

2. Explication of the Treatise for Nyak

Sachen Künga Nyingpo (1092–1158)

I PROSTRATE with the crown of my head at the feet of the excellent master.

Let me explain the meaning of the words.

After bowing at the lotus beneath the feet of the excellent master,...

The four “excellent masters” are: the excellent master who completely eliminates outer doubts; the master who presents the inner naturally arisen primordial awareness; the master who presents the secret coemergent primordial awareness; and the master who presents the utterly pure real nature of all phenomena in ultimate reality. If one touches the lotus beneath that vajra master’s feet, all qualities will be produced in oneself. Therefore, motivated by an exceptional clear faith, one bows with body, speech, and mind.

...I will write a brief explanation of the Path with the Result.

The path is the two mundane and transcendent paths, the two paths of the stiff and the spinning wheel, the two paths consisting of the warmth and consisting of the signs,¹⁶ and the two paths consisting of the advance and retreat of primordial awareness and the advance and retreat of thoughts. By way of these synonyms, there are eight.

The result is of three types: the great degree of benefit for oneself, which is the five bodies of enlightenment¹⁷ that come from aligning the dependently arisen connections and completely perfecting the assemblies; the great degree of benefit for others, which includes many qualities such as enabling the blind to gain sight; and the great degree of benefit for both oneself and others, which is buddhahood together with one’s circle, in a single group.

Therefore this is known as the oral instructions of the path with the result; the oral instructions of the result with the path; the oral instructions of understanding many points by understanding one; [12] the oral instructions of removing impediments to meditation by recognizing meditative concentration; the oral instructions of removing impediments of the māras by recognizing obstacles; the oral instructions of upholding faults as qualities; the oral instructions of accepting obstacles as attainments; and the oral instructions that are like a gold-transforming elixir.

This is a “brief explanation” because, in accordance with the permission received from the *nirmāṇakāya* emanated body,¹⁸ Virūpa presented a vast meaning in few words. In short, the meaning is: “I will write the real nature of the Tripiṭaka in vajra lines that are like a precious wish-fulfilling jewel.”

The Path of Samsara and Nirvana in Common

Now the meaning of the treatise is explained by way of the seven sections of the path of samsara and nirvana in common.

The Three Appearances

The path presented as the three appearances includes impure appearance, experiential appearance, and pure appearance. Three topics apply to each of these appearances: what the support is, what the cause is, and what the appearance is.

For a sentient being with afflictions, impure appearance occurs.

The support is a sentient being. Of the six types of sentient beings in general, this applies in particular to the mindstream of a single human being. The cause is referred to as the “appearance of affliction.” Due to the power of the habitual propensities of karma and afflictions, the appearance is an impure appearance. This includes both confusing appearance and karmic appearance.

For a yogin with meditative concentration, experiential appearance occurs.

The support is a yogin, of which there are three types: a person with a perfect body, a person with a pristine mindstream, and a person in whose mindstream experience has arisen. The cause is mentioned as “meditative concentration,” but this is an implicit reference to the blessing by the vital winds and mind, which are the ten father and mother *ḍākas* and *ḍākinis* within the mansions of the channel syllables. [13]

Concerning “experiential appearance,” the following arise in the mindstream: the three paths such as that of eliminating entry—which are the path of eliminating entry, the path of severing attachment, and the path of great enlightenment; the three experiences—which are the physical experiences, mental experiences, and dream experiences; the three dependently arisen connections—which are the dependently arisen connections of the reversal of the vital winds, the visual appearances, and dreams; the three

warmths—which are the warmth preceded by thought, the warmth of the gathering of the nine essential constituents, and the warmth of the blazing and gathering of the drops; and the three meditative concentrations—which are the meditative concentration of the characteristic as a variety, the meditative concentration of the nature as emptiness, and the meditative concentration of the essence as their unity. In that way, all fifteen experiences may arise, either in sequence or not in sequence, and should be recognized as meditative concentration and taken as the path.

For a sugata with the ornamental wheel of inexhaustible enlightened body, speech, and mind, pure appearance occurs.

The support is a sugata, of which there are four types: the sugata of outer shape, because one has gone to bliss through the path of the two assemblies; the sugata of inner mantra, because one has gone to bliss through the path of the central channel; the sugata of secret initiation, because one has gone to bliss in the space of the mother; and the sugata of ultimate reality, because one has gone to bliss through the path of the three gates to liberation.

The sugata's inexhaustible enlightened body consists of the inconceivable secret of enlightened body and the omnipresence of enlightened body. Similarly, inexhaustible enlightened speech consists of the inconceivable secret of enlightened speech and the omnipresence of enlightened speech. Inexhaustible enlightened mind consists of the inconceivable secret of enlightened mind and the omnipresence of enlightened mind.

Those [qualities] are *ornamental* because they beautify both oneself and others. They are a *wheel* because they are a wheel of enlightened activity. By means of both benefits being done and benefits that will be done, a sugata performs unceasing activities for the benefit of sentient beings until samsara has been emptied. [14]

That presents the support.

The dissolution of the four pulsations is the implicitly presented cause, which is explained later in the text and is not presented here.

The appearance is "pure appearance." In brief, one realizes that there are no separate appearances of samsara and nirvana beyond one's own utterly pure primordial awareness. At about that point, samsara and nirvana have a single taste, path and result have a single taste, being a buddha and being a sentient being are a single mindstream, and what is to be rejected and the

antidote have a single taste. This is the meaning of “at about that point, what is to be accepted and rejected are nondual and what is to be abandoned and attained are nondual.”

The Three Continua

Now the path is presented as the three continua, which are the causal continuum of the universal ground, the method continuum of the body, and the resultant continuum of mahāmudrā. These are also the root continuum of the universal ground, the method continuum of the body, and the resultant continuum of vajra body, speech, and mind.

Let me explain the meaning of the words.

Since samsara and nirvana are complete in the causal continuum of the universal ground, it is the root continuum.

[The mind] is known as the “universal ground” because it acts as the ground of both samsara and nirvana, depending on whether or not the methods are applied. It is *causal* because of its potent ability to arise as the result. It is a *continuum* because of the continuity of reflexive awareness that extends from when one is a sentient being until one becomes a vajra holder, with the nature of mind, pure awareness, an unbroken stream. Samsara and nirvana are complete in the sense that all the phenomena of samsara are complete in the form of the characteristics; all the path of nirvana is complete in the form of the qualities; and all the phenomena of the result are complete in the form of the potency. [15] That same [universal ground] is also referred to as the “root continuum,” because the mind, the universal ground, is to be realized through the alignment of the dependently arisen connections in the body.¹⁹

Now the method continuum of the body is explained by dividing the subject into five sections: the causal initiation, which is the first topic of the method continuum; the twenty topics of the path and so forth; the presentation of the group of sacred commitments; the presentation of the propitiation of the five ḍākas and ḍākinīs if [the sacred commitments] are damaged; and the presentation of the path initiation, which is the main topic of the method continuum.