your feet, O Venerable Guru.
18. You are of the nature of all Buddhas, teachers of all, including  
the gods;  
The source of the eighty-four thousand pure Dharmas,  
You tower above the whole host of Aryas;  
I prostrate to you, O Benevolent Gurus.
19. To the Gurus of the three times and ten directions,  
The Three Supreme Jewels and all worthy of homage,  
With faith, conviction and oceans of lyrical praise,  
I prostrate, manifesting forms as numerous as the  
atoms of the world.
20. O Saviours, O Venerable Gurus, together with your entourages,  
I present you with oceans of clouds of various offerings.
21. From expansive well-fashioned vessels, radiant and precious,  
Gently flow four streams of purifying nectars.
22. Beautiful flowers, as blossoms on trees  
And inquisitely arranged garlands,

Fill the earth and sky.

23. Drafts of lazuli smoke from fragrant incense  
Billow in blue clouds towards the heavens.
24. From suns and moons, glittering jewels and scores of  
flaming lamps,  
Joyful light dispels the darkness of a thousand million  
billion worlds.
25. Vast seas of scented waters, imbued with the fragrances  
Of saffron, sandalwood and camphor, swirl out to  
the horizons.
26. Delicacies of gods and humans, drinks and wholesome feasts  
With ingredients of a hundred flavours, amass at Mount Meru.
27. Music from an endless variety of various instruments  
Blends into a symphony, filling the three realms.
28. Goddesses of sense objects, holding symbols of  
sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, pervade all directions.
29. To you, O Saviours, treasures of compassion,  
Eminent and supreme fields of merit, I present with  
pure faith:  
Mount Meru and the four continents a billion times over,  
*The seven precious royal emblems,*<sup>201</sup>  
The precious minor symbols and more,  
Perfectly delightful environments and beings,  
And a great treasury of all that gods and humans use or desire.
30. On the shore of a wish-granting sea, grow lotuses,  
Offerings arisen from samsara's and nirvana's virtues,  
Both real and emanated, they captivate all hearts.  
Flowers (arising from) both worldly and supramundane  
virtues



Of my own and others' three doors, brighten all places.  
This garden is diffused with myriad fragrances of  
Samantabhadra offerings;  
It is laden with fruit - the three trainings<sup>202</sup>, *two stages*<sup>203</sup>  
and *five paths*;<sup>204</sup>  
I offer this in order to please you, O Venerable Gurus.

31. I offer a drink of China tea, the colour of saffron,  
Rich in a hundred flavours, with a delicate bouquet;  
The five hooks, five lamps and so forth  
Are purified, transformed and increased into a sea of nectar.
32. I even offer illusion-like consorts of youthful splendour,  
Slender and skilled in the sixty-four arts of love,  
A host of messenger Dakinis –  
Field-born, Mantra-born and Simultaneously-born.
33. I offer you the great wisdom of co-emergent bliss,  
unobstructed  
The sphere of the true, unelaborated nature of all phenomena,  
Beyond thought and expression, spontaneous and inseparable,  
The supreme Ultimate Bodhicitta.
34. I offer all types of potent medicines  
To cure the four hundred afflictions caused by defilements  
And I offer myself as a servant to please you;  
Pray keep me in your service as long as space endures.
35. Before those having great compassion,  
I confess with regret, and vow never to repeat,  
Whatever non-virtuous and evil actions  
I have done since beginningless time,  
Caused others to do, or in which I have rejoiced.
36. Though all things are like a dream,  
Lacking the sign of inherent existence,  
I sincerely rejoice in every virtue that ever arises

As the happiness and joy of all Aryas and ordinary beings.

37. I pray, shower rains of vast and profound Dharma,  
From a gathering of a million clouds of perfect wisdom  
and compassion,  
To grow, sustain and propagate a garden of moon flowers  
Of benefit and bliss for limitless beings.
38. Though Your vajra body is subject to neither birth nor death,  
But is a vessel of the mighty king, unification,  
Please abide forever according to my wishes,  
Not passing beyond sorrow until the end of samsara.
39. I dedicate the collection of white virtues thus created  
To sentient beings that they may be inseparably cared for  
in all future lives  
By Venerable Gurus, kind in the three ways  
And attain the Vajradhara unification.
40. You are a source of virtue, an immense ocean of  
moral discipline,  
And brimming over with a treasure of the jewels of  
vast learning.  
Master, second King of Sages clad in saffron,  
O Elder, Holder of Vinaya, I make requests to you.
41. You have the *ten qualities*<sup>205</sup> that make one a suitable guide,  
To teach the path of Those-Gone-to-Bliss.  
Lord of Dharma, representing all the Conquerors,  
O Mahayana Guru, I make requests to you.
42. With your three doors well subdued, wise, patient and  
honest,  
Honourable, knowing the tantras and rituals,  
Having both sets of ten principles, skilled in drawing  
and teaching,  
O Foremost Vajra-Holder, I make requests to you.

43. You unmistakably show the good way of the Sugatas  
To the unruly migrators untamed by countless past Buddhas,  
The beings of this degenerate age, difficult to curb,  
O Compassionate Saviour, I make requests to you.
44. At this time of the setting of the sun of the Sage's teachings,  
You enact the deeds of the Conqueror  
For the many migrators who lack a saviour;  
O Compassionate Saviour, I make requests to you.
45. Even a single hair from the pores of your body  
Is praised as a field of merit for us,  
Higher than the Conquerors of the three times and  
ten directions,  
O Compassionate Saviour, I make prostrations to you.
46. Adorned by the precious wheels and the three bodies of  
Sugatas,  
From an intricate web of appearances, with skilful means  
You manifest in an ordinary form to lead all beings,  
O Compassionate Saviour, I make requests to you.
47. Your aggregates, elements, sensory bases and limbs  
Are in nature of the *Five Sugatas*<sup>206</sup>, their consorts,  
Bodhisattvas, and wrathful Protectors;  
O Essence of the Three Jewels, Supreme Guru, I make  
requests to you.
48. You are the quintessence of ten million mandala cycles  
Arising from the play of omniscient pristine awareness.  
All pervading lord of a hundred Buddha families,  
foremost Vajradhara,  
O Lord of Primordial Unity, I make requests to you.
49. Unobscured, inseparable from the play of innate bliss,  
The nature of all things, pervading everything in motion and  
at rest,

Samantabhadra, free of beginning or end,  
Actual ultimate bodhicitta, I make requests to you.

50. You are the Guru, you are the Yidam, you are the  
Dakinis and Protectors.  
From now until Enlightenment I shall seek no refuge  
other than You.  
In this life, the bardo and all future lives, hold me with  
your hook of compassion.  
Save me from the fears of samsara and nirvana,  
grant all siddhis,  
Be my constant friend and guard me from interferences.

By the virtue of having thus requested three times,  
From the seats of my Guru's body, speech and mind,  
White, red and dark blue nectars and rays  
Stream forth one by one, and then all together, into my  
own three places.  
And one by one and then all together, they absorb, purging  
the *four obscurations*,<sup>207</sup>  
And I receive the four pure empowerments and seeds of  
the *four bodies*.<sup>208</sup>  
A replica of the Guru happily dissolves into me  
And grants inspiration.

### **Tsok Offering**

*[When a Tsok offering is performed, especially on sacred days like  
the tenth or twenty-fifth day of the lunar cycle, it should be included  
at this point of the rite. Otherwise, skip directly to Verse 81.]*

OM AH HUM

(x3)

52. Pure clouds of outer, inner and secret offerings,  
Objects that bind us closer and fields of vision  
Pervade the reaches of space, earth and sky,

Spreading out beyond the range of thought.  
In essence, they are pristine awareness,  
In aspect, the inner offering and the various objects of offering.  
Their function is to generate the extraordinary  
pristine awareness  
Of emptiness and bliss as objects to be enjoyed  
by the six senses.

53. E Ma Ho! In the grand play of pristine awareness,  
All places are vajra fields  
And all structures majestic vajra palaces.  
Oceans of clouds of Samantabhadra offerings billow forth.
54. All objects are imbued with the glories of all wishes.  
All beings are actual Viras and Viranis,  
There is not even the word 'impurity' or 'flaw'.  
All is but infinitely pure.
55. HUM! From a state of Dharmakaya in which all mental  
fabrications are stilled,  
On top of a turbulent wind and blazing fire,  
Upon the crown of a tripod of three human heads,  
AH, within a proper human skullcup,  
OM, the ingredients brilliantly appear one by one.
56. Placed above them are OM AH HUM,  
Each sparkling with brilliant colour.  
The wind becomes turbulent, fires flare, the ingredients melt.  
From their boiling, tumble forth copious vapours.
57. From the three letters, profusions of light rays radiate out  
in the ten directions,  
Drawing back the three vajras with nectars,  
That dissolve individually into three letters.  
These melt with the nectar and blend with the ingredients,  
Purifying, transforming and increasing them,

E Ma Ho, becoming an ocean glittering with the splendours  
Of all that could be wished for.

OM AH HUM

(x3)

58. O host of root and lineage Gurus, Yidams, a host of Deities,  
Three Jewels of Refuge, Viras, Dakinis, Dharmapalas and  
Guardians of the teachings,  
I request you, who are in the nature of compassion,  
To appear and come to this offering site.
59. Place your radiant feet firmly upon this elegant throne  
formed of jewels,  
Amidst an ocean of clouds of outer, inner and  
secret offerings.  
Grant us, who are striving in the supreme realisation,  
The powerful attainments that we all wish for.
60. HO! This ocean-like Tsok offering of uncontaminated nectar,  
blessed by samadhi, mantra and mudra,  
We offer in order to please you, hosts of root and lineage Gurus.  
OM AH HUM  
Contented by your sport with all the splendours that could  
be wished for,  
E Ma Ho, please let fall a great rain of blessings.
61. Blessed by concentration, mantra and mudra,  
This ocean-like Tsok-offering of spotless nectar,  
I offer for your delight, assemblies of root and lineage Gurus  
Satisfied by enjoying an abundance of all you wish,  
Please, I beg, let fall a great rain of blessings!
62. Blessed by concentration, mantra and mudra,  
This ocean-like Tsok-offering of spotless nectar,  
I offer for your delight, assemblies of Yidams, Deities  
and attendants!

Satisfied by enjoying an abundance of all you wish,  
Please, I beg, let fall a great rain of powerful  
accomplishments!

63. Blessed by concentration, mantra and mudra,  
This ocean-like Tsok-offering of spotless nectar,  
I offer for your delight, assemblies of the most  
Precious Jewels!  
Satisfied by enjoying an abundance of all you wish,  
Please, I beg, let fall a great rain of the Holy Dharma!
64. Blessed by concentration, mantra and mudra,  
This ocean-like Tsok-offering of spotless nectar,  
I offer for your delight, assemblies of Dakinis and Dharma  
Protectors! Satisfied by enjoying an abundance of all you wish,  
Please, I beg, let fall a great rain of virtuous deeds!
65. Blessed by concentration, mantra and mudra,  
This ocean-like Tsok-offering of spotless nectar,  
I offer for your delight, assemblies of mother sentient beings!  
Satisfied by enjoying an abundance of all you wish,  
Please, let delusive appearances and suffering be allayed!

*[Return to Verse 61 and recite this section a total of three  
times]*

### **Offering the Tsok to the Master**

66. Look, Venerable, a great circle of Tsok!  
You who has followed in the tracks of the Sugatas of the  
three times,  
And are the source of all-powerful attainments.  
Since we realise this, O Great Hero,  
Who has forsaken the conceptualising mind,  
Please enjoy continually this circle of Tsok! A-LA-LA HO!
- Very good!

*The Master's Reply*

67. With nature inseparable from the three vajras,  
I visualise myself as a Guru-Yidam.  
This nectar of immaculate wisdom-knowledge,  
Without stirring from bodhicitta,  
I drink to satisfy the Deities dwelling in my body.  
What great bliss!

*Song of the Spring Queen*

68. All Tathagata-Buddhas, Vira-Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas  
and Dakinis,  
To all of you I make this request.  
O Heruka, who delights in supreme bliss  
And who attends the mudra experiencing bliss,  
Please, by enjoying yourself in accordance with the rites,  
Join with innate bliss (and emptiness),  
May the hosts of stainless Dakinis  
Look with loving compassion and accomplish all deeds.
69. HUM! We make our requests to you,  
The Tathagatas, who are Thus-Gone, as well as to the Viras,  
Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis.  
Yoginis dance with enchanting, soothing movements  
The Protector so exceedingly to please  
And the multitudes of Dakinis come before us and bless us.  
Bestow upon us innate great bliss.

A-LA-LA-LA-LA-HO A-I-A-AH A-RA-LI-HO

You, the multitudes of immaculate Dakinis,  
Look upon us with love.  
Bestow all the powerful attainments.

70. HUM! We make our requests to you,  
The Tathagatas, who are Thus-Gone, as well as



To the Viras, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis.  
The great bliss that is possessed of liberating qualities,  
The great bliss without which freedom cannot be  
gained in one life  
Though one endures many ascetisms,  
The great bliss abides within the centre of the supreme lotus.

A-LA-LA-LA-LA-HO A-I-A-AH A-RA-LI-HO

You, the multitudes of immaculate Dakinis,  
Look upon us with love.  
Bestow all the powerful attainments.

71. HUM! We make our requests to you,  
The Tathagatas, who are Thus-Gone, as well as to the Viras,  
Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis.  
Just as a lotus born out of the mud,  
Great bliss, though born out of desire, is unsullied by  
its faults.  
O Supreme Yoginis, by the bliss of your lotus,  
May the bonds of samsara be quickly untied.

A-LA-LA-LA-LA-HO A-I-A-AH A-RA-LI-HO

You, the multitudes of immaculate Dakinis,  
Look upon us with love.  
Bestow all the powerful attainments.

72. HUM! We make our requests to you,  
The Tathagatas, who are Thus-Gone, as well as  
To the Viras, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis.  
Like a swarm of bees drawing forth the nectar of flowers,  
May we likewise be satiated  
By the captivating nectar of the mature lotus  
Possessing six qualities.

A-LA-LA-LA-LA-HO A-I-A-AH A-RA-LI-HO

You, the multitudes of immaculate Dakinis,  
Look upon us with love.  
Bestow all the powerful attainments.

73. HUM! Impure deceptive appearances become purified in the  
sphere of emptiness.  
AH, this magnificent nectar created out of pristine awareness,  
OM, becomes a vast ocean of all desired things.  
OM AH HUM (x3)

*[Offering the remaining Tsok]*

74. Ho! This ocean of remaining Tsok of uncontaminated nectar  
blessed by samadhi, mantra and mudra,  
We offer to please you, hosts of oath-bound Realm-Protectors.  
OM AH HUM!  
Contented by your sport with all the splendours that could  
be wished for,  
E Ma Ho, please accomplish the virtuous conduct of the  
yogic path as you have pledged.

*[Take the pretas' Tsok outside.]*

75. Ho! By offering this ocean of remaining Tsok  
To the guests who are left together with their entourage,  
May the precious teachings proliferate,  
May the upholders of the teachings, the offering patrons  
together with their entourage, and especially we yogis,  
All gain freedom from sickness, a long life, fame, good  
fortune and abundant wealth as wished for.
76. Bestow on us the powerful attainments of actions  
Such as pacification, increase and so forth,  
O oath-bound Protectors, protect us!  
Help us obtain all-powerful attainments.

77. Make us meet no untimely death,  
Sickness, demons or interfering spirits.  
See that we have no bad dreams,  
Ill omens or calamities.
78. May we have worldly happiness, good crops and harvests,  
May the Dharma flourish, all goodness and joy come about,  
And may all the wishes in our minds be fulfilled.
79. And by the force of this bountiful giving,  
May I become a self-evolved Buddha for the sake of all  
sentient beings.  
And by this gesture of generosity, may I liberate  
The multitudes of beings who were not liberated by the  
Buddhas of the past.

*Reviewing the Entire Stages of the Path*

80. O Holy and Venerable Gurus, supreme field of merit,  
Inspire me to make offerings and devoted requests  
To you, O Protectors and root of all well-being,  
That I may come under your joyous care.
81. Inspire me to realise how this opportune and fortunate rebirth  
Is rare, found but once and quickly lost,  
And thereby, undistracted by the meaningless works of this life,  
Seise its meaningful essence.
82. Afraid as I am of the searing blaze of suffering in the  
lower realms,  
Inspire me to take heartfelt refuge in the Three Precious Gems.  
And to fervently strive at avoiding non-virtue,  
And accomplishing all collections of virtue.
83. Violently tossed as I am by waves of delusions and karmas,  
Plagued by hordes of sea-monsters – the three sufferings –  
Inspire me to develop an intense longing to be free

Of this dreadful boundless great ocean of existence.

84. I have abandoned the view that sees this unbearable prison  
of cyclic existence as a pleasure grove;  
Inspire me to train in the three trainings, the store of the  
Arya's treasures,  
And thereby uphold the banner of liberation.
85. I have considered how all these tormented beings  
Are my mothers who have kindly cared for me again and  
again;  
Inspire me to develop unfeigned compassion,  
Like that of a loving mother for her precious child.
86. As no one desires even the slightest suffering,  
Nor ever has enough happiness,  
There is no difference between myself and others.  
Therefore, inspire me to rejoice when others are happy.
87. This chronic disease of cherishing myself  
Is the cause of unwanted suffering;  
Perceiving this, may I be inspired to blame, begrudge  
And destroy this monstrous demon of self-cherishing.
88. Cherishing my mothers and seeking to secure them in bliss  
Is the gateway to infinite virtues;  
Seeing this, may I be inspired to hold them dearer than my life,  
Even should they arise as my enemies.
89. In brief, infantile beings labour for their own gain alone,  
While the Buddhas work solely for others;  
Understanding the distinction between their respective  
faults and virtues,  
May I be inspired to be able to exchange myself for others.
90. Cherishing myself is the doorway to all downfalls,  
While cherishing my mothers is the foundation of  
everything good.

Inspire me to make the core of my practice,  
The yoga of exchanging myself for others.

91. Therefore, O Venerable Compassionate Gurus  
Bless me so that all karmic obscurations and sufferings  
Of mother migrators may ripen upon me right now,  
And that I may give others my happiness and virtuous deeds,  
In order that all sentient beings have happiness.
92. Though the world and the beings therein are full of the  
fruits of evil,  
And undesired sufferings shower upon me like rain,  
Inspire me to see them as a means to exhaust the results of  
negative karma,  
And to take these miserable conditions as a path.
93. In short, no matter what appearances may arise, be they  
good or bad,  
Inspire me to take them into a path enhancing the two  
Bodhicittas,  
Through the practice of the *five forces*<sup>209</sup> - the essence of the  
entire Dharma  
And thus enjoy only a mind of happiness.
94. Inspire me to immediately conjoin with meditation whatever  
I encounter,  
By the skilful means of having the *four applications*,<sup>210</sup>  
And to make this opportune rebirth worthwhile,  
By practising the advice and commitments of mind training.
95. So that I may rescue all beings from the vast ocean of  
samsara,  
Inspire me to master true bodhicitta,  
Through love, compassion and the superior intention,  
Conjoined with the technique of mounting taking and  
giving upon the breath.

96. Inspire me to eagerly strive in the practice  
Of the three moralities of the Mahayana,  
And to bind my mind-stream with the pure Bodhisattva vow,  
The single path journeyed by Victorious Ones of the  
three times.
97. Inspire me to transform my body, wealth, and virtues of the  
three times,  
Into the objects desired by each sentient being,  
And through the advice of enhancing detached giving,  
Complete the perfection of generosity.
98. Inspire me to complete the perfection of moral conduct,  
By working for sentient beings, accumulating virtuous qualities,  
And not transgressing the bounds of Pratimoksha,  
Bodhisattva or Tantric vows, even at the cost of my life.
99. Should all *nine types of beings*<sup>211</sup> of the three realms  
Become angry at me, abuse, upbraid, threaten, or even kill me,  
Inspire me to complete the perfection of patience,  
And, undisturbed, work for their benefit in response to  
their harm.
100. Even if I must remain in the fires of Avici  
For an ocean of aeons for the sake of each sentient being,  
Inspire me to complete the perfection of joyous effort,  
And through compassion, to strive for supreme  
Enlightenment.
101. By avoiding the faults of dullness, agitation and distraction,  
With one-pointed concentration set on the mode of  
existence of all phenomena – emptiness of true existence –  
Inspire me to complete the perfection of concentration.
102. Through the wisdom discriminating suchness,  
Conjoined with the induced tranquility and great bliss,  
Inspire me to complete the perfection of wisdom,

Through the space-like yoga absorbed on the ultimate truth.

103. Inspire me to perfect the illusion-like concentration  
By realising how all outer and inner phenomena  
Lack true existence, yet still appear  
Like illusions, dreams, or the moon's reflection in a still lake.
104. Samsara and nirvana have not an atom of true existence,  
While dependent-arising by cause and effect is non-deceptive.  
Inspire me to realise the import of Nagarjuna's thought,  
That these two are not contradictory, but complementary.
105. Then, through the kindness of my helmsman,  
Vajradhara,  
Inspire me to cross the labyrinthine ocean of tantra,  
By holding my vows and pledges, the root of siddhis,  
Dearer than my life.
106. Inspire me to cleanse all stains of attachment to  
ordinary appearance  
Through the *first-stage yoga*<sup>212</sup> of transforming birth,  
death and bardo,  
Into the Conquerors' three bodies,  
And to see all that appears as the deity.
107. Setting your feet, O Protector, upon the eight petals  
of my heart,  
Within the central channel, inspire me to actualise  
The path uniting clear light and *illusory body*,<sup>213</sup>  
In this very lifetime.
108. Should I not have completed the points of the path at  
the time of death,  
Inspire me that I may reach a Pure Land,  
By either the instructions on applying the five forces,  
Or by the forceful means to Enlightenment, the Guru's  
transference.

109. In short, O Protector, inspire me,  
That I may be cared for by You inseparably in all my  
future lives,  
And become your chief disciple,  
Holding every secret of your body, speech and mind.
110. O Protector, please grant me the good fortune  
To be the very foremost of your retinue wherever you  
manifest Buddhahood,  
And that all my temporal and ultimate wishes and needs,  
Be effortlessly and spontaneously fulfilled.
111. Having been thus entreated, pray grant this request,  
O Supreme Gurus.  
So that you might bless me, happily alight on the crown of  
my head  
And once again set your radiant feet  
Firmly on the corolla of my heart lotus.
112. I dedicate the merit thus gathered,  
Toward the realisation of the aims and deeds,  
Of Buddhas and their children of the three times,  
And to the upholding of the doctrine of scripture and insight.
113. May I, in all lives, through the force of this merit,  
Never separate from the *four wheels of the great vehicle*,<sup>214</sup>  
And accomplish all the stages of the path,  
Renunciation, bodhicitta, perfect view and the two stages.

*Verses for Auspiciousness*

114. Through the excellence of whatever white virtues there are in  
samsara and nirvana,  
May all be auspicious for us to be free, here and now, from all  
misfortune and hardship,  
And thus enjoy a glorious and perfect celestial treasure  
Of temporal and ultimate virtue and goodness.



115. May all be auspicious for the Buddhas' teachings to  
endure long,  
Through your centres of Dharma, Omniscient Losang Dragpa,  
Being filled with hosts of monastics and yogis  
Striving single-pointedly to master the *three pure trainings*.<sup>215</sup>
116. Having requested your blessings, Losang Dragpa, who  
from the time of your youth,  
Made requests to the supreme Guru-Yidam,  
May all be auspicious for you, O Losang Vajradhara,  
To Spontaneously grant the wishes of others.
117. May all be auspicious for all our desired endowments to swell  
like a lake in the summer rains,  
Bringing an unbroken flow of rebirths of leisure in  
faultless families,  
So that we may pass our days and nights  
With your holy Dharma, O Losang,  
And thus delight in the glories of perfection.
118. By the collection of whatever virtuous deeds others and  
I have done,  
And shall do from now until Enlightenment,  
May all be auspicious, O Holy Venerable One,  
For your body of form, to remain in this land,  
immutable like a vajra.

**Note:** Composed by Venerable Panchen Losang Choegyen, translated from Tibetan into English by the Foundation of the Preservation of Mahayana Tradition [FPMT].

# MAHAYANA EIGHT PRECEPT CEREMONY

[Tib. *theg chen gso sbyong*]

“I go for refuge,  
To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Supreme Sangha.  
I generate the mind of full awakening,  
To accomplish the goals of others and myself.”

“O Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions,  
Please pay heed to me.  
I will generate bodhicitta from here onwards,  
To achieve the consummate Buddhahood.”

*Taking the Precepts of Thekchen Sojong*

*[Since the Sojong has to be received initially from a Guru, imagine the Guru as a real Arya Avalokiteshvara surrounded by all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Generate intense faith and make three prostrations to the Guru. Sit properly in front of the Guru. Offer a mandala to the Guru in order to receive Sojong precepts.]*

*Set your motivation, so intense and fresh as thus*

I will do the best to attain the precious consummate Buddhahood,  
for the sake of all sentient beings, as vast as space. For that purpose,  
I will take the precepts of the Mahayana Thekchen Sojong. I will  
observe them well until sunrise tomorrow.

*Then repeat the following three times after the Guru*

“O all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, please pay  
heed to me.

O Acharya, please pay heed to me.

Just as the previous Buddhas, Sugatas, Arhats, All Consummate  
Buddhas, like the altruistic horse and the great elephant, having  
completed their tasks, still engage in the welfare of beings, shed

the burden of accomplishing one's welfare, completely free from the bondage of samsara, with immaculate teachings, mind totally freed, wisdom totally freed, have observed the Sojong ceremony in its pure form for the welfare of all sentient beings, to benefit them, to liberate them, to alleviate them from famine, to heal all illnesses, to invoke in full the qualities of the aspects of Enlightenment, to actualise in the true sense the unsurpassable, complete Enlightenment, I \_\_\_\_\_ [insert your name] from this time until sunrise tomorrow, in order to benefit sentient beings, to liberate them, to alleviate them from famine, to heal all illnesses, to invoke in full the qualities of the aspects of Enlightenment, to actualise in the true sense the unsurpassable, complete Enlightenment, will observe well the Sojong Ceremony until sunrise tomorrow."

*At the end of the third repetition, generate great joy over having received the precept.*

*The Guru then says:*

"This is the way." [Tib. *thab yin-no*]

*You then reply:*

"Yes, indeed". [Tib. *lek-so*]

*Once again, reinforce the spirit of bodhicitta that was generated earlier, thinking thus:*

Just as the previous (Bodhisattva) Arhats refrained from all negative actions of body and speech such as killing, and mentally reserved from these actions, likewise, for the sake of all sentient beings, I will abandon these negative actions for a day, and will properly engage in the related instructions.

*Repeat after the Guru*

"From here on, I will not engage in killing,  
Will also not engage in stealing,

Will refrain from sexual activities,  
Will not utter lies as well,  
Will completely abandon intoxicants, the source of numerous problems,  
Will not sit on big and high seats,  
Likewise, I will not take untimely food,  
Will abandon perfumes, garlands, ornaments, dance, song and so forth.

Just as the Arhats of all times refrained from killing and so forth,  
Likewise, I will abandon actions such as killing.  
May I achieve the sublime Enlightenment swiftly.  
May all sentient beings who are in the turbulence of suffering  
Be liberated from the ocean of samsara.”

*Repeat the mantra of pure morality three times after the Guru,  
then recite 21 times along with the Guru*

OM AMOGHA ŚILA SAMBHARA BHARA BHARA MAHÂ  
ŚHUDDHA SATTVA PADMA VIBHŪṢITA BHUJA DHARA DHARA  
SAMANTAAVALOKITE HUM PHAT SVÂHÂ

*Thereafter, recite verses of dedication such as the stanza below:*

“Morality is flawless.  
May we be adorned with pure ethical discipline,  
Morality freed of pride;  
May our ethical discipline be perfect.”

*End with prayers and dedications.*

*[Once you have taken the precepts from a Guru, you can later take them on your own in front of the image of a Buddha. In this case, visualise the image as a real Arya Avalokiteshvara and make three prostrations to it. The rest of the practice should be done as stated in the main text.]*

**Note:** Indian and Tibetan masters of the past observed this ceremony frequently in order to invoke the spirit of bodhicitta. It is advisable that individual practitioners take and uphold this vow on auspicious days of the lunar calendar, i.e. the 8th, 10th, 15th, 25th and 30th lunar days.

Translated from Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul.





## **DAILY DEDICATION PRAYERS**





## SONG OF IMMORTALITY

### Prayer for the Long Life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

[Tib. *rgyal ba'i zhabs rten rab 'byams rgyal ba ma*]

*Ling Rinpoche & Trijang Rinpoche*

Om Svasti!

1. To the assembly of most kind teachers, both present and past –  
The miraculous dance of the body, speech and mind of  
innumerable Buddhas  
Manifesting in accord with aspirants' spiritual capacities,  
The wish-granting jewel, the source of all virtue and goodness –  
To you, we offer our prayers with fervent devotion:  
That Tenzin Gyatso, protector of the Land of Snows, live for a  
hundred aeons.  
Shower on him your blessings so that his aspirations are fulfilled  
without hindrance.
2. To the assembly of all meditational deities  
Manifesting as countless mandalas and divinities –  
The magical clouds of immaculate, transcendent wisdom  
Reaching to the farthest expanse of the space of ultimate reality –  
To you, we offer our prayers with fervent devotion:  
That Tenzin Gyatso, protector of the Land of Snows, live for a  
hundred aeons.  
Shower on him your blessings so that his aspirations are fulfilled  
without hindrance.
3. To all the victorious Buddhas of the three times  
Endowed with ten powers and who are even masters of the gods,  
And whose attributes of perfection are the source of all  
compassionate deeds  
Benefiting the vast ocean-like realm of sentient beings,  
To you, we offer our prayers with fervent devotion:  
That Tenzin Gyatso, protector of the Land of Snows, live for a

hundred aeons.

Shower on him your blessings so that his aspirations are fulfilled without hindrance.

4. To the assembly of sacred doctrine embodied in the three vehicles,  
Supremely serene, a jewel-treasure of Enlightenment,  
Stainless, unchanging, eternally good, and the glory of all virtues,  
Which actually liberates beings from the sufferings of the three worlds,  
To you, we offer our prayers with fervent devotion:  
That Tenzin Gyatso, protector of the Land of Snows, live for a hundred aeons.  
Shower on him your blessings so that his aspirations are fulfilled without hindrance.
5. To all members of the enlightening, noble spiritual community,  
Who never stray from the thoroughly liberating adamant city,  
Who possess the wisdom eye that directly sees the profound truth  
And the highest valour to destroy all machinations of cyclic existence,  
To you, we offer our prayers with fervent devotion:  
That Tenzin Gyatso, protector of the Land of Snows, live for a hundred aeons.  
Shower on him your blessings so that his aspirations are fulfilled without hindrance.
6. To the assembly of heroes and dakinis, heavenly beings of the three worlds,  
Who appear in the highest paradises, in the sacred places, and in the cremation grounds,  
And who, through creative play in the hundred-fold experiences of bliss and emptiness,  
Support practitioners in their meditation on the excellent path,  
To you, we offer our prayers with fervent devotion:  
That Tenzin Gyatso, protector of the Land of Snows, live for a

hundred aeons.

Shower on him your blessings so that his aspirations are fulfilled  
without hindrance.

7. To the ocean of protectors endowed with eyes of  
transcendent wisdom –  
The powerful guardians and upholders of the teaching  
Who wear inseparably on their matted locks  
The knot symbolising their pledge to the 'Vajradhara' –  
To you, we offer our prayers with fervent devotion:  
That Tenzin Gyatso, protector of the Land of Snows, live for a  
hundred aeons.  
Shower on him your blessings so that his aspirations are fulfilled  
without hindrance.
8. Thus to this congregation of excellent, undeceiving refuge,  
We pray that by the power of this prayer  
Expressed from a heart filled with fervent devotion and humility,  
May the body, speech and mind of the soul of the Land of Snows,  
The supreme Ngawang Losang Tenzin Gyatso,  
Be indestructible, unfluctuating and unceasing;  
May he live immutable for a hundred aeons,  
Seated on a diamond throne, transcending decay and destruction.
9. You are the jewel-heart embodying all compassionate,  
beneficial deeds;  
O most courageous one, you carry on your shoulders  
The burden of all the Buddhas of the infinite realms.  
May all your noble aspirations be fulfilled as intended.
10. By virtue of this, may the heavenly doors of the fortunate era open  
eternally  
As a source of relief and respite for all beings;  
And may the auspicious signs reach the apex of existence  
and release,  
As the sacred teachings flourish through all times and in all realms.

11. May the nectar-stream of the blessings of the *Lotus Holder* <sup>216</sup>  
Always enter our hearts and nourish them with strength.  
May we please you with offerings of dedicated practice,  
And may we reach beyond the shores of perfect, compassionate  
deeds.
12. Through the blessings of the wondrous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,  
By the infallible truth of the laws of dependent origination,  
And by the purity of our fervent aspirations,  
May the aims of my prayer be fulfilled without hindrance.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by Thupten Jinpa, PhD.

# KING OF PRAYERS - THE EXTRAORDINARY ASPIRATION OF THE PRACTICE OF SAMANTABHADRA

[Skt. *samantabhadrācharya*]

[Tib. *'phags pa bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*]

I bow down to the youthful Arya Manjushri.

1. You lions among humans,  
Gone to freedom in the present, past and future,  
In the worlds of ten directions,  
To all of you, with body, speech, and sincere mind,  
I bow down.
2. With the energy of aspiration for the Bodhisattva way,  
With a sense of deep respect,  
And with as many bodies as atoms of the world,  
To all You Buddhas visualised as real, I bow down.
3. On every atom are Buddhas numberless as atoms,  
Each amidst a host of Bodhisattvas,  
And I am confident the sphere of all phenomena  
Is entirely filled with Buddhas in this way.
4. With infinite oceans of praise for You,  
And oceans of sound from the aspects of my voice,  
I sing the breathtaking excellence of Buddhas,  
And celebrate all of You, Gone to Bliss.
5. Beautiful flowers and regal garlands,  
Sweet music, scented oils and parasols,  
Sparkling lights and sublime incense,  
I offer to You Victorious Ones.

6. Fine dress and fragrant perfumes,  
Sandalwood powder heaped high as Mount Meru,  
All wondrous offerings in spectacular array,  
I offer to You Victorious Ones.
7. With transcendent offerings peerless and vast,  
With profound admiration for all the Buddhas,  
With strength of conviction in the Bodhisattva way,  
I offer and bow down to all Victorious Ones.
8. Every harmful action I have done  
With my body, speech, and mind,  
Overwhelmed by attachment, anger, and confusion,  
All these I openly lay bare before You.
9. I lift up my heart and rejoice in all the merit  
Of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in ten directions,  
Of solitary realisers, hearers still training, and those beyond,  
And of all ordinary beings.
10. You who are the bright lights of worlds in ten directions,  
Who have attained a Buddha's omniscience through the  
stages of awakening,  
All You who are my guides,  
Please turn the supreme wheel of Dharma.
11. With palms together, I earnestly request:  
You who may actualise parinirvana,  
Please stay with us for aeons numberless as atoms of the  
world,  
For the happiness and well-being of all sentient beings in  
samsara.
12. Whatever slight merit I may have created,  
By paying homage, offering and acknowledging my faults,  
Rejoicing and requesting that the Buddhas stay and teach,  
I now dedicate all this for the full awakening of all beings.

13. May You Buddhas now living in the worlds of ten directions,  
And all You gone to freedom in the past, accept my offerings.  
May those not yet arisen, quickly perfect their minds,  
Awakening as fully enlightened ones.
14. May all worlds in ten directions,  
Be entirely pure and vast.  
May they be filled with Bodhisattvas  
Surrounding Buddhas gathered beneath a bodhi tree.
15. May as many beings as exist in ten directions,  
Be always well and happy.  
May all samsaric beings live in accord with the Dharma,  
And may their every Dharma wish be fulfilled.
16. Remembering my past lives in all varieties of existence,  
May I practise the Bodhisattva way,  
And thus, in each cycle of death, migration and birth,  
May I always abandon the householder's life.
17. Then, following in the footsteps of all the Buddhas,  
And perfecting the practice of a Bodhisattva,  
May I always act without error or compromise,  
With ethical discipline faultless and pure.
18. May I teach the Dharma in the language of gods,  
In every language of spirits and nagas,  
Of humans and of demons,  
And in the voice of every form of being.
19. May I be gentle-minded, cultivating the *six paramitas*,<sup>217</sup>  
And never forget bodhicitta.  
May I completely cleanse, without omission,  
Every negativity and all that obscures this awakening mind.
20. May I traverse all my lives in the world,  
Free of karma, afflictions and interfering forces,



Just as the lotus blossom is undisturbed by the water's wave,  
Just as the sun and moon move unhindered through the sky.

21. May I ease the suffering in the lower realms  
And in the many directions and dimensions of the universe.  
May I guide all sentient beings in samsara to the pure bliss of  
Enlightenment  
And be of worldly benefit to them as well.
22. May I practise constantly for aeons to come,  
Perfecting the activities of Enlightenment,  
Acting in harmony with the various dispositions of beings,  
Showing the ways of a Bodhisattva.
23. May I always have the friendship  
Of those whose path is like mine,  
And with body, words and also mind;  
May we practise together the same aspirations and activities.
24. May I always meet a spiritual mentor  
And never displease that excellent mentor,  
Who deeply wishes to help me  
And expertly teaches the Bodhisattva way.
25. May I always directly see the Buddhas,  
Masters encircled by Bodhisattvas,  
And without pause or discouragement for aeons to come,  
May I make extensive offerings to them.
26. May I hold within me the Buddha's genuine Dharma,  
Illuminate everywhere the teachings that awaken,  
Embody the realisations of a Bodhisattva,  
And practise ardently in all future aeons.
27. While circling through all states of existence,  
May I become an endless treasure of good qualities –  
Skilful means, wisdom, samadhi and liberating stabilisations–  
Gathering limitless pristine wisdom and merit.

28. On one atom, I shall see Buddha fields numberless as atoms,  
Inconceivable Buddhas among  
Bodhisattvas in every field,  
Practising the activities of Enlightenment.
29. Perceiving this in all directions,  
I dive into an ocean of Buddha-fields,  
Each an ocean of three times' Buddhas in the space of a  
wisp of hair.  
So I, too, will practise for an ocean of aeons.
30. Thus, I am continually immersed in the speech of the  
Buddhas,  
Expression that reveals an ocean of qualities in  
one word,  
The completely pure eloquence of all the Buddhas,  
Communication suited to the varied tendencies of beings.
31. With strength of understanding,  
I plunge into the infinite enlightened speech of the Dharma  
Of all Buddhas in three times gone to freedom,  
Who continually turn the wheel of Dharma methods.
32. I shall experience in one moment,  
Such vast activity of all future aeons,  
And I will enter into all aeons of the three times  
In but a fraction of a second.
33. In one instant, I shall see all those awakened beings,  
Past, present and future lions among humans,  
And with the power of the illusion-like stabilisation,  
I will constantly engage in their inconceivable activity.
34. I shall manifest upon one single atom,  
The array of Pure Lands present, past and future.  
Likewise, I shall enter the array of pure Buddha fields  
In every direction without exception.

35. I shall enter the very presence of all my guides,  
Those lights of this world who are yet to appear,  
Those sequentially turning the wheels of complete awakening,  
Those who reveal nirvana – final, perfect peace.
36. May I achieve the power of swift, magical emanation,  
The power to lead to the great vehicle through every approach,  
The power of always beneficial activity,  
The power of love pervading all realms,
37. The power of all surpassing merit,  
The power of supreme knowledge unobstructed by  
discrimination,  
And through the powers of wisdom, skilful means and  
samadhi,  
May I achieve the perfect power of awakening.
38. Purifying the power of all contaminated actions,  
Crushing the power of disturbing emotions at their root,  
Defusing the power of interfering forces,  
I shall perfect the power of the Bodhisattva practice.
39. May I purify an ocean of worlds,  
May I free an ocean of beings,  
May I clearly see an ocean of Dharma,  
May I realise an ocean of pristine wisdom.
40. May I purify an ocean of activities,  
May I fulfil an ocean of aspirations,  
May I make offerings to an ocean of Buddhas,  
May I practise without discouragement for an ocean of aeons.
41. To awaken fully through this Bodhisattva way,  
I shall fulfill without exception,  
All the diverse aspirations of the awakening practice  
Of all Buddhas gone to freedom in the three times everywhere.

42. In order to practise exactly as the wise one  
Called Samantabhadra, 'All-Embracing Good',  
The elder brother of the sons and daughters of the Buddhas,  
I completely dedicate all this goodness.
43. Likewise, may I dedicate  
Just as the skilful Samantabhadra,  
With pure body, speech and mind,  
Pure actions and pure Buddha fields.
44. I shall give rise to the aspirations of Manjushri  
For this Bodhisattva practice of all-embracing good,  
To perfect these practices  
Without discouragement or pause in all future aeons.
45. May my pure activities be endless,  
My good qualities boundless,  
And through abiding in immeasurable activity,  
May I actualise infinite emanations.
46. Limitless is the end of space,  
Likewise, limitless are living beings,  
Thus, limitless are karma and afflictions.  
May my aspiration's reach be limitless as well.
47. One may offer to the Buddhas  
All wealth and adornments of infinite worlds in ten  
directions,  
And one may offer during aeons numberless as atoms of the  
world  
Even the greatest happiness of gods and humans;
48. But whoever hears this extraordinary aspiration  
And longing for highest awakening,  
Gives rise to faith just once,  
Creates far more precious merit.

49. Those who make this heartfelt aspiration for the  
Bodhisattva way  
Will be free of all lower rebirths,  
Free of harmful companions,  
And will quickly see Amitabha, Infinite Light.
50. And even in this very human life,  
They will be nourished by happiness and have all conducive  
circumstances.  
Without waiting long,  
They will become like Samantabhadra himself.
51. Those who give voice to this extraordinary aspiration  
Will quickly and completely purify  
The five boundless harmful actions  
Created under the power of ignorance.
52. Blessed with supreme knowledge,  
Excellent body, family, attributes and appearance,  
They will be invincible to vast interfering forces and  
misleading teachers,  
And all the three worlds will make offerings.
53. Going quickly to the noble bodhi tree  
And sitting there to benefit sentient beings,  
Subduing all interfering forces,  
They will fully awaken and turn the great wheel of Dharma.
54. Have no doubt that complete awakening  
Is the fully ripened result—comprehended only by a Buddha –  
Of holding in mind by teaching, reading or reciting  
This aspiration of the Bodhisattva practice.
55. In order to train just like  
The hero Manjushri who knows reality as it is  
And just like Samantabhadra as well,  
I completely dedicate all this goodness, just as they did.

56. With that dedication which is praised as greatest  
By all the Buddhas gone to freedom in the three times,  
I, too, dedicate all my roots of goodness  
For the attainments of the Bodhisattva practice.
57. When the moment of my death arrives,  
By eliminating all obscurations  
And directly perceiving Amitabha,  
May I go immediately to Sukhavati, Pure Land of Great Joy.
58. Having gone to Sukhavati,  
May I actualise the meaning of these aspirations,  
Fulfilling them all without exception,  
For the benefit of beings for as long as this world endures.
59. Born from an extremely beautiful, superlative lotus  
In this joyful land, the Buddha's magnificent mandala,  
May I receive a prediction of my Enlightenment  
Directly from the Buddha Amitabha.
60. Having received a prediction there,  
May I create vast benefit  
For beings throughout the ten directions,  
With a billion emanations by the power of wisdom.
61. Through even the small virtue I have accumulated  
By offering this prayer of the Bodhisattva practice,  
May all the positive aspirations of beings  
Be fulfilled in an instant.
62. Through creating limitless merit  
By dedicating this prayer of Samantabhadra's deeds,  
May all beings drowning in this torrent of suffering,  
Enter the presence of Amitabha.
63. Through this king of aspirations, which is the greatest  
of the sublime,  
Helping infinite sentient beings in samsara,

Through the accomplishment of this scripture dazzling with  
Samantabhadra's practice,  
May suffering realms be utterly emptied of all beings.

Thus is completed the *Extraordinary Aspiration of the Practice  
of Samantabhadra*, also known as *The King of Prayers*, from the  
Gandavyuha Chapter of the Avatamsaka Sutra

**Note:** Translated by Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, and Yeshe-de, circa  
900 CE. The Tibetan was compared with the Sanskrit and revised by  
Lotsawa Vairochana.

Translated into English by Jesse Fenton at the request of her teacher,  
Venerable Thubten Chodrön.

# A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA’S WAY OF LIFE

[Skt. *bodhisattvacharyāvatāra*]

[Tib. *byang chub sems dpai’ spyod pa la ’jug pa*]

*Bodhisattva Shantideva*

## Dedication Chapter

1. Through the virtue of having composed this work,  
*A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*,  
May all living beings come to engage  
In the Bodhisattva’s conduct.
2. May all beings everywhere,  
Plagued with sufferings of body and mind,  
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy  
By virtue of my merits.
3. For as long as they remain in cyclic existence,  
May their (mundane) happiness never decline,  
And may all of them, uninterruptedly, receive  
Waves of joy from Bodhisattvas.
4. May all embodied creatures,  
Who throughout the universe  
Experience hellish realms,  
Come to enjoy the bliss of Sukhavati.
5. May those feeble with cold find warmth,  
And may those oppressed with heat be cooled  
By the boundless waters that pour forth  
From the great clouds of the Bodhisattvas’ (merits).
6. May the forest of razor sharp leaves  
Become a beautiful pleasure grove,  
And may the trees of knives and swords  
Grow into wish-fulfilling trees.



7. May the regions of hell become places of joy  
With vast and fragrant lotus pools,  
Beautified, with the exquisite calls  
Of wild ducks, geese and swans.
8. May the heaps of burning coals change into heaps of jewels,  
May the burning ground become a polished crystal floor,  
And may the mountains of the crushing hells  
Become celestial palaces of worship, filled with Sugatas.
9. May the rains of lava, blazing stones and weapons  
From now on become a rain of flowers,  
And may all battling with weapons  
From now on be a playful exchange of flowers.
10. By the force of my virtues, may those caught in the fiery  
torrents of acid,  
Their flesh eaten away, revealing their lily white bones,  
Obtain the bodies of celestials  
And dwell with goddesses in gently flowing rivers.
11. Why are the henchmen of Yama, the unbearable buzzards  
and vultures afraid?  
Through whose noble strength is joy brought upon us and  
darkness dispelled?  
Looking up, they behold in the firmament the radiant form  
of Vajrapani!  
Through the force of their joy, may they be free from  
wrongdoing and find his company.
12. When they see the lava fires of hell extinguished  
By a rain of falling flowers mixed with scented water,  
Immediately satisfied, they wonder whose work this was;  
In this way, may those in hell behold Padmapani.
13. Friends, don't be afraid but quickly gather here,  
What need is there to flee when above us is the youthful

Manjughosha to dispel our fears,  
The tender Bodhisattva who protects all living things,  
Through whose might all suffering is removed and the force  
of joy abounds.

14. Behold him in an enchanting palace resounding with  
hymns sung by a thousand goddesses,  
With the tiaras of a hundred gods being offered to his  
lotus feet,  
And a rain of many flowers falling on his head, the eyes  
of which are moist with kindness.  
Upon seeing Manjughosha in this way, may those in hell  
cry out loud with joy.
15. Likewise, having seen, due to the roots of my wholesome  
deeds,  
The cool and sweet - smelling rain falling from joyful clouds  
Created by the Bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Sarva-  
nirvarana-vishkambhini,  
May all beings in hell be truly happy.
16. May all animals be free from the fear  
Of being eaten by one another;  
May the hungry ghosts be as happy  
As the people of the Northern Continent.
17. May they be satisfied  
By a stream of milk pouring from the hand  
Of the Noble Lord Avalokiteshvara,  
And by bathing in it, may they always be cooled.
18. May the blind see forms,  
May the deaf hear sounds  
And just as it was with Mayadevi,  
May pregnant women give birth without any pain.
19. May the naked find clothing,

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

20. May the poor find wealth,  
Those weak with sorrow find joy;  
May the forlorn find new hope,  
Constant happiness and prosperity.
21. May all who are sick and ill  
Quickly be freed from their illness,  
And may every disease in the world  
Never occur again.
22. May the frightened cease to be afraid  
And those bound be freed;  
May the powerless find power,  
And may people think of benefiting one another.
23. May all travellers find happiness  
Everywhere they go,  
And without any effort may they accomplish  
Whatever they set out to do.
24. May those who sail in ships and boats  
Obtain whatever they wish for,  
And having safely returned to the shore,  
May they joyfully reunite with their relatives.
25. May troubled wanderers who have lost their way  
Meet with fellow travellers,  
And without any fear of thieves and tigers,  
May their going be easy without any fatigue.
26. May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful  
wildernesses —  
The children, the aged, the unprotected,  
Those stupefied and the insane —  
Be guarded by beneficent celestials.

27. May beings be free from all states of no leisure  
And be endowed with faith, wisdom and kindness;  
With food (obtained in a proper manner) and  
excellent conduct,  
May they be mindful throughout their lives.
28. May all beings be without want for wealth  
Just like the treasury of space,,  
And without (it being the source of) dispute or harm  
May they always enjoy it as they wish.
29. May those who have little splendor  
Come to be endowed with majesty;  
And may those whose bodies are worn with toil  
Find magnificent and noble forms.
30. May all lower life forms in the universe  
Take (rebirth) in higher forms;  
May the lowly obtain grandeur,  
And may the proud be humbled.
31. By the merits I (have accumulated),  
May every single being  
Abandon all forms of wrongdoing  
And perpetually engage in virtue.
32. May they never be parted from the mind of bodhicitta,  
And may they always engage in the Bodhisattva's conduct;  
May they be cared for by the Buddhas  
And relinquish the actions of devils.
33. May sentient beings have lives  
Inconceivably long (when in fortunate realms);  
May they always live in contentment,  
Unfamiliar with even the word 'death'.
34. May there abound in all directions,  
Gardens of wish fulfilling trees

Filled with the sweet sound of Dharma  
Proclaimed by the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas.

35. And may the land everywhere be pure,  
Smooth and devoid of any rocks,  
Level like the palm of the hand,  
And of the nature of lapis lazuli.
36. For all the circles of disciples,  
May many Bodhisattvas  
Dwell in every land,  
Adorning them with their excellent (manifestations).
37. May all embodied creatures  
Uninterruptedly hear  
The sound of Dharma issuing from birds and trees,  
Beams of light and even space itself.
38. May they always meet with Buddhas  
And their children the Bodhisattvas,  
Then may these spiritual masters of the world  
Be worshipped with endless clouds of offerings.
39. May celestials bring timely rains  
So that harvests may be bountiful.  
May kings act in accordance with Dharma,  
And the people of the world always prosper.
40. May all medicines be effective  
And the repeating of mantras successful;  
May dakinis, cannibals and the like  
Be endowed with compassionate minds.
41. May no living creature ever suffer,  
Commit wrong or ever fall ill.  
May no one be afraid or belittled,  
Or their minds ever be depressed.

42. In all temples and monasteries  
May reading and recitation flourish and remain;  
May the Sangha always be in harmony  
And may their purposes be accomplished.
43. May monks desiring to practice  
Find quiet and solitary places,  
And through having abandoned all wandering thoughts,  
May they meditate with flexible minds.
44. May nuns be materially sufficient,  
Abandon quarrelling (with each other) and be unharmed.  
Similarly may all ordained ones  
Never let their morality weaken.
45. Having repented any moral falls  
May wrong actions always be eradicated,  
And thereby obtaining a happy state of birth  
May spiritual conduct not decline even there.
46. May the wise be honoured  
And may they receive alms;  
May their minds be completely pure,  
And may they be renowned in all directions.
47. May beings not experience the misery of lower realms  
And may they never know any hardships;  
With a physical form superior to the gods,  
May they swiftly attain Buddhahood.
48. May sentient beings again and again  
Make offerings to all the Buddhas,  
And may they constantly be joyful  
With the inconceivable bliss of the Buddhas.
49. Just as they have intended,  
May the Bodhisattvas fulfill the welfare of the world,

And may all sentient beings receive  
Whatever the Buddhas have intended for them.

50. Similarly may the Pratyekabuddhas  
And the Shravakas find happiness.
51. And until I reach the level of the Joyous One  
Through the kindness of Manjughosha,  
May I be able to recollect my past  
And always receive ordination
52. May I live and be sustained  
By simple, common foods,  
And in all my lives, may I find  
The ideal solitude (for practicing Dharma).
53. Whenever I wish to see something  
Or even wish to ask the slightest question,  
May I behold without any hindrance  
The Lord Manjughosha himself.
54. In order to fulfill the needs  
Of beings who reach unto the ends of space,  
May my way of life  
Be just like that of Manjughosha.
55. For as long as space endures  
And for as long as living beings remain,  
Until then may I too abide,  
To dispel the misery of the world.
56. May all the pains of living creatures  
Ripen (solely) upon myself,  
And through the might of the Bodhisattva Sangha,  
May all beings experience happiness.
57. May the teachings, which are the sole medicine for  
suffering

And the origin of every joy,  
Be materially supported and honoured  
And abide for a very long time.

58. I prostrate to Manjughosha  
Through whose kindness wholesome minds ensue,  
And I prostrate to my spiritual masters,  
Through whose kindness I develop.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by Stephen Batchelor,  
courtesy of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives [LTWA].



## LAMRIM DEDICATION PRAYER

[Tib. *lam rim smon lam*]

*Lama Tsongkhapa*

1. From my *two collections*,<sup>218</sup> vast as space, that I have amassed  
From working with effort at this practice for a great  
length of time,  
May I become the chief leading Buddha  
For all those whose mind's wisdom eye is blinded by  
ignorance.
2. Even if I do not reach this state,  
May I be held in your loving kindness for all lives, Manjushri.  
May I find the best of the complete graded paths of the  
teachings,  
And may I please all the Buddhas by my practice.
3. Using skilful means drawn by the strong force of compassion,  
May I clear the darkness from the minds of all beings  
With the points of the path as I have discerned them.  
May I uphold Buddha's teaching for a very long time.
4. With my heart going out with great compassion  
In whatever directions the most precious teachings  
Have not yet spread, or once spread have declined,  
May I reveal this treasure of happiness and aid.
5. May the minds of those who wish for liberation be granted  
bounteous peace  
And the Buddhas' deeds be nourished for a long time  
By even this graded path to Enlightenment traversed  
completely,  
Due to the wondrous virtuous conduct of the Buddhas  
and their children.

6. May all human and non-human beings who eliminate adversity  
And create conducive conditions for practising the excellent  
paths  
Never be separated in any of their lives  
From the purest path praised by the Buddhas.
7. Whenever someone makes an effort to act  
In accordance with the *ten-fold Mahayana virtuous practices*<sup>219</sup>  
May they always be assisted by the mighty ones,  
And may oceans of prosperity spread everywhere.

**Note:** Translated from Tibetan into English by the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee, whose editor-in-chief is Joshua W. C. Cutler and editor is Guy Newland.

# NGAG-RIM DEDICATION PRAYER

[Tib. *sngags rim smon lam*]

*Lama Tsongkhapa*

1. Through the gathering of the multitudes of enormous two accumulations,  
The efforts in this graded path of the Great Secret Vajrayana,  
May they be dedicated towards attaining the powerful state of Vajradhara - the Union State,  
Which fulfills the aspirations of all the mother sentient beings.
2. By my efforts in all the future lifetimes,  
May I delight my Guru of the supreme vehicle who is the basis of accomplishments,  
And may I become the vessel for the profound path  
Through the power of the *four empowerments*<sup>220</sup> properly received.
3. May I never falter from the limits of the rules of abstention, food consumption and practice pledges,  
Which I well vowed to observe  
Amidst the congregation of Gurus, Viras and Viranis, as witnesses.
4. With the unparalleled stainless wisdom,  
To penetrate into the meaning of the tantra of two stages along with the (boosting) conducts,  
May it cut all the ignorance, misconceptions, and doubts,  
And with all my efforts, may I be able to fully dedicate to the practice of Dharma.
5. In thus training in the unexcelled practice,  
May the powerful ones assist me at all times  
That the obstacles are eliminated leaving not even a trace,

And may I be endowed with conducive factors for practice as wished for.

6. Gaining conviction that the Dharma alone is the root of all happiness and goodness,  
Of all the beings such as those of the celestial realms,  
With great courage, may I unflinchingly hold and not let the precious dharma dissipate,  
Even at the cost of my life and body.
7. By virtue of this good unraveling of the meanings of the Secret (Vajrayana),  
Serving as the factor to see the treaties as pith instructions,  
For the numerous entrances of the Supreme Vehicle,  
May the pith instructions (of Buddha's teachings) be illuminated for long.
8. Your head protrusion is like the golden mountain  
Embraced by the youthful directional clouds;  
You are appealing with the divine body, saffron in colour,  
And your crown is beautified with deep blue hair in five bunches,
9. Through your kindness, Manjushree,  
By joyfully nurturing me throughout my future lives,  
May my wisdom delve infinitely  
Into the ocean of teachings, whose depth is profoundly difficult to fathom.

**Note:** Translated into Tibetan into English by Geshe Dorji Damdul,  
21 August 2016.

## ADDITIONAL DEDICATION PRAYERS

*Ghangri ra-way khor-way shing-kham soo  
Phen dhang dhaywa ma lue joong-way nay  
Chenray zigwang Tenzin Gyatso yi  
Shab-pay si-thay bhar-tu ten gyur chi*

In the land encircled by snow mountains,  
You are the source of all happiness and good;  
All-powerful Chenrezig Tenzin Gyatso,  
Please remain until samsara ends.

*Jam pel pa wo ji tar khyen pa dang  
Kun tu Zang po de yang de zhin te  
De dag kun gyi je su dag lob chhir  
Ge wa di dag tham chay rab tu ngo*

Just as the brave Manjushri, and Samantabhadra too,  
Realised things as they are,  
Also I dedicate all these merits in the best way,  
That I may follow their perfect example.

*Du sum sheg pai gyal wa tham cha kyi  
Ngo wa gang la chhog tu ngag pa de  
Dag gi ge wai tsa wa di kun kyang  
Sang po choe chir rab tu ngo war ghi*

I dedicate all these roots of virtue  
With the dedication praised as the best  
By all the Buddhas who appeared in the three times,  
So that I might perform the noble Bodhisattva's deeds.

*Jangchup semchok rinpoche  
Ma-khay pa nam khayghur chik  
Khaypa nyam-pa may-pa yang  
Gong nay gong dhu phelvar shok.*

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

As long as space remains,  
As long as sentient beings remain,  
Until then, may I too remain  
To dispel the miseries of the world.<sup>221</sup>

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

I dedicate the merit thus gathered,  
Towards the realisation of the deeds and the prayers,  
Of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times,  
And to the upholding of the Dharma of teaching and realisation.

May I, in all lives, through the force of this merit,  
Never separate from the *four wheels of the Mahayana vehicle*,<sup>222</sup>  
And accomplish all the stages of the path,  
Renunciation, Bodhicitta, perfect view and the two stages.<sup>223</sup>

With the wish to free all beings,  
I shall always go for refuge  
To the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha  
Until I reach full Enlightenment.

Inspired by wisdom and compassion,  
Today in the Buddha's presence,  
I generate the mind of full awakening  
For the benefit of all sentient beings.

I go for refuge to the Triple Gem,  
I confess the negativities individually,

I rejoice in the virtues of all the beings,  
I hold the precious Buddhahood in my heart.

By the power of practicing and supplicating to you  
May all be free from sickness, poverty and conflicts  
And may Dharma and the auspiciousness proliferate,  
In all the places where we abide.

*Tong nyi nyingjay soong tu jug-pay lam*  
*Chay chayr selzay ghangchen ten-droe goen*  
*Chagna paymo Tenzin Gyatso la*  
*Solwa dhepso shay dhoen lhun drup shog.*

The path of the union of emptiness and compassion  
Is lucidly explained by the Protector of both, the Dharma and the  
beings of the Land of Snows.  
You are the Lotus Holder, Tenzin Gyatso.  
We supplicate you that your wishes are fulfilled spontaneously.<sup>224</sup>

*Monlam log pay gyal way tenpa la*  
*Khu way nag chok sook chen sook may dhey*  
*Sam jor nyen pay juk pa ma lue pa*  
*Chok soom dhen pay tsay nay choe gyur chig.*

May the operations of evil thoughts and deeds,  
Of the negative forces of humans and non-humans,  
Who harbour malice through perverted prayers  
Against the teachings of the Buddhas,  
Be totally vanquished through the power of the truth of  
the Three Jewels.<sup>225</sup>

In all my lives, never separated from perfect Gurus,  
May I enjoy the magnificent Dharma.  
By completing the qualities of the stages and the paths,  
May I quickly attain the state of Vajradhara.<sup>226</sup>

Throughout my future lifetimes,  
May I always be guided by Arya Manjushri  
And be able to uphold the Dharma in general and  
The teachings on Dependent Origination in particular, even at the  
cost of my life.<sup>227</sup>

*Seal your day's practice with any amount of time, such as five or  
twenty minutes of meditation on emptiness before retiring to bed.*

*May the auspiciousness of the two bodhicittas spread in the hearts  
of all dear mother sentient beings.*

*Sarva Mangalam!*

*May auspiciousness prevail!*



## FOOD OFFERING PRAYERS

We offer this food to the Buddha, the teacher of unconditional love, on the basis of understanding the interdependence of oneself and others;

We offer this food to the Dharma, the perfect teachings of the Buddha;

We offer this food to the Sangha, the perfect practitioners of this teaching;

By the power of offering this food to the Three Jewels, may all sentient beings be freed of suffering (of hunger, thirst, fear and so forth) and eventually be led to full awakening, which is the highest state of happiness.

The qualities of the Buddha are inconceivable;

The qualities of the Dharma are inconceivable;

The qualities of the Arya Sangha are inconceivable;

By the power of venerating the inconceivables,

The results accrued as well are inconceivable.

I offer this food to the inconceivable fields of perfection.

*Sang ghay yonten sam mi khyab*

*Choe ki yonten sam mi khyab*

*Phag-pay gendun sam mi khyab*

*Sam mi khyab la dhay jay pay*

*Nampar mingpa-ang sam mi khyab*

*Namdhak shing la choepa phul*

The precious Buddha is the Sublime Teacher;

The precious Dharma is the Sublime Protection;

The precious Sangha is the Sublime Assistant;

We offer this food to the Three Jewels, the sources of refuge.

*Ton pa lamay sangay rinpoche*  
*Kyopa lamay dhamchoe rinpoche*  
*Drenpa lamay gedhun rinpoche*  
*Kyap nay konchok soom la choepa phul*

I go for refuge in the Triple Gem;  
I confess the negativities individually;  
I rejoice in the virtues of all the beings;  
I hold the precious Buddhahood in my heart.

**Note:** Food offering prayers are usually recited before mealtimes. Including the last verse would be a very skillful way to activate the seed of bodhicitta as many times as one takes one's meals.



## APPENDIX



## **THE STAIRCASE TO EMPTINESS: MEDITATION ON ULTIMATE REALITY**

*Geshe Dorji Damdul*

The greatest gift of the compassionate Buddha Shakyamuni to all beings on earth is twofold – the wisdom of emptiness and the unconditional love of bodhicitta. The infinitely numerous ill experiences that we go through in our lives, such as - dissatisfaction, fears, anxiety, depression, anguish, lamentation, grief and so forth - although they appear to be diverse, can all be subsumed under the category of fear.

Just as it requires the coming together of two hands for the sound of a clap to be produced, similarly, all our fears and pains too are created by depending on two factors – external factors and internal factors – which are akin to the two hands. Just as both hands are required for the sound of a clap to arise, just so, both the internal and external factors are necessary for creating fears in us. The external factors in the form of a bully or any other obstacles, and the internal factor of the self-referential ego (which is nothing but the combination of the self-grasping ignorance and self-centered attitude). In order to stop the sound of a clap, either of the hands must be removed. Likewise, to stop all our miseries and pains, we have to either remove the external factors or the internal factors. The reality is that, there are no means by which we can completely stop all the external factors that disturb us. For example, when one is by oneself, one feels lonely and when one is surrounded by others, one feels deprived of privacy. These are the only two possible external options that can exist in this situation, and both options create unhappiness in the individual. If one really wants to be freed of pain, then the only choice left is to remove the internal factor, symbolised by the other hand.

This will invariably lead us to ask two questions: what is the internal factor? And, how can I get rid of the internal factor for good?

From what we are going to learn here, the internal factor is a very specialised type of ignorance, also referred to as the self-grasping ignorance (or the ignorance that grasps at true existence). This ignorance propels all phenomena to appear as objectively real, while in reality, all phenomena exist simply through the projection of one's own mind. This can be better understood through the analogy of how a person who is dreaming sees the entire contents of their dream as existing totally independent of their mind i.e. as objectively true, while in reality, the dream contents exist only from the subject, which in this case is the dreaming mind. Seeing what is projected by the subjective mind as being objectively real is known as the self-grasping ignorance and it is this ignorance, which is responsible for the nightmares in our dreams. This is akin to our experience of watching a movie that is projected on a screen. While we are looking at the movie on the screen, it is actually being projected by the movie projector, which lies on the opposite side of the screen. The movie on the screen resembles the object and the projector resembles the subjective mind. In reality, the movie is totally empty from the screen. Likewise, everything that appears to us is like a movie, it is all subjectively existent and totally empty from the object. This is also known as emptiness or the ultimate truth.

Whether one is a believer or a non-believer, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, high or low, man or woman, every single being yearns for complete freedom from fear and wishes to attain maximum joy. Contemplate on this to see for yourself - how true it is, that each one of us embodies the desire to get away from the fears of life such as sickness, ageing, death of near and dear ones etc.

If we really want to be fearless and wish to counteract our fears completely, then the best possible means to do so, that exists in the entire universe, is the wisdom of emptiness, i.e. seeing the interdependent nature of all phenomena. Other means do exist but the supreme elixir that dispels all fears is the wisdom of emptiness. If one gets even a glimpse or an inkling of emptiness, it will literally

make one feel mentally and physiologically extremely peaceful and calm, thus giving one a profound conviction and comfort that I am neither hopeless nor is my life worthless; I have finally found the answer to all my grief.

Bodhisattva Aryadeva clearly indicated in his treatise, *Four Hundred Verses on the Middle Way* [Skt. *chatuhśaṭaka śāstra nāma kārikā*; Tib. *bzhi brgya pa*]:

Those with less merit will not even have a doubt  
In this Dharma (of ultimate reality).  
Should an enquiry ever arise in someone,  
It will shatter samsara into pieces.

Therefore, those who encounter the teachings on emptiness are indeed very fortunate. Even more meritorious are those who actually reflect and meditate on the efficacy of the wisdom of emptiness, alongside their learning about it.

The following is a very simple, step-by-step outline for meditation on the wisdom of emptiness, which practically anyone can do. Engaging in this practice helps to leave a special and powerful imprint in the mind and helps one to become calmer when confronted with day-to-day experiences of sadness, agitation, and so forth, not to mention the fact that it leaves a very meaningful predisposition in one's mind towards becoming consistently fearless and achieving full awakening.

The following passages will be very helpful in gaining some understanding of emptiness, and these passages are cherished by all the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas.

Acquaint yourself well with the *Four Essentials to Discern Emptiness*, as given below, with special emphasis on the first essential – the essential of identifying the object of negation. Never mind if one is not familiar with the concept of the object of negation as yet, I suggest you to still go through the section on the ‘Sequence of the Meditations on Emptiness’, right below.



### ***Four Essentials to Discern Emptiness***

1. The essential of identifying the object of negation i.e. the belief in the existence of the object from it's own side (objectively existent object).
2. The essential of understanding the emptiness of the object's being one with its parts.
3. The essential of understanding the emptiness of the object being different from its parts.
4. The essential of understanding the pervasion that anything which is empty of being one with its parts and different from its parts, should be empty of objective existence and only subjectively existent i.e. for an object to exist from its own side, it has to be either one with its parts or different from its parts.

### **Sequence of the Meditations on Emptiness [A Sample]**

1. Meditation on the Emptiness of an Object (e.g. flower)
2. Meditation on the Emptiness of your 'Self'
3. Meditation on the Emptiness of your Mind

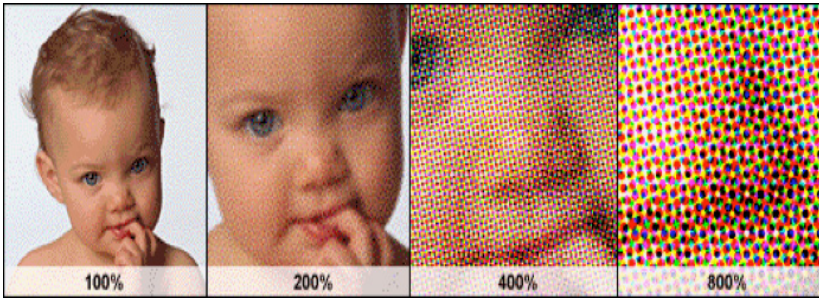
Inanimate objects such as a flower, as well as animate objects such as a person or (one's) self, exist in space with directional parts, as well as in time with temporal parts; whereas the mind exists only in time, having temporal parts. The flower or one's body consists of millions of atoms existing in different directions, such as east, west, north, south, northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest, up and down. Whereas those things that exist in time, such as the mind, do not have directional parts in space; since the mind is immaterial, it is rather constituted of temporal parts. For example, if you think about your mind today - today's mind exists over the duration of a day with 24 hours and hence today's mind exists in 24 segments of time that are referred to as 24 temporal segments. The first of the 24 temporal segments, further consists of 60 temporal segments because each hour is made up of

60 minutes. We can go on like this ad infinitum.

### **I. Meditation on the Emptiness of an Object [e.g. flower]**

Visualise a very beautiful and appealing image of a flower in your mind, of the size one inch by one inch, 200 dpi in resolution (i.e. the picture is made of 200 x 200 dots per inch, a total of 40,000 dots) and this image is greatly enlarged into a gigantic picture, 20 feet by 20 feet in size (the developer can be creative and make the 40,000 dots, each in the form of demons' faces).

The same analytical meditation can be extended to any other objects such as this picture –



Q 1: From a distance, what do you see?

A 1: A picture of a very beautiful tender flower.

Q 2: What is your mental reaction towards this picture of the flower?

A 2: It is so appealing.

[Technically, your mind is pulled by the object thinking that the picture is there from the screen. Here, one can see the dynamic relationship between ignorance (grasping at true or objective existence)<sup>228</sup> and all other afflictions (such as attachment and aversion), and how they are all triggered by this ignorance. Seeing the picture as existing from the screen is the 'ignorance viewing objective reality'. Your mind being pulled towards the picture is the 'afflictive emotion of attachment'. If presented with an ugly image,

your mind will be repulsed by the picture and that is the ‘afflictive emotion of aversion’. As mentioned before, all afflictions are either inclined towards the nature of attachment or towards the nature of aversion. Those which are not inclined to either are neutral, but still are of the nature of ignorance.]

Q 3: Does the picture of the flower exist or not? Be very sure of your answer.

A 3: It does exist, it is there on the screen. It is such an attractive picture, I would like to see it more closely.

Q 4: Go up to the screen. What happens to the picture of the flower now?

A 4: The picture of the flower disappears.

Q 5: What happens to the appealing feeling that arose in you earlier?

A 5: It also disappears. Instead, aversion arises upon seeing the 40,000 pictures of demons’ faces.

[This indicates how all our afflictive emotions such as attachment and anger are triggered by our mental perception which is always under the influence of the ignorance grasping at objective or true existence (except for the wisdom having a non-dual experience of emptiness). Likewise, it shows how all our afflictions will come to cease if this ignorance is eliminated, just as the attachment to the flower stops as soon as the flower disappears upon closer analysis].

Q 6: [Ask the same question again] Does the picture of the flower exist or not? If it does, where is it now - on the screen, inside your eyes or somewhere in between?

A 6: Yes it does exist, though I am no longer sure where it really is! Earlier, I thought it was on the screen but now I have come close to the screen and to my amazement, it is not there. As Arya Nagarjuna said in *Precious Garland* [skt: *ratnāvalī*; Tib. *rinchen phreng ba*]:

If the mirage were to be water,

Why is it not seen (as water) by those close to the mirage?

The picture of the flower does not exist from the screen because if it did then I should also be able to see it now, from up close. Likewise, it does not exist inside my eyes as I am not looking at my eyes for the picture. It makes no sense either, to say that it exists in between the screen and the eyes.

Q 7: Why have you come close to the screen, in search of what?

A 7: I came closer to the screen to look at the flower more clearly.

[Rephrasing the same response in more technical terms – you came closer to the screen to look for an objectively existent picture of the flower, as opposed to a merely mentally imputed picture of the flower. By doing so, you are looking for something ultimate, i.e. something more than just what your perception creates. If you do find something to exist in that way, then that should be the ultimate reality of the picture of the flower].

Q 8: What did you find upon coming closer to the screen?

A 8: I did not find anything amidst the 40,000 dots of demons' faces, they are all separated by a wide distance. As Arya Nagarjuna cautioned in *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, Verse 24.18 [Skt. *mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; Tib. *dbu ma rtsa ba shes rab*]:

That which dependently originates  
Is posited to be empty (of independent existence).  
That being dependently designated,  
This is the Middle Way.

The picture of the flower disappears, it is not there. The screen is empty of the picture of the flower. The disappearance of the picture of the flower is found, i.e. absence or emptiness of the flower is found.

[On the screen, you see two things - the 40,000 dots that are in the form of the faces of demons and the emptiness of the flower. While the two, like the two sides of the same coin, are the same entity,

they are different isolates. Of the two isolates, for the specific purpose of meditation on emptiness, simply pick up the isolate of the emptiness of the flower – the disappearance of the flower. Pay no attention to the isolate of the dots.

Of the two isolates, by using the appearance of the first isolate which is the 40,000 dots of demons' faces, shift your focus onto the isolate of the disappearance of the flower, which is also referred to as the emptiness of the flower. The emptiness of the flower should be seen as a non-affirming negative phenomenon instead of an affirming negative or a positive phenomenon. If your mind shifts its attention to and remains focused on seeing the 40,000 dots or the demons' faces, then you are not meditating on emptiness since both of them are a positive phenomenon, and correct meditation on emptiness is done only by focusing on a non-affirming negative isolate - this is a very important point which cannot be emphasised enough. It is only by meditating correctly on emptiness as mentioned here, that our self-grasping ignorance can be uprooted and liberation from samsara will thus be possible. Maintaining one's focus on the mere absence of the flower in the form of a non-affirming negative is really very challenging for ordinary beings who are not used to this experience for even the shortest duration of time, let alone for an extended period of time. This is because our mind is completely addicted to seeing (hearing, smelling, tasting etc.) things in the form of a positive or affirming negative phenomenon].

To put it simply, in order to bring the correct isolate of emptiness to your mind, ask these two questions:

Q. What are you seeing now?

A. I am seeing the 40,000 dots, each in the form of demons' faces.

Q. Where is the flower?

A. It disappears, it is empty. (Exactly in the moment that this answer comes to you, the isolate of the emptiness of the flower is also appearing to your mind).

In order to habituate and familiarise our mind so that it retains its focus on the emptiness of the flower in the form of a non-affirming negative phenomenon, continue to ask the above two questions over and over again. Do so as soon as the 40,000 dots in the form of demons' faces start to appear to your mind and you lose the experience of the emptiness of the flower. This will slowly help you to acquire a stable experience of emptiness. Over time, you will be able to obtain and hold the experience of emptiness for longer durations.

This is an extremely precious practice for awakening us from the deceptive dream of the fears of samsara. Otherwise, no matter what one does, it is like doing good things and bad things in a dream, while misapprehending those actions as real and not as a dream. This is how we are slaves to the deception of the self-grasping ignorance which imposes itself as real and sways us. Being under the sway of the deception of ignorance constantly agitates our mind - moving it here and there - this is also referred to as the involuntary pull and push of the mind, which is nothing but the loss of freedom. This loss of freedom causes all our miseries, and this is what is called samsara.

Therefore cultivating a precise and sustained experience of emptiness is so precious.

*Abide in the experience of emptiness as mentioned above for a while.*

Q 9: Now, moving away from the screen while continuing to look at the screen, what appears to your eyes when you are at the same distance from the screen as you initially started out with?

A 9: The picture of the flower returns.

[This is the infallible dependent origination. Only the picture of the flower appears and, not that of a tree or a house. Every phenomenon, while lacking objective reality, still exists and functions infallibly, but merely on the conventional level, through dependent origination. In this case, the picture of the flower arises

by dependence on various factors such as the dots, the space in between the dots, the light, the screen and the perceiving mind. This should generate in us a deep conviction in the efficacy of dependent origination, which permeates all phenomena, including the law of karma. While everything exists, it never exists on the ultimate level but only on the conventional level. Our chronic ignorance always drives us to misperceive and believe that things do exist on the ultimate level. This understanding of the infallible dependent origination does not bring the phenomenal world from the ultimate level to the conventional level, it has always been on the conventional level since beginningless time (and never on the ultimate level). This understanding allows our mind to shake off its chronic ignorant belief and makes us realise that everything operates only on the subjective level].

Q 10: As you keep going towards and away from the screen, again and again, what is happening to the perception of your eyes?

A 10: The perception keeps on changing from that of the picture of the flower, to the emptiness of the picture of the flower.

Remark 1a) This indicates that the same object on the screen shows two faces or two aspects. While nothing changes at all from the object's side on the screen, your perception of the object keeps changing. This is indicative of the fact that what you see on the screen as the picture of a flower is nothing other than just your own perception. Perception means something which is purely mental and hence it is totally subjective.

Remark 1b) Just as a ghost in a dream does not exist in reality from its own side and thus is a dream ghost, just so, the picture of the flower is merely our mental projection and is only subjectively existent. Conversely, it is said to be empty of objective existence and thus dream-like or illusion-like.

*Abide in this experience of emptiness for a while.*

Remark 2: When you look very closely, what you see of the same object on the screen (i.e. the emptiness of the picture of the flower) is the face of the ultimate reality of the picture of the flower. What you see as a picture of the flower from a distance is the face of the subjective / conventional reality of the picture of the flower. These are the two truths of the same object. Every phenomenon necessarily possesses these two truths or realities and emptiness is no exception; emptiness also possesses two truths.

## **II. Meditation on the Emptiness of your ‘Self’**

In a similar manner, meditate on the emptiness of your ‘self.’

Keep in mind the following analogies:

- 1) The picture of the beautiful tender flower is analogous to your ‘self.’
- 2) The 40,000 dots of demons’ faces are analogous to the atoms or the six elements (earth, water, fire, air, space and consciousness) or the five aggregates (form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and mental consciousness) that constitute you.
- 3) The emptiness of the flower is analogous to the fact that there is no singular, independent entity called ‘self’ which can be found as objectively existent upon (ultimate) analysis. The self is merely designated on the basis of the parts (such as the atoms or the five aggregates or the six elements). There is no ‘self’ which is found, as either being one with its parts or different from its parts (*Essential No. 2 and 3 to Discern Emptiness*).

*Abide for sometime in the experience of the emptiness of the self, this meditation on emptiness is precious beyond words.*

## **III. Meditation on the Emptiness of your Mind**

In a similar manner, meditate on the emptiness of your mind.

Keep in mind the following analogies:



- 1) The picture of the beautiful tender flower is analogous to your mind.
- 2) The 40,000 dots of demons' faces are analogous to the temporal moments of the mind which constitute the whole mind, in relation to the emptiness of your mind.
- 3) The emptiness of the flower is analogous to the fact that upon analysis, there is no independent moment of mental experience which can be found as objectively existent.
- 4) For meditating on the emptiness of the mind, analyse that the present moment, which is the frame of reference for the three times (past, present and future), is not findable. Analyse the mind's deceptivity of experiencing its objects. Through close analysis, one realises that the mind cannot discern the object that it thinks it is discerning or experiencing, due to the object's fast moving transitoriness.

The following verses may be used during the meditations on the emptiness of the self and the mind:

*Arya Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, Verse 1:80 - 81*

[skt: *ratnāvalī*; Tib. *rin chen phreng ba*]

If the person is not earth, not water,  
Not fire, not air, not space,  
Not also consciousness, and not all (of them)  
Where is the person out of those?

Just as a person is not truly existent,  
Because of being an aggregation of the six constituents,  
So each constituent also is not truly existent  
As they are aggregations (of their own constituents)

*Arya Nagarjuna's Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way,  
Verse 22.1* [Skt. *mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; Tib. *dbu ma rtsa ba shes rab*]

Neither the aggregates, nor different from the aggregates,  
The aggregates don't (depend) on him, nor is he (dependent)

on them,  
The Tathagata does not possess the aggregates,  
What is the Tathagata? [Insert your name]

*Bhikuni Vajira's Utterance in a Fundamental Vehicle Sutra*

Just as one designates a cart,  
In dependence upon a collection of parts,  
So we assert the conventional sentient being,  
In dependence upon the aggregates.

Remark 3: Repeatedly recite the above verses as often as possible in order to abide in the experience of emptiness which you obtained (from Question 8 and Remark 1b), both in meditation as well as in post-meditation. Recite the sacred verses from sutras and other compositions on emptiness by Indian saints, to reinforce your experience (refer to pages 208 - 214). This practice is the essence that gives profound meaning to your whole life. Make sure you do not lose the regularity of this practice by doing it on a daily basis.

Remark 4: In all moments of your waking state, try to be mindful to the best of your ability that everything (i.e. the three spheres of action) is dream-like: (1) the objects you are interacting with (2) you, as the agent who is interacting, and (3) the action of interaction itself (refer to Remark 1a). All these three lack true objective reality. Yet, to our mind, they deceptively appear to exist from their own side i.e. as truly existent, in all moments of the waking state, as well as during sleep and while dreaming. Remember the verses from Buddha's sutras, such as the ones given above and below, as they will help you to engage in daily activities with the mindfulness and awareness that everything you encounter is dream-like. As advised by Lama Tsongkhapa in *Lamrim Chenmo (The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment)*, engage in all virtuous actions by seeing them in the light of their dream-like nature. This helps us accumulate the two collections of merit and wisdom from all the actions that one engages in, throughout one's life.

*Upali Requested Sutra*

[Skt. *upālipariprocchanāmamahāyāna sūtra*]

The various delightful flowers blossom,  
And the sparkling, supreme, golden abodes stand so alluring.  
For none of these is there a creator.  
They are posited by the power of thought.  
It is through conceptualisation that the world is imputed.

*King of Concentration Sutra*

[Skt. *samādhirāja sūtra*; Tib. *ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po'i mdo*]

Just as in the dream of a young girl,  
She met with a boy and saw his death,  
Joyous was she at the meeting and anguished at his death,  
View all phenomena as thus.

*Rain Shower of Feats: A Song of the Four Mindfulnesses as a Guide to the View of the Middle Way [H.H. Kalsang Gyatso, the VII Dalai Lama]*

At the crossroads of the six collections (of consciousness), which  
have diverse perceptions,  
Are seen the hazy dualistic phenomena which are baseless.  
There is a magical show that is by nature, deceptive.  
Don't believe it to be true, but view it as having the nature of  
emptiness.  
Don't let your mind go astray, but place it in the nature of  
appearance-emptiness.  
Through not losing mindfulness, hold it in the nature of  
appearance-emptiness.

Remark 6: You should not give in to the ignorance grasping at true existence [Tib. *dhakzin marigpa* or *timuk dhakzin*] anymore. Dispel this darkness of ignorance from your mind and the minds of all dear mother sentient beings by sharing this light of the wisdom of emptiness with others. It is better that we do not waste our

precious time and rather engage in the urgent mission of bringing unconditional happiness and peace to all our mothers and to ourselves. Concluding the day with a meditation on emptiness and sealing the day's virtuous practices with prayers would be profoundly helpful.

Remark 7: After gaining some understanding of how things exist subjectively and are devoid of objective existence, it is beneficial to think of the dependent nature of phenomena in terms of the mutuality of dependence of cause and effect, labels and the labeled, characteristics and the characterised, the mind and its objects, the whole and the parts, big and small, and so forth.

### **Dedication Prayer**

Throughout my future lifetimes,  
May I always be guided by Arya Manjushri  
And be able to uphold the Dharma in general and the teachings  
on Dependent Origination in particular,  
Even at the cost of my life.<sup>229</sup>

**Note:** A student-practitioner interested in refining their experience of emptiness can use the 'Staircase to Emptiness' as a support to set-up an initial practice but they should try their best to keep expanding their meditation experience and make it more nuanced through engaging in further extensive learning, reflection and meditation on the wisdom of emptiness.

Written by Geshe Dorji Damdul at the request of Ellora Mubashir for the participants of the Bodhicitta Retreat [Series I] at Shree Raghavendra Krupasharma, Punyasthala, January 15 - 28, 2013.

# METHODS TO CULTIVATE BODHICITTA

## I. Seven-Fold Cause and Effect Method

[Tib. *rgyu 'bras man ngag bdun*]

*(Prerequisite: the practice of equanimity)*

1. Remembering all beings as one's mothers [Tib. *mar shes*]
2. Remembering their kindness [Tib. *drin dran*]
3. Repaying their kindness [Tib. *drin gzo*]
4. Seeing beings in the light of great affection [Tib. *yid 'ong byams pa*]
5. Great compassion [Tib. *snying rje chen po*]
6. Altruism [Tib. *lhag bsam*]
7. Bodhicitta [Tib. *byang chub sems bskyed*]

## II. Equalising and Exchanging Self with Others Method

[Tib. *bdaggzhan mnyam brje*]

1. Equalising self and others [Tib. *hdag bzhan mnyam pa*]
2. Reflecting on the demerits of cherishing oneself [Tib. *rang gces 'dzin gyi skyon sgo du ma nas bsam pa*]
3. Reflecting on the merits of cherishing others [Tib. *gzhan gces 'dzin gyi yon tan sgo du ma nas bsam pa*]
4. Taking the suffering of others with great compassion [Tib. *len*]
5. Giving your happiness to others with wishing them love [Tib. *gtong*]
6. Actual exchange of self with others [Tib. *bdaggzhan brje ba'i bsam pa dngos*]
7. Special recollection of the kindness of others [Tib. *drin drna khyad par ba*]
8. Altruism [Tib. *lhag bsam*]

9. Bodhicitta [Tib. *byang chub sems bskyed*]

### III. The Synthesised Version of the Two Methods

1. Equanimity
2. Remembering all beings as one's mothers [Tib. *mar shes*]
3. Remembering their kindness [Tib. *drin dran*]
4. Repaying their kindness [Tib. *drin gzo*]
5. Equalising self and others [Tib. *hdag bzhan mnyam pa*]
6. Reflecting on the demerits of cherishing oneself [Tib. *rang gces 'dzin gyi skyon sgo du ma nas bsam pa*]
7. Reflecting on the merits of cherishing others [Tib. *gzhan gces 'dzin gyi yon tan sgo du ma nas bsam pa*]
8. Taking the suffering of others with great compassion [Tib. *len*]
9. Giving your happiness to others with wishing them love [Tib. *gtong*]
10. Actual exchange of self with others [Tib. *bdaggzhan brje ba'i bsam pa dngos*]
11. Special recollection of the kindness of others [Tib. *drin drna khyad par ba*]
12. Altruism [Tib. *lhag bsam*]
13. Bodhicitta [Tib. *byang chub sems bskyed*]

# CATEGORIES OF BODHICITTA

## Category by Way of Demarcation

1. Bodhicitta of devoted conduct
  2. Bodhicitta of the pure altruistic attitude
  3. Fully mature Bodhicitta
  4. Bodhicitta of the abandonment of obstructions
- 
1. *Bodhicitta of devoted conduct*  
Bodhicitta in the continua of Bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation and the path of preparation.
  2. *Bodhicitta of the pure altruistic intention*  
Bodhicitta in the continua of Bodhisattvas on any of the seven impure Bodhisattva bhumis/grounds (the first until the seventh Bodhisattva ground).
  3. *Fully mature Bodhicitta*  
Bodhicitta in the continua of Bodhisattvas on any of the three pure Bodhisattva bhumis (the eighth, ninth and tenth Bodhisattva grounds).
  4. *Bodhicitta of the abandonment of obstructions*  
Bodhicitta in the continua of Buddhas.

## Category by Way of the Purpose

1. *Shepherd-like Bodhicitta*  
Main mind concomitant with the aspiration that aspires for all sentient beings to attain Enlightenment before one attains Enlightenment oneself.
2. *Ferryman-like Bodhicitta*  
Main mind concomitant with the aspiration that aspires for all sentient beings and oneself attaining Enlightenment together.

### 3. *King-like Bodhicitta*

Main mind concomitant with the aspiration that aspires to oneself attaining Enlightenment first in order to lead all sentient beings to Enlightenment.

### Category by Way of Similes

The following 22 aspects of bodhicitta are explained in *The Ornament of Clear Realization* along with their corresponding similies:

Twenty-two kinds of Bodhicitta	Twenty-two corresponding similes
1. Earth-like Bodhicitta	1. Bodhicitta endowed with aspiration
2. Gold-like Bodhicitta	2. Bodhicitta endowed with the resolve to continue
3. Moon-like Bodhicitta	3. Bodhicitta endowed with exceptional resolve
4. Fire-like Bodhicitta	4. Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers/wisdoms
5. Treasure-like Bodhicitta	5. Bodhicitta endowed with generosity
6. Jewel Mine-like Bodhicitta	6. Bodhicitta endowed with ethics



7. Ocean-like Bodhicitta	7. Bodhicitta endowed with patience
8. Vajra-like Bodhicitta	8. Bodhicitta endowed with joyous effort
9. Mountain-like Bodhicitta	9. Bodhicitta endowed with concentration
10. Medicine-like Bodhicitta	10. Bodhicitta endowed with wisdom
11. Spiritual Friend-like Bodhicitta	11. Bodhicitta endowed with skilful means
12. Wish-Fulfilling Gem-like Bodhicitta	12. Bodhicitta endowed with prayer
13. Sun-like Bodhicitta	13. Bodhicitta endowed with power
14. Song-like Bodhicitta	14. Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of exalted wisdom
15. King-like Bodhicitta	15. Bodhicitta endowed with clairvoyance
16. Storehouse-like Bodhicitta	16. Bodhicitta endowed with merit and exalted wisdom
17. Great Path-like Bodhicitta	17. Bodhicitta endowed with the thirty-seven paths to enlightenment

18. Riding Mount-like Bodhicitta	18. Bodhicitta endowed with compassion and special insight
19. Spring-like Bodhicitta	19. Bodhicitta endowed with retention and confidence
20. Pleasant Sound-like Bodhicitta	20. Bodhicitta endowed with a festival of the four seals of Dharma
21. River-like Bodhicitta	21. Bodhicitta endowed with the one path travelled
22. Cloud-like Bodhicitta	22. Bodhicitta concomitant with the Truth Body that emanates the twelve enlightened deeds and benefits sentient beings

# WHEEL OF LIFE

## [TWELVE LINKS OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION]

[Skt. *bhavachakra*; Tib. *srid pa 'khor lo*]



## **Explanation of the Wheel of Life and the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination**

*Geshe Dorji Damdul*

Legend has it that king Bimbisara was very sad over not having anything precious and valuable to present to king Udrayana in return for the invaluable gift of an armour made of precious gems, which king Bimbisara had received from him. King Bimbisara approached the Buddha for advice. The Buddha asked the king to send the most renowned painters of his kingdom to him. The Buddha then instructed the painter to paint the Wheel of Life (facing page). King Bimbisara gifted to this painting to king Udrayana, who studied it closely and started to contemplate deeply on the meaning and significance of various depictions in the painting. It was through this painting that king Udrayana became connected with the profound path to Enlightenment and achieved significant spiritual attainments.

The Buddha also instructed the ordained sangha to have the Wheel of Life painted on the entrance façade of all the monasteries and additionally instructed that a monk be appointed to explain the significance of this painting to pilgrims when they visit any monastery.

An Overview Explanation of the Wheel of Life:

- I. Brief explanation of the Wheel of Life painting
- II. The Wheel of Life as a teaching on the Four Noble Truths
- III. The Wheel of Life as a teaching on the Three Jewels
- IV. Teaching on the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination: The process of how we are incessantly and involuntarily projected into samsara through the force of afflictions and contaminated karmas, which are all are rooted in ignorance as explained by the twelve links of dependent origination. These twelve links

are also encapsulated in a single verse by Arya Nagarjuna as cited below.

## I. Brief Explanation of the Wheel of Life Picture

The contents of the Wheel of Life are concisely summarised by Arya Nagarjuna in *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, Verse 18.5 as follows [Skt. *mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; Tib. *dbu ma rtsa ba shes rab*]:

Ceasing of karmas and afflictions leads to nirvana.  
 Actions and afflictions arise from conceptual thought.  
 These arise from (mental) elaboration (grasping at true existence).  
 Elaboration ceases by (or into) emptiness.

In the above verse, Arya Nagarjuna enumerates and explains the process of the coming into being of samsara in five steps: 1) samsara as the final result as opposed to nirvana; 2) contaminated karmas; 3) afflictions; 4) inappropriate attention (referring to a deceptive mind which exaggerates the qualities or imputes false characteristics to its objects; and 5) self-grasping ignorance which misconceives the object itself as being objectively real, when in reality it exists merely subjectively. Each of these five steps are clearly illustrated by specific parts of the Wheel of Life painting.

### ***The Inner Most Circle*** [circle no. 1]:

The inner most circle depicts a pig, a bird and a snake, symbolizing the three primary afflictions respectively – ignorance, attachment and anger – also referred to as the three poisons of our mind. We find two different versions of this circle – (i) One version shows both the tails of the bird and the snake emerging out of the pig's mouth, indicating that all afflictions, such as attachment and aversion, finally arise from ignorance which is represented by the pig. (ii) The second version depicts the tail of one animal coming out from the mouth of another animal, such that they are in a circular loop. This



indicates that the three poisons mutually give rise to each other.

***The Second Circle*** [circle no. 2]:

The second concentric circle is vertically split into two, one half painted white and the other half black. The white semi-circle indicates virtuous karmas (not including uncontaminated virtuous karmas) and the black semi-circle indicates non-virtuous karmas, both of which arise from afflictions, particularly from ignorance (depicted by the innermost circle). This ignorance is like the ignorance, which believes the dream contents to be real and accordingly acts in virtuous or non-virtuous ways within the dream. Each semi-circle contains three figures: in the white semi-circle, moving clockwise from the bottom up is a human, followed by an asura (demi-god) and then devas or devis (gods/goddesses) - these are the three favorable births possible within samsara, resulting from virtuous actions which propel beings into the three respective higher realms. In the black half of the circle, moving clockwise from top down is an animal, a hell being and a hungry ghost, all shown being dragged downwards - these are the three unfavorable births possible within samsara, resulting from non-virtuous actions which propel beings into the three respective lower realms.

***The Third Circle of the Wheel*** [circle no. 3]:

The third concentric circle is divided into 5 or 6 sections, each representing the one of the desire realms of samsara – devas, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings. Samsaric beings are involuntarily and incessantly projected life after life into any of these realms a result of their virtuous and non-virtuous karmas (as depicted by the second circle).

***The Fourth Circle (from the Inner Most) of the Wheel*** [circle no. 4]:

The fourth concentric circle which is the outermost circle illustrates

the detailed explanation of the causal relationship between the first three circles - how the first circle of afflictions gives rise to the second circle of contaminated karmas, which in turn gives rise to the third circle of the resultant births in any of the six realms. This chain of cause-effect relationship is explained in detail by the Buddha in the form of the twelve links of dependent origination, which are explained in brief at the end of this section.

The demon holding the wheel symbolises the impermanence of life and death i.e. there is no escape from the cycle of samsara as long as one is in the fangs of a demon. Likewise, as long as we are under the sway of the demons of afflictions and contaminated karmas, there is no escape from the incessant cycle of births and deaths in samsara. Is it that there is no escape from this vicious samsara at all? How can we be freed from the fangs of the lord of death? This question leads us to the next point, which is represented by the Buddha on the top right, outside the wheel help by the demon.

***The Buddha*** [on the top right of the painting]:

Through reflecting on the excruciating pains of cyclic existence inflicted by the force of afflictions and contaminated karmas, depicted by the various circles in the wheel held in the jaws of the demon, one ponders, "how exhausting it is to be incessantly in fears and tears! When will it ever come to an end?" The end is only achieved through getting out of the wheel, like the Buddha who is outside of the wheel and freed from the cycle of birth and death altogether.

How can we become one like the Buddha? This brings us to the full moon painted on the top left, which the Buddha is pointing to.

***The Full Moon*** [on the top left of the painting]:

One can escape from the vicious fears of samsara through cleansing one's mind of afflictions, contaminated karmas and the active seeds

of both of them. On the full moon day, the dark part of the moon fully disappears and the moon becomes visible in its complete form. Likewise, it is through cleansing the mental defilements of afflictions and contaminated karmas which are rooted in ignorance, that the true nature of the mind, which is the Buddha nature or Tathagatagarbha, becomes manifest and then we no longer suffer. How can we remove the mental defilements? This question takes us to the next point, which is illustrated by the two verses written below the moon.

***The Two Verses:***

We find these either written beneath the moon or at the bottom of the wheel -

Strive to eliminate (the defilements);  
Enter into the teachings of the Enlightened One;  
Just as an elephant in the midst of huts,  
Destroy the host of the lord of death.

Those with conscientiousness,  
Engage in the dharma of pacification.  
Abandon the cycle of birth,  
And bring an end to the miseries.

The two verses stand-in for the third noble truth - the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering and its causes, also represented by the full moon. Following the meaning of the two verses will unwittingly drive us into the five paths as indicated by the Heart Sutra mantra:

TADYATHÂ (OM) GATE GATE PÂRAGATE PÂRASAMGATE BODHI  
SVÂHÂ

Traversing along the five paths will result in giving rise to the full moon-like Enlightenment, in the form of complete freedom and absolute peace.



## II. The Wheel of Life as a Teaching on the Four Noble Truths:

1. The first Noble Truth, the truth of suffering, symbolised by the third concentric circle.
2. The second Noble Truth, the truth of the cause of suffering i.e. afflictions and contaminated karmas symbolised by the innermost and the second circle respectively.
3. The third Noble Truth, the truth of cessation of suffering and its causes symbolised by the full moon on the top right. The moon, which is symbolic of the mind, and the fullness of it with no trace of darkness, is indicative of the cleansing of the mental defilements from the moon-like mind, which indicates the full awakening of the true nature of the mind. This is nirvana or Enlightenment.
4. The fourth Noble Truth, the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering and its causes symbolised by the following two verses:

Strive to eliminate (the defilements);  
Enter into the teachings of the Enlightened One;  
Just as an elephant in the midst of huts,  
Destroy the host of the lord of death.

Those with conscientiousness,  
Engage in the dharma of pacification.  
Abandon the cycle of birth,  
And bring an end to the miseries.

[The outermost circle (circle no. 4) depicts the causal relation between afflictions, karmas and the resultant suffering, shown by the three inner circles respectively.]

## III. The Wheel of Life as a Teaching on the Three Jewels:

*The Jewel of the Buddha and the Jewel of Sangha:* The Buddha

Shakyamuni depicted on the top right (pointing to the moon) and the two verses are symbolic of the Jewel of the Buddha – like the best of the doctors, and also the Jewel of Sangha – the best of the nurses.

*The Jewel of Dharma:* The Jewel of Dharma can be understood in two divisions - (1) the Dharma of cessation represented by the full moon, and (2) the Dharma of realisation represented by the two verses.

#### **IV. Teaching on the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination in the Outer Most Circle:**

The Buddha, in *The Rice Seedling Sutra* [Skt. *salistamba sutra*], is described to have spoken these aphorisms to the monks, while gazing at a rice seedling:

“Monks, whoever sees dependent origination sees Dharma, and whoever sees Dharma sees the Buddha. Dependent origination means the following: because this exists, that exists; because this is produced, that arises. That is to say: ignorance conditions (mental) formations. (Mental) formations condition consciousness. Consciousness conditions name and form. Name and form conditions the six (sense) entrances. The six entrances condition contact. Contact conditions feeling. Feeling conditions desire. Desire conditions grasping. Grasping conditions becoming. Becoming conditions birth. Birth conditions decay and death, and grief, lamentation, suffering, depression and anxiety arise. Thus the arising of this entire great mass of suffering occurs.”

More in-depth study is required to fully understand the Wheel of Life in the context of the *Salistamba Sutra* and generate clarity about the following questions - what is the causal relationship among the twelve links of dependent origination? What are the underlying reasons for altering the sequence of the twelve links in the painting differently from their actual causal sequence? In how

many life times is one cycle of the twelve links exhausted? What is the difference between the projecting links and the projected links? What are the immediate causal links and the corresponding resultant links? And so forth.

Below a list of the twelve links of dependent origination, their meaning in brief, along with a short description of their visual representation in the painting:

- 1) *Ignorance* [Skt. *avijjā*, Tib. *ma rigs pa*]
- 2) (*Contaminated*) *Karmas / Actions* [Skt. *sankhāra*, Tib. 'du byed]
- 3) *Consciousness* [Skt. *viññāna*, Tib. *nam par shes pa*]
- 4) *Name and form* [Skt. *nāmarūpa*, Tib. *ming gzugs*]
- 5) *Sense sources* [Skt. *salāyatana*, Tib. *skyed mched*]
- 6) *Contact* [Skt. *phassa*, Tib. *reg pa*]
- 7) *Feeling* [Skt. *vedanā*, Tib. *tshor ba*]
- 8) *Attachment / Craving* [Skt. *tanhā*, Tib. *sred pa*]
- 9) *Grasping* [Skt. *upādāna*, Tib. *len pa*]
- 10) *Becoming / Existence* [Skt. *bhava*, Tib. *srid pa*]
- 11) *Birth* [Skt. *jāti*, Tib. *skye ba*]
- 12) *Aging and death* [Skt. *jarāmarana*, Tib. *rga shi*]

1) *Ignorance* [Skt. *avijjā*, Tib. *ma rigs pa*] is symbolised by a blind person about to fall off a cliff. This is symbolic of the ignorance, which projects beings into the vicious fears of samsara replete with involuntary birth, sickness, ageing, death, fear, anxiety and so forth. Out of the many kinds of ignorance, the one which is the first link is precisely the self-grasping ignorance, which obscures the vision of reality by distorting the things as objectively true.

2) (*Contaminated*) *Karmas / Actions* [Skt. *sankhāra*, Tib. 'du byed] are symbolised by a potter in the process of making a pot and also surrounded by many pots of varying sizes, shapes and colors. Like the potter who shapes the mud into various objects, it is the contaminated karmas which decide which realm one will take birth in out of the six realms, which are like the different possible

shapes of life within samsara. Contaminated karmas are classified into three – virtuous, non-virtuous and unwavering karma.

- 3) *Consciousness* [Skt. *viññāna*, Tib. *rnam par shes pa*] is symbolised by a monkey who is shown in the midst of jumping from one tree to the next tree. The monkey is symbolic of our ordinary mind and the two trees respectively symbolise the body of this life and the body of the next life respectively. The monkey carries the fruits from one tree and jumps to the next tree. Likewise, our mind is the repository agent of all the imprints of karma (the second link), which we carry from one life to the next.
- 4) *Name and form* [Skt. *nāmarūpa*, Tib. *ming gzugs*] is symbolised by two people in a boat. The physical body [form] and the mind [name], which constitute us as individuals of this life, are depicted by the two people in the boat. As long as the two are in the same boat in a stream, they cannot separate and have to go together until they cross the stream. Likewise the body and the mind we have acquired since the time of conception in the mother's womb, will go together until our death.
- 5) *Sense sources* [Skt. *salāyatana*, Tib. *skyed mched*] are symbolised by a house with five or six windows. Just as for a person inside a house, the windows help the person to interact and connect with the outside world, likewise the five physical sense sources – eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body - along with the sixth sense source, the mental sense, helps the individuals to interact and connect with the outside world when one is inside the mother's womb. This is the stage of our development within the womb, when the sense sources take physical form but are not yet functional.
- 6) *Contact* [Skt. *phassa*, Tib. *reg pa*] is symbolised by a couple kissing and in union. The couple's coming into contact is the initial cause necessary for giving birth to an offspring as the result. As the sense sources progressively develop in the foetus, they reach a level where they become functional and are able to

come into contact with their respective objects, for e.g. eyes with visual objects, and so forth. Contact can be of six kinds – (the omnipresent) mental factor of contact that accompanies the five sense consciousnesses and the sixth mental consciousness.

- 7) *Feeling* [Skt. *vedanā*, Tib. *tshor ba*] is symbolised by an arrow piercing an eye. The feeling of pain is so sharp when an arrow strikes one's eye, likewise in the mother's womb, the sense forces develop and mature to such an extent that eventually the sense consciousnesses can actually feel the various feelings of pain, pleasure and neutrality. All feelings can be subsumed under three kinds – feeling of pleasure giving rise to attachment, feeling of pain giving rise to aversion and neutral or indifferent feelings giving rise to ignorance.
- 8) *Attachment/Craving* [Skt. *tanhā*, Tib. *sred pa*] is symbolised by an alcoholic person reaching out for alcohol. What desire does to increase the insanity of an alcoholic, just so, attachment acts like the water, which aids the germination of the seed of the second link i.e. for contaminated karmas to ripen.
- 9) *Grasping* [Skt. *upādāna*, Tib. *len pa*] is symbolised by a monkey who is eating a fruit with one hand, while already grasping for a second fruit with the other hand. As the eighth link of attachment becomes more and more intense, it turns into craving, also referred to as grasping. There are four kinds of grasping – grasping of desire, grasping of view, grasping viewing the supremacy of conduct and the grasping at asserting the self.
- 10) *Becoming /Existence* [Skt. *bhava*, Tib. *srid pa*] is symbolised by a woman in the last stage of pregnancy. Just as the woman in the last stage of pregnancy is on the verge of giving birth to a child, the seed of karma (which is the second link) is greatly matured by the force of links eight and nine, to the extent that it is on the verge of propelling the individual to their next birth. The last stage of maturation of the projecting karma is known as 'becoming'.

- 11) *Birth* [Skt. *jāti*, Tib. *skye ba*] is symbolised by a woman actually giving birth. Birth is the initial introduction of an individual to the new samsaric world. Likewise the tenth link, becoming, throws the individual to their next birth in samsara. Here, the consciousness of the individual of this life departs from this body and connects to the next birth. The initial stage of the next birth is the eleventh link – birth. Several stages of dissolution of the mind are involved before the mind is actually ejected from the body of this life. While they are still alive, some practitioners train in the various dissolution processes of the mind until the stage of Clear Light. One can strive for the details of this only through systematic procedures of receiving teachings and practicing accordingly.
- 12) *Aging and death* [Skt. *jarāmarana*, Tib. *rga shi*] are symbolised by a corpse. When the following two questions were asked: “Does all that is born die, and does all that dies take birth?” The Buddha responded, “All that is born dies but all that dies may not take birth.” Who does not take rebirth in this vicious samsara after death? Those who have severed the self-grasping ignorance from the root do not take involuntary birth in samsara, and won’t be further connected to miseries in perpetuity.

Link twelve begins and is in full operation from the time of the second moment of inception of the foetus in the mother’s womb. We age every moment, a process halted only by death. Before death, the links of the other cycles have already started. Thus, like a wheel in motion, our existence within samsara is incessant, with no beginning and no end. This is how we are submerged in this entire great mass of suffering as indicated in the *Salistamba Sutra*.

Out of the twelve links of dependent origination, three links - 1) ignorance, 8) attachment, and 9) grasping belong to the category of afflictions. Two links – 2) compositional factors [actions] and 10) becoming, fall in the category of karma. The remaining seven belong to the category of results. Some systems classify 3) consciousness

also as in the category of afflictions.

Understanding our current reality as such - a mass of terrifying, incessant miseries in samsara - one wonders, "is there a way out?" After studying and reflecting deeply on the Wheel of Life, one will come to know that ignorance - the first of the twelve links has to be severed, for it is only by cutting the root of the poisonous tree, that however many millions of poisonous leaves there are, they will all dry out effortlessly.

*How can we eradicate ignorance?* Just as it is through introducing the light that the darkness is eliminated, it is only through introducing the light of the wisdom (of emptiness) that the darkness of (self-grasping) ignorance can be eliminated.

*What is wisdom?* It is a discerning mind whose apprehension of the object tallies with the reality.

*What is reality?* The reality is the reality of dependent origination, in other words, the emptiness of independent existence. It is the absence of things to be the way they appear to us, as being so objectively true. Everything is like a dream and like an illusion. Things do exist but not in the way they appear to us, as objectively real. They only exist as illusion-like, all coming from our mind. This concept is so precious, in fact it is the greatest legacy bequethed to us by the very compassionate Buddha Sakyamuni, alongside the legacy of the non-referential, unconditional love of bodhicitta in order to relieve all sentient beings from the miseries of samsara.

All the pains that we go through are like the reaction of a child towards the scary objects seen in a dream. For the child to be free from the nightmare of the dream, he or she has to wake up from sleep. Likewise it is only through waking up from the sleep of self-grasping ignorance with the help of the wisdom of emptiness that we can stop all our miseries.

The Buddha taught in *Samadhiraja Sūtra*:

Just as in a dream of a young girl,  
She met with a boy and saw his death,  
Joyous was she at the meeting and despairing over his death,  
View all phenomena as thus.

What a relief it will be for the aforementioned girl to realise, upon waking up, that the meeting with the boy, which gladdened her and the death of the boy, which shattered her, were both nothing but her own dream, with no objectively real basis. This is absolute peace. This is Enlightenment. It is for this reason that the Buddha is given the epithet ‘The Fully Awakened One’.

**Note:** Written by Geshe Dorji Damdul, on 25 June 2017.



## SHAMATHA MEDITATION ON BREATH

Of the many meditations that may be undertaken, focusing on one's breath is a good beginner's meditation. To simplify matters, it may be conceived in four important parts:

- I. [Seven Features of Vairocana's] Posture
- II. Focal Point
- III. Identifying the Two Common Errors of Meditation
- IV. Applying the Antidotes to Overcome the Errors of Meditation

### **I. Seven Features of Vairocana's Posture**

1. The legs are crossed in the vajra posture, full or half. If that is difficult for the practitioner, it is also okay to sit upright in a chair.
2. The right hand is placed in the left hand, palms upwards, with the tips of the thumbs slightly raised and gently touching.
3. The back is straight and does not touch a backrest.
4. The tongue rests against the back of the upper teeth. The lips and the teeth are in their natural position.
5. The head is tipped a little forward.
6. The eyes are neither wide open nor completely closed, but remain half open and are cast at a 45degrees downwards angle.
7. The shoulders are level and the elbows are held a little away from the sides.

### **II. Focal Point**

The focal point is the space between the nose and the upper lip. Remember, one is always meditating with one's mental consciousness and not eye sense consciousness (the reason why it is important from the beginning to keep one's eyes slightly

open during meditation and not closed, so the practitioner gains proficiency in separating the two).

### **III. Identifying the Two Common Errors of Meditation**

(1) mental excitement (when the mind is scattered, flitting and wandering from here to there) and

(2) mental laxity (when the mind becomes dull and lethargic).

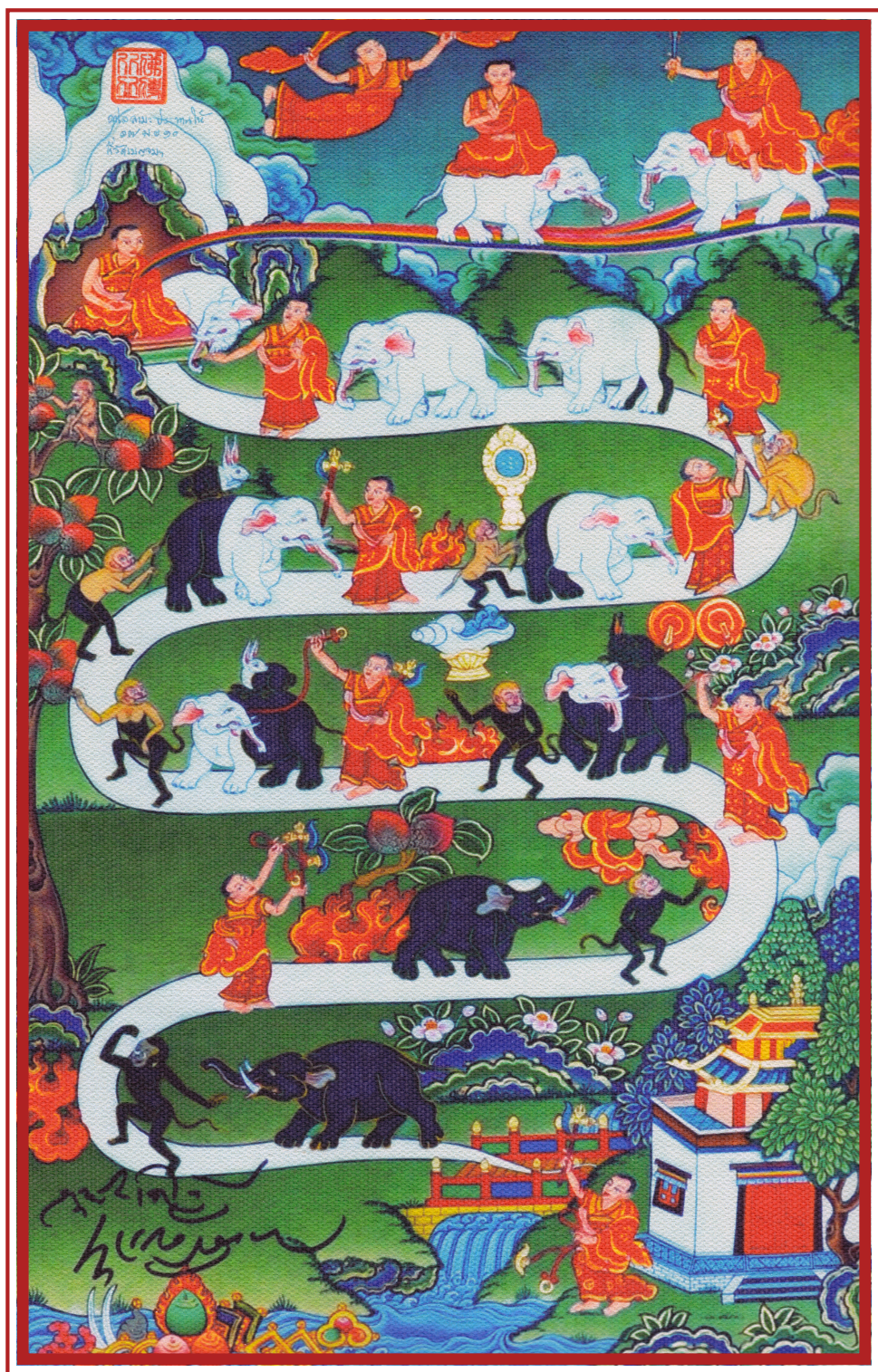
### **IV. Applying the Antidotes to Overcome the Common Errors of Meditation**

(1) *Introspection* (awareness which examines whether or not the focal point is lost due to mental excitement or mental laxity) and

(2) *Mindfulness* (seeks to return the focus of the mind to the object of meditation). The analogy given for introspection and mindfulness is that the former is like discerning one's pet dog has wandered off, and the latter is finding it and tethering it to a pole with a rope.

*To begin the meditation*, focus the mind on the focal point of the breath being exhaled and inhaled, at the point between the nose and the upper lip. Breathe naturally and do not belabor the breath, either slowing it down or speeding it up. Simultaneously, so that you are multitasking, begin counting the cycles of your breath, with one cycle comprising an inhalation and an exhalation.

The practitioner may begin by doing breathing meditation for twentyone cycles or five minutes and not more.



# SHAMATHA MEDITATION

## Nine Stages of Training the Mind

[Skt. *navākārā cittasthiti*, Tib. *sems gnas dgu*]

The final remedy to overcome the subtlest of the ignorance which obscures the ultimate Buddha nature from manifesting fully within each of the sentient beings is the non-dual wisdom of subjective clear light in unison with the objective clear light of the ultimate expanse of reality of the awareness itself. As a precursor to this refined realisation of the non-duality of Shamata and Special Insight focused on emptiness pertaining to the subtlest subjective clear light, one needs to cultivate Shamata first followed by the cultivation of special insight (in the context of Sutrayana).

For to dispel the darkness in order for one to enjoy the sight of a beautiful garden, one has to introduce a light. The light should have two characteristics – it should be bright light and it should be steady - not wavering. The latter is the metaphor for cultivating Shamatha which emphasises on building the power of single pointedness in our meditation. Whereas the former is metaphor for cultivating the analytical meditation focused on emptiness.

Shamatha is attained in progression through the nine stages as indicated by the picture enclosed, by dependence on the eight remedies to abandon the five faults. This is done by resorting to the six powers and the four mental engagements

### I. The Five Faults:

1. Laziness
2. Forgetfulness of the instruction
3. Laxity and excitement
4. Non application of the remedies
5. Over application of the remedies

## **II. The Eight Remedies:**

1. Faith
2. Aspiration
3. Effort
4. Pliancy
5. Mindfulness
6. Introspection
7. Application of remedies
8. Equanimity of remedy application

The first four remedies are to overcome the first fault which is laziness. The remaining four remedies are antidotes to the remaining four faults respectively.

## **III. The Six Powers:**

1. The power of hearing – stage 1
2. The power of reflection – stage 2
3. The power of mindfulness – stage 3 and 4
4. The power of introspection – stage 5 and 6
5. The power of joyous effort – stage 7 and 8
6. The power of complete familiarity – stage 9

## **IV. The Four Engagements:**

1. Tightly focused engagement – stage 1 and 2
2. Interrupted engagement – stage 3 to 7
3. Uninterrupted engagement – stage 8
4. Effortless engagement – stage 9

## **Picture Description of the Process of Shamtha Cultivation**

1. The first stage is attained through the power of hearing.
2. Stage 1 – *Mental setting*



3. Mindfulness
4. Introspection
5. The flame progressively decreases in intensity from this stage till the seventh stage in intensity until it disappears altogether. This is indicative of the decrease in the degree of the strength of effort required in the application of mindfulness and introspection.
6. The elephant is symbolic of the mind and the black color laxity.
7. The monkey is symbolic of the proliferation of thoughts. The black color of the monkey symbolises excitement.
8. The second stage is attained through the power of reflection.
9. Stage 2 - *Continual setting*
10. Excitement is due to the five sensual pleasures.
11. The black color progressively disappears to become white which is symbolic of progressively increasing clarity and stability of the mind.
12. The third and fourth stage are attained through the power of mindfulness.
13. Stage 3 - *Patch-like-setting*
14. The hare symbolises the subtle laxity. The practitioner is able to identify the distinction between the coarse and subtle laxity from this stage.
15. At this point, one is able to identify that the mind has wandered, although it still is attracted by the sensual objects, which is indicated by the elephant looking back.
16. Stage 4 - *Close setting*
17. The fifth and sixth stages are attained through the power of introspection.
18. The potential to arise excitement prior to meditation has decreased.

19. Other than the intended meditation, arising of mental states, be they virtuous, distracts the cultivation of this meditation, it is encouraged not to follow them.
20. It is through the power of introspection that the mind is not getting scattered. When uplifted, the mind flows into concentration.
21. Stage 5 – *Controlled setting*
22. Stage 6 – *Pacification*
23. The seventh and eighth stages are attained through the power of joyous effort.
24. Stage 7 – *Complete pacification*  
Even the subtle laxity and excitement finds it difficult to arise. With little effort, they can be stopped should they arise.
25. The black color of the elephant disappears. The monkey is also no more there. This is indicative of the mind's ability to flow in meditative concentration without any tendency for interruption from laxity and excitement or discursive thoughts should the practitioner begin the meditation with little application of introspection and mindfulness.
26. Stage 8 – *Single-pointed setting*
27. The ninth stage is attained through the power of familiarity.
28. Stage 9 – *Equal setting*
29. Physical pliancy
30. Mental pliancy
31. Shamatha is accomplished
32. Through the attainment of special insight in unison with Shamata focused on emptiness, the practitioner severs the final ignorance grasping at the selfhood of person and phenomena which is the final root of Samsara.
33. Through the refined mindfulness and introspection, one is encouraged to seek the correct insight into the ultimate reality.







## GLOSSARY

*Able One*: (also Buddha) the one who has subdued the four gross and four subtle devils. The four devils are the devil of aggregates, afflictions, death, and the son of God.

*Akanishtha* [Skt.]: (also Heaven Beneath None) the highest of the eighteen heavens in the form realm; it also refers to the pure land where all the Buddhas achieve Enlightenment.

*Arhat* [Skt.]: one who is freed from samsara by abandoning the afflictions such as self grasping ignorance by completing the five paths - the path of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no more learning.

*Aryadeva* [2 CE]: the principal disciple of Arya Nagarjuna; some of his major works on philosophy and logic constitute *Four Hundred Verses on the Middle Way* (in sutra) and *Compendium of Conducts* (in tantra).

*Asanga* [300 - 370 CE]: one of the seventeen Nalanda scholars, his appearance was prophesied by the Buddha. While he held the philosophy of Madhyamaka, he was mainly credited for being the trailblazer of the Chittamatra school of thought.

*Asura* [Skt.]: (demi-god) one of the six classes of sentient beings. See *Six classes of sentient beings*.

*Awakening Mind*: see *Bodhicitta*.

*Bardo* [Tib.]: an intermediate state; a state of existence between death and next birth; one of the four existences - birth state, living state, death state, and intermediate existence.

*Bhagavan* [Skt.]: an epithet of the Buddha; See *Buddha*.

*Bhavaviveka* [500 - 570 CE]: trailblazer of the Svatantrika Madhyamaka school, counted amongst the seventeen great scholars of the erstwhile Nalanda University.

*Bhikshu* [Skt.]: (Bhikku in Pali) a fully ordained monk or nun.

*Bhumi* [Skt.]: literally, ground or earth. In Mahayana there are ten Bodhisattva grounds or *bhumis* - (1) The Extremely Joyous; (2) The Stainless; (3) The Luminous; (4) The Radiant; (5) The Difficult to Overcome; (6) The Approaching/Facing/The Close Approach; (7) The Gone Afar; (8) The Immovable; (9) The Good Intelligence/Excellent Insight; and (10) The Cloud of Dharma.

*Bodhicitta* [Skt.]: spontaneous altruistic intention to achieve Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.

*Buddha* [Skt.]: one who has eliminated all the mental defilements and whose qualities have proliferated infinitely. See *Able One*.

*Bodhisattva*: courageous beings who have generated bodhicitta to become Buddhas for the benefit of all sentient beings through engaging in Bodhisattva deeds such as the *Ten Perfections*.

*Chandrakirti* [600 - 650 CE]: one of the seventeen great Nalanda scholars, credited as the trailblazer of Prasangika Madhyamaka school of thought; his major contributions are *Clear Words* [Skt. *prasanapada*; Tib. tshig gsal], *Entry into the Middle Way* [Skt. *madhyamakavatara*; Tib. dbu ma la 'jug pa], and *Clear Lamp* [Skt. *pradipaodotanam*; Tib.].

*Clear Light*: it is of two kinds: Objective Clear Light - the ultimate reality in the form of emptiness of intrinsic existence and Subjective Clear Light - the subtlest mind manifested at the end of dissolution of all the gross minds.

*Commitment being*: one of the three beings explained in tantra - (1) commitment being; (2) wisdom being; and (3) concentration being;

*Completion stage*: one of the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra - generation stage and completion stage.

*Compositional aggregates*: (also compositional factors) it is one of the five aggregates - (1) aggregate of form; (2) aggregate of feeling;

(3) aggregate of discrimination; (4) aggregate of compositional factors; and (5) aggregate of consciousness.

*Conqueror*: an epithet of the Buddha; See *Buddha*.

*Dependent Origination*: the phenomenon of coming into existence by dependence on other factors. There are three levels of dependent origination - (1) causal dependence; (2) whole's dependence on its parts; and (3) dependence on mere mental designation.

*Dharmakaya* [Skt.]: the Buddha's body in general is known as Dharmakaya; more specifically, it is one of the three divisions of the Buddha's body - (1) Truth Body [Skt. *dharmakaya*; Tib. *chos sku*]; (2) Enjoyment Body [Skt. *sambhogakaya*; Tib. *longs sku*]; and (3) Emanation Body [Skt. *nirmanakaya*; Tib. *sprul sku*].

*Dharmadhatu* [Skt.]: is the Buddha nature that exists in every sentient being. It is of two kinds - (1) natural Buddha nature; and (2) proliferating Buddha nature.

*Dharmakirti* [7 CE]: (Tib. *chos kyi grags pa*) one of the seventeen Nalanda masters, he wrote seven treatises on valid cognition, among them his famous *Commentary on (Dignaga's) "Compendium of Valid Cognition"* (Skt. *pramanavarttika*, tib. *tshad ma rnam 'grel*).

*Dharmapala* [Skt.]: literally, Dharma protector or defender; in Buddhism it refers to a being who helps to eliminate obstacles and gather the necessary conditions for Dharma practice.

*Dhatu* [Skt.]: expanse of ultimate reality which refers to the emptiness of intrinsic existence.

*Dignaga* [480 - 540 CE]: one of the seventeen Nalanda scholars who is credited as the progenitor of Buddhist logic; his major work is *Compendium of Valid Cognitions* [Skt. *Pramanasamucchaya*; Tib. *tshad ma kun las btus pa*]

*Dipamkara* [982 - 1054 CE]: a Buddhist saint scholar from Bengal

who was invited to Tibet by Lha Lama Yeshe O and Jangchub O. He lived in Tibet and taught Buddhism there for thirteen years. He is the founder of the *Kadampa* Buddhist tradition and to his credit are twenty texts, the principal of which is *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* [Skt. *bodhipathapradipa*; Tib. *byang chub lam sgron*]

*Eight Mundane Concerns*: are presented in four pairs of opposites - (1 - 2) joy over material gain and sadness over material loss; (3 - 4) joy over pleasure and sadness over misery; (5 - 6) joy over praise and sadness over deprecation; and (7 - 8) joy over fame and sadness over infamy.

*Elements*: there are numerous ways of identifying elements. One classification is in the form of Eighteen elements - (1 - 6) the six objects as the base elements : (1) form; (2) sound; (3) smell; (4) taste; (5) tactility; and (6) objects of the mind/phenomenal source; (7 - 12) the six sense powers as the dependee elements: (1) eye sense power; (2) ear sense power; (3) nose sense power; (4) tongue sense power; (5) body sense power; and (6) mental sense power; (13 - 18) the six consciousnesses as the dependent elements: (1) eye consciousness; (2) ear consciousness; (3) nose consciousness; (4) tongue consciousness; (5) body consciousness; and (6) mental consciousness. Another classification is the form of Six elements - (1) earth; (2) water; (3) fire; (4) air; (5) space; and (6) consciousness.

*Emptiness*: (also ultimate reality, suchness, thatness) the final nature of phenomena in the form of the absence of inherent existence.

*Extreme of Existence*: (also extreme of absolutism, eternalism, permanence) the reification of what does not exist as existent. For example, viewing selfless phenomena as of self-hood.

*Extreme of Non-Existence*: (also extreme of nihilism) a viewpoint that denigrates existent things as non-existent. For example,

denigrating the law of cause and effect.

*Five Heinous Deeds:* (also five immeasurable negative deeds or five crimes with immediate retribution) they are - (1) killing one's mother; (2) killing one's father; (3) killing an Arhat; (4) creating a schism in the Sangha; and (5) maliciously drawing blood from a the body of a Buddha.

*Final Two Perfections:* the last two of the Ten Perfections. See *Ten perfections*.

*Foe-destroyer* [Tib. *dra chom pa*]: (also Arhat) the one who has abandoned the foe of afflictions from the root and thus are freed from samsara altogether.

*Four Classes of Tantra:* (1) Action Tantra [Skt. *kriyatantra*; Tib. *bya rgyud*]; (2) Performance Tantra [Skt. *charyatantra*; Tib. *spyod rgyud*]; (3) Yoga Tantra [Tib. *rnal 'byor rgyud*; and (4) Highest yoga tantra [Skt. *anuttarayogatantra*; Tib. *rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud*].

*Four Devils:* are - (1) the devil of aggregates; (2) the devil of afflictions; (3) the devil of death; and (4) the devil of the son of God. The gross ones stop you from achieving nirvana and the subtle ones stop you from achieving Buddhahood.

*Four Great Elements:* (1) earth; (2) water; (3) fire; and (4) air.

*Four Noble Truths:* (1) the truth of suffering; (2) the truth of the origin of suffering and its causes; (3) the truth of the cessation of suffering and its causes; and (4) the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering and its causes.

*Foundational Consciousness* [Skt. *alyavijnana*; Tib. *kun gzhi'i rnam shes*]: one of the eight types of consciousness asserted by Chittamatra school. It is described as the primary, and the store-house or repository of all mental imprints. The eight consciousnesses are - (1) eye consciousness [Skt. *caksuvijnanam*]; (2) ear consciousness [Skt. *svotravijnanam*]; (3) nose consciousness [Skt. *ghranavijnanam*]; (4) tongue

consciousness [Skt. *jihvavijnanam*]; (5) body consciousness [Skt. *kaya vijnanam*]; (6) mental consciousness [Skt. *manovijnanam*]; (7) afflictive consciousness [Skt. *klesavijnanam*]; and (8) foundational consciousness: the mental basis of all [Skt. *alayavijnanam*].

*Garuda* [Tib. *ja khyung*]: celestial eagle; a bird in Buddhist and Hindu mythology which is depicted as half human and half eagle.

*Gandharvas* [Skt.]: literally, the smell eaters; a category of hungry ghosts who primarily feed on smell.

*Great Seer*: an epithet of the Buddha; See *Buddha*.

*Gunaprabha*: one of the seventeen Nalanda scholars. His main contribution is in the study of *Vinaya* on moral the codes of monastics and the Monasteries. He wrote *Vinayamulasutra* [Tib. 'dul ba mdo rtsa ba]

*Guru Padmasambhava* [Tib. *Guru Rinpoche*, 8 CE]: a great Indian saint and tantric adept who was one of the three principal persons responsible for Buddhism taking root in Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The three are Bodhisattva Shantarakshita, Guru Padmasambhava and the emperor Trisong Detsen, 38<sup>th</sup> king of Tibet.

*Haribhadra* [459 - 529 CE]: one of the seventeen Nalanda scholars; among his many contributions, the most important is *Clear Meaning* [Skt. *abhisamayalakaranama-prajna-paramitopadesasastravrtti*; Tib. 'grel pa don gsal], a commentary on Arya Maitreya's *Abhisamayalamkara*.

*Highest Yoga Tantra*: one of the four classes of tantra. In the Nyingma tradition, the Highest Yoga Tantra corresponds to the three inner tantras of Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga. According to the Sarma tradition, Highest Yoga Tantras are divided into Mother Tantras (such as the *Chakrasamvara Tantra*), Father Tantras (such as the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, the *King of Tantras*) and Non-dual Tantras (such as the *Kalachakra Tantra*).

*Heruka*: a principal deity of the Mother Tantras. He has a blue-coloured body, four faces, and twelve arms.

*Hevajra*: one of the fully enlightened deities in Vajrayana.

*Heaven Beneath None* [Skt. *akanishtha*; Tib. 'og min stugpo bkodpa'i zhing khams]; See *Akanishtha*.

*Illusion-like Emptiness*: an experience which a practitioner of the wisdom of emptiness goes through when she or he comes out of the meditative equipoise on emptiness, where she or he perceives everything as illusion-like.

*In Praise of Dharmadhatu* [Skt. *dharmadhātustava*; Tib. *chos kyi dbyings su bstod pa*]: a treatise written by Arya Nagarjuna that primarily explains the Buddha nature called *dharmadhatu*, which is one of the primary subject matter of the Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma. It belongs to Arya Nagarjuna's Collection of Praises.

*Jangchup Wo*: a descendant of Tibetan king Tri Relpachen who along with Yesheho was responsible for inviting Atisha Dipamkara to Tibet in the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE for the second dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet.

*Kamalashila* [8 CE]: one of the seventeen Nalanda scholars.; a disciple of Bodhisattva Shantarakshita who was invited to Tibet by king Trisong Deutsen. He defeated the Chinese monk Ha-shang in debate as a part of reviving Buddhism in Tibet. His contributions include treatises such as *Stages of Meditation* [Skt. *bhavanakrama*; Tib. *sgom pa'i rim pa*] – the beginning, middle and end, and *Illuminating the Middle Way* [Skt. *madhyamakalankara*, Tib. *dbu ma snang ba*].

*Karma* [Skt.]: 'action' which involves mental intention; it is of three kinds - physical, verbal and mental. In a broad sense, from the point of view of progress on the spiritual path, it can be classified into ten virtuous karmas to be engaged in and their opposite, the ten non-virtuous karmas to be refrained from (see *Ten*



*Non-virtues*). Practicing the virtues will result in taking birth in the favourable realms - human or celestial realms; whereas engaging in the non-virtuous karmas will result in throwing us into rebirth in the three lower realms – animal, hungry ghost or hell realms.

*Karmic Defilements of Three Doors*: non-virtuous actions engaged in through the (doors) of body, speech and mind.

*Lama Tsongkhapa* [1357 - 1419 CE]: a Tibetan saint-scholar who was the founder of Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and one of the greatest contributors in the literary world of Buddhism in Tibet.

*Lamrim*: translates as ‘stages of the path’ or ‘graded path of Enlightenment’, which involves three stages: path for the small scope, middle scope and great scope person.

*Mara* [Skt.]: devil; in the practice of Dharma there is the mention of four devils which obstruct one from achieving the goal of Enlightenment. See *Four Devils*.

*Mahakala* [Skt. *mahākāla*; Tib. *nag po chen po* but usually *mgon po*]: - a supermundane dharma protector who appears in a number of forms, such as Four-arm Mahakala, Six-arm Mahakala, Bernakchen, Maning Nakpo and Pañjaranatha (Tib. gurgyi gönpö).

*Mahamudra* [Skt.]: The Great Seal; spiritual realisation of the subtlest clear light which is focused on the ultimate reality which pervades all phenomena; this practice was primarily inherited from the great saints like saint Sarah, saint Tilopa, and saint Naropa.

*Maitreya*: the future Buddha after Buddha Shakyamuni, who presently resides in Tushita realm. It is said that if one hears and thinks about the five treatises which he revealed to Arya Asanga, one will be reborn in the Tushit pure land. Arya Maitreya is the embodiment of love. The five treatises are: (1) *Ornament of Mahayana Sutra* [Skt. *mahayanasutralamkara*;

Tib. *theg pa chen po'i mdo sde rgyan*]; (2) *Ornament of Clear Realisation* [Skt. *abhisamayalamkara*; Tib. *mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan*]; (3) *Clear Distinction between the Middle Way and Extremes* [Skt. *madhyantavibhanga*; Tib. *dbus dang mtha' rnam par 'byed pa*]; (4) *Clear Distinction between Phenomena and their Reality* [Skt. *dharmatavibhanga*; Tib. *chos dang chos nyid rnam par 'byed pa*]; and (5) *The Sublime Continuum* [Skt. *uttaratantra*; Tib. *rgyud bla ma*].

*Manjushrigarbha*: the Buddha of wisdom in the tantra system and a Bodhisattva of wisdom in the sutra system.

*Marpa Lotsawa*: a great Tibetan master of 11<sup>th</sup> century CE, who was one of the principal students of saint Naropa and the teacher of Jetsun Milarepa. He was one of the greatest contributors in the teaching lineage of Mahamudra, Shri Chakrasamvara and Shri Guhyasamajatantra.

*Migrator*: (also sentient being) a being who in general migrates from one life to the other. This includes all beings who are yet to achieve Buddhahood.

*Mind Only* [Skt. *cittamatra*; Tib. *sems tsampa*]: (also *Yogachara* or *Vijnanavadin*) a Buddhist school of thought whose fundamental philosophy advocates that everything is of the nature of mind.

*Nagarjuna* [150 - 250 CE]: the trailblazer of Madhyamaka school of philosophy which propounds that while nothing has true existence the conventional existence of actions and agents is feasible. He was prophesied by the Buddha Shakyamuni to appear four hundred years after the mahaparinirvana of the Buddha. He was born in a Brahmin family in South India and also revered as the second Buddha. There are numerous texts in both sutra and tantra to his credit. In sutra, there are two sets of genre – six major works on Madhyamika philosophy and the genre of praises. In tantra, he wrote *Panchakarma* [Tib. *rim lnga*], *Sutramayshavara* [Tib. *mdo byed*], and *Pindavitisadhana* [Tib. *mdo sred*] amongst others.

*Nirvana* [Skt.]: attainment of nirvana marks the end of cyclic

existence [Skt. *samsara*] where one is liberated of all afflictions. It can be classified into three - (1) nirvana with remainder; (2) nirvana without remainder; and (3) Non-abiding nirvana. (1) Nirvana with remainder is nirvana where the Arhat continues to live in the contaminated body which she derived from her birth due to the previous contaminated karmas and afflictions. (2) Nirvana without remainder is the one which is free of all the five contaminated aggregates such as the gross physical body. The interpretation of nirvana with remainder and without remainder differs in Prasangika philosophy. Nirvana from the point of view of Prasangika is understood as the state of cessation of defilements from the ultimate reality of the mind. (3) Non-abiding nirvana refers to Buddhahood.

*Non-dual Exalted Wisdom*: (also non-dual wisdom of emptiness; non-conceptual wisdom of emptiness; direct insight into emptiness) the wisdom of emptiness where the subject-object duality dissolves.

*Non-duality*: the non-duality of subject-object, where a practitioner other than Buddha experiences only emptiness.

*One Gone to Bliss* [Skt. *Sugata*]: an epithet of the Buddha; a fully enlightened being who has achieved the highest state of bliss which transcends all mundane bliss.

*Padmapani* [Skt.]: (also Avalokiteshvara) is a Bodhisattva who embodies the compassion of all Buddhas.

*Parinirvana* [Skt.]: that which is beyond (para) nirvana; the Buddha Shakyamuni attained nirvana under the bodhi tree in Bodhgaya and parinirvana when He assumed passing away.

*Perfect View*: refers to the wisdom of emptiness.

*Performance Tantra* [Skt. *caryatantra*]: the second of the four classes of tantra. See *four classes of tantra*.

*Practitioners of Three Scopes*: there are three types of persons pertaining to the level of realisation in the practice of Dharma.

They are: (1) practitioner of small scope; (2) practitioner of middle scope; and (3) practitioner of great scope.

*Prajna* [Skt.]: wisdom.

*Prasangika (Madhyamaka) School*: the highest Buddhist school amongst the four tenets, which rejects any degree of objective existence. It is one of the two divisions of the Madhyamaka School of philosophy.

*Pratimoksha* vows: are vows observed by aspirants of personal nirvana. There are eight types of pratimoksha vows: (1) vows of the fully ordained monk [Skt. *bhiksusamvara*]; (2) vows of the fully ordained nun [Skt. *bhiksunisamvara*]; (3) vows of the novice monk [Skt. *sramanerasamvara*]; (4) vows of the novice nun [Skt. *sramanerasamvara*]; (5) vows of the layman [Skt. *upasakasamvara*]; (6) vows of the laywoman [Skt. *upasika*]; (7) probationary vows [Skt. *siksamanasamvara*]; and (8) one day ordination vows [Skt. *upavasinsamvara*].

*Pratyekabuddha*: literally, 'a Self-realiser'; the beings who seek Enlightenment are classified into three - Shravaka, Pratyekabuddha and Bodhisattva. The nirvana of Pratyekabuddha is much subtler than that of Shravaka but inferior to that of the Buddhas.

*Preta* [Skt.]: hungry ghost which is one of the six classes of sentient beings.

*Ratnamala*: also *Precious Garland: of Advice for the King* [Skt. *rajaparikatharatnavah*, Tib. *rgyal po la gtam bya ba rin po che'i phreng ba*], is one of the six treatises of Madhyamaka philosophy written by Arya Nagarjuna. The text was addressed to his friend, a king of the Satavahana dynasty, who ruled over a vast area of India. The Precious Garland contains very practical advice, still relevant today, on how to govern in accordance with the Buddha's teaching.

*Realm of Desire*: samsara can be classified into three realms - (1) desire realm; (2) form realm; and (3) formless realm; desire realm is characterised as the realm where the beings who are born here are more obsessed by the five sensual objects.

*Realm of Form*: one of the three realms of samsara; it has four further divisions - (1) first concentration form realm; (2) second concentration form realm; (3) third concentration form realm; and (4) fourth concentration form realm.

*Rahu* [Skt.]: classical Indian legend has it that during the churning of the ocean [Skt. *samudramanathan*], the Asura Svarbhanu drank some of the nectar [Skt. *amrita*]. The Sun and the Moon realised it and alerted Mohini, the female avatar of Vishnu. Mohini cut off Svarbhānu's head before the nectar could pass his throat. The head, however, remained immortal due to the effect of amrita and became Rahu.

*Renunciation*: the aspiration to achieve total freedom from all the fears of samsara (see *three miseries or sufferings*), which are propelled under the force of afflictions and contaminated karmas that are in turn triggered by ignorance that misconceives the reality of self and phenomena as objectively real.

*Rudra* [Skt.]: is a being in a form of spirit.

*Rupakaya* [Skt.]: the form body of the Buddha; one of the two divisions of Buddha's body - Rupakaya and Dharmakaya.

*Sugata* [Skt.]: The One Gone to Bliss; the one who has reached the final state of bliss of Buddhahood. There is also the mention of two kinds of Sugata: Sugata of cessation and Sugata of realisation.

*Samadhi* [Skt.]: meditative concentration.

*Samantabhadra* [Skt.]: literally, forever noble; it is also the name of one of the eight great Bodhisattvas.

*Samaya* [Skt.]: pledge.

*Sangha* [Skt.]: actual Sangha refers to any practitioner who has achieved direct realisation of emptiness. Symbolic Sangha refers to a group of four monastic members. In a broader sense, all monastics are referred to as Sangha.

*Self-grasping Ignorance*: the misconception which mistakenly views self and other phenomena as inherently real as opposed to being dependently originated and empty of objective existence.

*Self-centered Attitude*: self-referential mind, the grosser one of which views the self as more important than others and the subtler one which views the self as important while being oblivious to the importance of others.

*Shamatha* [Skt.]: an advanced state of single pointed meditation, which is enhanced and tempered by pliancy; it is trained with the help of the nine mental stages of practice. The minimum qualification to have achieved full fledged Shamatha is to achieve stability of the single pointed meditation totally free of the two flaws of excitement and laxity and be able to maintain this state for at least four hours at a stretch.

*Shravakas* [Skt.]: one of the three aspirants of nirvana. The three aspirants are: Shravakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas. The mental caliber of Shravaka is less than the other two. The Sanskrit word Shravaka means, 'one who hears and proclaims'.

*Siddhis* [Skt.]: spiritual feats; they are of two kinds. See *Two Attainments*.

*Six Perfections*: (1) generosity; (2) moral ethics; (3) patience; (4) enthusiasm; (5) meditative concentration; and (6) wisdom.

*Six Sense Sources or Sense Powers*: (1) eye sense power; (2) ear sense power; (3) nose sense power; (4) tongue sense power; (5) body sense power; and (6) mental sense power. Sense power along with the other two conditions – the observed object and the immediately preceding moment of mental consciousness – gives rise to a sense consciousness such as eye sense consciousness; the six sense sources are a division of the eighteen elements.

Supreme Yana [Skt. *mahayana*]: the system of Dharma practice motivated by the wish to benefit all sentient beings.

*Sutra* [Skt.]: it has several connotations - (1) all teachings of the Buddha are referred to as Sutras; (2) Sutra as opposed to tantra; and (3) Sutra in the context of the three baskets of the Buddha's teachings [Skt. *tripitaka*]: Vinaya, Sutra and Abhidharma. Here it refers to the collection of teachings whose main subject matter deals with meditation.

*Svatantrika Madhyamaka School* [Skt.]: one of the two Madhyamaka Schools of philosophy - Svatantrika and Prasangika. This school was founded by Acharya Bhavaviveka [6<sup>th</sup> Cent. CE]; its unique tenet is the rejection of true existence while asserting self characteristics on the conventional level.

*Suchness*: (also ultimate reality or emptiness) See *emptiness*.

*Ten Non-virtues* [Skt. *dasadusalani*; Tib. *mi gaywa chu*]: divided into three sets - three non-virtues of the body: (1) killing; (2) stealing; and (3) sexual misconduct; four non-virtues of the speech: (4) lying; (5) slander (divisive speech); (6) harsh speech (insulting words); and (7) idle gossip; three non-virtues of mind: (8) covetousness; (9) malicious intent; and (10) wrong view (of disbelieving in the law of cause and effect).

*Ten Perfections*: perfection of (1) generosity; (2) ethical discipline; (3) patience; (4) enthusiasm; (5) meditative concentration; (6) wisdom; (7) skillfulness; (8) aspirational prayers; (9) power; and (10) discriminatory wisdom.

*Tetralema*: the four possible modes presented in a logical proposition, by which true existence is rejected. They are: (1) the rejection of the extreme of existence; (2) the rejection of the extreme of non-existence; (3) the rejection of the extreme of both existence and non-existence; and (4) the rejection of the extreme of neither existence and non-existence.

*The Seven Treatises on Epistemology*: (1) *Commentary on Valid*

*Cognition* [Skt. *pramanavartika*]; (2) *Discernment of Valid Cognition* [Skt. *pramanaviniscaya*]; (3) *Drop of Reasoning on Valid Cognition* [Skt. *nyayabindu*]; (4) *Drop of Logical Reasoning* [Skt. *hetubindu*]; (5) *Analysis of Relationship* [Skt. *sambandhapariksa*]; (6) *Establishing Alternative Continuum* [Skt. *samtanantarasiddhi*]; and (7) *Science of Debate* [Skt. *vadanyaya*].

*Three Conqueror's Bodies*: three Buddha bodies - (1) Truth Body [Skt. *dharmakaya*]; (2) Complete Enjoyment Body [Skt. *sambhogakaya*]; and (3) Emanation body [Skt. *nirmanakaya*].

*Three Divine Bodies*: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya.

*Three Realms*: whole samsara where the sentient beings take birth is divided into three realms on the basis of the refinement of their meditative experience; three realms are: (1) desire realm; (2) form realm; and (3) formless realm.

*Three Miseries or Sufferings*: (1) suffering of suffering; (2) suffering of change; and (3) pervasive conditioned suffering.

*Three yanas* [Skt.]: literally, three vehicles - Shravakayana, Pratyekabuddhayana, and Mahayana.

*Tushita* [Skt.]: this is where Buddha Shakyamuni anointed Arya Maitreya as his Regent before taking birth as prince Siddhartha on planet earth.

*Twelve Links of Dependent Origination*: refer to the “Wheel of Life” in the Appendix for a detailed explanation.

*Twenty Stanzas*: one of the treatises written by Acharya Vasubandhu.

*Two Attainments*: common spiritual attainment and supreme spiritual attainment. The former includes clairvoyance, prolonging life span and so forth. Supreme spiritual attainments



include the advanced spiritual qualities like illusory body, Meaning Clear Light, Union, *Buddhahood* and so forth.

*Two Bodhicittas*: ultimate bodhicitta and conventional bodhicitta.

Ultimate bodhicitta is the non-dual experience of emptiness of Arya Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. Conventional bodhicitta is the spontaneous altruistic intention to become Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings.

*Two Collections*: the collection of merit and collection of wisdom.

*Two Extremes* [Skt. *divyanta*; Tib. *mtha nyi*]: the extreme of permanence or reification [Skt. *nityanta*] and the extreme of nihilism [Skt. *ucchedanta*]. See *extreme of existence and non-existence*.

*Two Mental Obscurations*: (1) afflictive obscurations which obscure one from achieving nirvana; and (2) cognitive obscurations which obscure one from achieving Buddhahood.

*Ultimate Awakening Mind*: Ultimate bodhicitta; the provisional part of the two divisions of bodhicitta – conventional bodhicitta and the ultimate bodhicitta. The former refers to the spontaneous aspiration to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. The latter is provisionally referred to as bodhicitta, it is the non-dual wisdom of emptiness which the Bodhisattvas in the path of seeing and above as well as the Buddhas experience.

*Ultimate Truth*: emptiness of independent existence.

*Vaibhasika* [Skt.]: one of the four main Buddhist schools of philosophy - (1) *Vaibhasika*; (2) *Sautantrika*; (3) *Chittamatra*; and (4) *Madhyamika*.

*Vajradhara* [Skt.]: Buddha in the context of Tantrayana.

*Vajradhatu Ishvari* [Tib. *dorje ing chukma*]: name of a female deity.

*Vajrasattva* [Skt.]: the Buddha which manifested in relation to the practice of purification. He is blue in color and holds a vajra

in his right hand, at the heart and a bell in the left hand at his waist. Recitation of the hundred-syllable mantra is uniquely associated with the practice of Shree Vajrasattva for purification of negative karmas and afflictions.

*Vasubandhu*: born in Purusapura present day Peshawar [316 CE] half-brother of Arya Asanga; his major contributions are *Abhidharmakosa* and its auto commentary; there are several treatises on Chittamatra philosophy ascribed to him.

*Victor*: (refers to Buddha) See *Buddha*.

*Vijnanavadin* [Skt.]: (also *Chittamatra* philosophers) See *Mind Only*.

*Vinaya* [Skt.]: set of the teachings on the moral discipline which is one of the 'three baskets of teachings of the Buddha' [Skt. *tripitaka*]: (1) *Vinaya*, the content of which is discipline [Skt. *shila*]; (2) *Sutra*, the content of which is meditative concentration [Skt. *samadhi*]; and (3) *Abhidharma*, the content of which is wisdom [Skt. *prajna*].

*Vimuktisena* [6 CE]: one of the seventeen Nalanda scholars.

*Viradatta*: Aryapajin.

*Viras*: refers to heroes in tantra.

*Virinis*: refers to heroines in tantra.

*Vows of Individual Liberation*: also pratimoksha vows; see *Prati-moksha* vows.

*Yakshas* [Skt.] a class of beings with some special powers such as having control over rain; some of them are dharma protectors.

*Yidam* [Tib.]: fully enlightened deity in tantra.

*Yoga Tantra*: the third of the four classes of tantra. See *four classes of tantra*.

## ENDNOTES

### Preface

1. See *Sun Illuminating the Threefold Faith: Praise to the Seventeen Nalanda Masters* [Tib. *dpal nalanda' pangrub bchu bdung yi gsol 'debs*], pp. 19-25.
2. *Nalanda university*: The Nalanda monastic university, in what is now the Indian state of Bihar, was one of the greatest centres of secular and Buddhist studies in India from the 5 CE - c.1200 CE. At its peak, the school attracted scholars and students from near and far with some travelling from Tibet, China, Korea, Central Asia and Indonesia. All students at Nalanda studied Mahayana as well as the texts of the eighteen sub sects of Buddhism. Their curriculum also included other subjects such as *Hetuvidyā* [Logic], *Shabdavidya* [Grammar and Philology] and *Chikitsavidya* [Medicine]. It was famed for its outstanding and vast library.
3. *Heart Sūtra mantra*: In Mahayana Buddhism, one presentation of the path that leads us to Buddhahood is divided into five stages on the basis of the mental purification. Each stage is encoded in this precious Heart Sūtra mantra – (1) GATE: path of accumulation; (2) GATE: path of preparation; (3) PARAGATE: path of seeing; (4) PARASAMGATE: path of meditation; and (5) BODHI SVAHA: path of no-more learning or Buddhahood.

### Preliminary Prayers

4. *Proper motivation*: often referred to as the two actions to be done - “one at the beginning and one at the end” of all practices - refers to setting a correct motivation at the start of any practice and dedicating the merit accumulated at the end. This is formulated by the Kadampa masters.
5. Concluding verse, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* [Skt. *mulamadhyamakakarika*] by Arya Nagarjuna.
6. Opening homage verse, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle*

Way [Skt. *mulamadhyamakakarika*] by Arya Nagarjuna.

7. Homage verse, *Ornament of Clear Realisation* [Skt. *abhisamayalankara*; Tib. *mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan*] by Arya Maitreya, is a Mahayana text containing instructions on the hidden aspect of the Perfection of Wisdom sūtras. The fact that there are twenty-one Indian commentaries on this work and many others by Tibetan masters indicates its great importance. It served as one of the most important basis for all the later Tibetan literature on the stages of the path.
8. Homage verse, *Compendium of Valid Cognition* [Skt. *pramanasamuchaya*] by Acharya Dignaga.
9. Homage verse, *Commentary on Valid Cognition* [Skt. *pramanavartika*] by Acharya Dharmakirti.
10. This is a resolution the Buddha made shortly after his enlightenment that is recorded in the *Play in Full Sūtra* [Skt. *lalitavistara sūtra*; Tib. *rgya cher rol pa*]. By making this statement, Buddha was underlining the profundity of the ultimate reality which he had discovered.
11. *Four Seals of the Buddha's teachings*: [Skt. *caturlaksana*; Tib. *lta ba bka' rtags kyi phyag rgya bzhi*] Buddhism is distinguished by these four characteristics or seals.
12. This quote is found in both, the *King of Samadhi Sūtra* [Skt. *samādhirājasūtra*, Tib. *ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po'i mdo*], also known as the *Moon Lamp Sūtra* [Skt. *Candrapradīpa Sūtra*, Tib. *zla ba sgron me'i mdo*], and *Udānavarga* [Tib. *ched du brjod pa'i tshoms*].
13. Verse 3.5, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* [Skt. *bodhisattvacaryavatara*, Tib. *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*] by Bodhisattva Shantideva.
14. During a six-month retreat focused on Arya Manjushri, at the young age of twelve, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo had a clear vision of the deity. Arya Manjushri appeared to him, seated on a jewelled throne, resplendent, orange in colour, his hands in the mudra of expounding the Dharma, and surrounded by an entourage of Bodhisattvas. Arya Manjushri proceeded to give him the instructions on parting from

the four attachments. Upon deeper contemplation of the four-line teaching, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo was able to gain profound insight into all aspects of the practice of Dharma present in these concise pith instructions.

### Blessing the Speech

15. *Seven precious royal symbols*: [Skt. *saptaratna*; Tib. *rgyal srid sna bdun*] are the seven possessions of a universal monarch, symbolising the seven noble riches. They are - (1) the precious golden wheel; (2) the precious wish-fulfilling jewel; (3) the precious queen; (4) the precious minister; (5) the precious elephant for power and courage; (6) the precious horse for strength and discipline; and (7) the precious general.
16. *Eight auspicious signs*: (1) umbrella; (2) a pair of golden fish; (3) treasure vase; (4) lotus; (5) white conch shell with coils turning to the right; (6) endless knot; (7) victory banner; and (8) wheel of dharma.
17. *Three pure bhumis*: the last three of the ten Bodhisattva grounds [Skt. *bhumis*; Tib. *sa*], so called because they are purified of afflictions. See *Bhumi* in the glossary.

### The Sutra Remembering the Three Jewels

18. *Marks of Buddhahood*: there are thirty-two major divine marks and eighty minor marks of a Buddha. The thirty-two major marks of a Buddha are: (1) The palms of his hands and feet bear signs of a wheel; (2) His feet are well set upon the ground like a tortoise; (3) His fingers and toes are webbed; (4) The palms of his hands and soles of his feet are smooth and tender; (5) His body has seven prominent features: broad heels, broad hands, broad shoulder blades and broad neck; (6) His fingers are long; (7) His heels are soft; (8) He is tall and straight; (9) His ankle-bones do not protrude; (10) The hairs on His body point upward; (11) His ankles are like an antelope's; (12) His hands are long and beautiful; (13) His private organ is withdrawn; (14) His body is the color of gold; (15) His skin is thin and smooth; (16) Each hair curls to the right; (17) His face is adorned by a coiled hair between His eyebrows; (18) The upper part of His body is like

that of a lion; (19) His head and shoulders are perfectly round; (20) His shoulders are broad; (21) He has an excellent sense of taste even of the worst tastes; (22) His body has the proportions of a banyan tree; (23) He has a protrusion on the crown of his head; (24) His tongue is long and thin; (25) His voice is mellifluous; (26) His cheeks are like those of a lion; (27) His teeth are white; (28) There are no gaps between his teeth; (29) His teeth are evenly set; (30) He has a total of forty teeth; (31) His eyes are the color of sapphire; and (32) His eyelashes are like those of a magnificent heifer.

The eighty minor marks of a Buddha are: (1) His nails are copper-colored; (2) His nails are moderately shiny; (3) His nails are raised; (4) His nails are round; (5) His nails are broad; (6) His nails are tapered; (7) His veins do not protrude; (8) His veins are free of knots; (9) His ankles do not protrude; (10) His feet are not uneven; (11) He walks with a lion's gait; (12) He walks with an elephant's gait; (13) He walks with the gait of a goose; (14) He walks with a bull's gait; (15) His gait tends to the right; (16) His gait is elegant; (17) His gait is steady; (18) His body is well-covered; (19) His body looks as if it were polished; (20) His body is well-proportioned; (21) His body is clean and pure; (22) His body is smooth; (23) His body is perfect; (24) His body contains the full set of thirty-two excellent signs of enlightening body; (25) His physical bearing is excellent and dignified; (26) His steps are even; (27) His eyes are perfect; (28) He is youthful; (29) His body is not sunken; (30) His body is broad; (31) His body is not loose; (32) His limbs are well-proportioned; (33) His vision is clear and not blurred; (34) His belly is round; (35) His belly is perfectly moderate; (36) His belly is not long; (37) His belly does not bulge; (38) His navel is deep; (39) His navel winds to the right; (40) He is perfectly handsome; (41) His habits are clean; (42) His body is free of moles and discolouration; (43) His hands are soft as cotton wool; (44) The lines on his palms are clear; (45) The lines on his palms are deep; (46) The lines on his palms are long; (47) His face is not too long; (48) His lips are red like copper; (49) His tongue is pliant; (50) His tongue is thin; (51) His tongue is red; (52) His voice is like thunder; (53) His voice is sweet and gentle; (54) His teeth are round; (55) His teeth are sharp; (56) His teeth are white; (57) His

teeth are even; (58) His teeth are tapered; (59) His nose is prominent; (60) His nose is clean; (61) His eyes are clear and wide; (62) His eyelashes are thick; (63) The black and white parts of his eyes are well-defined and are like lotus petals; (64) His eyebrows are long; (65) His eyebrows are smooth; (66) His eyebrows are soft; (67) His eyebrows are evenly haired; (68) His hands are long and extended; (69) His ears are of equal size; (70) His ear sense power is perfect; (71) His forehead is well-formed and well-defined; (72) His forehead is broad; (73) His head is very large; (74) His hair is as black as bumble bee; (75) His hair is thick; (76) His hair is soft; (77) His hair is untangled; (78) His hair is not unruly; (79) His hair is fragrant; and (80) His hands and feet are marked with auspicious emblems such as the Srivasta and Svastika.

### **Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha**

19. Excerpt from the Vinaya [Tib. 'dul ba].
20. Excerpt from the *Vajra Cutter Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* also commonly known as the *Diamond Sūtra* [Skt. *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*; Tib. 'phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa rdo rje gcod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo].

### **Sun Illuminating the Threefold Faith: Praise to the Seventeen Nalanda Masters**

21. *Mother of Conquerors*: refers to the Perfection of Wisdom.
22. *Three trainings*: (1) training in moral discipline [Skt. *śīlasikṣa*]; (2) training in concentration [Skt. *samādhisikṣa*]; and (3) training in wisdom [Skt. *prajñasikṣa*].
23. *Six Ornaments and Two Supreme Masters*: The Six Ornaments are Arya Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Arya Asanga, Acharyas Vasubandhu, Dignaga, and Dharmakīrti, and the Two Supremes are Acharyas Guṇaprabha and Shakyaprabha.

### **The Heart Sutra: The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra**

24. *Profound illumination*: refers to the non-dual experience of ultimate reality.
25. *Mantra of the Perfection of Wisdom*: see endnote 3.

## Seven Points of Training the Mind

26. *Three objects, three poisons, and three roots of virtue: three objects* - (1) the objects that please us; (2) the objects that make us uncomfortable or averse; and (3) the objects that we are indifferent to. *Three poisons* - also known as the three root afflictions are - (1) attachment; (2) aversion; and (3) ignorance. *Three roots of virtue* - (1) non-attachment; (2) non-aversion; and (3) non-ignorance.
27. *Single source*: refers to self-grasping ignorance as set out in the commentary by Geshe Chekawa Yeshe Dorje.
28. *Three views*: (1) the emptiness of the self; (2) the emptiness of the victim; and (3) the emptiness of the ailments.
29. *Treasury of space*: refers to the emptiness of objective existence, the ultimate reality.
30. *Four Buddha bodies*: (1) Sambhogakāya [Eng. *Enjoyment Body*, Tib. *longs sku*]; (2) Nirmānakāya [Eng. *Emanation Body*, Tib. *sprul sku*]; (3) Jñānadharmakāya [Eng. *Wisdom Dharmakaya*, Tib. *ye shes chos sku*]; and (4) Svabhāvakāya [Tib. *ngo bo nyid sku*].
31. *The fourfold practice*: (1) the accumulation of merit by making offerings to the deities and the spiritual teachers and supplicating them; (2) purifying your negative karmas; (3) making offerings to the malevolent forces; and (4) making offerings to the Dharma protectors.
32. *Five powers*: (1) the power of propelling intention; (2) The power of acquaintance; (3) The power of positive; (4) The power of eradication; and (5) The power of aspirational prayer.
33. *Single point*: to eliminate self-grasping ignorance.
34. *Two witnesses*: (1) self; and (2) others.
35. *Three general points*: (1) to not contravene your pledges; (2) do not become ostentatious in your mind training; and (3) that your mind should not be biased in your mind training.
36. *Poisonous food*: it is the self-interest harbored in the depths of one's heart.



37. *Single means*: mind training practice.
38. *Two tasks*: (1) setting a proper motivation at the start of the day; and (2) at night, reviewing one's activities of the day to check whether they have been virtuous or not.
39. *Two*: great fortune or great misfortune.
40. *The two*: (1) the precepts and commitments presented in the teachings in general; and (2) the commitments of this particular mind training teaching.
41. *Three difficult challenges*: When eliminating the afflictions, in the beginning it can be (1) difficult to remember the antidotes; (2) in the middle it can be difficult to overcome the afflictions; and (3) at the end it can be difficult to eradicate the continuum of the afflictions.
42. *Three principal conditions*: (1) there should be a qualified spiritual teacher who possesses the pith instructions and is endowed with higher realisations; (2) your state of mind should be such that (many realisations have arisen)—from (the rarity of) precious human existence to (the understanding of) selflessness—and these should have arisen just as contemplated or as taught by your teacher; and (3) conditions conducive to Dharma practice must be gathered—such as faith, intelligence, joyous effort, a strong sense of disenchantment with food and clothing, and other necessities.
43. *Three that are free of degeneration*: (1) Since all the attainments of the Mahayana depend upon the student's faith and respect (toward his or her teacher), make sure you are never divorced at any time from the perception of your teacher as a Buddha; (2) with the thought, "This mind training teaching represents the quintessence of Mahayana and is like a potent seed of Buddhahood," engage in this incomparable practice. Thus make sure your enthusiasm for mind training remains undiminished; and (3) the pledges of the Great and Lesser vehicles you have taken, you should, by sailing the great ship of shame and conscientiousness, which are the true antidotes, learn to guard them undiminished, not tainted by even the slightest infractions.
44. *Three inseparable factors*: are making sure that your body, speech, and mind are never divorced from virtuous activity at all times.

## Eight Verses for Training the Mind

45. *Eight mundane concerns*: [Tib. *'jig rten chos brgyad*] are presented in four pairs opposites - (1 – 2) joy over material gain and sadness over material loss; (3 – 4) joy over pleasure and sadness over misery; (5 – 6) joy over praise and sadness over deprecation; (7 – 8) joy over fame and sadness over infamy.
46. *Two collections*: [Skt. *sambhāradvaya*; Tib. *tshogs gnyis*] (1) collection or accumulation of wisdom [Skt. *jñāna*; Tib. *ye shes*]; and (2) collection or accumulation of merit [Skt. *punya*; Tib. *bsod nams*].

## Short Mandala Offering

47. *Non-duality of bliss and emptiness*: the wisdom which experiences great bliss with emptiness as its object.

## The Foundation of All Good Qualities

48. *Precious freedom of this rebirth*: Generally speaking, there are three types of human existence [Tib. *mi lus gsum*] – (1) merely human [Tib. *mi lus tsam po pa*], as described in the *The Treasury of Precious Qualities*, where “human beings are unaware of the defects of samsara, are without regret for their condition and actually crave the transient and futile pleasures of the higher realms. Totally unaware that they should engage in virtue and refrain from evil, they pass their lives sunk in negativity”; (2) special human existence [Tib. *mi lus khyad par can*], i.e., in which actions and attitudes oscillate between virtue and negativity; and (3) precious human existence [Tib. *mi lus rin po che*], this third kind is referred to here. It is characterised by eight freedoms and ten advantages or fortunes. The *eight freedoms* are - being free from eight adverse conditions. Four of them are - (1) non-human states as hell-beings, animals, hungry ghosts and celestial beings with extremely long lives; (2) the suffering of those in the bad states of rebirth is so intense that they cannot think about spiritual practice; (3) celestial beings with long lives are absorbed in sensual pleasures or the pleasure of concentration and cannot develop an aversion to cyclic existence; and (4) Their bodies and minds are not suitable as a basis for vows of any kind. There are four human states which prevent spiritual practice, the most serious of which is - (1) holding wrong views such as that there are no past and future lives and that there is no

connection between actions and their effects; (2) being born a barbarian in a remote place where there is no access to Buddhist teachings; (3) being born at a time when a Buddha's teachings do not exist in the world; and (4) having defective faculties are also serious impediments. *Fortune* means enjoying conducive conditions, five kinds of such fortune are personal – (1) being born as a human; (2) being born in a place “where the teachings exist and there are ordained men and women; (3) possessing healthy faculties; (4) not having created any seriously negative actions like the five extremely grave and the five almost as grave actions; and (5) having faith in spiritual teachers, the three kinds of training and the texts which contain instructions on them. Five kinds of good fortune are circumstantial - (1) that a Buddha has come to the world; (2) that he has lit the lamp of the teachings; (3) that these teachings are alive insofar as there are people who hear, think about and meditate on them; (4) that there are those who can be looked upon as role-models because of their exemplary practice of the teachings; and (5) that support and encouragement for practitioners is available.

49. *Pratimoksha* vows: are vows observed by aspirants of personal nirvana. There are eight types of pratimoksha vows: (1) vows of the fully ordained monk [Skt. *bhiksusamvara*]; (2) vows of the fully ordained nun [Skt. *bhiksunisamvara*]; (3) vows of the novice monk [Skt. *sramanerasamvara*]; (4) vows of the novice nun [Skt. *sramanerikasamvara*]; (5) vows of the layman [Skt. *upasakasamvara*]; (6) vows of the laywoman [Skt. *upasika*]; (7) probationary vows [Skt. *siksamanasamvara*]; and (8) one day ordination vows [Skt. *upavasinsamvara*].
50. *Three types of morality*: (1) the morality of refraining from negativities; (2) the morality of gathering virtues; and (3) the morality of engaging in the welfare of sentient beings.
51. *Bodhisattva* vows: [Tib. *byang sems kyi sdom pa*] entail refraining from eighteen major and forty-six minor transgressions. Ideally they are taken when one wishes and feels ready to engage in the deeds of Bodhisattvas. Emphasis is placed not only on physical and verbal conduct but on constantly maintaining an altruistic state of mind towards all living beings.
52. *Vajra vehicle*: refers to Vajrayana [Skt. *vajrayāna*; Tib. *rdo rje theg pa*]. Based on the motivation of bodhichitta—the wish to attain, for the sake

of others, the state of complete enlightenment—the Vajrayana is a path centred on cultivating pure perception.

53. *Two attainments*: spiritual attainments or feats are known as *siddhis* in Sanskrit. These are of two types: (1) common attainments; and (2) supreme attainments.
54. *Pure vows and samaya*: the tantric vows [Tib. *gsang sngags kyi sdom pa*] consist of restraint from fourteen general transgressions. There are also numerous pledges and commitments which must be kept. One is required to observe the tantric vows after receiving yoga tantra and highest yoga tantra empowerments. *Samaya* [Tib. *dam tshig*] are the Vajrayana commitments taken when receiving empowerment. There are several ways of explaining the literal meaning of *dam tshig*. To make this very simple, *dam* means sublime, and *tsik* is a statement. Thus *samaya* is a statement that is true, genuine, pure, real. To apply oneself in a way that is in harmony with how the truth is, is called keeping the *samaya*. When the *samayas* are described in detail, there are hundreds of thousands that can be listed, but all of them can be condensed in this way. The foremost *samaya* is when you compose yourself in a state in which you in actuality experience the fact that all sights, sound and awareness are visible emptiness, audible emptiness and aware emptiness. To have that certainty is called keeping all the hundreds of thousands of *samayas*.
55. *Two stages*: Deity yoga [Skt. *devata-yoga*; Tib. *lha'i rnal 'byor*] is a practice of Vajrayana Buddhism involving identification with a chosen deity through visualisations and rituals, and the realisation of emptiness. It involves two stages: (1) the generation stage, where one dissolves the mundane world and visualises one's chosen deity [yidam], its mandala and companion deities, resulting in identification with this divine reality; and (2) the completion stage, where one dissolves the visualisation of and identification with the yidam in the realisation of *sunyata* or emptiness. Completion stage practices can also include subtle body energy practices.

## Generating the Mind of Consummate Yoga

56. Those who are not just taking the aspirational bodhicitta commitment, as here, but are also eligible to take the Bodhisattva vows can also perform the latter ceremony at this point.

57. This and the previous verse are from Bodhisattva Shantideva's, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. These are recited in order to make the aspirational bodhicitta commitment, which is meant to increase our inclination towards bodhicitta, without necessarily having to take the Bodhisattva vows.
58. Excerpt from Lama Tsongkhapa's *Ocean of Reasoning*, a commentary on Arya Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*.
59. Bodhisattva Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, Chapter 3: *Full Acceptance of the Awakening Mind*.
60. *Four wheels of the Mahayana vehicle*: (1) meeting with a genuine spiritual teacher; (2) meeting with conducive environment for Dharma practice; (3) having abundance of accumulation of merit; and (4) having a proper aspirational dedication.
61. The previous verse and this one are from Venerable Panchen Losang Choegyen's *Guru Puja*.
62. *Two collections*: see endnote 46.
63. Excerpt from Lama Tsongkhapa's *Final Lamrim Prayer*.

### **The Noble Mahayana Sutra "Dependent Arising"**

64. There are multiple variations of this creed found throughout the Buddhist world. See Sykes (1856) and Skilling (2003).

### **The Noble Mahayana Sutra "The Rice Seedling"**

65. *Aphorism*: the term translated here is sūtra [Tib. *mdo*]. In Indian literature a sūtra generally refers to the statement of a short rule or universal truth, e.g. an axiom, dictum, formula, or thread. A collection of such statements can also be called a sūtra. While, generally speaking, Buddhist sūtras present a complete speech of the Buddha including introductory and concluding statements, here we have a complete teaching of the Buddha in very few words but still resembling the general usage of the term.
66. *Dharma*: owing to the multivalence of the term dharma [Tib. *chos*] and the play between these different senses witnessed in this text, we have chosen to leave it untranslated as dharma/Dharma in certain passag-

es. Where we do render it into English, explanatory notes are provided.

67. *Sharadvatiputra*: a common name variant of Śāriputra.
68. *Formations*: refers to contaminated karmas, the second of the twelve links of dependent origination.
69. *Appropriation*: also translated as grasping, it is the ninth of the twelve links of dependent origination.
70. *All dharmas*: here has the sense of “all phenomena.” We leave the term untranslated here and throughout this passage to help convey the chain of associations communicated in the Sanskrit and Tibetan source texts through these uses of the multivalent term *dharma/chos*. See the following note, and endnotes 72, 77, 78 & 79 for more on this multivalence.
71. *Body of Dharma*: here renders *chos kyi sku*. This section of the sūtra is not attested in the available Sanskrit material, so the available Sanskrit editions have actually been reconstructed from the Tibetan translation. Louis de La Vallée Poussin (1913, p. 72) and Sastri (1950, p. 3) reconstruct *chos kyi sku* here with *dharmakāya*, but we prefer—with Reat (p. 30)—the term *dharmasārīra* because it is attested as a possible underlying Sanskrit term for the Tibetan *chos kyi sku* in the next paragraph (cf. Reat, p. 32 n5). Kamalaśīla interprets the term as the pristine wisdom, or suchness, that serves as a basis for the dharmas (i.e., awakened qualities) of a Buddha. He states: “‘body of Dharma’ demonstrates the cause: that which serves as the cause of the dharmas (i.e., awakened qualities) of a Buddha is pristine wisdom or pristine suchness—the body which is the body of Dharma” (Schoening, vol. 2, p. 473). Reat (ibid.) translates this term as “Dharma-body,” whereas Schoening (vol. 1, p. 237) renders it as “the body consisting of dharma(s).” As indicated by these different interpretations, the semantic range of the term *dharmasārīra* [Tib. *chos kyi sku*] can include the interlinked notions of the “corpus” of the Buddha’s “teachings” or “doctrine” (Dharma), the “collection” of undefiled “qualities” (dharmas) that make a buddha a buddha, the physical body of the Buddha as an “embodiment” of “ultimate reality” (Dharma) and attendant “awakened qualities,” and, by extension, as Kamalaśīla’s interpretation suggests, the ethereal “body” of pristine wisdom that characterises the Buddha’s awakening experience. The mutual implications of dharma as “doctrine,” “qualities,” and “reality” (and “phenomena” in gener-

al) is an important facet of the term's multivalence in Buddhist literary sources. For more on the shifting semantic range of the terms *dharma*, *dharmaśarīra*, and *dharmakāya*, see Paul Harrison (1992). We have partially followed Reat in rendering this term with the slightly ambiguous “body of Dharma,” with the hope of not overly constraining the broad semantic range of the term and its possible commentarial interpretations.

72. *Dharmas*: [Tib. *chos rnam*s] here seems to have the dual sense of “trainings” on the path and their associated “attainments” or “qualities” of attainment. Reat (p. 31) interprets dharmas here to mean only “rules, practices,” but this would not apply to “those beyond training.”
73. *Constant*: we opted to interpret this passage according to Kamalaśīla’s commentary: “It is constant because it has been taught as a dharma that is thus unborn in all times. This shows that since the three times too are ultimately of one taste, it is unchanging [Skt. *Śālistambatikā*, p. 395: Tib. *dus thams cad du 'di ltar skye ba med pa'i chos gsungs pa dang ldan pas na rtag pa'o / 'dis ni dus gsum yang don dam par ro gcig pas 'gyur ba med par bstan to*].” However, the Sanskrit versions also allow another interpretation by which “permanent / always / constant” [Skt. *satatasamitam*] qualifies “without life force” [Skt. *ajīvam/nirjīvam*], thus meaning, “always without life force.” This is also supported by the *Śālistambatikā* ascribed to Nāgarjuna (p. 805). Reat (pp. 32–33) translates this passage with “always and ever devoid of soul,” and he translates from the Chinese (Taishō 709) with “eternal, continuously arising without soul.” Note also the very similar passage at 1.59.
74. *Tranquil*: the Sanskrit (Reat, p. 32) has *śiva*, “glorious,” “auspicious,” “propitious,” suggesting that the Tibetan *zhi ba* might have been a transliteration of the Sanskrit. However, Kamalaśīla (Schoening, vol. 2, pp. 479–480) interprets it to mean “tranquil,” “peaceful.”
75. *Stilled*: in Tibetan “by nature” could also refer to all aspects listed above; however, in Sanskrit, and according to Kamalaśīla (Schoening, vol. 2, pp. 481–482), it only modifies “never stilled” [Skt. *avyupaśamasvabhāva*].
76. The available Sanskrit (Reat, p. 32) for this passage reads: *anuttaradharmaśarīram buddham paśyati | ārya dharmābhisamaye samyag-jñānād upanayenaiva*]. The corresponding section in the Tibetan Degé and other versions recorded in the Pedurma comparative edition read: *'phags pa'i*

*chos mngon par rtogs te / yang dag pa'i ye shes dang ldan pas bla na med pa'i chos kyi skur sangs rgyas mthong ngo gsungs so/*. The Stok Palace version of the Tibetan differs from the Degé and all other versions recorded in the Pedurma comparative edition; it also more closely reflects the Sanskrit. The Stok Palace (F.284a.4-5) reads: *yang dag pa'i ye shes thob pas / 'phags pa'i chos mngon par rtogs pas bla na med pa'i chos kyi skur sangs rgyas mthong ngo gsungs so/* ("By attaining right knowledge and thereby realising the Dharma of the noble ones, he sees the Buddha, the body of the unsurpassable Dharma"). The Tibetan *thob pa*, "to attain," is a conceivable rendering of the Sanskrit upanaya, which Reat renders as "exertion." Kamalaśīla (Schoening, vol. 2, pp. 483–484) interprets this phrase to mean, "Whoever sees dependent arising in this manner sees the Dharma of accomplishment and the Dharma of fruition, because ultimately everything is the same taste, and because the Buddha Bhagavān too is the nature of the body of the ultimate Dharma which was thus taught. Therefore, it is taught that whoever sees the Dharma thus taught sees the Buddha... Whoever comprehends dependent arising thus taught realises the Dharma of the noble ones; this means 'comprehending the Dharma of the ultimate meaning.' Whoever comprehends the Dharma of the ultimate meaning is endowed with perfect wisdom. Whoever is endowed with perfect wisdom abides in the wisdom of equanimity and thus does not perceive any difference between dependent arising, the Dharma, and the Buddha." The *Śālistambatīkā* attributed to Nāgārjuna (Schoening, vol. 2, p. 393) interprets the phrase as: " 'Unsurpassable' means that that there is no special dharma whatsoever that is superior to this, hence it is 'unsurpassable.' 'Body of Dharma' means the Dharma-body itself. ... 'Buddha' is so-called because of comprehending dharma(s). Thus, one who sees dependent arising sees the nature of one who awakens to the unexcelled Dharma, beyond further training." Akin to the reconstruction presented above in note 7, this phrase on its own carries the semantic range of the Buddha as an embodiment of the unsurpassable nature of "reality" (Dharma), the unsurpassable "doctrine" (Dharma) that teaches it, and the unsurpassable "qualities" of awakening (dharma(s)) incumbent upon becoming an awakened one (Buddha). Reat (p. 32) translates the phrase as "he sees the unsurpassable Dharma-body, the Buddha, by exertion based on right knowledge in clear understanding of the noble Dharma." Schoening (vol. 1, p. 241) translates the final section as, "sees the Buddha, the body consisting of unsurpassable dharma(s)." In interpreting "unsurpassable" to modify "dharma," and not the whole phrase "body of dharma,"



we attempt to follow the interpretations of the commentaries and Schoening. We also leave “dharma” untranslated here in an attempt to capture something of the multiple *entendre* of the term. See Harrison (1992) for observations about possibly earlier, non-metaphysical senses of *dharma*-*makāya* and the associated term *dharmaśarīra* in Mahāyāna literature.

77. *Things*: here renders *dharma* / *chos*. Note the associations the source text is making in this and the next passage between *dharma* / *chos* as “phenomena,” “reality,” and “doctrine.”
78. *Dharma*: the sense of “Dharma” here seems to be both “doctrine” and “reality,” i.e., the “doctrine” as “law” (Dharma), which describes the “true nature” (*dharmatā*) of “reality” (Dharma). According to Kamalaśīla (Schoening, vol. 2, p. 487), the phrase functions as a synonym for “true nature” (Skt. *dharmatā*, Tib. *chos nyid*). We leave it untranslated here so as not to constrain this double *entendre*.
79. *Dharma*: the available Sanskrit (Reat, p. 33) reads *niyāmatā*. Edgerton describes this term, as rendered into Tibetan with the phrase *chos mi 'gyur ba nyid*, as “the doctrine’s being unchangeably the same.” Kamalaśīla (Schoening, vol. 2, p. 487) has the Tibetan *nges par 'gyur ba*, and interprets it as, “purely immutable, meaning, one should know that things are dependent on certain specific causes.” Once again, “Dharma” here seems to refer both to the nature of reality and to the doctrine that describes this reality.
80. *Season*: although the Tibetan *dus* is most often rendered with the general term “time,” the Sanskrit *rtu* suggests a specific time span. Also compare with Kamalaśīla’s *Śālistambatikā*, (p. 405): “As for ‘season,’ the division by specific momentary conditions of the earth, etc., is considered a specific aspect of time (*dus kyang sa la sogs pa'i gnas skabs kyi bye brag gis rab tu phye ba nyid dus kyi bye brag tu dgongs pa'o*).”
81. *Isvara*: (Skt.) is a concept in Hinduism, with a wide range of meanings that depend on the era and the school of Hinduism. According to certain Hindu schools, *Ishvara* is a divine being who is said to be the creator of the world and its inhabitants.
82. *Time*: here, “time” as an agent is rejected, not change in time. (cf. Reat, p. 39 n4).

83. *Prakṛti*: in Sanskrit means "nature". According to the non-Buddhist Sāṃkhya school of philosophy, *prakṛti* - the primal substance - is the permanent underlying material cause and the nature of all objective phenomena. It contrasts with *Puruṣa* which is pure awareness and metaphysical consciousness.
84. The sentence, "The sprout...has not ceased," is not found in the known Sanskrit sources. Reat thus assumes it might be displaced from the similar sentence in the next paragraph (Reat, p. 40 n2).
85. *Sprouts*: [Tib. *myu gu*]. this term is missing from the available Sanskrit materials (Reat, p. 47 n16).
86. *Soul*: the Tibetan *gso ba*, literally "nourishment," but here translated as "soul," is not found in the Sanskrit sources (Reat, p. 50). Also compare with Schoening (vol. 1, p. 296 n2). Generally, however, the list of items in the Tibetan translation featuring *gso ba* appears in several Sanskrit Buddhist texts. Sastri (p. 9 n45) refers to such an occurrence in Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (where it is, however, marked as a quote from a Prajñāpāramitā text) and inserts *poṣa* based on that. De La Vallée Poussin (p. 79) also inserts *poṣa*, but does not reference a source. Edgerton, under his entry for *poṣa* (which he defines as, "person, individuality, soul, spirit"), mentions *gso ba* as a common Tibetan rendering. He surmises that the Tibetan translation comes from the notion that the Sanskrit *poṣa* derives from *pus*, "to thrive, nourish," when it more likely derives from *puruṣa*.
87. *Form*: in all the *Śālistamba* sources that are not from the Kangyur, i.e. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* and *Bhāmatī* (cf. Reat, pp. 49–50), the passage on name and form is more explicit; in all of these sources an additional passage clarifies that "name and form" includes all five aggregates: the four immaterial aggregates that emerge together with consciousness are subsumed under "name," while physical form is subsumed under the aggregate of "form." This point is also clarified later in the sūtra.
88. *Three factors*: here, in which "factor" renders *chos* (*dharma*), are object, sense faculty, and consciousness (Reat, p. 52 n19).
89. *Attention*: the Tibetan here, *yid la byed pa dang ldan pa*, reflects a rendering of the Sanskrit phrase *manasikārayukta*, partially attested in

the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Mahāyānasūtrasamgraha* as *manasikārasam-prayukta* (Reat, p. 52 n32).

90. *Entryways*: the Sanskrit *āyadvāra* (Reat, p. 53) here includes the *āya* part of *āyatana*, and is defined by Edgerton as “cause or means (lit. door) of arrival or origin.” The Tibetan *skye ba'i sgo* gives the sense of “door of arising.”
91. *Subtle defilement*: the Sanskrit reads *upakleśa* here (Reat, p. 53), whereas the Tibetan reads *nyon mongs* (Skt. *kleśa*). However, since *nye ba'i nyon mongs* (*upakleśa*) appears in the previous discussion of “anxiety,” we have opted for the Sanskrit.
92. *Forever*: Kamalaśīla's commentary (Schoening, vol. 2, p. 517) interprets the Tibetan phrase *rtag par rgyun du* not to modify the adjacent *srog med pa*, as suggested by the available Sanskrit and Tibetan, but as the “constant and uninterrupted” quality of dependent arising itself.
93. Unlike other trees, the palm tree does not produce cambium - the layer that closes a wound and protects the trunk from rotting. As a result a palm tree dies when its head is cut off.

### Three Principal Aspects of the Path

94. *Leisure and opportunity*: also translated as freedom and fortune, see endnote 48.
95. *Renunciation*: the aspiration to achieve total freedom from all the fears of *samsara* (see three miseries or sufferings), which are propelled under the force of afflictions and contaminated karmas that are in turn triggered by ignorance that misconceives the reality of self and phenomena as objectively real.
96. *Karma* [Skt.]: ‘action’ which involves mental intention; it is of three kinds - physical, verbal and mental.
97. *Miseries of samsara*: there are six kinds of suffering experienced by beings in any state of cyclic existence – (1) lack of certainty; (2) lack of satisfaction; (3) having to give up one's body repeatedly; (4) being conceived over and over again; (5) repeatedly alternating between high and low rebirths; and (6) being friendless. Eight kinds of suffering are particularly relevant to

- our human condition - (1) birth; (2) sickness; (3) ageing; (4) death; (5) separation from what is agreeable; (6) encountering what is unpleasant; (7) seeking and not finding what we desire; and (8) the mere fact of having a contaminated body and mind which are in themselves painful. All these different forms of suffering can be subsumed under the three kinds of suffering - (1) suffering of suffering; (2) suffering of change; and (3) pervasive conditioned suffering.
98. *Four powerful rivers*: (1) river of attachment; (2) river of aversion; (3) river of ignorance; and (4) river of wrong view.
99. *Self-grasping*: the misconception which mistakenly views self and other phenomena as inherently real as opposed to being dependently originated and empty of objective existence.
100. *Three miseries*: [Skt. *tridukkhata*; Tib. *sdug bsngal gsum*] also referred to as the three types of suffering - (1) suffering of suffering [Skt. *dukkha-dukkha*; Tib. *sdug bsngal gyi sdug bsngal*]; (2) suffering of change [Skt. *viparinama-dukkha*; Tib. *'gyur ba'i sdug bsngal*]; and (3) all-pervasive conditioned suffering [Skt. *sankhara-dukkha*; Tib. *khyab pa 'du byed kyi sdug bsngal*].
101. *Dependent origination*: the phenomenon of coming into existence by dependence on other factors. There are three levels of dependent origination - (1) causal dependence; (2) whole's dependence on its parts; and (3) dependence on mere mental designation.
102. *Extreme of existence*: (also extreme of absolutism, eternalism, permanence) the reification of what does not exist, as existent. For example, viewing selfless phenomena as of selfhood.
103. *Extreme of non-existence*: (also extreme of nihilism) a viewpoint that denigrates existent things as non-existent. For example, denigrating the law of cause and effect.
104. *Three principal paths*: (1) renunciation; (2) bodhicitta; and (3) the view of emptiness.

### In Praise of Dharmadhatu

105. *Dharmadhatu* [Skt.]: is the Buddha nature that exists in every sentient being. It is of two kinds - (1) natural Buddha nature; and (2) proliferating

Buddha nature.

106. *Three realms*: whole samsara where the sentient beings take birth is divided into three realms on the basis of the refinement of their meditative experience; they are: (1) desire realm; (2) form realm; and (3) formless realm.
107. *Dharmakaya* [Skt.]: the Buddha's body in general is known as Dharmakaya; more specifically, it is one of the three divisions of the Buddha's body - (1) Truth Body [Skt. *dharmakaya*; Tib. *chos sku*]; (2) Enjoyment Body [Skt. *sambhogkaya*; Tib. *longs sku*]; and (3) Emanation Body [Skt. *nirmanakaya*; Tib. *sprul sku*].
108. *Afflictions*: are defined as a mental factor, the presence of which disturbs our mind. All the infinite types of afflictions can be classified into the family of these three root afflictions - (1) ignorance; (2) attachment; (3) aversion. Further, three more are added to this list in the presentation of six root afflictions - (4) pride; (5) afflictive doubt; and (6) afflictive or wrong views.
109. *Dhatu* [Skt.]: the "true nature" [Skt. *dharmatā*, Tib. *chos nyid*] of "reality" (*Dharma*), the expanse of ultimate reality which refers to the emptiness of intrinsic existence.
110. *Ten-fold powers*: here refers to the ten powers of the Buddha - (1) power of knowing right from wrong; (2) the power of knowing the consequences of karmas; (3) the power of knowing the various mental inclinations; (4) the power of knowing various mental faculties; (5) the power of knowing the various levels of intelligence; (6) the power of knowing the paths to all goals; (7) the power of knowing the ever-afflictive and purified phenomena; (8) the power of knowing past lives; (9) the power of knowing death and birth; and (10) the power of knowing the exhaustion of contaminations.
111. *Thirty-two marks*: see endnote 18.
112. *Rupakaya* [Skt.]: the form body of the Buddha; one of the two divisions of Buddha's body Rupakaya and Dharmakaya.
113. *Akanistha* [Skt.]: also Heaven Beneath None, the highest of the eighteen heavens in the form realm; it also refers to the pure land where all the Buddhas achieve Enlightenment.

114. *Noble*: [Skt. *arya*; Tib. '*phags pa*] a 'superior being', one who has attained a direct perception of ultimate truth.
115. *Six-fold objects*: are visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental objects. These form the six base elements as part of the eighteen elements. See *elements* in glossary.
116. *Two selflessnesses* [Skt. *nairatmya*; Tib. *bdag med*]: the selflessness of person [Skt. *purusanairatmya*] and the selflessness of phenomena [Skt. *dharma nairatmya*].
117. *Bhumi* [Skt.]: literally, ground or earth. In Mahayana there are ten Bodhisattva grounds or bhumis - (1) The Thoroughly Joyous; (2) The Stainless; (3) The Luminous; (4) The Radiant; (5) The Difficult to Overcome; (6) The Close Approach; (7) The Gone Afar; (8) The Immovable; (9) The Good Intelligence/Excellent Insight; and (10) The Cloud of Dharma.
118. *Three kinds of Enlightenment*: Enlightenment of Shravakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Buddhas.
119. *Nirvana with remainder*: is the nirvana where the Arhat continues to live in the contaminated body which she/he derived from her/his birth due to the previous contaminated karmas and afflictions.
120. *Nirvana without remainder*: is the nirvana which is free of all the five contaminated aggregates such as the gross physical body. The interpretation of nirvana with remainder and without remainder differs in Prasangika philosophy. Nirvana from the point of view of Prasangika is understood as the state of cessation of defilements from the ultimate reality of the mind.

### **In Praise of Dependent Origination**

121. *Tirthikas* [Skt.]: refers to the ancient non-Buddhist tenet holders.

### **Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way:**

### **Chapter 22 - Examination of the Tathagata**

122. *Fivefold means*: (1) Tathagata is not the aggregates; (2) Tathagata is not other than the aggregates; (3) aggregates do not depend on him; (4) Tathagata is not dependent on them; and (5) Tathagata does not possess

the aggregates.

123. *Tetralema*: the four possible modes presented in a logical proposition, by which true existence is rejected. They are: (1) the rejection of the extreme of existence; (2) the rejection of the extreme of non-existence; (3) the rejection of the extreme of both existence and non-existence; and (4) the rejection of the extreme of neither existence and non-existence.

## Chapter 24 - Examination of the Four Noble Truths

124. *Four Noble Truths*: (1) the truth of suffering; (2) the truth of the origin of suffering and its causes; (3) the truth of the cessation of suffering and its causes; and (4) the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering and its causes.
125. *Eight persons*: are the eight kinds of Sangha members - (1) enterer into the fruit of stream enterer; (2) abider in the fruit of stream enterer; (3) enterer of once returner; (4) abider of once returner; (5) enterer of non-returner; (6) abider of non-returner; (7) enterer of foe-destroyer; and (8) abider of foe-destroyer.
126. His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama has been known to comment that this verse (and the following one) are the heart of the entire *Mulamadhyamikakarika* and can be said to contain the essence of the entire Middle Way system.

## Chapter 26 - Examination of Twelve Links of Samsaric Existence

127. *Three compositional factors* (actions or karmas): (1) virtuous action; (2) non-virtuous action; and (3) unwavering action.
128. *Existence*: also translated as 'becoming', it is the 10th of the 12 links of dependent origination.
129. *Five aggregates*: (Skt. *pañcaskandha*; Tib. *phung po lnga*) the five psycho-physical aggregates - (1) form (Skt. *rūpa*; Tib. *gzugs*); (2) feeling or sensation (Skt. *vedanā*; Tib. *tshor ba*); (3) discrimination or discernment (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Tib. *'du shes*); (4) compositional factors or formations (Skt. *samskāra*; Tib. *'du byed*); and (5) consciousness (Skt. *viññāna*; Tib. *rnam shes*).

## A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment

130. *Three kinds of persons*: also translated as practitioners of three scopes, they are three types of persons pertaining to the level of realisation in the practice of Dharma. They are: (1) practitioner of small scope; (2) practitioner of middle scope; and (3) practitioner of great scope.
131. *Persons of the least capacity*: also person of lower or small scope; they are characterised with the following - (1) Motivation and goal: seeks a higher state of rebirth and happiness and be freed from miseries of poverty and so forth in the next life impelled by fear of the lower rebirths; and (2) Dharma to be practised: they should go for refuge in the Three Jewels and observe the morality of refraining from ten non-virtuous actions.
132. *(Practitioner of) middling capacity*: also person of intermediate or middle scope; they are characterised with the following: (1) Motivation and goal: seeks total freedom from samsara altogether which includes all three realms – desire, form and formless; and (2) Dharma to be practised: the practice of the three higher trainings, they are: morality (Skt. shila) in the form of Pratimoksha vows, meditative concentration (Skt. samadhi) and wisdom (Skt. prajna) such as the wisdom of emptiness.
133. *Persons of supreme capacity*: also person of great or higher scope; they are characterised by the following: (1) Motivation and goal: seeking complete Enlightenment of Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings; and (2) Dharma to be practised: bodhicitta, six or ten perfections, four means to gather beings and so forth. The expedient method will include the practice of Tantra. The teachings for the higher scope must include all the teachings meant for the lower (and middle) scope person except for some minor details, such as the practice of renunciation for personal nirvana and so forth.
134. *Seven part offering*: (1) drinking water; (2) bathing water; (3) flowers; (4) incense; (5) light; (6) perfume; and (7) food.
135. *(Prayer of) Noble Conduct*: also known as the *King of Prayers*: Samantabhadra's "Aspiration to Good Actions" (Skt. samantabhadracaryapranidhānarāja; Tib. kun tu bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po) from the Gandavyūha chapter of the Avatamsakasūtra. This long sūtra describes the deeds of Bodhisattvas, which the King of Prayers summarises.
136. *Three bad rebirths*: (1) hell being; (2) hungry ghost; and (3) animal.



137. *Array of Trunks Sūtra*: (Skt. *gandavyūhasūtra*, Tib. *sdong po bkod pa'i mdo*) is part of the *Avatamsakasūtra*.
138. *Sūtra Requested by Viradatta*: Skt. *viradattagrhapatipariprcchanamasūtra*, Tib. *dpas byin gyis zhus pa'i mdo*.
139. *Seven kinds of individual liberation vows*: There are eight kinds of individual liberation vow [Tib. *so sor thar pa'i sdom pa rigs hrgyad*]. Lama Atisha has omitted the "vow of one who remains nearer" [Tib. *bsnyen gnas kyi sdom pa*] through which one draws closer to liberation. It is taken for only twenty-four hours at a time and is therefore not considered equal to the others as a basis for the Bodhisattva vow. It consists of restraint from - (1) killing; (2) stealing; (3) lying; and (4) sexual activity. One may not use (5) high or fancy seats; (6) intoxicants; (7) eat after midday; and (8) wear garlands, jewelry, perfume, make music, dance or sing. This vow is taken by laypersons.
140. *Bodhisattva vows*: see endnote 51.
141. *Bodhisattva Stages*: or *Bodhisattva Grounds* by Arya Asanga [Skt. *yogacaryabhūmau bodhisattvabhūmi*, Tib. *rnal 'hyor spyod pa'i sa ins hyang chub sems dpa'i sa*] explains the paths of the Great Vehicle, while its companion volume, the *Hearer Stages* [Skt. *śrāvakaḥhūmi*, Tib. *nyan sa*], explains the paths of practice of the Lesser Vehicle.
142. *Ornament Of Manjushri's Buddha Land Sūtra*: Skt. *manjusrihuddhaksetragunavyūhasūtra*, Tib. *'jane deal gyi songs rgyas kyi zhing gi yon tan hkod pa'i mdo*.
143. *Higher perceptions*: the six extra-sensory perceptions / the six clairvoyances / the six extraordinary knowledges - (1) knowledge of miracles; (2) knowledge of the divine eye; (3) knowledge of the divine ear; (4) knowledge of other's thoughts; (5) knowledge of recollecting past lives; and (6) knowledge of the extinction of contamination.
144. *Calm abiding*: [Skt. *Shamatha*] an advanced state of single pointed meditation, which is enhanced and tempered by pliancy; it is trained with the help of the nine mental stages of practice. The minimum qualification to have achieved full fledged Shamatha is to achieve stability of the single pointed meditation totally free of the two flaws of excitement and laxity and be able to maintain this state for at least four hours at a stretch.
145. *Collection Of Meditative Stabilisation Chapter*: [Skt.

- samadhisambharaparivarta*, Tib. *ting nge 'dzin tshogs kyi le'you*] by Bodhibhadra. Bodhibhadra succeeded Naropa as northern doorkeeper at the monastic university of Nalanda. Only eminent scholars capable of defending Buddhist philosophical tenets and presenting an intellectual challenge to those who wished to enter were appointed to these positions.
146. *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness*: Arya Nagarjuna's *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness* [Skt. *sunyatasaptatikarika*, Tib. *stong nyid hdun cu pa*] belongs to his six collections of reasoning [Tib. *rigs tshogs drug*].
  147. *Treatise on the Middle Way / The Root Verses on the Wisdom of the Middle Way*: [Skt. *prajñā-nāma-mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; Tib. *dbu ma rtsa ba shes rab*] is the most famous and important treatise on Madhyamika philosophy, composed by the great master Arya Nagarjuna.
  148. 'Heat': refers to the first division of the path of preparation [Tib. *sbyor lam*] which has four divisions – (1) heat [Tib. *drod*]; (2) peak [Tib. *rtse mo*]; (3) forbearance [Tib. *bzod pa*]; and (4) supreme of phenomena [Tib. *chos mchog*].
  149. 'Thoroughly Joyous': [Tib. *rab to dga' ba*] first of the ten Bodhisattva grounds or bhumis.
  150. *Force of the eight*: the forces which make the individuals have access to (1) good vase; (2) miracle feet; (3) magical sword; (4) entrusting; (5) diving under the ground; (6) vanishing power; (7) wish fulfilling tree; and (8) royal emblems.
  151. *Action and performance tantras*: there are four classes of tantra: (1) Action Tantra [Skt. *kriyatantra*; Tib. *bya rgyud*]; (2) Performance Tantra [Skt. *charyatantra*; Tib. *spyod rgyud*]; (3) Yoga Tantra [Tib. *rnal 'byor rgyud*]; and (4) Highest yoga tantra [Skt. *anuttarayogatantra*; Tib. *rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud*].
  152. *Great Tantra of the Primordial Buddha* [Skt. *paramadibuddhoddhṛta-srikalacakranamatantraraja*, Tib. *dang po sangs rgyas rgyud*]

### Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva

153. *Four formless states*: the four absorptions of the formless realm are differentiated on the basis of the accompanying discrimination which becomes less and less coarse. They are – (1) limitless space; (2) limitless consciousness; (3) nothingness; and (4) peak of cyclic existence.

154. *First five perfections*: from ten perfections - (1) perfection of giving; (2) morality; (3) patience; (4) effort; (5) concentration; (6) wisdom; (7) skillfulness; (8) aspiration prayers; (9) power; and (10) primordial wisdom.
155. *Three spheres*: (1) object; (2) subject; and (3) action.

## A Commentary on the Awakening Mind

156. *Aggregates*: see endnote 129.
157. *Elements*: there are numerous ways of identifying elements. One classification is in the form of Eighteen elements - (1 - 6) the six objects as the base elements : (1) form; (2) sound; (3) smell; (4) taste; (5) tactility; and (6) objects of the mind/phenomenal source; (7 - 12) the six sense powers as the dependee elements: (1) eye sense power; (2) ear sense power; (3) nose sense power; (4) tongue sense power; (5) body sense power; and (6) mental sense power; (13 - 18) the six consciousnesses as the dependent elements: (1) eye consciousness; (2) ear consciousness; (3) nose consciousness; (4) tongue consciousness; (5) body consciousness; and (6) mental consciousness. Another classification is the form of Six elements - (1) earth; (2) water; (3) fire; (4) air; (5) space; and (6) consciousness.
158. *Sense sources*: also translated as sense sources, it refers to the sense powers. There are five sense powers - (1) Eye sense power [Skt. *caksur-āyatana*; Tib. *mig gi skye mched*]; (2) Ear sense power [Skt. *śrotra-āyatana*; Tib. *rna ba'i skye mched*]; (3) Nose sense power [Skt. *ghrāṇa-āyatana*; Tib. *sna'i skye mched*]; (4) Tongue sense power [Skt. *jihva-āyatana*; Tib. *lce'i skye mched*]; and (5) Body sense power [Skt. *kāya-āyatana*; Tib. *lus kyi skye mched*].
159. *Gandharvas* [Skt.]: literally, the smell eaters; a category of hungry ghosts who primarily feed on smell and are renowned for their music skills.
160. *Foundational Consciousness*: [Skt. *āyavijñāna*; Tib. *kun gzhi'i rnam shes*] one of the eight types of consciousness asserted by Chittamatra (following scripture) school. It is described as the primary, and the store-house or repository of all mental imprints. The eight consciousnesses are - (1) eye consciousness [Skt. *caksuvijñānam*]; (2) ear consciousness [Skt. *svotravijñānam*]; (3) nose consciousness [Skt. *ghranavijñānam*]; (4) tongue consciousness [Skt. *jihvavijñānam*]; (5) body consciousness

[Skt. *kaya vijñānam*]; (6) mental consciousness [Skt. *manovijñānam*]; (7) afflictive consciousness [Skt. *klesavijñānam*]; and (8) foundational consciousness: the mental basis of all [Skt. *alayavijñānam*].

161. *Six classes of beings*: (1) god [Skt. *deva*]; (2) demi-god [Skt. *asura*]; (3) human [Skt. *manuṣya*]; (4) animal [Skt. *tiryak*]; (5) hungry ghost [Skt. *preta*]; and (6) hell being [Skt. *naraka*].
162. *Non-abiding nirvana*: refers to Buddhahood.

### **The Benefits of the Awakening Mind**

163. *The Sutra Requested by Subahu*: [Skt. *subāhupariṣcchāsūtra*, Tib. *lag bzangs kyis zhus pa'i mdo*] "if one perseveres for the sake of bringing happiness and benefit to an infinite number of beings, then the infinite roots of virtue from this infinite aim that bears in mind the happiness and benefit of all sentient beings shall increase, expand and reach towards fulfilment every moment, day and night, regardless of whether one is unconscious or even asleep."

### **Recognising the Mother: A Song on the Experience of the Middle Way View**

164. *Three eastern masters*: in the 8<sup>th</sup> century in Eastern India, there were three Svatantrika Madhyamika scholars: Acharya Jana Garbha had written *Two Truths of Madhyamaka*, Bodhisattva Shantaraksita had written *Ornament of Middle Way* [Skt. *madhyamikāṅkara*] and Acharya Kamalashila had written *Madhyamikprabha*.

### **A Song of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment**

165. *Three worlds*: refers to the three realms of samsara - (1) desire realm; (2) form realm; and (3) formless realm.
166. *Lamrim*: translates as 'stages of the path' or 'graded path of Enlightenment', which involves three stages: path for the small scope, middle scope and great scope person.
167. *Karmic defilements of the three doors*: are the karmic defilements of the body, speech and mind.
168. *Four powers*: All negative karmas can be purified by means of the *four powers*: (1) the power of basis – generating refuge and bodhicitta; (2)

the power of regret; (3) the power of overcoming misdeeds through antidotes; and (4) the power of commitment not to repeat the misdeeds.

169. *Space-like emptiness*: the emptiness which the practitioner experiences, in the form of a non-affirming negative, at the time of meditative equipoise.
170. *Illusion-like emptiness*: an experience which a practitioner of the wisdom of emptiness goes through when she or he comes out of the meditative equipoise on emptiness, where they perceive everything as illusion-like.

### **Noble Pursuit: Revealing One's Personal Realisations**

171. *Six Ornaments and the Two Supremes*: see endnote 23.
172. *Three lower tantric schools*: the first three of the four tantric schools. See *Four Classes of Tantra* in glossary.
173. *Vairochana Sambhodi*: [Tib. *namrang nongjang*] one of the systems of Yoga Tantra which is one of the four classes of Buddhist Tantra.
174. *Palden dhe-nyid dhue-pay gyued* [Tib.]: in sanskrit *Shrisarvatathagatatattva samgraha*.
175. *Dorji Tsemo* [Tib.]: in Sanskrit, *Vajrasekhara Mahaguhya Yoga Tantra*.
176. *Compendium of Valid Cognition*: [Skt. *pramāna-samuccaya*; Tib. *tshad ma kun las btus pa*] by Acharya Dignaga—one of the greatest works on Buddhist logic. Acharya Dignaga's tradition was further developed in the 7th century by Acharya Dharmakirti.
177. *Seven Treatises on Epistemology*: (1) *Commentary on Valid Cognition* [Skt. *pramanavarttika*]; (2) *Discernment of Valid Cognition* [Skt. *pramanaviniscaya*]; (3) *Drop of Reasoning on Valid Cognition* [Skt. *nyayabindu*]; (4) *Drop of Logical Reasoning* [Skt. *hetubindu*]; (5) *Analysis of Relationship* [Skt. *sambandhapariksa*]; (6) *Establishing Alternative Continuum* [Skt. *samtanantarāsiddhi*]; and (7) *Science of Debate* [Skt. *vadanyaya*].
178. *Bodhisattva Grounds*: see endnote 141.
179. *Sūtra Alankara (Ornament of Sūtra)*: also, *Ornament for the Mahayana Sūtras* [Skt. *mahayanasūtralamkara*, Tib. *theg pa chen po'i mdo sde'i rgyan*] by Arya Maitreya.

180. *Sikshasamuccaya* [*Compendium of Training*]: or *Compendium of Precepts* [Tib. *bslab pa kun btus*] by Bodhisattva Shantideva presents clearly and in detail the conduct that bodhisattvas should embrace at all times. It is organised as a commentary on twenty-seven short mnemonic verses known as the *Śikṣāsamuccaya Kārikā* [Tib. *bslab pa kun las btus pa'i tshig le'u byas pa*]. It consists primarily of quotations (of varying length) from sūtras — generally those sūtras associated with the Mahayana tradition and was written as a complimentary volume to the *Bodhicharyavatara*. (Arya Nagarjuna's text called *Shikshasamucchaya*, mentioned by Shantideva in the *Bodhicharyavatara*, is no longer available).
181. *The Stages of Meditation*: Skt. *bhavana krama* by Acharya Kamalasila.
182. *Six corners*: are mentioned in the context of explanations in tantra system: (1-2) definitive and provisional meaning; (3-4) face value and non-face value meaning; and (5-6) intended and unintended meaning.
183. *Four modes*: are mentioned in the context of explanations in tantra system: (1) literal meaning; (2) general meaning; (3) hidden meaning; and (4) ultimate meaning.
184. *Compendium of Conducts*: Skt. *charyāsamuchaya*
185. *Namshak*: [Skt. *vyavasthapanā*] *An Exposition*, it is a commentary on the *Shree Guhyasamaja tantra* by the great Nalanda saint-scholar Aryadeva.
186. *Five great commentarial treatises*: (1) Prajanaparamita; (2) Madhyamika; (3) Pramanavarttika; (4) Abhidharmakosha; and (5) Vinaya.
187. *Two Mahayanas*: Sūtrayana and Tantrayana or Vajrayana.
188. *Two stages of the uncommon path*: Generation stage and completion stage; see endnote 55.

### **Summary of the Stages of Meditation: An Excerpt from the Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment**

189. *Ten virtues*: [Skt. *dasakusalani*; Tib. *gaywa chu*] three physical - (1) virtue of refraining from killing; (2) refraining from taking what is not given; and (3) refraining from sexual misconduct; four verbal - (4) virtue of refraining from lying; (5) refraining from slander; (6) refraining from harsh words; and (7) refraining from idle gossip; three mental - (8) virtue of refraining from covetousness (greed); (9) refraining from malice (ill

will); and (10) refraining from wrong views (of disbelieving in the law of cause and effect).

190. *Ten Non-virtues*: [Skt. *dasadusalani*; Tib. *mi gaywa chu*] are in direct opposition to the ten virtues; they are divided into three sets - three non-virtues of the body: (1) killing; (2) stealing; and (3) sexual misconduct; four non-virtues of the speech: (4) lying; (5) slander (divisive speech); (6) harsh speech (insulting words); and (7) idle gossip; three non-virtues of mind: (8) covetousness; (9) malicious intent; and (10) wrong view (of disbelieving in the law of cause and effect).
191. *Four powers*: See endnote 168.
192. *Three trainings*: See endnote 22.
193. *The rite*: of taking the bodhisattva vows and so forth.
194. *Engaged spirit of Enlightenment*: the bodhicitta, which actually delves into the bodhisattva deeds as opposed to the initial aspirational bodhicitta.
195. *Six Perfections*: also six paramitas - (1) generosity; (2) moral ethics; (3) patience; (4) enthusiasm; (5) meditative concentration; and (6) wisdom.
196. *Four ways of gathering disciples*: [Tib. *bsdu ba'i dngospo bzhi*] the qualities of the teacher that enable him/her to gather and nurture students. They are - (1) giving whatever is necessary [Skt. *danam*]; (2) speaking pleasantly [Skt. *priyavadita*]; (3) helping others [Skt. *samanarthata*]; and (4) consistency between words and deeds [Skt. *arthacarya*].

## A Guide to the Two truths

197. *Dharmata*: see endnote 109.

## Guru Puja

198. *Kind in three ways*: these are related to the qualities of a root spiritual teacher in ways of giving: (1) empowerment; (2) oral transmissions; and (3) commentarial teachings.
199. *Five Buddhas* (and their respective representative colours): or the five Sugatas, the heads of the five families of Victorious Ones [Tib. *rgyal ba rigs inga*] are (1) Vairocana, (white) [Tib. *rnam par snang mdzad*]; (2)

- Akshobhya (blue) [Tib. *mi bskyod pa*]; (3) Ratnasambhava (yellow) [Tib. *rin chen 'byung gnas*]; (4) Amitabha (red) [Tib. *'od dpag med*]; and (5) Amoghasiddhi (green) [Tib. *don yod grub pa*].
200. *Three vajras*: are mentioned in the context of the practitioner's essences of body, speech and mind as the vajra of the body, the vajra of the speech, and the vajra of the mind, depicted by the syllables OM, AH and HUM respectively.
201. *Seven precious royal emblems*: see endnote 15.
202. *Three trainings*: see endnote 22.
203. *Two stages*: see endnote 55.
204. *Five paths*: see endnote 3.
205. *Ten qualities*: of a spiritual mentor are - (1) morality; (2) meditative concentration; (3) wisdom; (4) qualities surpassing those of the students; (5) enthusiasm; (6) wealth of scriptural knowledge; (7) loving concern; (8) thorough knowledge of reality; (9) skilled in instructing disciples; and (10) abandoned dispiritedness.
206. *Five Sugatas*: see endnote 199.
207. *Four obscurations*: (1) karmic obscuration [Skt. *karmavarana*]; (2) afflictive obscuration [Skt. *klesavarana*]; (3) obscurations to omniscience [Skt. *nanavarana*]; and (4) obscurations to meditative absorptions [Skt. *samapattiavarana*].
208. *Four bodies*: refers to the four Buddha bodies - (1) Natural Truth body (of the Buddha); (2) Wisdom Truth body; (3) Enjoyment body; and (4) Emanation body.
209. *Five forces*: (1) the power of white seed [Skt. *suklabijabala*]; (2) the power of intention [Skt. *asayabala*]; (3) the power of repulsion [Skt. *dusanabala*]; (4) the power of familiarity [Skt. *abhyasabala*]; and (5) the power of prayers [Skt. *pranidhanabala*].
210. *Four applications*: (1) close contemplation of body [Skt. *kayasmrityupasthana*]; (2) close contemplation of feelings [Skt. *vedana-smrityupasthana*]; (3) close contemplation of mind [Skt. *citta-smrityupasthana*]; and (4) close contemplation of dharma [Skt.



*dharmasmrityupasthana*].

211. *Nine types of beings*: are mentioned in the context of perpetrators who incite anger - (1) you harmed me; (2) you are harming me; (3) you will harm me; (4) you harmed my close ones; (5) you are harming my close ones; (6) you will harm my close ones; (7) you benefited my enemies; (8) you are benefiting my enemies; and (9) you will benefit my enemies.
212. *First stage yoga*: generation stage, which is the first stage of the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra. The second stage being the completion stage.
213. *Illusory body*: the subtle divine body as explained in tantra that is principally developed from the indestructible wind.
214. *Four wheels of the Mahayana vehicle*: see endnote 60.
215. *Three trainings*: see endnote 22.

### **Song of Immortality**

216. *Lotus Holder*: is an epithet for Arya Avalokiteshvara.

### **King of Prayers**

217. *Six Paramitas*: see endnote 195.

### **Lamrim Dedication Prayer**

218. *Two collections*: see endnote 46.
219. *Ten-fold Mahayana virtuous practices*: [Skt. *dasadharmacarya*]: (1) writing [Skt. *lekhana*]; (2) making offerings [Skt. *pujana*]; (3) listening to Dharma [Skt. *sravanam*]; (4) generosity [Skt. *danam*]; (5) reading [Skt. *vacanam*]; (6) memorizing [Skt. *udgrahnam*]; (7) teaching [Skt. *prakasana*]; (8) recitation [Skt. *svadhyayanam*]; (9) reflection [Skt. *cintana*]; and (10) meditation on Dharma points [Skt. *bhavana*].

### **Ngag-rim Dedication Prayer**

220. *Four empowerments*: (1) The vase empowerment [Skt. *kalasbhiika*; Tib. *bum pa'i dbang*]; (2) The secret empowerment [Skt. *guhya bhiika*; Tib. *gsang ba'i dbang*]; (3) The knowledge-wisdom empowerment

[Skt. *prajñābhīka*; Tib. *shesrab yeshe kyi dbang*]; and (4) The precious word empowerment [Tib. *tshig dbang rinpoche*].

### **Additional Dedication Prayers**

- 221. Verse 55, Chapter 10: Dedication, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* by Bodhisattva Shantideva.
- 222. *Four wheels of the Mahayana vehicle*: see endnote 60.
- 223. Excerpt from Venerable Panchen Losang Choegyen's *Guru Puja*.
- 224. Supplication to His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, composed at the request of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.
- 225. This is the *Prayer to Dispel Evil Spirits* as an instruction from Nechung Oracle.
- 226. Excerpt from Lama Tsongkhapa's *Foundation of All Good Qualities*.
- 227. This is the concluding prayer in Lama Tsongkhapa's *Ocean of Reasoning* - A commentary on Arya Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*.

### **Meditation on Ultimate Reality: Staircase to Emptiness**

- 228. According to Prasangika Madhyamaka - objectively, ultimately, truly, inherently, intrinsically and independently existent, are all synonymous. Likewise, mentally imputed, subjective and conventional existence are synonymous.
- 229. The concluding prayer in Lama Tsongkhapa's *Ocean of Reasoning* - A commentary on Arya Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*.

## **RESPECT FOR SCARED BOOKS**

The Dharma of the Buddha is the true sources of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like this one are repositories of the words and guides of great masters, showing us how to put the Teachings into practice and integrate into our lives, whereby we can gain the happiness we seek and become a source of comforts and happiness for others. Therefore, books containing Dharma teachings are more precious than other material objects and should be treated with utmost respect.

Do not treat them casually like other objects or put them underneath other things, step over them, sit upon them, or use them for mundane purposes, such as propping up tables, chairs and so on. They should be wrapped in cloth when carried and always be kept in a clean, high place, separate from writings on worldly Subjects.





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