

A Lamp for the Path and Commentary



By **ATĪŚA**

*translated & annotated by
Richard Sherburne S.J.*

*foreword by His Holiness
the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*



The Wisdom of Tibet Series-5

A Lamp for the Path and Commentary

of

ATĪŚA

Translated and Annotated by
Richard Sherburne, S.J.

FOREWORD BY HIS HOLINESS TENZIN GYATSO,
THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

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To my lama and *kalyanamitra*, Tulku Kunga Labrang,
the Dezhung Rinpoche:

for his patient guidance and tutelage;

To my mentor, Turrell V. Wylie:

for his continual scholarly insistence;

To my colleague and collaborator,

Nancy Moore Gettelman:

for her unfailing trust and spirited encouragement;

To my reader and editor, Gerald Yorke:

for priceless and valued help in the English language.

For all their wise assistance and kind friendship,

I could barter only my own ignorance and this result.

— *Richard Sherburne, S.J.*
Seattle University
Spring, 1983

THE DALAI LAMA



THEKCHEN CHOELING
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HIMACHAL PRADESH

Foreword

Atiśa, the author of *A Lamp For The Path To Enlightenment (Bodhipathapradīpa)*, is held in special regard by Tibetans. He had a vision that he would not live so long if he left India and went to Tibet. Nevertheless, this Indian saint and scholar made the arduous journey across the Himalayas and travelled throughout Tibet teaching and giving guidance in the full realisation that by so doing he would shorten his life by many years. The place where he died, not far from Lhasa, was and remains to this day an important place of pilgrimage for Tibetans.

Atiśa's life itself exemplifies the religious path taught by the Buddha. He travelled far and wide to study with teachers who could explain the practices from their own experience, and having learned the importance of altruism directed towards all living beings, strove to transform himself into an embodiment of love and compassion. He recognised the importance of ethical conduct, meditative stabilisation and wisdom and practised all three. Before coming to Tibet he was accepted in his own land as foremost authority on discipline, meditation and Buddhist philosophy. Like other great and kind Indian masters who taught Buddhism to Tibetans, he also gave due importance to Tantra.

Atiśa taught that Buddha's message was primarily a method to relieve the suffering of living beings. He sought to heal the division which threatened the spread of Buddhism in Tibet by emphasising the central Buddhist teachings and by showing clearly that each teaching was relevant at the appropriate time and for the appropriate person. He stressed the value in all branches of the Buddha's teaching.

This book, which was written by Atiśa with special needs of his Tibetan disciples in mind, is the prototype of the stages of the

(*Lam rim*) literature which reached its full bloom amongst later Tibetan teachers and scholars. It presents the important practices in a concise and easily understandable manner and orders them in terms of the development and ability of the mind.

Such practices as these are timeless and of benefit to all. Just as we Tibetans have benefited greatly from them through the centuries, I hope those in other countries will find here a method to attain the lasting peace they desire. The translation of the text into English here by the noted Christian scholar, Richard Sherburne, S.J., illustrates cooperation between religions that enhances mutual understanding and draws the world together in recognition of the common goal of bettering humankind.



July 14, 1982

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Introduction

The *Lamp for the Enlightenment Path* and its *Commentary* are eleventh-century Buddhist texts which were written at Tho-ling (“High-flying”) Monastery in the central Himalayas near Mount Kailas. Although little known to “outsiders”, these texts have been used and cherished by the Buddhist communities within Tibet and inner Asia for well over nine centuries. The monk who composed them wrote originally in Sanskrit (now lost) while simultaneously translating them into Tibetan, and they were included as authentic commentary in the earliest canon of Mahāyāna scripture.

The *Lamp* proved to be a unique model for a religious literary style that received much attention and development in Tibet: the concise but comprehensive manuals that show the “steps of the path” (*lam-rim*, as the genre is called) and are kept as lifelong guides for the spiritual endeavour. Both beginner and adept find a map for the Path in the poem, which was to be memorised, while the *Commentary* provides the eminently practical explanation for further reflection and study. The *Lamp* and its companion were a new direction and emphasis for Tibetan Buddhist life because they presented for the first time the harmonious relationship between Buddhism’s essential monastic basis and the compassionate Bodhisattva’s high ideal, flowering in the true and necessary mystical experience of Tantra.

Compassion, Calm and Insight, Emptiness and Bliss become key concepts because of the emphasis in these texts, well supported not only by the authority of Sūtra but by the brilliance of Buddhist minds for centuries. The fascination of so integrated a goal in the *Lamp* and *Commentary* made them into the curriculum for training and study in Tibet’s first distinctive religious order, the *Bka’-gdams-pa* (“Word-Instructed”). While the author was not the Order’s founder in actual fact, it was his charisma and insight (and dying wish) that led his immediate disciples to found the group of monks who now

are popularly known in the West as “Yellow Hats” – the order to which the Dalai Lamas have belonged. The spirituality of these texts has consequently exerted a very strong influence on the religious and cultural development of the Buddhist peoples of the Roof of the World.

The so far unmentioned author of these works is Atīśa (AD 982–1054), an Indian monk known to Tibet as Jo-bo-rje (“The Noble Lord”). All Tibetan historians mark his arrival at Tho-ling in 1042 as the rebirth of Buddhism in their country – the “Second Spread” (*phyi-dar*) of the religion that had first crossed their mountains in the seventh century.

Born in western Bengal of noble family in the final century of Buddhist glory in India – just prior to the Muslim destruction – Atīśa was a gifted student in both secular and religious learning. As a young man, it is said, he travelled to north-west India and the valley of Swat where he was initiated in the prevalent mystical experience of his day, studying and practising Tantra for some years. At the age of twenty-nine he took the vows and ordination of the Buddhist monk, continuing his Mahāyāna studies for ten years in far-off Sumatra, then a great monastic centre with close ties to Pāla Bengal. When he returned to India it was to the great monastery at Vikramaśīla, a Pāla foundation, where, then in his prime, he held the post of respected Elder (*sthavira*) and became a popular teacher (*ācārya*) – popular especially with Tibetan student monks, by whose eagerness he was attracted and whose language he quickly mastered. He was of course already an accomplished master of Sanskrit, a *paṇḍita*.

While Atīśa does not reach the stature of a Nāgārjuna or Aśaṅga, the great Buddhist ornaments of earlier centuries, he is nevertheless a man of deep personal holiness and charisma coupled with considerable literary ability and productivity. His insight is balanced with the practical, as is evidenced in the many short incisive texts he wrote for his students both at Vikramaśīla and at neighbouring Odantapurī. All his biographers record his charm and wit, and his adventuresome spirit needs little testimony: he was sixty years old when he arrived at Tho-ling, after a

year's journey that would tax even the modern traveller.

His missionary labours in Tibet extended over thirteen years, beginning at Tho-ling, where he composed the *Lamp* and *Commentary* in 1042-3; he then moved east to Bsam-yas and to Lha-sa, teaching at many monasteries, writing, and counselling renewal of spirit. He died at Snye-thang just south of Lha-sa where his relics are enshrined in a temple overlooking the Skyid-chu near its confluence with the mighty Brahmaputra.

If Tibetan monastic life in Atīśa's time was somewhat in disarray, it was due to both political and religious influences. After Buddhism's original royal patronage in the seventh century, temples and monasteries had fanned out as far as the reaches of the Tibetan empire itself – from within the borders of T'ang China to what is now Russian Turkestan, sweeping the entire arc of the Himalayas from Kashmir to Burma. But two centuries of growth was summarily stopped in a merciless persecution that began in 836 under Glang-dar-ma, upon whose assassination the Tibetan empire itself fragmented. After a century and a half of suppression and decline, refugee monks began slowly to return to ancient ruins and find patronage under local princes and families. Direct descendants of the old royal family in western Tibet were particularly eager to restore Buddhist life, building impressive monasteries like Tho-ling and financing the education of promising Tibetan youths in Kashmir and northern India.

It was a prince of this line, Byang-chub-'od, grand-nephew of the builder of Tho-ling and an ordained monk, who heard about Atīśa through the Tibetans who had studied at Vikramaśīla, and pressed the urgent invitation for him to come and assist in the work of restoring true observance of monastic life.

The urgency of the invitation was not so much that corruption existed because of the years of suppression and isolation, but rather that serious misinterpretations of Buddhist ideals and practice had arisen through the pitfalls of Tantra. This movement of a devotional and mystical system had been growing among Brahmanists and Buddhists in India for some centuries and held great appeal

for the Tibetans. But it is well known that the subtle and profound elements of much of the “swift path” are clothed in sexual imagery that lends itself to misuse by the uninitiated and unguided. Atīśa was the first to integrate and balance the Buddhist paths and win an audience that would carry on his teaching. The *Lamp* and *Commentary* show his views and are his major work.

Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| <i>AK(LVP)</i> | <i>L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu</i> by La Vallée Poussin (1971) |
| <i>BCA</i> | <i>Bodhi-caryā-avatāra</i> by Śāntideva |
| <i>FBT</i> | <i>Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras</i> by Lessing and Wayman (1968) |
| <i>Ot.</i> | <i>Tibetan Tripitaka – Peking Edition</i> kept in the Library of Otani University |
| <i>SS</i> | <i>Śikshā-samuccaya</i> of Śāntideva, translation by Bendall and Rouse (1922) |
| <i>TBT</i> | <i>The Buddhist Tantras</i> by Wayman (1973) |

MANUSCRIPT PAGE NUMBERING OF THE TIBETAN TEXTS

Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma

[*Ot.* 5344: *Dbu ma*: *Khi*: 274b–277b]

Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma'i dka' 'grel

[*Ot.* 5345: *Dbu ma*: *Khi*: 277b–339b]

A Lamp for the Enlightenment Path

[Root Text: *Poem*]

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VEHICLE OF THE PERFECTIONS

HIGHER CONDUCT

| | | |
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HIGHER MEDITATION

| | | |
|---------------------|-------|-----|
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|----------------|-------|-------|

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|----------|----|----|
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|----------|----|----|

A Lamp for the [274b] Enlightenment Path

COMPOSED BY ATĪŚA
IS CONTAINED HEREIN.

In the Sanskrit language:
Bodhi-patha-pradīpa.

In the Tibetan language:
Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī,
the ever-youthful!

- 1 I bow in great reverence to all past, present, and
Future Victors, to their Doctrine and Communities.
I shall light a Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment,
At the request of my good disciple Byang-chub-'od.
- 2 In that they are Inferior or Mediocre or Superior,
Persons should be understood as three:
The characteristics of each are very clear, and
I shall note how they differ from one another.
- 3 One who by every means he finds,
Seeks but the pleasure of saṃsāra,
And cares but for himself alone, that one
Is known as the Inferior Person.
- 4 One who puts life's pleasures behind
And turns himself from deeds of sin,
Yet cares only about his own peace,
That person should be called Mediocre.
- 5 One who wholly seeks a complete end
To the entire suffering of others because
Their suffering belongs to his own [conscious] stream,
That person is a Superior.
- 6 For those pure beings whose desire
Is the highest of Enlightenments,
I shall explain the right means
Which were taught me by my Gurus.
- 7 Facing a painted image of the Perfect Buddha,
Or in front of holy reliquaries and the like,
Give worship with flowers and incense
And whatever objects may be at hand.
- 8 Then with the Sevenfold Worship expressed
In the *Deeds of Samantabhadra*,
And a mind that does not turn back until
The Heart of Enlightenment is reached,
- 9 With great faith in the Three Jewels,
Bending knee to the ground,
And folding the hands, [275a]
First take the Three Refuges thrice.

- 10 Then, because the Thought of Love for
All creatures is the prerequisite,
One looks out on all the world,
Suffering in death, transmigration,
And rebirth in the three bad destinies:
- 11 At sight of that suffering, one suffers;
And he who wants to free the world
From the very cause of such suffering,
Must beget this Thought of Enlightenment
That is pledged never to turn back.
- 12 Every quality that belongs to
Begetting thoughts of such Resolution
Has been well explained by Maitreya
In his sūtra, the *Stalks in Array*.
- 13 Read that sūtra or hear it from a Guru, and when
The infinite benefits of Perfect Enlightenment Thought
Are seen, then for that very reason you
Will beget the Thought again and again.
- 14 The merit of this is shown extremely well
In the sūtra called the *Questions of Viradatta*;
And to give the essence of it,
I quote three of its verses here:
- 15 “If a form could be had for the full
Merit of the Enlightenment Thought,
It would surpass even one
That filled the whole realm of space.”
- 16 “Or take a man who owns jewels, and with them
Fills every one of the Buddha-fields –
Reckoned as more than the grains of Gaṅgā’s sands –
Then offers all this to the Lord of the World;”
- 17 “Yet another who merely folds his hands,
And inclines his thought to Enlightenment.
The latter’s worship is higher by far,
Because in it there is found no limit.”¹
- 18 When you get the thoughts of aspiring to Enlightenment,
Then with great effort strive to expand them fully;

And to recall your resolve in your other births,
Observe fully the Training I explained to you.

- 19 A right resolve will not be furthered
Without vows that have progress in mind; [275b]
Therefore he who seeks growth in the resolve for
Perfect Enlightenment, earnestly takes them.
- 20 Only he who has lasting vows in
One of Prātimokṣa's seven ranks
Is fit for the Vow of the Bodhisattva;
There is no other way for it to be.
- 21 The Tathāgata has said that of
The seven ranks of Prātimokṣa,
The glorious Pure Life is highest;
By which he meant the vows of a Monk.
- 22 According to the ritual given in the
Conduct Chapter of the *Bodhisattva Levels*,
One takes the Vow from any good Guru
Who has the proper characteristics.
- 23 One who is learned in the ritual of the Vow,
And himself lives the Vow he has taken,
And has the compassionate forbearance
To impart it – know him to be the good Guru.
- 24 But if, after trying, one cannot
Find just such a Guru as this,
I will explain another ritual
For taking the vow in a correct way.
- 25 In this latter way, Mañjuśrī in a former life
As Ambarājā beget the Enlightenment Thought;
And as told in the sūtra called
The Ornament of Mañjuśrī's Buddha-field,
I write it down clearly here now:
- 26 “In the presence of the Lords, I beget
The Thought of Perfect Enlightenment,
And issuing invitation to all creatures,
I will save them all from the cycle of rebirth.”

- 27 “Beginning from this moment and henceforth,
Until I obtain the Highest Enlightenment,
I shall not permit ill-will or anger,
Avarice or envy, to occupy my mind.”
- 28 “I shall practise the Pure Life,
And renounce sin and base desire;
I shall imitate the Buddha
By rejoicing in the vow of Conduct.”
- 29 “Myself, I am not keen to reach
Enlightenment in some swift way;
I shall remain until the final end
For the sake of but a single creature.”
- 30 “I shall purify the innumerable [276a]
Inconceivable fields of the universe,
And from the taking of this [new] name, [henceforth]
I shall live in the ten directions.”
- 31 “Purifying the actions of
My body and speech entirely,
I shall cleanse my mind’s activity as well;
No unvirtuous deed will ever be mine.”²
- 32 In essence, one’s purity of body, speech and mind
Means keeping vows with a mind for progress;
For by practising well the Three Conduct Trainings,
Appreciation of those same Three becomes greater.
- 33 Hence, when one has striven in the vows which make up
The pure and perfect Bodhisattva Vow,
He will bring to complete perfection
The very Equipment for Perfect Enlightenment.
- 34 All the Buddhas have held that
Perfecting this Equipment,
The nature of which is Merit and Knowledge,
Lies essentially in the superknowledges.
- 35 Just as a bird with unfledged wings
Cannot fly up into the sky,
So without the superknowledges’ power,
One cannot work for the good of others.

- 36 The merits which a man with the
Superknowledges gains in a single day
Could not be had in a hundred lives
By one who lacked those knowledges.
- 37 He who seeks to bring to perfection swiftly
The Equipment for Perfect Enlightenment
Strives hard for the superknowledges,
For they are not accomplished by sloth.
- 38 As long as Calmness is not attained,
The superknowledges will not occur;
Therefore, in order to achieve Calmness,
One must keep striving over and over.
- 39 One who neglects the Limbs of Calmness,
Even though he strive to meditate
For thousands of years, never
Will achieve Concentration.
- 40 Therefore, when well established in the Limbs
That are stated in the *Chapter on Concentration Equipment*,
One can then set the mind in virtue,
Fixed on any Topic he chooses.
- 41 When yogic Calmness is achieved,
So too are the superknowledges; [276b]
But obscuration is not destroyed
Without the Perfection of Insight.
- 42 Hence, to remove all obscuration
Of his affliction and his knowledge,
The yogin must continually cultivate the
Perfection of Insight together with Means.
- 43 Scripture says that bondage is from
Insight being divorced from Means,
And the Means from Insight as well.
Therefore, neglect not this union.
- 44 To remove any doubts about
What Insight is, and what are Means,
I make clear the difference
Between the Means and Insight.

- 45 The Victors have explained that the Means
Are all the Equipments of virtue,
Starting with the Perfection of Giving,
Up to, but excluding, that of Insight.
- 46 One who combines mastery of the Means
With a true cultivation of Insight
Will swiftly attain Enlightenment, but
Not by cultivating merely Non-self.
- 47 “Insight” is fully explained as knowing
The Emptiness of intrinsic nature,
In comprehending that Aggregates and
Sense-bases and Elements do not arise.
- 48 An existent’s arising is impossible;
A non-existent’s is like flowers in the sky;
For a thing to be both is absurd fallacy;
So neither do they originate together.
- 49 Since an entity does not arise from itself,
And is not from another, or even from both,
Nor is it yet without cause; therefore it has
No intrinsic nature by way of own-existence.
- 50 Furthermore, if one analyses all things
As identities or multiplicities,
Own-existence is not perceived; hence one is
Certain that intrinsic natures do not exist.
- 51 The reasoning of the *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness*,
And of texts like the *Basic Stanzas on the Middle Way*,
Explains the proof that all entities
Are empty of intrinsic nature.
- 52 Wherefore, lest my text become too long,
I do not elaborate it here,
But will explain only proven tenets
In order to further contemplation.
- 53 Thus, not to perceive intrinsic nature [277a]
In any phenomenon whatever
Is to contemplate its Non-Self; which
Is the same as contemplating with Insight.

- 54 And this Insight which does not see
 Intrinsic nature in any phenomena
 Is that same Insight explained as Wisdom.
 Cultivate it without conceptual thought.
- 55 The world of change springs from conceptual
 Thought, which is its very nature;
 The complete removal of such
 Thought is the Highest Nirvāṇa.
- 56 Moreover, the Blessed One declared:
 “Conceptual thinking is the great ignorance,
 And casts one into saṃsāra’s ocean; but
 Clear as the sky is his contemplation who
 Remains in Concentration without concepts.”
- 57 And he also says in the *Non-Conceptual Progress Formula*:
 “When a son of the Victor meditates on
 This holy Doctrine without conceptual thought,
 He gradually attains the non-conceptual.”³
- 58 When through scripture and reason one has
 Penetrated the non-intrinsic
 Nature of all non-arising phenomena,
 Then contemplate without conceptual thought.
- 59 And when he has thus contemplated Thatness,
 And by stages has attained “Warmth” and the rest,
 Then he will gain the “Joyous” [Level] and on up:
 Buddha-Enlightenment is not far off.
- 60 Through the rites of “Appeasement” and “Prosperity”
 And the rest, effected by the force of Mantra,
 And also by the strength of the Eight Great Powers,
 Starting with that of “Good Flask”, and others,
- 61 It is maintained that the Equipment for
 Enlightenment is perfected with ease;
 And if one wants to practise Mantra as prescribed
 In the Tantras: Action, Practice, and on,

- 62 Then, to gain the Preceptor-Initiation,
 One must first win a holy Guru
 By giving him attendance and precious things
 And by obedience to his word.
- 63 And when the Preceptor-Initiation has been
 Conferred by the Guru who was won over,
 Then one is purified of all sin, and [277b]
 Becomes fit to exercise the Powers.
- 64 The Secret and Insight Initiations
 Should not be taken by religious celibates,
 Because it is emphatically forbidden
 In the *Great Tantra of Primal Buddha*.
- 65 If those Initiations were taken by one who stays
 In the austerity of a religious celibate,
 It would violate his vow of austerity
 Since he would be practising what is forbidden.
- 66 Transgressions would occur which defeat
 The man of religious observance;
 And by his certain fall to bad destinies,
 He could not even succeed [in Mantra practice].
- 67 Having acquired the Preceptor-Initiation,
 He may listen to all Tantras and explain them;
 Perform Fire-offering, Gift-worship, and the like:
 There is no wrong in wisdom about reality.
- 68 I, the Elder, Dīpaṃkaraśrī,
 Have seen this explanation in texts
 Such as the sūtras; and at Byang-chub-'od's request
 Have explained concisely the Path to Enlightenment.

[Colophon]

This completes the *Lamp for the Enlightenment Path*
 composed by the great Ācārya, glorious Dīpaṃkarajñāna.
 Translated and edited by the great Upādhyāya of India
 himself, and by the revisor-translator Dge-ba'i blo-gros.
 This text was composed at the Tho-ling temple of
 Zhang-zhung.

Notes to the Root Text

Notes on the contents of the basic poem are given in the text of the *Commentary* where the stanzas are repeated, except for the following source identifications:

- 1 Ot. 760 (28), Vol. 25:86.2.
- 2 Ot. 760 (15), Vol. 23:129.2.
- 3 Ot. 810, Vol. 32:232.5.

The Commentary on a Lamp for the Enlightenment Path

Dedication and Theme

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Commentary on the Difficult Points of the Lamp for Enlightenment Path

In the Sanskrit language:
Bodhi-mārga-pradīpaṃ-pañjikā-nāma.

In the Tibetan language:
Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma'i dka' 'grel.

Dedicatory Verse

I pay homage to the noble and blessed Tārā.
I pay homage to Mañjuśrī, prince of old.
To Cakrasaṃvara the Triple-pledge King,
To Lokeśvara and Tārā in respect I bow.

Bowing down in sincerity to the Gurus:
Maitreya; Aśaṅga and Guru Suvarṇadvīpa,
And to Mañjughoṣa: Śāntideva and Bodhibhadra,
I will write this Commentary to give sunlight.

Since the *Lamp for the Path* is only a moonbeam [278a]
On the good path to Enlightenment's heart;
Whatever details may be unclear in it,
This sun-like Commentary will light the way.

Though I have no talent for treatise composing,
I am writing this clearer explanation,
At my devout and ardent disciple's request,
So that the Buddha's teaching may increase, and
Disputes over scripture may be put to rest.

For wise men to produce wonders, and
Average men to understand with ease,
And so lesser men will put aside their passions,
I write this *Commentary on Difficult Points*.

With so much meaning in so short a text,
This treatise may be hard to comprehend;
And without holy men [for guidance]
One will altogether go astray.

Therefore, an intelligent person
Wins the favour of a Guru, and
Asks for the right personal guidance which
Is in accord with the Guru-tradition.

The Text

The instruction I give here came like drops of honey and nectar to me from the holy Gurus Suvarṇadvīpa and the glorious and venerable Bodhibhadra. And faced with the repeated requests of Byang-chub-'od, my disciple of princely rank, and of the Monk Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba, my disciple of long-standing, I am going to gather up those drops of personal guidance I received, and follow both what my Gurus gave me, and what the sūtras and treatises have to say.

Because Byang-chub-'od is ever asking me
For the sevenfold explanation, saying:
“The meaning is not clear in your root text”,
I will write for the sake of his request.

He was referring to what the great scholar Ācārya Vasubandhu said:

“Those who preach a sūtra's meaning
Should give short instructions which include:
[1] its usefulness, [2] a summary, [3] the word definitions,
[4] its relevance, [5] objections, [6] responses, and
[7] explanation.”¹

If men of insight rely on a Guru and are taught according to this method, they quickly comprehend the good Path of Mahāyāna – the Path of the great Wagons and the way of the Superior Person. [278b]

And thus I will explain the
Path of the Bodhisattvas,
According to the sūtras,
Texts, and my Gurus' teaching.

Where does my explanation begin? It begins right there in the basic text, starting with the first stanza:

I BOW IN GREAT REVERENCE TO ALL PAST, PRESENT, AND
FUTURE VICTORS, TO THEIR DOCTRINE AND COMMUNITIES.
I SHALL LIGHT A LAMP FOR THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT,
AT THE REQUEST OF MY GOOD DISCIPLE, BYANG-CHUB-'OD. [Stanza 1]

The first half of the stanza is easy to understand. In the second half, by "GOOD DISCIPLE" I mean a fit vessel for the doctrine of Mahāyāna. And who is this good disciple? He is the man we call Byang-chub-'od. "AT THE REQUEST OF" refers to his saying to me:

"In this area of Tibet there are persons who misinterpret the Mahāyāna Path of the Buddha's teaching. Gurus and Spiritual Friends are arguing back and forth about things they themselves do not comprehend. They all have their own logic to analyse their suppositions about the Profound View and Broad Practice. With so much disagreement on all sides, I beg you to clear up these doubts for us."

And so, because of his repeated entreaty and for his sake, I do light this lamp for the Path to Enlightenment, following the teaching of the sūtras and tradition.

If you ask where that Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment is to be found, it is the main part of my basic text from the stanza on the Superior Person [6] through to the last stanza [67] on Tantra.

Theme: Three Persons

In the opening stanzas about the Three Persons I show who is and who is not a fit vessel for Mahāyāna. The definitions of the Inferior and Mediocre Persons are easy to understand. It is this stanza which shows who is the fit vessel for Mahāyāna: [279a]

ONE WHO WHOLLY SEEKS A COMPLETE END
TO THE ENTIRE SUFFERING OF OTHERS BECAUSE
THEIR SUFFERING BELONGS TO HIS OWN [CONSCIOUS] STREAM,
THAT PERSON IS A SUPERIOR. [5]

This is what the commentaries have to say about the subject:

“The Bodhisattva loves all creatures
From the bottom of his heart;
As one loves an only child,
Ever desiring to seek its good.”²

Or again:

“As the dove loves her own chicks best,
Sitting to brood them beneath her breast;
So like her, with aversion overcome,
Treat every creature with affection.”³

And the great scholar, Ācārya Vasubandhu:

“A lesser man uses his resources to provide for the happiness of his own [conscious] stream. The mediocre man is not happy and so turns aside only [his own] suffering, but thereby remains in suffering. The holy man, because sufferings exist in his own stream, has the sole care to turn aside the very basis for others’ suffering and give them happiness; for he suffers on account of their suffering.”⁴

And he adds:

“Those who suffer because others are suffering, and who rejoice and are happy at the happiness of others belong to that class of men for whom there is no ‘My’. They do not look to their own happiness, but rather make great effort, thinking ‘I am able to save others from the great river of suffering.’ By its very nature their compassion rejoices both in their own suffering and at the happiness of others because of the strength they have cultivated in compassion.”⁵ [279b]

Consequently, the person who by nature cannot bear to see his neighbour afflicted with calamity, who proposes to barter his own [happiness] for others’ [suffering], who looks

upon every creature as his only child – as a father cannot bear to see an only son trapped in a blazing fire, or falling into an abyss or being swept away by a flood – I praise that kind of man here as being the fit vessel for Mahāyāna.

The Right Means for the Superior Person

It was with that kind of Great Being in mind, that I wrote:

I SHALL EXPLAIN THE RIGHT MEANS
WHICH WERE TAUGHT ME BY MY GURUS. [6]

By “GURUS” I mean the venerable and glorious Bodhibhadra and the venerable Suvarṇadvīpa. As to “THE RIGHT MEANS”, I will explain them fully in the following order: [A] Taking Refuge in the Three [Jewels], [B] the two aspects of Enlightenment Thought, [C] begetting the Superknowledges in order to work for the special good of others, [D] accumulating the Two Equipments through the union of Means and Insight, and [E] accumulating the Two Equipments through the extra-ordinary method of Mantra, that great [system] of Mahāyāna which swiftly perfects the good of self and others.

Notes to Dedication

- 1 *Science of Preaching*, Ot. 5562, Vol. 113:245.4.
- 2 *Ornament of Sūtras*, Ot. 5521, Vol. 108:10.3.
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 *Explanation of “Treasure of Phenomenology”*, Ot. 5591, Vol. 115:189.1. The quotation is of paramount importance because it is evidently Atīśa’s doctrinal and literary source for the “Three Persons” distinction of spiritual qualities he introduces to all the later Tibetan *lam-rim* (“Steps on the Path”) writings. The teaching device of triads in presenting qualitative degrees – low-medium-high – is common enough in all literature (*aller guten Ding sind drei*), and eminently so in Buddhism. But the three types of person presented here by Vasubandhu (and Atīśa following him) are not to be taken as the same triple division of Paths (Hearer, Solitary Buddha, Bodhisattva) that the *Perfection of Wisdom* literature uses, since the inferior person is not even concerned about liberation – as the Hearer would be. Rather, the distinction is between the utter worldling (inferior), the Hearer or Solitary Buddha (mediocre), and the Bodhisattva (superior) who seeks Enlightenment out of compassion, and not just for his own liberation.
- 5 *ibid.*

Vehicle of the Perfections

PART ONE

Higher Conduct

CHAPTER 1

The Triple Refuge

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The Triple Refuge

The Triple Refuge

Going for refuge to the Three Jewels is the entrance portal, so to speak, to the great city of Liberation, and the foundation of the Thought of Enlightenment. I teach about this in the three stanzas [7, 8, 9] that begin:

FACING A PAINTED IMAGE OF THE PERFECT BUDDHA,
OR IN FRONT OF HOLY RELIQUARIES AND THE LIKE.

By “FACING” I mean the kind of thing one sees in such Mahāyāna sūtras as the *Admonitions for the King*, taken from the old *Glorious Acts*:

“The Enlightenment Thought is produced [just] by facing and seeing the body of a Tathāgata.”¹

And all the Spiritual Friends say that this is true. [280a]

A fuller ritual for taking the Refuges can be shown later [but here let me state it briefly]. First of all, beg that each likeness of the Three Jewels painted in the Twenty-seven Maṇḍalas² be present before you, and then invite also the [actually] purified Three Jewels from their respective abodes, wherever they may be in all the regions of the ten-directional world. Or again, you may prefer to place yourself in those very paradises, taking a worshipful posture, and reflecting that you are seated in the presence of each and every Buddha and Bodhisattva. Then, with your palms flat together or cupped, join the hands at the crown of the head, completing the acts of worship, and perform the Three Heaps [of Confession, Rejoicing, and Entreaty]. Then afterwards, when you have presented the Guru with a gift, the Refuges can be taken. Of course, this

should be prefaced with an understanding of [the difference between] the Three Jewels as Ultimate Reality and the Three Jewels as present before us.

Sevenfold Worship: The Good Practice

“GIVE WORSHIP WITH FLOWERS AND INCENSE” [Stanza 7b] illustrates Worship with Pleasing Objects. “AND WITH THE SEVENFOLD WORSHIP” [Stanza 8] illustrates Meditative Worship. A bodhisattva on the Equipment Path, who is going to be an instructor himself, should be skilled in these matters of Worship because they afford great growth in the Equipment of Merit.

AND WITH THE SEVENFOLD WORSHIP EXPRESSED
IN THE *DEEDS OF SAMANTABHADRA* [Stanza 8a]

refers to that scripture known as the *Deeds of Samantabhadra*, [280b] *the Royal Resolves*, which is a part of the *Stalks in Array Sūtra*. The great scholars and holy Gurus have described this sūtra as a lamp for the scriptures of the Bodhisattvas’ vehicle of the Perfections. It is the *completely good* [*samanta-bhadra*] practice of a Bodhisattva who had attained the Great Level. It is the *completely good* [*samanta-bhadra*] practice of those who have discovered the treasure found in endless oceans of Resolve. And it is the Resolve of “One Who Is Completely Good” [Samantabhadra].

[*The Royal Resolves*]³

- (1) To all those Lions of Men who
In every corner of this world have
Passed beyond the dimensions of time,
I pay homage with body, speech, mind.
- 2 With the power of Resolve in good practice,
I use bodies more numerous than atoms
To pay reverence to all
Victors my mind can perceive.

- 3 I place full faith in these Victors,
And their virtues of Excellence –
In these countless Buddhas, seated 'midst
Their Sons, more than atoms upon atoms.
- 4 I praise all those gone to Bliss,
With oceans of endless laud;
I sing the virtues of all Victors
With the whole range of ocean's voice.
- 5 With fine flowers and fine garlands,
Cymbals' sound, unguents and parasols,
With finest lamps and pure incense,
I do worship all those Victors.
- 6 With finest cloth and excellent fragrances,
With vessels of powder piled high as Meru,
With special arrays of anything rare,
Again to those Victors I do give worship.
- 7 I also devote to all Victors
All magnificent and supreme worship;
In the strength of my faith in good practice,
I pay worship in homage to all Victors.
- 8 Whatever sins I may have committed
Out of lust or hatred or illusion,
Whether in body, speech, or mind as well,
I confess them, each and every one.
- 9 I rejoice in all the merits of the
Buddha's Sons, of Solitary Victors,
Of those still learning and those beyond,
In the entire world's merit I rejoice.
- 10 I entreat the Supreme Wheel's Turning
From those who are Lamps throughout this world,
Who through their steps to Enlightenment
Have reached unencumbered Buddhahood.
- 11 With folded hands, I petition all those
Who long to teach Nirvāṇa, to remain
For all creatures' welfare and happiness,
Throughout ages that cannot be counted.

- 12 Whatever least Merit I have gained
 In Homage, Worship, or Confession,
 In Rejoicing or Entreaty or my Petition,
 I bestow it on all for Enlightenment's sake.
- 13 I shall worship the Buddhas of the past
 Wherever they dwelt throughout the worlds;
 And may those yet to come, find their goal swiftly
 Through the steps to the Buddha's Enlightenment.)

First Interpretation

Now some Gurus interpret the *Good Practice Resolves* as sevenfold Worship in the following manner: [1] The first verse teaches Worship of Homage with body, speech and mind; [2] the second verse teaches the Worship of Body-Offerings; [3] the third verse teaches the Worship of Faith, with the Buddhas as its object; [4] the fourth verse shows the Worship of Praise; [5] the fifth and sixth verses teach the Worship with Ordinary Things; [6] the seventh verse teaches Supreme Worship; [7] the eighth, ninth and tenth verses teach the Worship of the Three Heaps [Confession, Rejoicing, Entreaty]. Then they say the rest of the verses show the bestowal of the merit of this Worship.

Second Interpretation

Again, some Gurus find sevenfold Worship in the *Royal Resolves* [just from the fifth verse]: [1] finest flowers, [2] finest garlands, [3] finest music, [4] finest unguents, [5] finest lamps, [6] finest incense, and [7] finest cloth. They say that the "fragrances" and "vessels of powder" [in the sixth verse] are included under unguents and incense; and that the "special arrays" [of the sixth verse] are to be made out of each of the above items as well as things not [explicitly] stated there.

Third Interpretation

And other learned Gurus interpret the Worship as sevenfold by summarising them as Seven Limbs which comprise Meditative [281a] Worship. They say it clearly means this

kind of Worship because of the words following the seven-fold summation [in the twelfth verse] itself:

“I shall worship the Buddhas of the past and present
Wherever they dwell throughout the worlds.”

These [three interpretations] are in no way contradictory, and one can take whichever one prefers.

Kinds of Worship

Now then, the kinds of Worship are twofold: [A] Worship with Pleasing Objects, and [B] Meditative Worship.

With Pleasing Objects

Worship of Pleasing Objects can be [1] either of things actually at hand, or [2] of things created by the mind. Things actually at hand can be kinds of flowers, incense, music, a kingdom or one's precious gems. Or they can be one's own mind and its basis, or a son, daughter, wife, or servants and the like. Things created by the mind are all those most excellent things of the universe which have no earthly owners and cannot be appropriated by anyone – the kinds of things mentioned in the *Cloud of Jewels Sūtra*, the *Garland of Thought Tantra*, the *Seal, Worship, and Centre of Concentration Sūtra*, the *Flaming Jewel*, and the *Progress in Practice*. Other things created by the mind are the arrays of offerings found, for instance, in the *Heavenly Treasure*: the Seven Precious Things of a Universal Monarch's Kingdom, and jewels, gold, silver, conch, crystal, moonstone and sapphire, emerald, pearl and red-pearl, ruby and diamond, cat's-eye, topaz, lapis [281b] lazuli, veined turquoise, beryl and shell-crystal, coral and quartz – whole showers of such gems, and countless palaces bedecked with jewelled banners, pennants and parasols. Moreover, one can take indescribable quantities of these things and offer them in the way the *Flaming Jewel Formula* mentions:

“Emitting a brilliance streaming with flowers,
 With canopies of flowers and great mounds of flowers,
 Scattering flowery profusion everywhere,
 The Great Beings gave worship to the Victor.”⁴

Using this verse, one can also offer arrays [as the *Formula* itself does] of incense, perfume, garlands and powders, cloth and gems, lotuses, victory garlands and royal banners – all in their panoplies of colour.

In the same sort of way, [imagine] a well-made parasol with its handle, colourfully fashioned of precious things, and providing an indescribable shelter for all the paradises of the Buddhas. Then do the same with a royal banner, treating it as you did the parasol. Or use a pennant or victory flag, [seeing] their size and material and number.

Or again, [imagine] showers of colourful flowers, perfect in shape and fragrance; then showers of garlands and of parasols, of victory banners, pennants and flags, and all the ineffable accoutrements of fabulous castles. The same method of worship can be applied to lamps and showers of incense, as well as to the eating and drinking of refreshments whose colour, aroma, and taste is excellent, or the wearing of soft and fragrant cloth.

Other mind-created things for offering are the pleasant and captivating sounds and melodies of music: of the lute and flute, of drums – snare-, kettle-, and bass – of tabor and conch, of cymbal and tinkling bell, the riot-drum – and the rapturous song of gods and men. [282a] Or just the hearing of melodious praise of the Three Jewels and contemplation of only one of its benefits – benefits more numerous than particles in a hundred ten-million Mount Sumerus of sandalwood powder! Even that description of worship is found in the *Cloud of Jewels Sūtra*!

Meditative Worship

The second kind of Worship, Meditative, is twofold: [1] the Meditative Worship itself, and [2] the Supreme Worship. The former has the Seven Limbs of Worship of:

- [a] Homage,
- [b] Pleasing Objects,
- [c] Confession of Sins,
- [d] Rejoicing [at Virtue],
- [e] Entreaty [for the Doctrine],
- [f] Petition [for the Buddha's blessing], and
- [g] Bestowal [of one's Merit on others].

[a] The Worship of Homage includes worship with the body as well as in speech. Bodily Worship is described in the first three verses of the *Good Practice Resolves*, where it tells what the object of one's attention is, what bodily offering means, and how homage is paid. The same topic is treated in the *Three Heaps Sūtra* in the words:

“In touching right knee to the ground . . . in touching left knee to the ground . . . in touching right hand to the ground . . . beget the Thought: ‘May all creatures in this direction remain on the Path’.”⁵

The same is to be understood for touching the left hand and head to the ground. [282b] It also speaks about the bestowal of the merit of that Homage:

“By this Homage of my five limbs, may the Five Obscurations of all creatures be cleansed away! May their Five Eyes be purified, and their Five Senses be perfect! May they remain in the Five Paths, and attain the Five Superknowledges unimpaired! May creatures born in the Five Destinies rise superior from those destinies, and attain to pre-eminent Conduct, Concentration, Insight, Liberation, and to superior vision and wisdom of Liberation! May they get to see the Buddha, hear the Doctrine, and join the Community!”⁶

Worship with speech is performed at the same time as the bodily Homage, making the obeisance and reciting hymns like the *Three Jewels Praise* or with whatever one is inspired. [b] Worship with Pleasing Objects has already been described.

[c] For the Worship of the Confession of Sins, one may consult texts like the *Golden Splendour*, or [my] *Confession of Failings*, the *Three Heaps Sūtra*, or the *Removal of Action's Obscuration*. The *Sūtra Set Forth by Akṣayamati* shows that the very Confession of Sin does constitute Worship, in the words: "Even the confession of my own and others' sin turns into merit."

[d] That Rejoicing [at Virtue] is also Worship is verified in passages of the *Moon-Lamp Sūtra*, where one can see also that [e] Entreaty, [f] Petition, and [g] Bestowal, are all considered as Worship.

The Supreme Worship has two divisions: [a] with objective-basis, and [b] without objective-basis. [283a] In regard to Worship with objective-basis, the [*Questions of*] *Sāgaramati Sūtra* says:

"O Sāgaramati, there are three things that are supreme for attendance upon, and worshipping of the Tathāgatas. What are the three? They are producing the Thought of Enlightenment, and comprehending the holy Doctrine, and begetting the Great Compassion for creatures."⁷

And the *Gradual Rising Sūtra*:

"Good Sir, the bodhisattva who worships the Tathāgata is one who looks for four certain qualities. What are the four? Faith in that excellent object of his veneration; and that other creatures, noticing him, will perform Worship also; and that from worshipping the Tathāgata, his Enlightenment Thought will become steady; and that by seeing the Thirty-two marks of the Great Person, he will acquire the roots of virtue. These are the four qualities."⁸

And in the *River of Brine Sūtra*, the Blessed One declares:

"Giving delight to creatures is also a form of supreme Worship."⁹

Ācārya Śāntideva has this:

“If others are happy, the great Sages rejoice;
If others are sad, the Sages are sad;
When others are content, all the Sages rejoice;
Harm done others is harm done to the Sage.”¹⁰

Then he adds:

“Henceforth I go as a slave to the world
In order to please the Tathāgatas;
It is right that the mass of men put feet on my head,
Or even slay me – if only it please the Lord of the World.”
The Compassionate Ones are making the entire
World their own – there is no doubt about that!
Is it not the Lords who appear in all [283b]
These creature-forms? How then not respect them?
It is the same as pleasing the Tathāgatas.”¹¹

And in the *Compendium of Training* he says:

“Worshipping with loving intent
Constitutes a creature’s greatness;
Merit from faith in the Buddha
Constitutes the Buddha’s greatness.”¹²

Or again from the *Progress in Practice*:

“There is no other means of pleasing the Victors
Except by showing deference to creatures.”¹³

This whole subject is explained at length in that text, and it should be consulted.

As for [b] the Worship without objective-basis:

It is contemplation with the Perfection of Insight. In this case, there is no object of Worship, or Worshipper, or substances for Worship. Hence the *Perfection of Insight Sūtra* says:

Whoever sees me as a Body, or knows me as a voice, that person sees me falsely. He does not see me. The Buddhas are the Body of Truth, and those who are guided have studied that Truth; yet its true nature is not to be seen, and no one can be conscious of it as an object.¹⁴

The *Chapter of Ever-Weeping* should be studied, where this theme is clearly preached. And in the *Lion's Roar Sūtra* there is this passage:

“If one does not see the Buddha when one has the concept of ‘Buddha’, then what need to say how impossible it would be when one worships the ‘Buddha’. What then does worshipping the Buddha mean? It means worshipping without producing the marks of a concept. The worship of the Tathāgata is that which is without mind, without products of the mind, without concepts of ‘Buddha’, without concepts of ‘Community’, and without concepts of ‘Person’ or ‘Self’ or ‘Other’.”¹⁵[284a]

One should consult the sūtra itself for the full meaning.

One could also appropriately quote the noble Asaṅga here:

“The Blessed Buddha is not as pleased by the Worship of Pleasing Objects as he is by Meditative Worship.”¹⁶

And as to the Buddha being the Body of Truth, a chapter of the *Garlands of the Buddha* says:

“The Buddhas are the Body of Truth;
The Tathāgata does not originate;
He is purified, just like Space.”¹⁷

And the *Heavenly Treasure Sūtra*:

“If there is no objective-basis [to be found] for the Blessed Buddha in his essential reality, where will be the objective-basis for viewing him as a form with characteristics?”¹⁸

As the superior Ācārya Nāgārjuna has said:

“All things being empty of inherent existence,
What is there to praise and who to praise it?
Rejecting origination and destruction,
For which there is no middle or extremes,
And subject and object have no place –
In this lies your whole power to praise!”¹⁹

Such then are the different kinds of Worship, and the bodhisattva of dull or keen faculties should learn those which are suitable for him.

The Heart of Enlightenment

Now let us return to the root text itself, and my words:

AND A MIND THAT DOES NOT TURN BACK UNTIL
THE HEART OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS REACHED. [Stanza 8]

In the ordinary sense, this Heart of Enlightenment refers to the site of the Great Enlightenment, the glorious Diamond Seat; or to the place called Akaniṣṭha, the paradise of the glorious *Heavily Adorned Sūtra*. Both these places are called the “Heart” because there [the Blessed One] attained the Diamond-like Concentration. But in the truest sense, the place where he acquired that Concentration should not be called the “Heart”, because ultimately the Heart of Enlightenment is the very essence of Truth itself. As the *Heavenly Treasure Sūtra* says: [284b]

“The Heart of Enlightenment is Space;
Enlightenment has the characteristic of Space.”²⁰

Not Turning Back

The words “AND A MIND THAT DOES NOT TURN BACK” refer to a bodhisattva’s [perseverance in] not turning back from the goal. There are three interpretations of this: [1] he does not

turn back after the Path of Practice; [2] he does not turn back after seeing the [Four] Truths; [3] he does not turn back after the Eighth [Bodhisattva] Level. One can study the full significance of these in the *Ornament for the Realisations: Treatise on the Perfection of Insight*.

Or again, it can mean he does not turn back after the Mundane Paths; or after seeing the Truths; or after the Seventh [Bodhisattva] Level. For this interpretation, consult Ācārya Jñānakīrti's *Cause of Splendour: A Major Treatise on Progress in Thatness*.

There is still another fourfold division of not turning back: [1] not turning back after begetting the Thought of Enlightenment; [2] not turning back in secret;²¹ [3] not turning back after acquiring Patience [in seeing that phenomena do not arise]; [4] [lacking in text].²²

Refuge-Taking

The words "FIRST TAKE THE THREE REFUGES THRICE" [Stanza 9] mean that one should take them three times for each of the Three Jewels. Here let me give a summary of topics for treating the Refuge-taking: [1] Content, [2] Candidate, [3] Intention, [4] Time, [5] Training, [6] Disposition, [7] Criteria, [8] Method, [9] Acts, [10] Classification, [11] Interpretation, [12] Examples, [13] Penalties, [14] Necessities, [15] and Benefits.²³ Now let me talk about the subject of taking the Refuges.

Mahāyāna Candidate

Some persons live faultlessly in the Conduct proper to one of the seven Prātimokṣa ranks. They are persons whose conversion comes out of the suffering of saṃsāra. They are ever mindful of death. And they are by nature of greater Compassion and Insight. If they are Householders, then they have the Training of the Lay Devotee [upāsaka] with its Five Precepts and forty-five practices pertinent to them. [285a] If they are Religious, they have their own method of Training; for instance, the items explained in the *Hearers*

Level: the Ornaments of Virtuous Practice, and Qualities of Purification, the Four Resources and Four Modes of Life, and so on. They also have the best of rituals, paths of practice, livelihoods, conduct, and views. Furthermore, their [way of life includes] zeal in the yoga of wakefulness in the early and latter parts of the night, propriety in food and restraint of the senses, and a fearful attitude toward even the slightest infraction [of their rules].

Now suppose such a person, after much reflection, says to himself: “If by all this Prātimokṣa discipline, I am still not finding my own and others’ good, how then shall I really do it? This so-called ‘Great Vehicle’ [Mahāyāna] is famed for its achieving one’s own and others’ good – I will seek it out from a holy Spiritual Friend.” And then he strives for a long time to please a holy man who will be suitable as his Guru. And when the Guru is won, with guileless heart he touches his feet with his head and says:

“Holy Man, have a kindly heart toward me. I beseech you to speak to me about the Path of Mahāyāna – that Means to fully achieve my own and others’ good.”

Preparation of Place

Then the Spiritual Friend examines the disciple’s disposition in three ways: according to his habits, his dreams, and his inspirations from both the mundane and supra-mundane gods. [285b] If he discerns that the disciple is a fit vessel, the Guru smiles and rejoices. And with no thought for esteem or gain or fine gifts, but with affectionate regard for that disciple, he goes about preparing a place [for the ceremony]. It should be pleasant and sturdy, and some isolated area apart from [the eyes of] sinful men. For cleanliness he paves and polishes it with the five bovine articles. Then he should anoint it with sandalwood [paste] or the like, and scatter fragrant flower petals around lightly. He should have images of the Three Jewels in the place, and his small books and things on a shelf or Bodhisattva-throne, arranging a canopy over it, and using whatever articles of worship he has – flowers, foods, decorations, and different kinds of music.

Ceremony of Petition

When this is done, the disciple, bathed and dressed in clean clothes, begs the Spiritual Friend to be seated on the high throne decorated with flowers. Then he visualises his Guru as [Buddha] the Teacher, thinking to himself, "This man is the Defender and Refuge of all creatures." With good intention he then says:

"O Son of Noble Family, please heed me! In this state of saṃsāra from beginningless time, I have been wounded by much suffering and have become very exhausted. I have no Master. I have no Defender. I have no Refuge."

He repeats this three times, and then the Guru declares:

"O man, you are depressed and weary from saṃsāra, and your desire to enter upon the Path of the Great Vehicle is very right. Now you shall learn it! Since what we call the 'Three Jewels' can be the Master and Defender and Refuge of those who are without master and defender and refuge, [286a] go for Refuge to them with pure mind and cheerful heart. Make the good of all creatures your goal. Gather up whatever things for Worship you have so that reverence and respect may be shown them [the Three Jewels] befittingly."

Then the disciple kneels with both knees on the ground and folds his hands, and offering a flower he repeats the following three times:

"O Chief of Men, please heed me!
From beginningless time till now,
I have spun round in saṃsāra,
Greatly wearied by suffering.
I beg you teach me the Path
Which puts an end to suffering."

Thereupon the Guru visualises the Three Jewels in the realms throughout the entire universe, and reverences them with an ineffable array of bodies. With an inconceivable

[number] of heads for each body, he reverences them with the tongues of those heads. And when he has performed the aforementioned Sevenfold Worship, then the Refuges should be given.

The Training Involved

One who has taken the Refuges should then observe the proper Training: he should not pay homage to other gods; he renounces harm and injury to others; he does not associate with heretics or show them religious reverence.

Mindful of the eminent qualities of the Three Jewels, he takes the Refuges over and over. Mindful of their great kindness, he is ever zealous in worship, making first-offerings even before eating and drinking. Mindful of Compassion, he spreads these practices among other creatures also. [286b]

Whenever he has any need in whatever he is doing, he makes Petition, worshipping the Three Jewels, and rejects other worldly means.

The benefits that come from the Three Jewels are: [1] at the time of Cause; [2] at the time of Path; and [3] at the time of the Result. The first are the benefits in the present lifetime; the other two should be learned from a Guru.²⁴

And so one who knows the advantages of taking the Refuges will repeat them three times a day and three times a night. He will preserve and not abandon the Three Jewels either out of human respect or jest or threat of his life.

Notes to Chapter 1

- 1 Ot. 887, Vol. 35:79.1.
- 2 This set of twenty-seven maṇḍalas is unknown to today's lamas. It may have referred to a series of temple-paintings (*thang-ka*) popular at Tho-ling in Atiśa's time, or possibly it should be read as "twenty-seven-fold", as the maṇḍala of Sitātapatrā, the Diamond Crown (*uṣṇiṣa*) of the Tathāgata Family in Action Tantra. See Mandala No. 8, *Gdugs-dkar lha nyer-bdun-ma'i dkyil-thang*, in Lokesh Chandra's *Maṇḍalas of the Tantra-samuccaya*.
- 3 Ot. 716, Vol. 11: 285.3ff. The sūtra is not actually quoted in Atiśa's text since his readers would know it by heart, but is supplied here for convenience in studying his analysis of it.
- 4 Ot. 472 (SS: p. 291).
- 5 Ot. 950, Vol. 37:114.5.

- 6 op. cit., 115.1.
 7 Ot. 819 (SS: p. 279).
 8 SS: p. 279. The sūtra is not found under this title in the Tibetan catalogues.
 9 Unidentified.
 10 *Progress in Practice*, Ot. 5272, Vol. 99:252.5.
 11 *ibid.*
 12 SS: p. 155.
 13 Ch. VI: 119.
 14 Ot. 739, Vol. 21:255.5.
 15 Ot. 760 (23), Vol. 24:41.4.
 16 Unidentified.
 17 Unidentified.
 18 Ot. 815, Vol. 33:28.3.
 19 Praise of Ultimate Truths, Ot. 2014, Vol. 46:34.4.
 20 SS: p. 249.
 21 *gsang-ste phyir-mi-ldog-pa*. The phrase is interpreted in the lama tradition as referring to the First Bodhisattva Level, but the significance of the “in secret” or “privately” has been lost.
 22 The omission of the fourth division here either is an oversight of the copyist, or the seventh or eighth Bodhisattva Level (the most commonly interpreted as the point of assured perseverance) is to be understood.
 23 The summary is taken verbatim from Atiīsa’s *Instruction on Refuge-Taking* (Ot. 5391, Vol. 103:195.4). In that short text each of the topics is defined and explained; however, here it is used only loosely as an outline of what follows.
 24 The times at which benefit comes from taking the Refuges is amplified in the above text (note 23, page 196: 3):
- [1] “At time of causé means in this life and in other re-rebirths: [a] In this life: it effects freedom from the Eight Great Fears, and makes friends with the 1,000 gods who rejoice in the Teaching and are without mischief. And at the hour of death it is a mental joy, and so on. [b] In other rebirths: it guides one from the suffering of saṃsāra, and the suffering of evil destinies, and gives zest for the joys of higher rebirths and Nirvāṇa.
- [2] At time of Path: It affords the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, and of the Seven Limbs of Enlightenment and so on.
- [3] At the time of the Result: One attains the two Nirvāṇas and the Three Bodies.”

CHAPTER 2

The Enlightenment Thought

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The Enlightenment Thought

Begetting the Thought of Enlightenment

Having shown the special kind of Refuge-taking [for Mahāyāna], I address the topic of Begetting the Enlightenment Thought in the following twenty-three stanzas, starting with:

THEN, BECAUSE THE THOUGHT OF LOVE FOR
ALL CREATURES IS THE PREREQUISITE, [Stanza 10].

The word “THEN” means after one has taken the Refuges. By “ALL CREATURES”, I point out the object in one’s begetting the Thought, and that one cannot put a limit on creatures, thinking they end with just so many. As the sūtras say:

“If all realms throughout the world were to become one huge enclosure of water, and one man worked at dipping the water from it with the tip of a single hair for hundreds of thousands of years – that water might diminish somewhat; but there is no such lessening of the realm of creatures.”

And the *Deeds of Samantabhadra: The Royal Resolves* also says:

“The extent of all creatures is as vast as the limits of space.”¹

When one has made creatures his object to that extent, then he can beget the Thought.

Love

“BECAUSE THE THOUGHT OF LOVE IS THE PREREQUISITE” refers to perceiving [all creatures] as one’s mother² – from which

arises the thought of repaying their kindness: that is Love. Then out of the thought of Love comes the thought of Compassion, And from the thought of Compassion, the Enlightenment Thought emerges. That is why I said the Thought of Love is prerequisite. [287a]. The next seven lines follow this same theme.

Ritual for Begetting the Thought

“MUST BEGET THIS THOUGHT OF ENLIGHTENMENT” means that after taking the Triple Refuge, and carefully offering whatever he can in Worship to the Three Jewels and Guru Spiritual Friend, one then makes the maṇḍala in the presence of the Guru. Then with good and sincere intention, he reflects within himself: “This Guru is the same as the Buddha seated before me. I too shall accomplish all the great deeds of all the Buddhas of the past, present and future.” Then kneeling on both knees and offering a flower in his folded hands, he declares three times:

“O Omniscient One, epitome of wisdom,
Purifier of the Wheel of Life,
I have no refuge in any Lord,
Except at your lotus feet.
O Hero of creatures, may the Great Sage
Bestow his kindness upon me!
May that Holy One grant to me the
Supreme and highest Enlightenment Thought!”

Then the Guru Spiritual Friend invites to witness all the Blessed Buddhas of all the realms throughout the universe, and all the Bodhisattvas who dwell on the Great Level, and all the Guru Spiritual Friends of past and present. In their presence he cleanses his [conscious] stream with the ritual of the *Good Practice* and the *Progress in Bodhisattva Practice*. When the disciple has likewise thoroughly purified [his stream], he again makes his petition to the Guru with flower in hand. [287b] The Guru then reflects – without thought of profit, esteem or fame, or of [the disciple’s] tone or verses or gifts – “Ah, this is wonderful! That in this age of great dread there should come forth a holy creature like

this! It is marvellous!" Such is the way to perform a ceremony [for begetting the Thought] with true Higher Intention.

Interpretations on the Thought

There have been different interpretations about Enlightenment Thought among the Ācāryas of old in my country: King Indrabhūti, Nāgārjuna, Śāntideva, Asaṅga, Daṃṣṭrasena, Candragomin, Śūra, Śāntirakṣita and others. The opinions of these great scholars may differ on various points: [1] on the very Thought of Enlightenment itself; [2] on the ritual for the Thought of Enlightenment; [3] on methods for growth in the Thought; [4] in the method of Training [to be observed] with the Thought.

[1] On the first point, some Ācāryas say that the Enlightenment Thought is the Resolve nurtured in the Mundane Paths when one is practising out of devotion. Others hold that Resolution is the Thought in so far as it depends upon an object [creatures], and is a species of Relative Truth. Others that Resolution is the Thought when it produces the basic virtues equivalent to the Equipment Path's "Aids to Liberation". And others that Resolution, which has yet to actualise its merit, is the Thought. Still others, that simply the Resolve to take Perfect Enlightenment as one's objective is the Thought, as in [the difference between] "Desiring to go, and [actually] going." There are other opinions besides these, but to include them would make my text too big. [288a]

[2] For the different rituals [for begetting the Thought], one should consult the texts of the above-mentioned scholars.

[3] On methods of growth in the Thought, some hold that it grows through begetting it in front of a person; but some say it should not be produced except in the presence of a Buddha; others hold that it grows through the practice of the Four Modes [of Compassion: seeing creatures as mothers: repayment of their kindness: compassion: Enlightenment Thought].

[4] There have been differences about the method of

Training [involved], depending on five [kinds of] bodhisattvas:

- [a] those who have first produced the Thought;
- [b] those who are entering the Practice Path;
- [c] those who will not turn back;
- [d] those who have attained Patience [in seeing that] phenomena do not arise;
- [e] those who have but one rebirth left.

Some hold that a Training pertains only to what is [pre-scribed] for the first two. Some hold that everything preached in the sūtras must be observed. Some that only the Training of the Equipment Path need be observed. Others that neither these Trainings nor any like them [need be observed]. Still others hold that the principal Trainings for those who have taken the Refuges are the ones [to observe] – instructions found in such sūtras as the *Stalks in Array*, the *Embracing the Roots of Virtue*, and the *Producing the Power of Faith Sūtra* – but still the Eight Teachings on Forgetting and Not Forgetting the Enlightenment Thought [found] in the *Questions of Kāśyapa Sūtra* are also to be kept.

These are only a few examples [of the differences]. If I set down all the systems of the great scholars of the past, my text would be far too large. These great Ācāryas were Mahāyāna Path's great men of philosophy, transformed by great love and compassion, their minds steady in both [the resolve and progress] aspects of Enlightenment Thought. Some of them had attained the power of the *Great Seal*.³ Some saw the Truth [directly]. [288b] And the ones who achieved the "Highest Mundane Virtue"⁴ received instruction from Buddhas in Apparition Bodies. We must keep in mind that these men represent the Great Path itself, since their interpretations of the sūtras are [at the same time] things declared by the Blessed One himself. However, my Gurus taught me that one should hold the system presented him by his own Gurus.

At least there are no differences of opinion about the method of Ritual for begetting the resolution thought for

Enlightenment. The excellent Ācāryas Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, and Śāntideva are all in accord. And my own Gurus, venerable and glorious Bodhibhadra and Suvarṇadvīpa, scholars of our own day, follow their system. I in turn followed my Gurus in that small ritual⁵ I composed for a group of my disciples; and my presentation is simply that of Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, and Śāntideva, and can be summarised as follows:

Preludes to Begetting the Thought

Two things are prerequisite, like watering, so to speak, for growth of the wish-granting tree of Enlightenment Thought:

- [1] purification of mind, and
- [2] presentation of gifts to the Guru.

The presentation of gifts should be made as described in passages of the *Good Age Sūtra* and the *Great Compassion*. [289a] The purification of mind is what I have already pointed out in the *Resolves of Samanta-bhadra*, and can be performed with the method of the *Progress in Bodhisattva Practice*. Then, using the ritual either of Asaṅga or Śāntideva, and cultivating the Four Infinitudes as the prerequisites, beget the Thought of Supreme Enlightenment. This is the path of the Great Wagons, and the religious tradition of the Superior Person, handed down from Guru to Guru.

Praises of the Thought

What is unique about the Thought of Enlightenment when it rises in the [conscious] stream of the disciple who conceives it? The Blessed One gave the answer to that in this passage from the *Sūtra Set Forth By Akṣayamati* [Imperishable Mind]:

“[Then] Akṣayamati said: ‘Venerable Śāriputra, the very first Thought of Enlightenment that bodhisattvas conceive is imperishable. And why is that so? Because it is pure. It rises without any influence of the passions. It

rises with tolerance because it has no desire for other vehicles. It rises with firmness because it is not anxious to argue with opponents. It is unassailable by any of the Evil Ones.

“It is solid because it masters perfectly all roots of virtue. It is permanent because it knows well that all composite things are impermanent. It rises without hesitation because it embraces correctly all teachings of the Buddha. It is without distress because it uses no false powers. It rises continually because it is unshakeable.

“This Thought is peerless because it has no kin. It is like a diamond cutting through all appearances. [289b] It is infinite, storing up immeasurable merit. It rises with equal [love] toward all creatures. It is perfectly pure because it is completely without corruption. It is immaculate because of its clear light of insight. It rises with great conviction because it does not forsake its Higher Intention. It stretches far beyond because it is like and equal to space. It rises in great breadth because it makes all creatures its scope.

“This Thought rises without obscuration because it is given over to dispassionate knowledge. It is a servant to all because of its constant great compassion. Because it knows [the value of] the ritual for Bestowal [of merit], it rises continually. Because it is the Thought taught by the Omniscient One, it is the prerequisite. It is worthy of study because it is not found in other vehicles, and any creatures studying them will not see it.

“This Thought rises adorned with the Equipment of Merit. It rises with realisation because of its Equipment of Knowledge. It is the seed of all Buddha virtues. It is not shattered by any phenomena. It is the home of all happy things.

“It rises [already] accumulating its equipment of Giving. It rises exalted in its resolve because of its equipment of Conduct. It rises in reverence because of its equipment of Patience. It rises invincible because of its equipment in Zeal. It rises with the marks of serenity because of its equipment in Meditation. It rises without hindrance because of its equipment of Insight. [290a]

“Because it has amassed great Love, it rises without ill-will. Because it has amassed great Compassion, it rises with firm roots. Because it has amassed great Joy, it abides in delight and gladness and supreme joy. In its great Equanimity, it is undisturbed by either happiness or suffering.

“It is blessed with the benediction of the Buddha. Its method is constant because of the unbroken ranks [of believers] in the Three Jewels. It rises as so well proclaimed in the assemblies of all the Buddha-realms throughout the universe.

“O Venerable Śāriputra, can such a thought of the Omniscient One ever perish?”

“To which [Śāriputra answered]: ‘O Noble Youth, it cannot. Anyone who holds that such a Thought of the Omniscient One perishes, holds that space perishes!’

“Then Akṣayamati said: ‘Venerable Śāriputra, that is right. The Thought of the Omniscient One is imperishable. And since [a bodhisattva’s] Enlightenment Thought is the root of the Omniscient One’s Thought, it too is imperishable.’”⁶

Further on the Sūtra continues:

“This [resolute] intention [of Enlightenment Thought] is genuine because it is not artificially made. It is not artificially made because it cannot be swayed. It is unwavering because it comprehends completely. It fully comprehends because it has no deceit. It has no deceit because it is sincere. Sincere because pure, pure because clear, clear because without dissimulation.”⁷

The sūtra continues at length in this fashion, and deserves to be studied.

Such then is the Enlightenment Thought unique to Mahāyāna, the Thought which is superior by far to the whole world, the Thought which rejects no creature. This is the Thought that Bodhisattvas on the Great Level purified and made pure. [290b] They protected it and kept it undiminished, increasing it from Level to Level. And because

it is the Thought of all Buddhas, the bodhisattva who begets it, is ever after protected by the gods who rejoice in the Teaching. At the hour of death, he dies rejoicing, and the gods protect him through the Intermediate State and in his mother's womb and throughout childhood. All his basic virtues continue through [into his next rebirth] and his mind retains its stream of merit.

As Ācārya Śāntideva says in his *Progress in Practice*:

“All other virtue is like the plaintain tree:
When its fruit ripens, itself begins to decay;
But the Tree of Enlightenment Thought grows
Ever greater, and its fruit never decays.”⁸

Therefore, since the Thought of Enlightenment is imperishable, all its virtues [of growth] in the Mundane and Supramundane Paths and their fruition at the Buddha Level are imperishable.

Resolution-Thought of Enlightenment

Qualities

At this point, having described the kind of Thought that arises, I wanted to speak about its beneficial qualities, and so I wrote:

EVERY QUALITY THAT BELONGS TO
BEGETTING THOUGHTS OF SUCH RESOLUTION. [Stanza 12]

I referred to the qualities that Maitreya spoke about to Sudhana “IN HIS SŪTRA, THE *STALKS IN ARRAY*” [Stanza 12]:

“O Noble Youth, this Enlightenment Thought is like the seed of all the Buddha's teachings. It is like a field because it makes the good deeds of all creatures grow. Like earth because the whole world rests on it. Like Vaiśravaṇa [the god of riches], because it destroys all poverty. Like a father because it protects all bodhisattvas. It is like a

royal wish-fulfilling jewel because it grants all boons. Like a good flask filling all aspirations. It is like a lance because it vanquishes all corruptions, its enemies. Like armour because it wards off all careless activity of mind. Like a sword because it beheads corruption. Like an axe because it chops down the tree of corruption. Like a weapon because it defends from rebirth.

“It is like a hook because it snatches one out of the river of saṃsāra. Like a cyclone because it scatters all the veils of obscuration. It is like a motto because it summarises all the resolves and practices of a bodhisattva. Like a shrine for all the worlds of gods and men and demigods. These are the qualities of the Enlightenment Thought, O Noble Youth, and it has infinite variety of other attributes too.”⁹

In accord with this passage are the words I quoted [in Stanzas 14–17] from the *Questions of the Householder Vīradatta*, and they should be considered here also.

Studying the Sūtras

There are many sūtras and great discourses on these attributes by men like Nāgārjuna and Śāntideva, but I do not present them here for fear of enlarging my text. But to acknowledge those sources, I wrote:

READ THAT SŪTRA OR HEAR IT FROM A GURU, AND WHEN
THE INFINITE BENEFITS OF PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT THOUGHT
ARE SEEN, THEN FOR THAT VERY REASON YOU WILL
BEGET THE THOUGHT AGAIN AND AGAIN. [Stanza 13]

On the words “READ THAT SŪTRA”, I quote from Śāntideva’s *Compendium of Training*:

“The precepts of Bodhisattva training appear most abundantly in the sūtra collections. [291b] They state both what a Bodhisattva practises and what the precepts of his training are. Therefore always respect sūtra study, lest through ignorance of them, transgressions occur and one go on to forfeit [the training altogether].”¹⁰

He also says in his root text [of the *Compendium*]:

“By never leaving the Spiritual Friend
And by ever studying the sūtras . . .”¹¹
[The Thought is preserved.]

And in the *Progress in Practice* he says:

“One must study the sūtras, and the
Sūtra of Ākāśagarbha is one that
Should be studied from the very start.
After that, the *Compendium of the Sūtras*
Composed by Nāgārjuna is the one
That should be studied next.”¹²

Reliance on the Guru

By my words, “HEAR IT FROM A GURU” [Stanza 13], I mean the kind of Guru who causes one to beget the Thought. And if he is that, then he is also a Guru in the lineage of Aśaṅga as well as of Śāntideva.

Now in the *Stalks in Array Sūtra*, when Śrīsambhava sees that [Sudhana] is wondering why he must rely on a Guru, he says:

“Noble Youth, a bodhisattva rightly guided by a Spiritual Friend does not fall into bad destinies. A bodhisattva protected by a Spiritual Friend makes no mistakes in his training. Motivated by a Spiritual Friend, he transcends this world. Showing reverence to a Spiritual Friend, he perseveres in not forgetting any practices. Adopted by a Spiritual Friend, he is unassailable by any deed or corruption.

“It is the Spiritual Friend who impresses on him the things that need to be done. [292a] He turns his indifference aside and drives him forth from the city of saṃsāra. Therefore, Noble Youth, since that is so, you must walk continually in the presence of Spiritual Friends.

“With mind like the earth, not sinking under the burden of all things. With mind like a diamond, not changing. With mind like a pup, not easily provoked. With mind like the Cakravāla Range, unshakeable by

any suffering. With mind like a servant, uncomplaining in any work. Like a sweeper, dismissing overweening pride. Like a wagon, carrying heavy burdens. Like a ship, unwearied in its comings and goings. With mind like a wise son, ever studying the face of the Spiritual Friend – with such a mind give reverent service to the Spiritual Friend.

“Noble Youth, you must see yourself as a sick man, and the Spiritual Friend as the doctor. His instructions are your medicine, and the cure of your sickness is taking to heart his prescriptions.”¹³

There is a similar passage [in the *Stalks in Array*] in the chapter about the monk Sāgaramegha. And in the *Questions of Ugra*, there is this:

“O Householder, if a bodhisattva [has learned] to read and recite any four-line stanzas about Giving, Conduct, or Patience, Zeal, Meditation or Insight, or about accumulating the equipment for the Bodhisattva Path, [then] he must give reverence for that doctrine to the Ācārya from whom he [first] heard, or learned to read and recite them. [292b] But even if he revered and attended and supported that Ācārya for as many aeons as [those stanzas] have names and words and letters, the reverence due that Ācārya, O Householder, would still not be enough – much less the reverence due the doctrine itself.”¹⁴

There are other pertinent accounts of relying on a Guru that should be studied in the *Vajrapāṇi Initiation Tantra*, and the chapter on Sadāprarudita in the *Perfection of Insight*, as well as [the example of] Anāthapiṇḍada.

Noble Asaṅga speaks about Reliance on the Guru in his *Bodhisattva Levels* in this way:

“There are certain questions one must ask about this matter: [1] What qualities make a bodhisattva a Spiritual Friend? [2] What qualities make him effective as a

Spiritual Friend? [3] What qualities make him stand out as an inspiration for faith? [4] What functions does he perform in acting as a Spiritual Friend? [5] What are the qualities of Reliance on a Guru? [6] What ideas should one have in mind for listening to the Doctrine from a Spiritual Friend? [7] What things should one avoid thinking about when listening to the Doctrine from a Spiritual Friend?

“[1] A bodhisattva can be recognised as a Spiritual Friend, perfect in every respect, if he has eight qualities: [a] He keeps the discipline of the Bodhisattva Vow without fault or failing. [b] He is very learned because his mind is pure. [c] He has a comprehending mind and has acquired all possible virtue arising from contemplation. [d] His loving heart is endowed with compassion. [293a] He puts aside his own happiness in this life and works for the good of others. [e] He is aware of the terrible fear others may have when the Doctrine is being taught, and [displays] unflinching confidence and fearlessness himself. [f] He is patient in the face of contempt, censure or flattery, the unpleasantness of malicious gossip, and all the devious ways creatures have. [g] His mind does not tire in his strong and incessant teaching of the Doctrine to the four assemblies [of the Community]. [h] He has the gift of clarity and does not obscure the reality behind words.

“[2] A bodhisattva will be effective in acting as a Spiritual Friend if he has five qualities: [a] He desires the happiness and benefit of others right from the start. [b] He knows what that happiness and benefit consists of. [c] He has unerring judgement. [d] Using every method and means of teaching the Doctrine, he has the power and ability to convert any creature capable of it, and his mind does not tire. [e] Impartial in compassion, he does not take sides with any persons, whether inferior, mediocre or superior.

“[3] The Spiritual Friend presents himself as an inspiration for faith if he has five qualities: [a] If hearing him discourse inspires sincerity, then actually gazing upon him should also: his manner is truly serene and

gracious, and his excellent disposition shows in his whole external appearance. [b] He is steadfast and constant in his activities, in deed, word, and thought. [c] He is not hypocritical, and does not feign constancy to deceive others. [d] He does not envy others their discourses on the Doctrine or their esteem and gain, but rather rejoices for them. He looks upon his own honour and gain as strengths for [helping] others. [293b] [e] He is simple and frugal in his needs, and whatever he saves beyond sufficiency, he gives to all.

“[4] The bodhisattva performs five functions in acting as a Spiritual Friend: [a] He converses. [b] He reminds. [c] He encourages. [d] He instructs. [e] He teaches the Doctrine. The classification of those terms can be learned from [my] *Hearers Level*, and the topics on Instruction and Teaching can be found in the Powers chapter [of my *Bodhisattva Levels*].

“[5] There are four qualities to [the disciple’s] perfect reliance on a Spiritual Friend: [a] Acting as his common servant and nurse as occasion demands. [b] Speaking respectfully and at the proper time; rising in his presence and greeting him cheerfully; bowing with folded hands. [c] Worshipping him [as a Buddha], and providing him with articles of worship, suitable religious robes, food, sleeping-quarters, a mat, and healing medicine, and the necessities of life. [d] Making him one’s refuge, and walking in his presence, confessing one’s sins to him and questioning and listening.

“[6] One who wants to hear the Doctrine from a Spiritual Friend should have five ideas [in mind] while he listens: [a] It is precious because it is so rare. [b] It is an eye, because it is the means to gaining deep Insight. [c] It is brilliant because it teaches all truths correctly. [d] It is of the greatest benefit because it is the means of gaining Supreme Enlightenment. [e] It is irreproachable because it is the source of pure joy in Calmness and Insight, leading to Nirvana and Perfect Enlightenment. [294a]

“[7] There are five things one should not think while listening to the Doctrine from a Spiritual Friend: [a] One should not think: ‘This man breaks the Rule and does not

keep his Vow; I should not listen to the Doctrine from him.' [b] Or: 'This man comes from a lower class [family than I], so I should not listen to the Doctrine from him.' [c] One should not have reliance on the person but on the Doctrine. [d] One should not think about the pleasant articulation of words, but rather rely on their meaning. [e] One should not think about his uncomely face or body, or his poor articulation, but rather listen to the Doctrine reverently. The Doctrine is untouched by personal defects, and can [never] become defective in itself. It is a bodhisattva of dull faculties who gets angry at the defects people have and does not want to hear the Doctrine from them. He should know he harms only himself; it is his own Insight that is hurt."¹⁵

Thus, when one relies upon a Guru, one can become wise about the beneficial qualities of Enlightenment Thought.

Repetition of the Thought

Now I return to the root text itself and the words:

. . . THEN DAY AND NIGHT YOU
WILL BEGET THE THOUGHT AGAIN AND AGAIN. [Stanza 13]*

After learning its beneficial qualities, you should beget the Enlightenment Thought continually – thrice a day, thrice a night, over and over – and thus expand it. Even if you do not use the full ritual for it, expand the Thought with words like these:

“I take refuge in the excellent Buddhas, Doctrines, and Communities until I be enlightened. May all my deeds of Giving and the rest accomplish Buddhahood for the good of all creatures.” [294b]

Benefits

In explaining other advantages of the Thought, the Scriptures also teach that bodhisattvas of dull faculty may achieve Perfect Enlightenment even in the midst of house-

*Atīṣa's words are not identical with the root text. See p. 6.

hold life simply as a result of their resolve for Enlightenment. The Blessed One says in the *Admonitions for the King Sūtra*:

“O great King, you are very busy indeed, carrying out your many duties. You cannot practise in every way all the details of the Perfection of Giving up through the rest of the Perfections, to Insight. Therefore, O great King, be ever mindful and keep constantly in your heart the longing for supreme and perfect Enlightenment. Cultivate [that longing] with faith, care and resolution – whether walking or sitting, sleeping or waking, even drinking and eating. Then gather up and weigh all the virtuous deeds you have done or will do – and those of the Buddhas and ordinary men too – and rejoice in it! Rejoice because [this mass of virtue] is the highest of joys; it is like Space [in its infinity]. It is similar to Nirvāṇa itself.

“After rejoicing, offer [those merits] in worship to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, noble Hearers and Solitary Buddhas. Then do it in union with all creatures.

“Then day after day, thrice a day, bestow [these merits] on all creatures until they achieve Omniscience, that they may perfect every virtue of Buddhahood and gain complete Enlightenment. [295a] O great King, if you live like that even while you act as king, you will not neglect your royal duties and will perfect the equipment for Enlightenment.”¹⁶

Ācārya Śāntideva speaks that way too in his *Compendium of Training*:

“Do not look down on the [mere] Thought of Enlightenment, even without the practice. It produces boundless happiness even in saṃsāra.”¹⁷

The potency of the Thought is also described in the Maitreya chapter on liberation in the *Stalks in Array*:

“O Noble Youth [Sudhana], just as a precious diamond, for example, even when divided, has brilliance that

overpowers any royal crown of gold, and can take away anyone's poverty without diminishing its repute as a precious gem; just so, O Noble Youth, the diamond of producing the Thought for Omniscience – even divorced from its practice – surpasses in brilliance the whole golden crown of achievements of the Hearer and Solitary Buddha. And even though it takes away all the poverty of samsāra, it does not lose its reputation as the Thought of Enlightenment.”¹⁸

Again from the *Admonitions for the King Sūtra*:

“O great King, you were reborn among the gods many times because your virtuous acts of [producing] the Enlightenment Thought matured. I need not tell you what the effect of producing it many more times will be!”¹⁹

Expanding the Thought

WHEN YOU GET THE THOUGHTS OF ASPIRING TO ENLIGHTENMENT
THEN WITH GREAT EFFORT STRIVE TO EXPAND THEM FULLY;
AND TO RECALL YOUR RESOLVE IN YOUR OTHER BIRTHS,
OBSERVE FULLY THE TRAINING I EXPLAINED TO YOU. [Stanza 18]

I wrote “WITH GREAT EFFORT STRIVE TO EXPAND THEM FULLY” so that when you have begotten the Thought and know its benefits, you will increase it. I treat this quite explicitly in the *Ritual for Begetting the Thought* I composed, when I say: [295b]

“In order that a person who has now produced the Enlightenment Thought may increase it, he should beget the Thought with these words: ‘At least three times a day and three times a night: I take refuge in the excellent Buddhas, Doctrines and Communities until I be enlightened. May all my deeds of Giving and the rest accomplish Buddhahood for the good of all creatures.’”²⁰

When I say:

AND TO RECALL YOUR RESOLVE IN YOUR OTHER BIRTHS,
OBSERVE FULLY THE TRAINING I EXPLAINED TO YOU, [Stanza 18]

I refer to what I took from the *Questions of Kāśyapa Sūtra* and presented in that same *Ritual* of mine:

“You must avoid four things which weaken the Thought of Enlightenment. What are the four? [1] Deceiving your instructor, teacher, guru, and persons worthy of respect. [2] Making others feel guilty when there is no reason for shame. [3] Belittling, defaming, or disparaging a person who has entered Mahāyāna. [4] Approaching the neighbour in guile and deceit and with improper motives.

“And you must practise four things which do not weaken the Thought of Enlightenment. What four? [1] Not speaking untrue words even to save your life, much less to provoke derision. [2] Living among creatures with high motivation, and without guile or deceit. [3] Seeing all bodhisattvas as The Teacher [Buddha], and proclaiming the praises of their perfect state everywhere. [4] Spurring on all creatures you have influenced to the Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment, lest they prefer the limited Vehicle.

“One who wishes to attain the Superknowledges quickly should practise especially the *Sevenfold Way Sūtra: Questions of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara*.”²¹
[296a]

This concludes what I mean by striving to expand fully.

Progress-Thought of Enlightenment

Origin in Sūtras

To point out the wider expansion of the Thought in the three degrees²² the Venerable Ones speak of, I wrote:

A RIGHT RESOLVE WILL NOT BE FURTHERED
WITHOUT VOWS THAT HAVE PROGRESS IN MIND;
THEREFORE HE WHO SEEKS GROWTH IN THE RESOLVE FOR
PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT, EARNESTLY TAKES THEM. [19]

The words “THAT HAVE PROGRESS IN MIND” refer to the

purified Higher Intention, as described in this passage from the *Heavenly Treasure Sūtra*:

“O Noble Youth, what virtues comprise the Enlightenment Thought so that one keeps it without regressing? And Gaganagañja replied:

“‘O Noble Youth, two virtues comprise the Enlightenment Thought so one keeps it without regressing: Intention and Higher Intention. Intention is comprised of sincerity and guilelessness. Higher Intention is comprised of detachment in its Intention and of superior behaviour.

“‘In turn, these four virtues are comprised of eight others. Sincerity is comprised of openness and candour. Guilelessness is comprised of artlessness and pure motives. Detachment is comprised of a mind that is not timid and a zeal which is not faint-hearted. Superior behaviour is comprised of the equipment of knowledge and the equipment of merit . . .’”²³

And so he continues combining virtues on up to one hundred and eight of them. You should study the sūtra itself for the entire description. And again, in the *Compendium of Doctrine Sūtra*: [296b]

“Higher Intention is the desire for special qualities: Higher Intention is gentleness toward living things. It is love for all creatures. It is reverence for all the Exalted Ones. It is compassion for all worldlings. It is faithful service to the Guru. It is to be a refuge, protector, island, and last resort for all who are without refuge, protector, island or last resort.”²⁴

And again in the same sūtra:

“For bodhisattvas with Pure Intention the Doctrine comes forth even from things like the sky, walls, trees, rivers and forests; counsel and instruction comes forth right from their own practice.”²⁵

And in the *Akṣayamati Sūtra*:

“Venerable Śāriputra, moreover, the bodhisattvas’ Higher Intention is imperishable. Why? Because it is more highly supported by all the basic virtues. Nay more, every single thought a bodhisattva has is supported by his Higher Intention [arising] from his virtuous motivation. The transmigrations which lift him from Level to Level are because of his Higher Intention. . . . Again I say, Venerable Śāriputra, this Higher Intention of the bodhisattva is imperishable.”²⁶

From these passages it may be seen that just as the best forests and harvests grow from good ground, so you should understand that all virtues of the Buddha will grow and increase from the good ground of Conduct. That is my analysis of the matter.

Difference between Resolve and Progress

In regard to the meaning of the Resolve-Thought of Enlightenment and the Progress-Thought of Enlightenment, great scholars of both past and present have given many different explanations. I do indeed understand their interpretations, but I omit expounding them here lest I be too wordy. But the meaning of the two kinds of Thought is clear in the sūtras themselves. For instance, the *Stalks in Array* says: [297a]

“O Noble Youth, rare are the beings who beget the resolution for Supreme Perfect Enlightenment; but rarer still are those who have set out towards it.”²⁷

And Ācārya Śāntideva in his *Compendium of Training*:

“The Enlightenment Thought is of two kinds: the Thought which resolves upon Enlightenment, and the Thought which progresses towards it.”²⁸

Again in his *Progress in Practice*:

“Just as one knows the difference
Between desiring to go and going;

So the wise man should know the difference
Of those two stages in the Thought.”²⁹

And in the *Compendium of Training* again:

“In this matter, the Resolve-Thought arises from the resolution: ‘I must become a Buddha.’”³⁰

Consequently, Resolve-Thought is the focusing and fixing on Perfect Enlightenment as the goal, as Maitreyanatha says in his *Ornament of Realisations*: “This begetting of the Thought is the desire for complete and perfect Enlightenment for the sake of others.”³¹ And Progress-Thought is the focusing and fixing on the virtues of Path, as he says in the *Ornament of the Sūtras*:

“[1] First is begetting the Thought, [2] then: one’s own and others’ good, [3] Thatness, [4] Power, [5] one’s own Buddha-field, [6] the maturing of others, [7] and seventh: the highest Enlightenment.”³²

Therefore, the Thought of Enlightenment itself, both at the time of its cause and at the time of its result, is altogether one and the same reality. [297b] The distinguishing of it into stages shows that this is true. Maitreyanatha explains them in detail in these words:

“Hence, it is like: [1] the Earth, [2] Gold, [3] the Moon, [4] Fire, [5] Treasure, [6] a Jewel Mine, [7] the Ocean, [8] a Diamond, [9] a Mountain, [10] Medicine, [11] a Spiritual Friend, [12] a Wish-granting Gem, [13] the Sun, [14] a Song, [15] a King, [16] a Storehouse, [17] a Highway, [18] a Carriage, [19] a Fountain, [20] a pleasant Sound, [21] a River, and [22] a Cloud. With these, the Thought is of twenty-two kinds.”³³

The [first] two are the Enlightenment Thought as cause. The [next] seventeen are the Thought during the Path. The [last] three are the Thought as fruition.

[Or again] the first two are Resolve-Thought; the

remaining twenty are Progress-Thought. In still another enumeration, the first three are the Thought while it is a cause; the next sixteen during the Path; the last three as the time of fruition. For the complete meaning of these [similes for stages], you must study the *Ornament of Realisations* itself.³⁴

Notes to Chapter 2

1 Ot. 716, Vol. 11:286.3.

2 *mar 'du-she*s. The phrase has the twofold meaning of treating others as a mother treats her child, and also the [Buddhist] recognition that in the cycle of rebirths and the countless destinies one has experienced as a sentient being, every other creature has at some time and place functioned as one's mother in that particular body. The method of developing compassion that Atiṣa presents here became a very popular Dge-lugs-pa "mind-purification" (*blo-sbyong*) exercise, known as the "Seven Cause and Effect Instruction" (*rgyu 'bras man-ngag bdun*). From Atiṣa's four steps, Tsong-kha-pa and later writers created seven:

1) *mar she*s: Perceiving as a Mother causes

2) *drin dran*: Mindfulness of Kindness causes

3) *drin gzo*: Repayment of Kindness causes

4) *byams-pa*: Affectionate Love causes

5) *snying-rje chen-po*: Great Compassion causes

6) *lhag-bsam nam-dag*: Pure Higher Motive causes

7) *byang-sems*: the Thought of Enlightenment.

See *Theory and Practice of Tibetan Buddhism* by Geshe Lhundup Sopa, pp. 28–32, for a translation of the Fourth Panchen Lama's presentation of the practice.

3 *phyag-rgya chen-po*: lit., "Great Seal". This is part of the initiation practice in Union and Supreme Union (yoga, anuttara yoga) Tantra. The powers (*dngos-grub/siddhi*) are described in Atiṣa's final chapter of the *Commentary*.

4 See Chart I: The Five Paths. Achievement of the "Highest Mundane Virtue" indicates that a bodhisattva is ready to pass on to his personal direct experience of the Four Truths in the Vision Path.

5 Atiṣa refers to his *Ritual for Begetting the Thought* (Ot. 5364).

6 Ot. 842, Vol. 34:39.5ff.

7 loc. cit.

8 *BCA*: I:12.

9 In *SS*: p. 5.

10 In *SS*: p. 43.

11 Ot. 5536, Vol. 102:196.3.

12 *BCA*: V:104.

13 In *SS*: pp. 37–8.

14 In *SS*: p. 39.

15 Ot. 5538, Vol. 110:189.3ff.

16 In *SS*: p. 10.

17 *SS*: p. 10.

- 18 In SS: p. 9.
- 19 In SS: pp. 10–11.
- 20 Ot. 5403, Vol. 110:204.4.
- 21 Ot. 760(43), Vol. 24:188.5.
- 22 *spel-ba rnam-pa gsum*. The three degrees of expanding the Enlightenment Thought are the customary three degrees of any attainment as applied here:
 1) Weak/Inferior (*chung*): Resolution-Thought;
 2) Medium/Mediocre (*'bring*): Progress-Thought;
 3) Strong/Superior (*che*): Vowed-Thought.
- 23 Ot. 815, Vol. 33: 28.3.
- 24 In SS: p. 260. The quote is actually from the *Sūtra Set Forth by Akṣayamati* (Ot. 842: Vol. 34:42.1).
- 25 In SS: p. 259.
- 26 Ot. 842, Vol. 34:41.5.
- 27 In SS: p. 9.
- 28 SS: p. 9.
- 29 BCA: I:16.
- 30 SS: p. 9.
- 31 Ot. 5184, Vol. 88:3.3.
- 32 Ot. 5521, Vol. 108: 7.5.
- 33 *Ornament of Realisations*, Ot. 5184, Vol. 88:3.3
- 34 The divisions of the twenty-two similes and their corresponding virtues or qualities into stages of Cause–Path–Result are not found explicitly in the *Ornament of Realisations*, but rather in the many commentaries on them; e.g., Maitreyanatha's *Ornament of Sūtras* (Ot. 5521) and Asaṅga's commentary (*bhāṣya*) on Maitreyanatha's work (Ot. 5527), and a small text by Sṛī-jñānakīrti, the *Instruction in the Steps of Contemplation in the Perfection Vehicle* (Ot. 5456).

CHAPTER 3

The Monastic Life

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The Monastic Life

Prātimokṣa Requisite for Bodhisattva Vow

Fit receptacles for Mahāyāna

I have described how the precious Thought of Enlightenment should be expanded in its special way, and that one must actually take vows of Conduct in order to increase it. I want to show now what persons constitute the special receptacles for the [Bodhisattva] Vow of Conduct by my verse:

ONLY HE WHO HAS LASTING VOWS IN
ONE OF PRĀTIMOKṢA'S SEVEN RANKS
IS FIT FOR THE VOW OF THE BODHISATTVA;
THERE IS NO OTHER WAY FOR IT TO BE. [Stanza 20]

But here you may object: "Did you not state at the beginning 'THAT PERSON IS A SUPERIOR' [Stanza 5] and 'FOR THOSE PURE BEINGS WHOSE DESIRE IS THE HIGHEST OF ENLIGHTENMENTS' [Stanza 6]? Then how can what you say now [in this stanza] be true? Here you hold that this [Prātimokṣa person] is the pure receptacle, and make the earlier [Superior Person] less pure."

My meaning here has been stated by my venerable Guru, the glorious Bodhibhadra, in his *Commentary on "Twenty Verses on the Vow"*:

"The vows of the Prātimokṣa have become ancillary to the Bodhisattva vow, and they should be understood as part of the whole. Therefore, the meaning of [Asaṅga's] 'This pledge of [Prātimokṣa] training should also be taken' is that the person who has the vows of Prātimokṣa is a fit vessel for taking the Bodhisattva vow correctly.

[298a] For there is simply no other [Buddhist] rule [that binds one] to refrain from killing, stealing, unchastity and so on. Even the fit vessel for taking the Bodhisattva Vow adds no [new rules] of refraining from these [unvirtuous deeds].”¹

Objections concerning Family

Well now, it is true there are those of “No-Family”,² as yet undisposed toward Mahāyāna, who have [physical or external] impediments to the Prātimokṣa system,³ [and thus are unjustly prevented from taking the Bodhisattva Vow even if they developed the desire]. [And I know] there are those who already have the Bodhisattva Vow but have never taken the Prātimokṣa vow, or [have taken it and] were expelled for offences,⁴ or [just] gave up the training, or rejected the life of virtue [altogether]. But if it is not the Prātimokṣa vow [that binds one to refrain from basic sins], then where can you possibly look for another?

Hence I say here: Could there be a bodhisattva who does not refrain from killing, stealing, unchastity and so forth? The answer is no. Because the sūtras say these are basic failures in a bodhisattva as well. That being so, the Prātimokṣa vow is necessary first of all, and is the very prerequisite for the Bodhisattva Vow. Of course, if someone has practised Mahāyāna in other births and remains in the Mahāyāna Family, there is nothing wrong with having taken the Bodhisattva Vow first because his natural state is not to commit sin.

Middle Way and Mind-Only Views

Then again, if you interpret the Mahāyāna Middle Way system strictly, a vessel for Mahāyāna does not exist anywhere at all [in the first place]. All creatures are one and the same Family and are “endowed with the essence of a Tathāgata”.⁵ As it is said:

“There is no fitness or unfitness
For higher Levels. All become Buddha.
Therefore, to achieve the perfect
Awakening, act to [your] capacity.” [298b]

And in the *Compendium of Thatness: A Major Tantra*:

“Yea, I do not try to examine who is and who is not a vessel for entering the great maṇḍala. And why is that, you ask? . . .”⁶

And the Ācārya Āryadeva says:

“As beginners one gives to creatures
Whatever it is they wish, because
There is no vessel for Holy Doctrine;
It has no existence anywhere at all.”⁷

And so, because all creatures are of one and the same Family, Ajitanātha says:

“Because the Ultimate Element⁸ is undifferentiated, distinct Families are impossible.”

And noble Nāgārjuna:

“If there is no distinguishing a chief Vehicle
Because the Ultimate Element is undifferentiated,
Then your teaching that there are Three Vehicles
Is simply to help creatures progress [on the Path].”

However, even the sūtras do speak of the three groups of creatures [Hearers, Solitary Buddhas, and Buddhas], and use the species of precious gems to exemplify the five types of Families among creatures: [No-Family, Uncertain Family, Hearer, Solitary Buddha, Buddha]. But the Commentaries say these refer only to temporary stages. To quote the venerable Suvarṇadvīpa:

“When scripture says there are two types of Family,⁹ the True Nature [dharmatā] Family and the Striving Family, it means that one remains in the Striving Family only as a temporary stage, but when it treats of the True Nature Family there are no distinctions whatever. Hence scholars say that Prātimokṣa vows are certainly and

chiefly necessary [while in the Striving Family]; but [the True Nature Family] is otherwise: [1] the Truth Body pervades all time and all reality; [2] the perfect Enjoyment Body remains in its [heavenly] courts, the property of only the Great Lords [Bodhisattvas] of the Ten Levels as they preach the profound and extensive Doctrine of Mahāyāna exclusively; and [3] the Apparition Body appears only now and then, like the udumbara fruit; as the sūtras say, ‘After this age, there will be sixty ages when a Buddha does not appear.’”¹⁰ [299a]

Hence, the Prātimokṣa vow he mentions is also a rare thing because it exists only in our time and is the chief cause that leads to happy destinies. It is the Buddha’s teaching that we refrain from sins of killing, stealing, unchastity and the rest, and since his Teaching endures only as long as the Prātimokṣa vows remain – and depends on them – we teach that the vows of the Prātimokṣa alone come first.

So, if you are talking about stages of progress [along the Path], then those previously undisposed toward Mahāyāna have as their preparation the vows of whichever of the seven Prātimokṣa ranks they find suitable. Hence I say correctly in the root text, “ONLY HE . . . IS FIT FOR THE VOW OF THE BODHISATTVA; THERE IS NO OTHER WAY FOR IT TO BE.”

Ranks of the Community

I continue now on the same theme:

THE TATHĀGATA HAS SAID THAT OF
THE SEVEN RANKS OF PRĀTIMOKṢA,
THE GLORIOUS PURE LIFE IS HIGHEST;
BY WHICH HE MEANT THE VOWS OF A MONK. [Stanza 21]

What I mean to say here is that the vows of a Monk are unique among the seven ranks.

Seven Only

There may be an objection at the outset that there are *eight*

Prātimokṣa ranks set down in all the basic *Discipline* texts, and in such Hīnayāna works as the *Progress in Knowledge*, the *Treasure of Phenomenology* and its useful summaries, and the *Major Exposition of the "Treasure"*, therefore how can my saying *seven* be correct? Well, it is true those texts do propose the number as eight, but noble Asaṅga establishes it as seven in every section of his *Levels of Yoga Practice* and [in particular] in the *Chapter on Conduct*. [299b] And if we doubt the brilliance of that great man's mind, we are finished. Asaṅga is a Bodhisattva of the Third Level, who attained a concentration called the "Stream of Truth", and who was prophesied in the *Basic Tantra of Mañjuśrī* as "that holy man, Asaṅga, wise in the true meaning of the texts".¹¹ Does anyone doubt that he heard the entire [sūtra] collection directly from Ajitanātha?

In his *Commentary on "Twenty Verses on the Vow"*, the venerable Bodhibhadra says:

"In regard to the vowing of Conduct, vows are taken in the seven ranks of Prātimokṣa. That is, the five kinds in the religious life: the Monk and Nun, the Nun-candidate, the male and female Novices; and the two kinds in the Lay state: the male and female Devotees. The practice of One-Day [vows] is not a true ascetical practice, and has not been taught as worthy of Prātimokṣa rank since there is no restraint of desires for [any] great length of time."¹²

The Guru who declared this was a great master of the *Discipline* of the Bodhisattva scriptures. I follow his interpretation because he received his instruction in the [Buddhist] tradition in the unbroken line from noble Nāgārjuna and Ācārya Śāntideva.

Lay Devotee and Novice

A few things can be observed here about the sevenfold ranks of Prātimokṣa: The [Lay] Devotees are of two types: those who abstain from unlawful sexual activity, and those who abstain even from their own partners. But the training common to both [types] is: renunciation of the four basic transgressions [killing, stealing, lying, unchastity] and of

liquor. Some say renunciation of false views [in place of liquor].

In regard to liquor, some *Discipline* masters interpret it as objectionable by its very nature [300a] but the *Phenomenology* followers say it is objectionable [only] because its renunciation has been promised. However, I must omit their full presentations here.

For the Devotee, then, there are the five precepts and forty-five rules which [specifically] apply to them.¹³ The Novice vows include these fifty practices of the faultless [and celibate] Devotee, [divided] according to whether [their subject matter] must be confessed [when violated] or [whose renunciation] must be vowed [as part of religious life] or are [simply] sinless.¹⁴

Monk and Nun

The training of the Monk is such that of two hundred and fifty-three [rules], twenty-seven must be confessed [when violated], two hundred and thirteen must be vowed, and thirteen pertain to sinless matters [of community governance].¹⁵

The Nun-candidate correctly observes two hundred and forty rules – that is, all the above, except for the thirteen [rules pertaining to community governance], and including the pure and irreproachable life of the Novice, as well as her Six Basic Rules and Six Rules for Harmony [in the community].¹⁶

The Nun is pure in her five hundred rules,¹⁷ which include those of the pure Nun-candidate as well as the Monk, together with the training the holy Doctrine and Discipline texts present for the perfecting of the pure Monk.

The Eighteen Schools of Buddhism

There have been a variety of sects [in the Buddhist Community]: [A] the Mahāsaṃghika, [B] the Sarvāstivāda, [C] the Sthavira, and [D] the Sammatīya sects. These existed [formerly] in eighteen schools:

[A] The five schools of Mahāsaṃghika: the Pūrvaśailā,

the Aparasāilā, the Haimavatā, the Lokottara-vādā, and the Prajñaptivādā. [B] The [seven Sarvāstivada]: the Mūla, the Kāśyapīyā, the Dharmaguptā, the Mahīśāsakā, the Vibhajya-vādā, [300b] the Bāhuśrutīyā, and Tāmraśāṭīyā. [C] Three sects of Sthavira: the Mahāvihāra-vasinā, the Jetavanīyā, and the Abhayagiri-vāsinā. [D] Three sects of Sammatīyā: Kaurukullakā, the Avantakā, and the Vātsī-putrīyā.¹⁸

Some texts differ on this listing, saying that the Vijñaptivādā belong to Sarvāstivādā, but keeping the rest the same. And another text has it:

“[A] Kāśyapīyā, Dharmaguptā,
Mahīśāsakā and Mūla-sarvāstivādā;
[B] Pūrva, Apara, Haimavatā,
Prajñapti, Vibhajya and Lokottaravādā;
[C] Tamraśāṭīyā, Bāhuśrutīyā, Avantakā,
Kaurukullaka and Vatsī-putrīyā;
[D] Jetavanīyā, Abhaya and Mahāvihārā.

“In four, six, five and three,
They wanted their variety, and
Hence the Eighteen Schools.

“The Lion of Śākya’s teaching endures
Because of the Gurus who went forth of old
With the power of his message.

“Though the schools were many,
And great the variety of views,
Due to difference in region and teachers,
Never did they argue about the [Great] Teacher.”¹⁹

For their respective differences in the matter of the Rule and views, you must study the great texts on those topics.

The Glorious Pure Life: The Monk

Returning to my root text, the words “THE PURE LIFE” [Stanza 21] refer to renunciation in the matter of liquor and of women. For the dangers of liquor you can study that subject in the [*Discipline*] scriptures and the pertinent

places in the sūtra collection. For the danger of women, consult the [*Discipline*] scriptures also, and the sūtras of both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. For instance, the Hīnayāna sūtra *The Teaching in Sevens: Sexuality*:

[301a] “For example, O Brahmin, take a man who promises to live the Pure Life, and never even has an intimate encounter with a woman. But when his eyes behold women’s bodies, he is attracted by their shape; he dallies with women and is captivated by their chatter; he becomes absorbed in paying them attentions. Even when he is separated from them by walls and curtains, women’s adornments and their singing and dancing and sound of music go right to his heart. And when he sees his neighbour indulging his senses with desire, he takes that into his heart. Yet he still makes Bestowal [of the merit] of his Pure Life [to gain] a place among the gods! The Pure Life of such a man is altogether impure.”²⁰

And again from the Mahāyāna sūtra, *The Seven-fold Way*:

“If we ought not cling to Desire even in imagination,
Why mention indulging the senses of sight and touch?”²¹

The dangers of Desire in general can be learned from the *Questions of King Udayana-vatsa* and the *Admonitions on Desire Sūtra*.

So then, a man who gives a show of living the Pure Life while not [truly] living it, who is proud of the signs and marks of the religious profession, yet treats it contemptuously thinking “The religious life [simply] means we are bodhisattvas who have the same prerogatives a layman does”, that man is a hypocrite, and like a thief and robber. The sūtras say things like “A thief is eating [alms]; a thief is drinking [alms]”. Such a sinful Monk or Novice should never have taken up the saffron robe – that shrine to gods and men. It has been said that “the religious robe burns [the hypocrite]; the begging bowl burns”. And the *Arrest of Misconduct Sūtra*:

“The Monk who violates his Rule without so much as a snap of the fingers for the royal mark of the Teacher’s saffron robes should not be kept [in the Community].”²²
[301b]

The misfortune of this [hypocrisy] can be studied in the pertinent parts of such sūtras as the *Questions of Kāśyapa*. The teaching of Mahāyāna – and my thought also – on that kind of sinful religious profession is that [such persons] should not enter upon this Great Path. The Pure Life, properly so called, is untouched by such evils and completely pure.

Because it is more perfect than the Lay Devotee or Novice or Nun-candidate, I said:

THE GLORIOUS PURE LIFE IS HIGHEST;
BY WHICH HE MEANT THE VOWS OF THE MONK. [Stanza 21]

And it is the Blessed One himself who held that the pure vow of the Monk is “the perfect foundation for the Great Vehicle, and superior by far”.

Acts of the Community

As for what we call “Monk”, it is he who has been ordained²³ by the Fourfold Motion-with-Acts [of the Community].

Now Acts of the Community are of four kinds:²⁴

- [1] a Motion with [single] Act;
- [2] a Motion with Two Acts;
- [3] a Fourfold: Motion-with-[Three Acts]; and
- [4] the Act of Triple Declaration of an Act.

These four kinds of Act are used for two types of matters:

[A] personal, and [B] non-personal.

Persons

Acts that deal with persons are:²⁵ [1] Admission, [2] Ordination, [3] Unity of mind among persons, [4] Release from [penances for] transgressions, [5] Agreement on: Dismissal, Banishment, and those in Summer Retreat, [6] Blessing [and permission to leave retreat] for seven, twenty, or forty days, [7] Assistance to persons, and [8] Acts imposing penances.

Non-Person

Acts that do not deal with persons are:²⁶ [1] Consecration of the Robes and Bowl, [2] Consecration of the Cloth, [3] Forfeiture of robes not freely given, [4] Decisions on [monastery] boundaries, [302a] [5] Unity of mind with the laity, and any other acts of business like these.

The Community Acts are also [grouped as]: those to be passed by an assembly of two, four, five, ten, twenty, forty, or by the unanimous Community.²⁷ For example, an Act performable by an assembly of two: when a Monk confesses a transgression or sin he has committed, with the Act of Triple Declaration in presence of Community. An Act performable by four: confession in each other's presence of the Four Gross Sins [Intercourse, Theft, Homicide, Lying to praise self]. An Act performable by ten: Ordination in populated areas. An Act performable by an assembly of five: Ordination in remote areas. By an assembly of twenty monks: Act of removing Suspension. By forty: Act of ordaining a Nun. By the unanimous Community: Acts for [monastic] boundaries, [establishing the date] of Poṣadha, and for the Retreat Examination.

Ten Ways of Ordination

The *Discipline* masters of the Sarvāstivādā sect – the Reverends Dharmatrāta, Dbyangs-sgrogs, Vasumitra, Buddhadeva, Bsam-rdzogs, the great scholar Vasubandhu, the Elder Guṇaprabhā, and the Reverend Śākyaprabhā – all say that Ordination has been performed in ten ways:²⁸

- [1] By self-ordination: Buddhas and Solitary Buddhas.
- [2] By conviction: the [First] Five Converts.

- [3] By the “Come aside, O Monk!”: Yaśas and others.
 [4] By accepting the Teacher: Mahākāśyapa and others.
 [5] By pleasing [the Buddha] with their questions: Sudatta and others.
 [6] By accepting the Eight Serious Virtues: Mahā-prajāpatī. [302b]
 [7] By messenger: Dharmadinnā.
 [8] By five Monks, without a *Discipline*-master: persons in remote areas.
 [9] By an assembly of ten: persons in populated areas.
 [10] By triple repetition of taking the Refuges: the Ordination of the Sixty Bhadravargas.

Four types of Monk have been [traditionally] described:²⁹ [1] one who is a Monk in name only; [2] one who [merely] professes [but does not live as a Monk]; [3] one who is called “Monk” because he begs; [4] one who is called “Monk” because he conquers the passions. It is rare in our times to find a Monk of pure observance; for as the Ācārya Śāntideva said: “The Teaching is rooted in monasticism, although monasticism survives with difficulty.”³⁰ And therefore the Gurus have said repeatedly that the pure Lay Devotee is to be praised as a Mahāyāna vessel [far] more than the Monk who is weak in his observance and is diminished, stained, torn, destroyed and impure.

Concerning Vows

I continue now with an explanation of the word “vow” [in Stanza 21]. “To vow” means to block and bind the stream of misconduct. This can be treated under several headings: [A] What is gained [by vowing]. [B] How it is gained. [C] Time for taking the vow. [D] How the vow is taken. [E] How it is given up. [F] Its nature. [G] Reasons that transgressions are committed. [H] Conditions that prevent transgression. [I] Rising from failures.

For the interpretation of the first four topics [A–D] one should consult his own *Discipline*-master and study the basic texts. [Topic E]: How is the vow given up? The ways

of giving up Prātimokṣa vows are several: one gives back his precepts, after sincere reflection, in the presence of anyone [capable of] understanding,³¹ or deserts the suitable environment [for living the religious life],³² or commits an Expulsion offence,³³ or becomes hermaphrodite,³⁴ or rejects the life of virtue altogether. How can these be [true] reasons for giving up the vow? [303a] Because the thought of honestly giving it up does occur, or one does forsake the supports [of religious life], or some cause or other of transgression does happen, or the [bodily] basis of the vow changes, or the foundation of it [in virtue] is wrecked.

Now some *Discipline*-masters say that by committing [just] one transgression, the whole [discipline] is forsaken. Others also say that vows are given up at times when the Holy Doctrine wanes. But the Sarvāstivādin *Discipline*-masters have this to say:

“By committing one transgression [against the vowed rules] the rest are not forsaken, for a man can be both restrained and unrestrained [at the same time]; just as a man can be rich and [yet have] debts. So if a man with [vowed] conduct confesses his transgression, then it is [simply] not true that he is [still] unrestrained.”³⁵

In the case of hermaphrodite change, one would not [precisely] be giving up the vow that had been taken [for a particular male/female sex status] since one does not forsake a vow that never existed [and there are no Prātimokṣa vows for this ambiguous state]. The same is true at times when the Holy Doctrine declines [for then the Prātimokṣa simply does not exist]. The vow also ceases in death and transmigration because a different body is involved and one has not promised to practise [Prātimokṣa] in that body, and the vows are not recalled [in the new body]. These explanations follow [the interpretations of] Ācārya Vasubandhu, but I omit here the many adversary opinions [he argues] in his [*Treasure of Phenomenology*] text.

[F] For the nature of the vow one should study the basic

Discipline texts and question the masters of his particular school.

- [G] There are two ways of committing transgressions: by not doing what should be done, and by doing what should not be done. And [the reasons are] fourfold: ignorance, irreverence, negligence, and strong passions.
- [H] Conditions that prevent transgression are fivefold: [1] the restraint of the doors of the senses; moderation in food; perseverance in yoga in the early and latter parts of the night, without falling asleep; deliberate behaviour, mindfulness, vigilance, and thorough awareness; a fear of even the slightest infraction. [2] the second condition is to look earnestly to one's [303b] religious practice, and reflect that the Teacher himself, and those who live the Pure Life, and the gods who rejoice in the Teaching, learned men as well as worldlings would condemn [transgression]; and through self-examination [to develop] a sense of shame and embarrassment. [3] The third condition is to have modest goals, modest activity, and modest [concern for the] outcome. [4] The fourth condition is not to live as half-layman, half-religious; and to be well instructed in what is and is not transgression; and zealous in the pursuit of virtue. [5] The fifth condition [reduces culpability in transgression]: being a beginner, insane, sleepy, of distraught mind or tormented by emotions.
- [I] Rising from failings involves three things: begetting five despairs, a five-limbed vigilance, and removing despair in five ways. The five-limbed vigilance can be studied in the *Hearers Level* [of Asaṅga].³⁶

The five despairs arise when a person commits some transgression or other and thinks: [1] "With this kind of start, my observance will [always] be faulty", or [2] "The Teacher [Buddha] and learned men of the Pure Life [surely] condemn me", or [3] "The gods condemn me [for this]", or [4] "Sinful men from here to the border know about me, and talk about me indecently", or [5] "With this unvirtuous

beginning of mine, I will be reborn in the bad destinies after [leaving] this body, and then it will be no use!”

These despairs are removed by five [contrary] ways of thinking: [1] “The Blessed One taught a Doctrine which has both a foundation and way of deliverance; therefore there [surely] is a means of rising from transgression”, or [2] “Because I have not [yet] learned that transgressions are committed through ignorance, irreverence, negligence [304a] and strong passions, they [continue to] increase”, or [3] “I now beget the Enlightenment Thought with sincere superior intention so that I will not go on failing”, or [4] “I have now properly confessed [my failing] in the presence of learned men of the Pure Life”, or [5] “I have entered the religious life of the well-spoken Doctrine-Discipline, and my despair when I go against its training is not right or proper. The Blessed One condemned the stream of despair with whole lists of the obstructions [it creates]. Now since despair is the thing making the obstacles, then to put up with it and not cleanse it away from the start [can only] mean that *I* am the one who is not virtuous and right in not removing it!”

Summation of the *Discipline*

Confession should be made according to the methods found in the proper *Discipline* of each one’s own school. You can also confess [privately] with the more general method I composed in my *Ritual for Confession of Failings*. But be earnest about the fortnightly recitation of the Prātimokṣa-sūtra and about the Poṣadha [observance]. The monk who is earnest about his *Discipline* training knows what the transgressions are and is wise about the [means] of deliverance [from them]. He does not despair because his nature is to be pure, clean, unsullied, and sinless. Having left the householder’s state to become homeless and enter religion, his Conduct in the well-spoken Doctrine-Discipline is not diminished, stained, torn, destroyed or impure. He guards it well. He stands adorned with the Twelve Qualities of Purification and the Seventeen Ornaments of Religious Practice.³⁷

It was as I reflected on how the pure Monk is this kind of man that I wrote:

THE GLORIOUS PURE LIFE IS HIGHEST;
BY WHICH HE MEANT THE VOWS OF A MONK [304b]

Finally, Ajitanātha says in his *Ornament of the Sūtras*:

“The Doctrine of the *Discipline* is [expressed] in terms of [1] Transgression, [2] its Source, [3] Rising from it, [4] Deliverance, [5] Persons, [6] Promulgation, [7] Distinction, and [8] Determination.”³⁸

This completes the section on the Hearer’s Vehicle.

Notes to Chapter 3

- 1 Ot. 5584, Vol. 114:262.2.
- 2 *rigs-med-pa/agotraka*. In some systems of Mahāyāna, notably the Yogācāra school, classification of persons into “Families” according to their dispositions in a particular rebirth became popular. The reference here is to a fivefold division:
 - 1) *rigs-med/agotra*: No-Family (= no inclination to liberation in one’s present rebirth);
 - 2) *ma-nges-pa/aniyata*: Uncertain Family (= those who will enter whichever Family circumstances suggest to them);
 - 3) *nyan-thos/śrāvaka*: Hearer Family (= Hīnayāna ideal of the Arhat saint);
 - 4) *rang-sangs-rgyas/pratyeka-buddha*: Solitary Buddha Family (= the self-made Buddha ideal of Hīnayāna);
 - 5) *de-bzhin-gshegs-pa/tathāgata*: Tathāgata Family (= the Mahāyāna ideal of compassionate Enlightenment).
- 3 *bar-chad/antaraya*: impediment. The *Vinaya* (Discipline) specifies many physical and circumstantial impediments which the candidate must be free from for acceptance as a Novice or Monk. The Ordination ceremony itself contains a double inquiry into freedom from these impediments; e.g., freedom from deformities, from a variety of specific diseases, from debt, lack of parental consent, and so on. See *Matters of Discipline*, Ot. 1030, Vol. 41:24.3ff.
- 4 *pham-pa byung-bal/pārājika*: expulsion offence. The first of the eight classes of offence against the monastic rule (which constitute the divisions of the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* itself (Ot. 1031, Vol. 41:141–9):
 - 1) Expulsion (see below);
 - 2) Suspension (*dge-'dun lhag-ma/saṃghāvaśeṣa*);
 - 3) Indeterminate (*ma-nges-pa/aniyata*);

- 4) Forfeiture (*spang-ba/naihsargika*);
- 5) Transgression (*ltung-byed-pa/pātayantika*);
- 6) Confessable (*so-sor-bshag-pa/pratideśanīya*);
- 7) Etiquette (*bslab-pa'i chos/śaikṣa*);
- 8) Dispute-settling (*rtsod-pa'i zhi/adhikaraṇa-śamatha*).

The four Expulsion Offences are the most serious and involve dismissal from the community:

- 1) Sexual intercourse (*mi-tshangs-pa spyod-pa/a-brahma-caryam*: lit., impure life);
 - 2) Theft (*ma-byin-par len-pa/adattādānam*);
 - 3) Homicide (*gsod-pa/badha*);
 - 4) Lying to praise self (*mi'i chos bla-mar smra-ba/uttara-manuṣya-dharma-pralāpa*: lit., speaking of self as higher in things of man).
- 5 *de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i snying-po-can* = *Tathāgata-garbha*. A term of the Yogācāra/Vijñānavāda school of Mahāyāna referring to ultimate reality under the aspect of the potential for Buddhahood within every "vessel" Such a reality would be rejected by strict Mādhyamika as holding to a position of reality, and therefore false both by reason of holding to a position and by establishing a reality. See Atīśa's Chapter VI of the *Commentary*; also A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, pp. 404–5.
- 6 Ot. 112.
- 7 Unidentified.
- 8 *chos-kyi dbyings/dharma-dhātu*. The term for ultimate reality when considered under the aspect of its own proper nature, indescribable, inconceivable.
- 9 The two types of Family [*rigs/gotra*] presented here differ from the fivefold distinction mentioned earlier [see note 2]. The True Nature [*chos-nyid kyi rigs*] Family means those who have already achieved Buddhahood in the various bodies of fruition that Suvarṇadvīpa describes; the Striving Family [*sgrub-pa'i rigs*] refers to those still progressing on the Paths.
- 10 *Illumination on the Unfathomable*, Ot. 5192, Vol. 91.
- 11 Ot. 162, Vol. 6.
- 12 Ot. 5584, Vol. 114:262.2.
- 13 The five precepts of the lay Devotee, according to the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition which the Tibetan Communities follow, are found in the vow formula itself:

"O Ācārya, please heed me! From this day forward, as long as I live, I, (name), renounce [1] the killing of living beings; I turn away, as was done by the saintly Arhats as long as they lived, from the killing of life. With this first precept I shall train, obey, and imitate the training of the saintly Arhats. Moreover, as was done by the saintly Arhats as long as they lived, I too from this day forward, as long as I live, renounce [2] the taking of what is not given, and [3] unlawful sexual conduct, and [4] speaking untruly, and [5] intoxicating liquor and places of vulgar amusement. These five precepts I shall study, obey, and follow as the saintly Arhats before me" [*Matters of Discipline*, Ot. 1030, Vol. 41:22ff].

The forty-five rules connected with the five precepts are not mentioned in the *Discipline* itself, but are later interpretations and refinements of the application of the precepts; e.g., the basic precept of Not Killing would have several types of killing expressed as "rules" connected with it: parricide, matricide, infanticide, the killing of an Arhat, and so on.

- 14 Atīṣa's triple division of the monastic rules is a more generic classification than the eight classes of transgressions [see note 4] found in the *Prātimokṣas* of any of the schools. The eight classes of the *Prātimokṣa* are specific descriptions of the type of transgression, ranked from the most serious to the least offensive. Atīṣa's analysis is rather of the nature of the transgressions themselves – whether they are actions evil in themselves (and therefore requiring confession), or actions that would not be wrong if one had not promised to observe them, or actions that are simply discretionary matters pertaining to good order.
- 15 The number of rules pertaining to each of the three classes totals 253, but that total is at variance with the total number of rules in the known *Prātimokṣas* [Sarvāstivāda: 262; Mūlasarvāstivāda: 258; Pali: 227]. This in itself is not unusual, since there is considerable latitude in the enumeration of the Etiquette rules, some combining two prohibitions into one. However, the *Commentary's* statement that twenty-three rules pertain to the "Confessable" does not agree with any of the schools, which all enumerate four: not receiving food from the hands of nuns, admonishing nuns to let the monks eat first when in a layman's house, receiving food from families which have been interdicted by the Saṃgha, and taking food in the Community for use outside, without permission of the Community. [See W. Pachow, *Comparative Study of the Prātimokṣa*, p. 11.]

The discrepancies about the monastic rule here in the *Commentary* simply point to Atīṣa's having been ordained in the Mahāsaṃghika lineage, whose *Prātimokṣa* has since been lost. Atīṣa did discourse on the *Discipline* during summer retreats in Central Tibet, but it is perhaps significant that no mention is made of his participating in any ordination ceremonies either as Ācārya or Upādhyāya. The statement has been made by Nyānamoli Thera in his *Pātimokkha* [p. 101] that Atīṣa was asked not to ordain in Tibet because his own lineage [Mahāsaṃghika] was different from that begun at Bsam-yas by Śāntirakṣita with the first seven Tibetan monks. Śāntirakṣita's lineage is attested as the Tibetan preference by the *Kanjur's* containing only the Mūlasarvāstivāda version of the *Discipline* and *Prātimokṣa Sūtra*.

- 16 The Six Basic Rules and Six Rules for Harmony are not identified in the known traditions. From the context they seem similar to the Nuns' "Eight Serious Virtues" mentioned in the Nuns Ordination Ritual; e.g. receiving ordination only from monks; awaiting announcement of the proper date for the fortnightly Poṣadha from the monks' community; not making the summer retreat without the monks nearby for instruction; not admonishing the monks; rising in reverence to even young monks although the nun be a hundred years old, and so on. See Ridding and La Vallée Poussin, "A Fragment of the Sanskrit Vinaya: *Bhikṣuni-karma-vacana*", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* (London), Vol. I, pt III, pp. 141–2.
- 17 The number 500 for the rules of Nuns is mentioned in a sūtra quote in Śāntideva's *SS* (p. 170), but the *Nuns Prātimokṣa Sūtra* (Ot. 1033) itself has a total of only 371 rules in the Mūla-sarvāstivāda tradition. The Pāli version has 311 rules. See A. C. Banerjee, *Sarvāstivāda Literature*, p. 88; and E. J. Thomas, *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 107–12, for further information.
- 18 The history of the early divisions of Buddhism was knowledge that every monk was expected to have, and the enumeration here is in Tibetan verse in the *Commentary*, a mnemonic borrowed from Bhavya's *Nikaya-bheda-vibhaṅga-vyākhyāna* (Ot. 5640), and translated by Atīṣa himself. The proper names refer to certain doctrines held, or to founding teachers, or to places where mother monasteries were built. See Sukumar Dutt's *Buddhist*

Monks and Monasteries of India; A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Chapter 9.

19 *Questions for the Monks' Retreat*, Ot. 5649, Vol. 127:309.1.

20 In SS: p. 81.

21 Ot. 817, Vol. 33:36.5.

22 Ot. 886, Vol. 35:55.2.

23 *bsnyen-par rdzogs-pa/upasampadā*: the ordination ceremony as distinct from the ceremony for admission to the religious life as a novice (*rab-tu-byung-ba/pravrajyā*). The essence of ordination is the unanimous and formally acknowledged consent of the Community to accept the novice who has the intention to be bound (vowed) by the rules of the Monk. The ceremony itself was conducted as a formal business meeting of the Community, requiring a minimum of five monks (four of whom have specific functions in the ceremony), and consent of the Community given in its most solemn and binding form. The four officers required for the ceremony are:

- 1) Preceptor (*mkhan-po/upādhyāya*): to sponsor and receive the novice in the name of the Community;
- 2) Teacher (*slob-dpon/ācārya*): to instruct the novice and receive his promises at the end of the ceremony;
- 3) President (*las-byed-pa/karma-karaka*): to act as master of ceremonies or chairman, seeing to the proper conduct of the ritual, and to present the formal motion to the Community for granting the ordination;
- 4) Admonitor (*gsang-ste ston-pa/raho'nuśāsaka*): to inquire privately during the ceremony about the novice's freedom from the physical impediments.

The ceremony in all its details of rubrics and formulas and proper conduct of the meeting is described in the first chapter of the *Matters of Discipline* itself, and is considered to be among the oldest of Buddhist scriptures. See A. C. Banerjee, op. cit. pp. 101–42.

24 The four basic types of acts of the Community (*dge'dun gyi las/saṃgha-karma*) are described in great detail in the *Matters of Discipline*, chapter 10: Acts. It is believed that this true democratic parliamentary procedure was adapted by the Buddha from contemporary tribal council systems such as the Vajji of northern India. (See S. Dutt, op. cit., pp. 85–7.) An Act of the Community is always expressed by silence in response to the presiding monk's proposal of the Motion. As Atīśa states, the third type of Act is required for ordination: a triple repetition of the Motion before the fourth and final assent of the Community. See S. Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, pp. 144ff; A. C. Banerjee, op. cit., pp. 222–4; for the Pāli *Vinaya*: *Mahāvagga IX* (S.B.E., Vol. XVIII).

25 Numerous rules throughout the *Prātimokṣa* are concerned with harmony in the religious community, and appropriate penances imposed for infractions, and formal lifting of the penance when atonement has been made. Banishment (*bskrad-pa/pravāsanīyam*) could be carried out against a group of monks who had created scandal in a given place. Penances in general are treated in Chapter XIII of the *Discipline*. Regulations and conduct for the annual monsoon retreat are covered in Chapter IV.

26 The first two items pertain to the Ordination Ritual; the third pertains to poverty in the matter of the monks' robes, their care and distribution, (Chapter VII of the *Discipline*). Forfeiture, the fourth class of *Prātimokṣa* rules, describes offences for which the monk must give up the cloth (and other material gain) he has received through suggesting that generosity to laypersons.

- 27 The prescriptions mentioned here show the minimal number (two) of monks required (and obligated) to conduct the fortnightly recitation of the *Prātimokṣa*, as well as how confession may be made even when a larger assembly is gathered; i.e. by turning to the monk at one's elbow to admit the guilt.

Ordination by five monks in remote areas had application in the history of Tibet when the native Tibetan lineage of ordinations begun at Bsam-yas by Śāntirakṣita was nearly broken by the persecution of Glang-dar-ma in the ninth century. In the later rekindling of the Doctrine, three monks who had fled the persecution and had found a Tibetan worthy and desirous of ordination in A-mdo, one Dgongs-pa rab-gsal, performed the ceremony according to the prescribed ritual by inviting two Chinese monks to participate in order to make up the minimal assembly of five. Bu-ston records the incident: *chos-'byung* (Obermiller), Pt II, pp. 201–2.

The Retreat Examination (*Discipline*, Chap. III) is the special recitation of *Prātimokṣa* at the end of the summer retreat, with examination and confession of faults committed, seen, or apprehended by *others* during the time of retreat.

- 28 Considering that Atiśa was ordained in the Mahāsamghika lineage and described a different analysis of *Prātimokṣa* rules from that of the Sarvāstivāda, it is interesting to note here his listing of their great *Discipline* masters as authorities – perhaps in deference to his Tho-ling patrons. The title “Reverend” (*bisun-pa/bhadanta*) is especially reserved for outstanding *Discipline* commentators, and all those listed here are found in the *Tanjur*, except for two (Dbyangs-sgrogs and Bsam-rdzogs). Guṇaprabhā and Śākyaprabhā are especially revered in Tibet as the “Two Excellents” (*mchog gnyis*).

The Ten Ways of Ordination are a traditional listing, found in *AK(LVP)*, IV, 60, and in the *Blue Annals* (Roerich), p. 33. The first Five Converts refers to the Buddha's companions in his initial austerities, who later listened to his first sermon on the Four Holy Truths and followed him. (See *Mahāvagga*, I, 6.) Yaśas' ordination by the “Come aside, O Monk!” (*dge-slong tshur shoglehi bhikṣu*) is described in the Ordination Ceremony itself as the Buddha's first way of receiving monks into the Community. (See *Matters of Discipline*: Ot. 1030, Vol. 41:22). Mahakāśyapa, the ascetic of Uruvela, came to the Buddha with his five hundred disciples, and all were ordained by their very assent to the Buddha's teaching. (See E. J. Thomas, *Life of the Buddha*, p. 91.) Sudatta (or Anāthapiṇḍada) is not recorded as ever being other than a lay devotee; so this reference remains unidentified. Mahāprajāpatī, the Buddha's aunt, who prevailed upon him to permit women to join the Community as nuns. (See *Cullavagga*, X, 1.) Dharmadinnā, a woman locked up in a harem, sent a messenger to the Buddha for admission to the Community. (See *Majjhima Nikaya*, I, 299.) The Sixty Bhadravargas (“the good groups”) are not accounted for in the various *Disciplines* known to date. The appellation *bhadravarga* is usually given to the first five converts.

- 29 In *AK(LVP)*, IV, 97.

30 *BCA*, IX, 45.

31 *mi brda phrad-pa*.

- 32 *ris mthun-pa/nikāya-sabhāga*. Vasubandhu, whom Atiśa is following in these topics, defines this as meaning death; i.e., one must be in the human body to be able to observe the precepts of the *Prātimokṣa*. At death, the

vows of the monastic life do not carry over into other rebirths, even human. See *AK(LVP)*, IV, 94.

33 See note 4.

34 *mtshan gnyis dus gcig-tu byung-ba*: lit., “both [sex] marks appearing at the same time”, which is hermaphroditism. But actually *sex-change* is meant here – a physiological possibility accepted in the history of Indian medicine. See *AK(LVP)*, IV, 94.

35 *AK(LVP)*, IV, 94.

36 The five-limbed vigilance is not found in the *Hearer's Level*, but rather in Asaṅga's *Bodhisattva Levels* [Ot. 5538, Vol. 110, 167.3]:

- 1) *sngon-gyi mtha' dang-ldan-pa*: one who has put an end to past transgressions;
- 2) *phyi-ma'i mtha' dang-ldan-pa*: one who has put an end to future transgressions;
- 3) *dbus-kyi mtha' dang-ldan-pa*: one who has put an end to present transgressions;
- 4) *snga-nas bya-ba*: learning what should be done from previous mistakes;
- 5) *lhan-cig rjes-su spyod-pa*: one who has put all the above together and acts accordingly ever after.

37 The Twelve Qualities of Purification (*sbyangs-pa'i yon-tan/dhūta-guṇa*) are one item in the Seventeen Ornaments of the Religious Practice (*dge-sbyong-gi rgyan/śrāmaṇā-alaṃkāra*), both of which are listed in Asaṅga's *Hearer's Level* [Ot. 5537, Vol. 110:65.5f]. The Twelve Qualities all have to do with living frugally in the religious life; the Seventeen Ornaments are more generic: having greater faith, greater patience, few necessities, and so on. See Glossary.

38 Ot. 5521, Vol. 108:8.1. The summary inserted here is a mnemonic verse covering the contents of the *Discipline* itself. Atiśa has treated only the first four topics in this chapter. Persons [5] refers to the subject matter of chapter XII of the *Matters of Discipline*: the disposition of disciplinary actions against persons. Promulgation [6] refers to the Buddha's assembling the monks to announce new changes in the rule as each new case arose. Distinction [7] covers the many exceptions allowed by the Prātimokṣa rules; e.g. absence from Poṣadha by reason of illness. Determination [8] refers to the settling of dissension in the Community and to the decision about undetermined infractions of the rule.

CHAPTER 4

The Bodhisattva Vow

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The Bodhisattva Vow

The Bodhisattva Vow

But you must not think it enough simply to have the Prātimokṣa vow and beget a resolve [for Perfect Enlightenment]; for the *Cloud of Jewels* says:

“O Noble Youth, a bodhisattva bound by the vow of bodhisattva training is one who says: ‘I cannot be directly awakened to the supreme and perfect Enlightenment just by Prātimokṣa vows. Rather I must train myself in everything the Tathāgatas have enjoined as bodhisattva practice and training in the sūtras and by their example.’”¹

And so at this point I will imitate my Gurus in following the Mahāyāna sūtras to explain what must be practised in the comprehensive training of a bodhisattva.

Conduct Chapter of *Asaṅga*

I have already indicated [in the preceding stanzas] who the unique vessel for Mahāyāna is, so now I point out the Path of the Great Wagons for him by saying:

ACCORDING TO THE RITUAL GIVEN IN THE
CONDUCT CHAPTER OF THE *BODHISATTVA LEVELS*,
[ONE TAKES THE VOW . . .] [Stanza 22]

This *Bodhisattva Levels* is the treatise composed by noble Asaṅga to present the Six Perfections. In that text there is the *Chapter on the Perfection of Conduct*² comprised of nine titles: [1] The Nature of Conduct, [2] All-inclusive, [3] The Difficulties, [4] The Approaches, [5] The Holy Man, [6] All Kinds, [7] The Wish in Misfortune, [8] Happiness

Here and Hereafter, [305a] and [9] Purified Conduct. My reference here is to what is stated under the heading “All-inclusive Conduct”.

The Good Guru

I show how this ritual proceeds by saying

ONE TAKES THE VOW FROM ANY GOOD GURU
WHO HAS THE PROPER CHARACTERISTICS. [Stanza 22]

And who is the good Guru and what are his proper characteristics?

ONE WHO IS LEARNED IN THE RITUAL OF THE VOW,
AND HIMSELF LIVES THE VOW HE HAS TAKEN,
AND HAS THE COMPASSIONATE FORBEARANCE
TO IMPART IT – KNOW HIM TO BE THE GOOD GURU.³ [23]

“LEARNED IN THE RITUAL OF THE VOW” means that he is well-informed and knowledgeable about it. “LIVES THE VOW HE HAS TAKEN” means that the Guru’s own Conduct is not diminished or destroyed and that it is pure. “FORBEARANCE” means he is willing to do it, and proceeds freely in imparting the vow. “COMPASSIONATE” means he sees a disciple as a son, and that he cannot bear to see others suffer. When I say he must be a “GURU” [“higher”] I mean that a vow can only [truly] be taken from someone whose attainment is higher than others. And a Guru is considered to be higher when his disciples possess virtues like his and when great reverence has been paid to his teaching.

Furthermore, a Guru possesses four excellences: [1] excellent Conduct, [2] excellent attainments, [3] excellent intention, and [4] excellent practice. I specify his excellent Conduct by saying “HIMSELF LIVES THE VOW HE HAS TAKEN”, and his excellent attainments by “LEARNED IN THE RITUAL OF THE VOW . . . [AND] . . . FORBEARANCE TO IMPART IT”.

To explain this further: “LIVES THE VOW” means that you cannot acquire a vow from a Guru who has forsaken his own vow or has violated his own Conduct or no longer agrees with the Doctrine. “LEARNED IN THE RITUAL” means

a vow cannot be acquired from a Guru who does not know the ritual because then the ritual itself is defective. And “FORBEARANCE TO IMPART” means he is willing to grant the vow because he approaches it with a glad heart, saying, “Excellent! I must give this vow without hesitation!”

His excellent intention and excellent practice are shown by the word “COMPASSIONATE”:

The Guru’s excellent intention is his faith, his sincere motivation in action, his detachment and compassion, his reverence for his own Guru. He desires little and knows moderation, keeping trifles unimportant. He has no anxieties, he is patient with others’ faults, he is free of anger and grudge-bearing.

The Guru’s excellent practice is his advancing in practice of virtue, ever esteeming and increasing it. He does not deceive himself about the rules of his training. He is neither overenthusiastic nor indolent, and he does not like noisy crowds or pleasure-seeking. His mind is undisturbed.⁴

If you take the vow from such a Guru your practice of Conduct will grow, and that kind of Guru is what I had in mind when I wrote:

ONE TAKES THE VOW FROM ANY GOOD GURU
WHO HAS THE PROPER CHARACTERISTICS. [Stanza 22]

Explanation of the Vow

My explanation continues now with these topics: [A] the ritual for taking the vow, [B] the full extent of it, [C] how the vow is forsaken, [D] how it will not be forsaken, [E] rising from failings in it, [F] the benefits of Conduct.

There are of course many systems of interpretation from the great scholars of the past, but here I am going to explain only the thought of Ārya Asaṅga and of Venerable Śāntideva because theirs is the spirituality of the Superior

Person – which is the Great Path of the Great Vehicle.
[306a]

The Ritual for Taking the Vow

[1] For the full ritual, you should study the one composed by Ācārya Asaṅga in his *Chapter on Conduct*⁵ or the one that I myself composed.⁶ There is also a ritual for taking the vow without a Guru given in the same *Chapter on Conduct*. For the ritual I made, I imitated Ārya Asaṅga's. The ritual by Śāntideva is found of course in his *Progress in Practice*, but is presented more fully in the *Compendium of Training*.⁷ He has also given a ritual for the vow without a Guru in the latter text.

[2] I presented my own ritual without a Guru in the stanzas from:

“BUT IF, AFTER TRYING, ONE CANNOT
FIND JUST SUCH A GURU AS THIS,
I WILL EXPLAIN ANOTHER RITUAL
FOR TAKING THE VOW IN A CORRECT WAY.” [Stanza 24]

down to the words:

“NO UNVIRTUOUS DEED WILL EVER BE MINE.” [Stanza 31b]

I chose this ritual of Ambarāja⁸ here because my Gurus have said it is a formula for the ritual both with and without a Guru. It is true, the *Compendium of Training* gives it as a ritual for taking the vow from a Guru, but since I am presenting both methods, my ritual for taking with a Guru is based on the *Chapter on Conduct* [of Asaṅga] and the one without Guru is based on the *Compendium of Training* [of Śāntideva].

Extent of Conduct

The full extent of Conduct. Ārya Asaṅga has summarised what the entire Sūtra collection teaches on Conduct in the nine sections of his *Chapter on Conduct* beginning with “Nature”. He concludes by saying:

“The Conduct of the Bodhisattva is completely covered by these practices. What he must do in his Conduct is complete with just these. The benefit of his Conduct is complete in just these. [306b] There is nothing more; there is nothing beyond them.”⁹

And Ācārya Śāntideva treats the whole Sūtra teaching as a training by three types of person; hence in Mahāyāna there is a higher practice of Conduct, and an average, and a minimal. When speaking of the higher practice in his *Compendium of Training* he says, “The fullest practice of Mahāyāna comes from the Bodhisattva vow.”¹⁰ Then in the *Progress in Practice* he says:

“There is no virtuous practice to be had anywhere
Which the Sons of the Victor do not observe.”¹¹

And my Guru, the glorious Bodhibhadra, has said:

“The chief precepts of Bodhisattva training are summarised here [in Asaṅga’s *Chapter on Conduct*]. But this training of a Bodhisattva is measureless and endless [in actual practice], and therefore when you return to what is taught here in these precepts, you will know what is or is not a fault.”¹²

On the subject of the average practice of Bodhisattva Conduct, Śāntideva says in the *Compendium of Training*:

“This Bodhisattva will know the basic attitudes [necessary] for not transgressing. He gives away his person and enjoyments to all creatures, and all the merit he has ever gained as well. And he keeps on growing in these practices.”¹³

Then on the subject of minimal practice, he says:

“A Bodhisattva who wants to observe some certain precept of the training makes a promise to do so in the presence of the Buddhas. If he has no [Guru] Spiritual

Friend, he acts on his own power to do so, and takes the vow in the presence of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Hence, even when acting on your own in observing a single precept, you should take the vow correctly.”¹⁴
[307a]

Forsaking the Vow

According to Ārya Asaṅga’s explanation, the causes of forsaking the vow are the failure to renew the resolve for the great Enlightenment, and through great entanglement to commit the four basic sins. The former means to grow tired of seeking the good of all creatures, and feeling that Enlightenment is too far off, and to have the resolution of only a Hearer or Solitary Buddha or an outsider. The latter means to be without shame or regret, and to lose all concern for the consequences, or to give back the vow in the presence of anyone capable of understanding.¹⁵

In Ācārya Śāntideva’s interpretation in the *Compendium of Training*, the vow is forsaken by failing to reject the Evil Works of Māra or the Fourteen Evil Things¹⁶ that begin with the man who appropriates for himself what belongs to the holy religion, and so on; and by imperfect mindfulness, by laziness and indifference, by not learning what the transgressions are, and by having no shame or regret.

And in his *Commentary on “Twenty Verses on the Vow”*, my Guru says, “. . . not learning the precepts of the training, by unmindfulness, delusion, and irreverence.”¹⁷

Preventing Transgression

For Asaṅga transgression is prevented by deliberateness and mindfulness, zeal and carefulness, by knowing what is and is not a fault, and by a sense of shame and regret. Śāntideva mentions these also, along with rejecting and correcting the Fourteen Evil Things, as even the ordinary [Paths] do.¹⁸

Rising from Transgression

Both Gurus say that one can be as free of regret for failure by being restored to virtue as by never having sinned in the first place. If one sees the wrong in his faults, and admits and confesses it even in little things, he will be pure. [307b]

In the *Chapter on Conduct*, Ārya Asaṅga speaks of rising from failings in the passage that begins “If there is no suitable person to act as one’s teacher [to confess to] . . .”,¹⁹ where he also says that when the basic sins have been committed because of complete entanglement, then the vow should be taken again after confessing in the presence of the community. But, for [lesser] faults committed, confession to anyone of the Hearers’ or the Great Vehicle [is sufficient]. In the *Compendium of Training* Ācārya Śāntideva comments on his verse, “If we do not strive as the Perfect Buddha told us, to evil destinies we will go”,²⁰ by giving an explanation of the *Four Virtues Sūtra*.

Benefits of Conduct

The *Chapter on Conduct* has this to say:

“And so this great collection of rules for Bodhisattva Conduct results in the attainment of the great Enlightenment. Through them you will reach the Perfection of Conduct and be directly awakened. And while striving toward Buddhahood you will gain five advantages: [1] you will think as a Buddha; [2] you will treat death as an occasion for rejoicing; [3] you will be reborn in your next life in a place where there is a Spiritual Friend who is wise in the Doctrine; [4] in the present life you will have an endless store of merit that will help you achieve the Perfection of Conduct; [5] and when you are reborn in your next life you will retain the level of Conduct you have gained.”²¹

And in the *Compendium of Training*:

“The benefits from observing the training are so very great, it is only fitting we should strive for them right from the present moment.”²²

And, supporting that idea, [Śāntideva] quotes from the *Exhortation to Higher Intention*, the *Miracle of Resolute Calm*, the *Moon-Lamp Sūtra*, and the *Cloud of Jewels*. [308a]

My own Guru [Bodhibhadra] says in his *Commentary on "Twenty Verses on the Vow"*:

“The man who conducts himself in this manner will thereby surely cut off any approach to the evil destinies, and will never be reborn in them again.”²³

And further on:

“He is not reborn in the evil destinies, and even though he be reborn a hundred times he does not experience severe suffering or [at least] is swiftly liberated from it, and in enduring it he works to mature others.”²⁴

There are still other benefits in taking the vow correctly, as Ārya Candragomin says:

“Because of the virtue in him then,
The Buddha with all his sons –
Their hearts set on virtue too –
Regard him as their comely child.”²⁵

And Ācārya Śāntideva:

“Today I am born into the Buddha’s family;
I have become a son of the Buddha!
As I take up this family’s profession,
Let me never act so as to spoil
Its spotless and venerable name.”²⁶

Purification of Body, Speech and Mind

Because the Bodhisattva who has taken the vow needs to preserve and extend his Conduct, I said:

IN ESSENCE, ONE’S PURITY OF BODY, SPEECH AND MIND
MEANS KEEPING VOWS WITH A MIND FOR PROGRESS. [Stanza 32]

Now as to the words “IN ESSENCE, ONE’S PURITY OF BODY, SPEECH AND MIND”, I quote from the *Tathāgata’s Compassion Sūtra*:

“[The Bodhisattva] cleanses his body, he cleanses his speech, and he cleanses his mind.”²⁷

Purifying the body and speech is done by [Asaṅga’s] Conduct of the Vow, and purifying the mind by his Conduct for Garnering Virtue and Conduct for Others’ Sake. Or again, each one of those Conducts purifies body, speech and mind. [308b] Or still again, body and speech are purified by avoiding the [first] seven Unvirtuous Deeds beginning with Killing and so on, and the mind is purified by avoiding the [last] three beginning with Covetousness. In the *Questions of Celestial King Druma Sūtra*, this is the meaning [the Blessed One] gave:

“The Conduct of a purified body is devoid of Lust, Anger, and Illusion, and the Conduct of purified speech is marked by no deceit toward my godly Three Jewels, and the Conduct of a purified mind holds no Covetousness, or Ill-will or False Views.”²⁸

As I reflected on how, if that is true, I would study well the training in Conduct, and how the strength gained in cultivating it would increase my desire, joy and delight in Conduct and my application to it, I wrote:

FOR BY PRACTISING WELL THE THREE CONDUCT TRAININGS,
APPRECIATION OF THE THREE BECOMES GREATER. [Stanza 32]

Now these three Trainings are: [A] the Conduct of the Vow, [B] Conduct for Garnering Virtue, and [C] Conduct for Others’ Sake.²⁹

Conduct of the Vow

Conduct of the Vow includes the vows of Prātimokṣa’s seven ranks which prohibit acts that would be wrong because [one has] pledged [to renounce them], as well as the Ten Unvirtuous Deeds which prohibit [acts that are] wrong by nature.

Conduct for Garnering Virtue

Conduct for Garnering Virtue means that after correctly taking the Vow you gather up every least bit of virtue you can in body, speech and mind, for the sake of Enlightenment. In particular it is to apply yourself to study, reflection, and contemplation with unique delight. And likewise it is your behaviour toward your Gurus, always greeting them first, rising and saluting them with folded hands. [309a] It is showing reverence to and proclaiming the praises of gifted persons, and rejoicing in all merit. It is forbearance under the contempt of others. It is bestowing [the merit of] all your virtues [on others] for Enlightenment's sake. It is regularly making the various resolves for purity. It is offering worship to the Three Jewels in a wide variety of offerings. It is zeal in virtue. It is rejecting inattention, and fostering mindfulness and deliberateness and restraint of the doors of the senses. It is knowing moderation in food, and striving not to sleep in the early and latter parts of the night. It is reliance on the holy man. It is knowing what the faults are and, having seen them, avoiding them or confessing them honestly. It is preserving and extending every good deed that is in harmony with these virtues.³⁰

And thus, if you keep the Conduct of Garnering Virtue, your life of virtue will become well integrated. For, if you do not consent to looking for pleasures even in small things, then how much less in greater. This Conduct is the very heart of the Ten Perfections, of the Four Means of Attraction, of the Four Infinitudes, and of the Ten Thoughts of Enlightenment.

Conduct for the Good of Others

Conduct for Others' Sake means that you must work for the good of creatures. It is being a companion to those in suffering as a nurse is to the sick, and so on.

It is being a guide for the blind, and teaching the deaf by signs, and carrying those who have no hands or feet, and cleansing those who hanker after desire, and purifying the suffering of anyone overcome or contemned by

others, and [309b] giving food and drink to the weary traveller, and helping with clothes and lodging. It means being indefatigable in helping the sick with your healing abilities, and having no thought of reward.³¹

In short, it is cleansing away all the suffering that creatures have, and keeping the intention to remove it, and bestowing all your virtues on others for their benefit. For the full significance of these practices, you must study the *Chapter on Conduct*.

Perfecting the Equipment

It was in my reflecting that these three kinds of Conduct for the [Bodhisattva's] vow are actually the Equipment of Merit, and should therefore quickly bring that Equipment to perfection, I wrote the verse:

HENCE, WHEN ONE HAS STRIVEN IN THE VOWS WHICH MAKE UP
THE PURE AND PERFECT BODHISATTVA VOW,
HE WILL BRING TO COMPLETE PERFECTION
THE VERY EQUIPMENT FOR PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT. [Stanza 33]

Consequently, you should understand that if you wish to reach the Perfect Enlightenment, and want to achieve the merit which is the condition for it, you will bring that Equipment of Merit to perfection by striving diligently in the Vow of the Bodhisattva.

Striving in Both Vows

By the words "VOWS WHICH MAKE UP THE . . . VOW", I include both the Vow of a Bodhisattva who is following Ārya Aśaṅga's system, and the Vow of a Bodhisattva who follows Ācārya Śāntideva's. If you have striven and laboured perseveringly in the paths of both these great Wagons, you will have fulfilled the Equipments of Merit and Knowledge alike, and the Gurus say that you will be directly and perfectly Enlightened. My Guru [Bodhibhadra, for instance] says in his *Commentary on "Twenty Verses on the Vow"*:

“These Three Trainings of Conduct are virtuous because to take and observe them correctly works for one’s own and others’ good, benefit, and happiness. [310a] They are measureless because they comprise the measureless trainings of a Bodhisattva. They are useful because they accomplish the benefit and happiness of all creatures. And one can understand how much greater their effect is [than other trainings] by the fact that through them one lays hold of the supreme and perfect Enlightenment, the greatest result of all.”³²

Five Effects

Now then, to undertake such a training from a holy Guru and desire the basic virtues of the Equipment Path’s Aids-to-Liberation, as is proper for a Bodhisattva, means that one has had the right disposition for it from previous rebirths. For as Maitreyañātha says in the *Classification of the Middle and Extremes*:

“Scriptures declare that the maturing [of karma] includes: [1] becoming a Vessel, and [2] Strength because of that capacity, and [3] Desire, and [4] Growth, and [5] Purification. These are the successive stages of the effects [of karma].”³³

And the great and learned Guru Śāntipa [explains this as]:³⁴

“The bodhisattvas’ becoming Vessels [for Mahāyāna] in this life is because of their having trained to cultivate virtue in their previous lives. This is the Maturation Effect. [1] Their becoming strong is because of what they have done in this life. This is the Dominant Effect. [2] For the same reason, but later, is their desire [for more training]. This is the Causally-Similar Effect. [3] Their great growth in training in this life is the Human-Activity Effect. [4] Their being dissociated from the impurities of the Obscurations is the Dissociation Effect. [5] Four of these effects, excepting the Dominant, are listed as effects of the same [causal] category, but the list would not be complete if that were true.”

And the great and learned Ācārya Vasubandhu says: [310b]

“The Bodhisattva who has the Thought for Enlightenment, from then on in rebirth after rebirth,

‘Has happy destinies, noble birth, all his faculties, is born a male, remembers rebirths, and does not turn back.’

He does not regret suffering in the cause of helping creatures. A servant not bought with worldly goods is this bodhisattva. And, even with his special eminence in the good fortune of a Great Being, he will not be proud and arrogant. Out of compassion, he is controlled by others, and lives at their feet like a dog, a servant or a low-caste. And although others hold him in contempt and hurt him, he is forbearing, and takes unto himself all weariness and anxiety.”³⁵

This is the kind of person we know as a Mahāyānist.

Marks of Unfailing Thought

The Sūtras also speak of the signs of Enlightenment Thought, unimpaired through rebirth after rebirth:

“[Because of the Thought] one is spared the evil destinies. He avoids birth in remote areas, and is reborn in a place where there is a holy man. His birth is of noble family, and he is handsome in body, and has great insight, and is free of sickness. He is endowed with compassion.”

Hence, you avoid the Eight Unfavourable Conditions and possess the qualities of the Ten Favourable ones. Or again, the signs [of Enlightenment Thought] are to be naturally endowed with the Six Perfections; for the Sūtras say, “One is endowed with [the Perfection of] Giving without being taught it”, on through each of the Perfections to “He is endowed with Insight without being taught it.”

And Ācārya Candrakīrti says this:

“If while [on the Paths of] the Ordinary Person,³⁶
 One hears of Emptiness and inner joy comes again and again,
 And from that joy the eyes fill with tears,
 And even the body hairs begin to rise; [311a]
 Then to that one, whoever he be who has this
 Seed of Enlightenment, let Ultimate Truth be taught.
 For from that seed springs the quality of realising it.”³⁷

Ācārya Vasubandhu puts it this way:

“Regarding the Aids to Liberation: when anyone hears a sermon on Non-Self, or on the defects of the cycle of rebirth, or on the qualities of Nirvāṇa, and the tears flow and his scalp tingles, then we recognise a man who has the basic virtues of the Aids to Liberation – just as surely as we know that seed has been sown in the furrows of the field when we see the summer’s sprouting.”³⁸

And the holy *Descent into Laṅka Sūtra*:

“As from seeing smoke, one knows there is fire;
 And from the presence of herons, that water’s nearby;
 So the Family of intelligent Bodhisattvas
 Is recognised by their characteristics.”³⁹

Beginner Bodhisattvas

And so, the Beginner Bodhisattva should be constantly aware that his whole body and life and enjoyments, and all the phenomena of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa alike are as but a dream. Dreamlike are the Three Jewels to which he pays dreamlike reverence. Dreamlike the cycle of rebirth in which he must sorrow; dreamlike the creatures for whom his compassion labours with dreamlike mind; and dreamlike the creatures whom he must respect.

He must bear in mind that all creatures are his lord; he must bear in mind the Non-arising [of all phenomena]; he must bear in mind the Thought of Enlightenment. He must bear Death in mind. He must bear Conduct in mind. He must bear in mind detachment from all material things. He

must bear in mind his mindfulness, deliberateness, attention, and careful reflection. [311b]

Skilled in Means

Moreover, this Beginner should at all times be skilled in the Means, [reflecting in this way:]

“Taking my own sins to be others’ sins, I confess them; and taking others’ sins to be my own, I confess them. Making my own roots of virtue to be others’ roots of virtue, and others’ to be my own – making my own happiness to be others’ happiness, and making their suffering to be mine – I cleanse away the suffering of others through my own suffering. When I see or hear of the happiness of others, my heart is glad. And when I see or hear of their suffering, my heart is cast down like a mother’s, thinking ‘Ah alas, when will I free them from their suffering?’

“I put aside all thought of worldly things. I must not be jealous of others’ gain, honour, and fame. Here am I, with this family, good health, attendants and wherewithal; I have the five branches of knowledge; I have my own goods, honour, and reputation; so, without pride or arrogance, I will not hold lesser people in contempt. In sharing my virtue with others, I completely bestow [its merits on them] for the Great Enlightenment; and the virtues that others have shared with me, I also completely bestow for the Great Enlightenment. And in sharing my own sins with others’ sins, I confess each one; and the sins they have shared with me, I confess them all.”

Unremitting Practice

The [Beginner Bodhisattva’s] daily practice is to be unremitting;⁴⁰ for as the *Cloud of Jewels* says:

“In eating . . . in drinking . . . in going forth . . . in lying down . . . in lying on the right side . . . [he is mindful].”⁴¹ [312a]

You must study the rest of the Sūtra for the description.

And then again his pledge is unremitting too, as these words of King Ākāśa of old say:⁴²

“From this day forward, even if the
Thought of attachment arise in me,
I will never betray all the Buddhas
Who dwell in the ten directions.

Beginning from this moment and henceforth,
[Until I obtain the Highest Enlightenment,]
I shall not permit ill-will or anger,
Avarice or envy, to occupy my mind. [Stanza 27]

I shall practise the Pure Life,
And renounce sin and base desire;
I shall imitate the Buddha
By rejoicing in the vow of Conduct.” [Stanza 28]

And the *Exhortation to Higher Intention Sūtra*:

“O Blessed One, from this day forward, we make this solemn promise in the presence of the Tathāgata. O Blessed One, from this day forward, if we talk about the failings of a person in the Bodhisattva Vehicle, be it true or not, we will be betraying the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the completely perfect Buddha . . .”⁴³

And you must study the sūtra for the rest [of that idea].

The Beginner’s Bestowal [of merit] is likewise unremitting: study the Bestowal prayer in the *Golden Splendour*, the Ten Great Bestowals of the Bodhisattva Vajradhvaḥ, and the *Twenty Verses on Gathering Merit* by Ārya Nāgārjuna, and others such as the Bestowal Chapter of the *Progress in Practice*.

His Resolve is also unremitting: read the holy *Good Practice*, the Ten Great Resolves of the *Sūtra on the Ten Stages*, the Twelve Great Resolves of the king in the *Glory of the Blessed One, Vaidurya, Teacher of Healing*, and Ācārya Aśvaghōṣa’s *Seventy Resolves*, and so on. [312b]

From time to time, recall the fifty [simile] teachings that my Guru collected from quotes out of the entire body of Sūtras: “Mother and Father-like” and “Son and Daughter-like” [is the Bodhisattva].⁴⁴

Sūtra Study

A Beginner should also read the whole Sūtra collection through at least once. And why is that? Because the beginner has only studied a small part of the remedy and its superficial conditions; and so he needs to study the Sūtras diligently [for basic understanding]. He should also read, listen to, and ask questions about the books that summarise the complete Sūtra meaning: the *Compendium of Sūtras*, the *Progress in Bodhisattva Practice*, the *Chapter on Conduct*, and the *Twenty Verses on the Vow*. Since the great Ācāryas of the past – and the great and learned Gurus of our own day – gave much reflection to the meaning of the Mahāyāna Sūtras, their treatises too ought to be studied, listened to, and copied.

He should also recite the *Three Heaps* three times a day and night, as the *Questions of Ugra* says:

“Washing himself three times a day and three times a night, and donning clean robes, he should recite the *Three Heaps*.”⁴⁵

And the *Instruction on the Non-Production of All Phenomena*:

“Three times a day as well as night, pay homage to the Bodhisattvas with head [to the ground].”⁴⁶

And the *Cloud of Jewels*:

“To all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, he performs worship three times a day and three times a night.”⁴⁷

And in the *Questions of Upāli*, it says: “He confesses day and night.”⁴⁸ [313a] And Ārya Asaṅga:

“The bodhisattva who wants to be enlightened swiftly, directly, and perfectly, must three times a day and times a night: pay Homage, perform Worship, Confess his sins, Rejoice, make Entreaty, offer Petition, and make the Bestowal.”⁴⁹

For the beneficial qualities of these practices, study the *Avalokiteśvara Sūtra*, the *Hundred Explanations of the Doctrine*, and Ācārya Śura's *Precious Garland of Discourses*. They should all be performed as given in the text of the *Good Practice*, and the *Three Heaps Sūtra* should then be recited again.

Kinds of Beginners

The keen and intelligent Bodhisattva, adorned with learning, will enlarge upon these ritual practices with the instruction he receives from his Guru – but only after he has grounded himself in the holy *Good Practice*. Hence, Śāntideva says in the *Progress in Practice*:

“Three times in the day and in the night
Recite the *Three Heaps Sūtra*, and then
Relying on the Victor and Enlightenment Thought,
The rest of your failings will be calmed.”⁵⁰

So, following such methods, he makes the Three Refuges and confesses the wrong of his failings, and then creates the twofold Enlightenment Thought [of resolving and progressing]. He tells himself that he must practise the complete and entire Training of a Bodhisattva preached in the Mahāyāna Sūtras. A full ritual for doing all of this can be sought from his Guru. [313b]

A yogin who is not found lacking in these daily practices can be said to be endowed with Three Excellences. As my own Guru [Bodhibhadra] put it:

“I will be in touch with happiness by means of Three Excellences: Excellence of Practice, of Intention, and of Prior Cause. By Excellence of Practice I am not continually committing sins of body, speech and mind; and I confess my wrongs. By Excellence of Intention I am motivated by the Teaching, and not its contrary, like Wrong Livelihood, etc. And, caring about the goal of Great Enlightenment, I have no use for the goal of

worldly happiness. By Excellence of Prior Cause I have acted out of virtue and merit in previous lives, and therefore I am not now impoverished in food, clothing and the necessities. I am naturally disposed to share my lot with others.”⁵¹

A beginning disciple of less keen intelligence should not embark on this path [of vowed Conduct] right at the start. The Gurus say that he should first have all the sūtras and commentary explained to him which show him the wide scope of Bodhisattva Training. And, when he has mastered these, then let the [vow] ritual for entering the path of a beginning individual be applied.

Here I suggest [an examination by] Watches to determine the extent of his reverence for the Three Jewels, or renunciation of attachment, or mindfulness of death, keeping the Conduct uppermost, or his honesty and trusting reverence towards his Guru:

The eighteen hours [of a day] are divided into Six Watches [of three hours each]. If there is a failure in the first or second hour of the Morning Watch, and in the third the Enlightenment Thought is forgotten, that individual [should be judged] weak. Let the [examen] be repeated in the next five Watches again. [314a]

The Superior Individual corrects his failures from hour to hour; the Mediocre in two hours; and the Inferior corrects his only in the last [hour of any Watch].

The superior-Superior corrects himself within a minute [of any failing], the mediocre-Superior corrects himself in two minutes, and the inferior-Superior in the last minute [of any given hour in which the fault is committed]. In this fashion the examination can be applied to all the rest of the nine [degrees]: superior-Mediocre, and so on.⁵²

There are, however, some famous learned Gurus who say that a Superior Person is one who corrects his fault immediately after it is committed, the Mediocre Person corrects his after two or more minutes, and the Inferior [only] corrects his by the end of the six Watches.

Notes to Chapter 4

- 1 Ot. 897, Vol. 35:178.1.
- 2 Ot. 5538, Vol. 110:166–77. The nine topics of the *Conduct Chapter* are Asaṅga's own verses, but by themselves do not give complete comprehension of their content. All but topic [2], the All-inclusive, represent succinct meditational or ascetical practices. The "all-inclusive" Conduct is a detailed description and enumeration of the entire Bodhisattva course, beginning with the development of the Enlightenment Thought, the conditions of a bodhisattva in both the lay and religious states, the prerequisite of Prātimokṣa vows (the opinion Atiśa follows), and a complete ritual with formulae and rubrics for taking the Bodhisattva Vow, along with a long list of *Prātimokṣa*-like offences to be avoided by a bodhisattva.
- 3 The inspiration for this stanza is taken almost verbatim from Candragomin's *Twenty Verses on the Bodhisattva Vow* [Ot. 5582, Vol. 114:253.1].
- 4 The entire paragraph here, although not indicated as a quotation in the text, is taken from Candragomin, *op. cit.*, pp. 266.5f.
- 5 Ot. 5538, Vol. 110:169.3 to 170.2.
- 6 *Ritual for Begetting the Thought and for the Vow*, Ot. 5364.
- 7 Ot. 5336, Vol. 102:187.2f.
- 8 One of Mañjuśrī's rebirths as a king, recounted in the *Ornament of Mañjuśrī's Buddhafield* [Ot. 760(15), Vol. 23:129.2f], and also quoted by Santideva in *SS*, p. 15.
- 9 *op. cit.*, pp. 177.2.
- 10 *SS*: p. 19.
- 11 *BCA*: V: 100.
- 12 *Commentary on "Twenty Verses on the Vow"*, Ot. 5584, Vol. 114:276.2f.
- 13 *SS*: p. 19.
- 14 *SS*: pp. 12–13.
- 15 *mi brda phrad-pa*. The term is borrowed from the conditions surrounding the giving up of the Prātimokṣa vows. See Chapter 3, note 31. The phrase "to give back the vow" (*sdom-pa phul*) has the technical sense of being legitimately released from it by appropriate authority for honest reasons.
- 16 The Hooks of Māra (his "Evil Works") are found in *SS*: pp. 46f; the Fourteen Evil Things are described in *SS*: pp. 70–71.
- 17 Ot. 5584, Vol. 114:269.1.
- 18 See note 16.
- 19 *op. cit.*, pp. 175.4f.
- 20 *SS*: p. 158.
- 21 *op. cit.*, p. 177.1ff.
- 22 *SS*: pp. 17–18.
- 23 *op. cit.*, p. 266.1.
- 24 *ibid.*
- 25 Candragomin, *op. cit.*, pp. 253.1.
- 26 *BCA*: III:25–26.
- 27 Ot. 814, Vol. 32:278.2.
- 28 Ot. 824, Vol. 33:159.4.
- 29 The Three Conduct Trainings used for explanation here are taken from Asaṅga's "All-inclusive Conduct" topic of the *Conduct Chapter* (see note 2), and form the broad outline for his treatment of Bodhisattva practices. These three Conduct Trainings should not be confused with the Three Higher Trainings (*lhag-pa'i bslab-pa gsum*): Higher Conduct, Higher Con-

centration, Higher Vision, which are also a common division of the elements of Bodhisattva life.

30 The practices mentioned here are again from Asaṅga's list in the *Hearer's Level* [Ot. 5537, Vol. 110:37.4f].

31 All of the graphic examples listed here are taken from Bodhibhadra's explanation of this Conduct Training [op.cit., p. 263.3f].

32 op.cit., p. 262.2f.

33 Ot. 5522, Vol. 108:21.1.

34 Śāntipā is also known as Ratnākaraśānti (Rin-chen 'byung-gnas zhi-ba), but the quotation here, although obviously a commentary on Maitreyanātha's work, remains unidentified as no such commentary is ascribed to Śāntipā in the catalogues. The five types of effect, however, are classical Buddhist divisions in any discussion of the good and bad effects of actions (*las/karma*). See AK(LVP):II:287ff.

1) Maturation (*rnam-par smin-pa/vipāka*): the effects of one's actions in terms of level of rebirth: whether in higher or lower destiny.

2) Dominant (*bdag-po/adhipati*): external circumstances viewed as the result of good or bad actions: natural calamity, fire, flood, etc. from bad actions; friends, material sufficiency, pleasant surroundings, etc. from good actions.

3) Human-Activity (*skyes-bu'i byed-pa/puruṣa-kāra*): the immediate effects in today's life of good or bad actions, as distinguished from the more remote effect in Maturation Effect.

4) Dissociation (*'bral-ba/visamyoga*): the necessary effect of knowledge gained; that is, the dispelling of ignorance.

5) Causally-Similar (*rgyu-mthun-pa/niṣyanda*): one's character retaining the good or bad tendencies toward which it was habituated by good or bad actions: a murderer toward more killing, a saint toward more virtue.

35 *Explanation of the "Treasure of Phenomenology"*, Ot. 5591, Vol. 115:218.5.

36 Paths of the Ordinary Person refers to the Equipment and Practice Paths, also called Mundane or Worldly. A person at this level has just begun to desire the goal of Enlightenment, but has not yet reached the immediate direct experience of the Four Truths' significance of the higher levels. See Chart I.

37 *Supplement to the "Treatise on the Middle Way"*, Ot. 5261, chap. 6, vv. 4–5.

38 AK(LVP): IV: p. 252.

39 Ot. 775, Vol. 29.

40 *phyin-ci-ma-log-pa/aviparyāsa*.

41 Ot. 897. In SS: p. 134.

42 The quotation is from the *Ornament of Mañjuśrī's Buddhafield* [Ot. 760(15), Vol. 23:129.2f], the same sūtra and verses Atiśa used in the root poem [Stanzas 26–31] for the formula of a Bodhisattva Vow without a Guru. The discrepancy here is that the king's name is given as Ākāśa (nam-mkha'), whereas in the root text he is called Ambarājā (am-ba-rā-dza).

43 In SS: p. 100.

44 The reference is to the *Instruction on the Concise Meaning of the Sūtra* [Ot. 5395], translated by Atiśa and Tshul-khrims, but without mention of the author – either in the catalogues or in Atiśa's text here. The first metaphor given here reads "The doctrine is Mother and Father-like, as Emptiness and Compassion. There can be no bodhisattva who is not born of these two."

45 In SS: p. 263.

46 In SS: p. 101.

- 47 In *SS*: p. 264.
- 48 In *SS*: p. 165.
- 49 The same unidentified quotation is used again in Chapter 5, merely ascribing the familiar Sevenfold Worship to Asaṅga. The repetition possibly indicates insertion by later editors.
- 50 *BCA*: V: 98.
- 51 Bodhibhadra, *op.cit.*, pp. 276.2.
- 52 The nine degrees means the three qualitative degrees that are applied to the three qualities of persons, totalling nine: superior-Superior, mediocre-Superior, inferior-Superior; superior-Mediocre, mediocre-Mediocre, inferior-Mediocre, and so on.

PART TWO

Higher Meditation

CHAPTER 5

The Superknowledges

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The Superknowledges

Relation of Conduct to Concentration

The Path to Enlightenment is not a matter of just Conduct by itself. You must develop Concentration and Insight too. However, from your foundation in Conduct, Concentration arises. As the holy *Moon-Lamp* says:

“The Concentration free from afflictions is swiftly
Attained: that is the advantage of purified Conduct.”¹

And Ācārya Śāntideva:

“In Conduct, Concentration is achieved. . . . Hence we must understand that any activity concerned with Concentration is [really] a part of Conduct. In striving for Concentration, we must have dispositions of mindfulness and deliberateness. . . . And in striving for Conduct also we must work on Concentration. . . . The interaction of both is what makes Conduct grow, and by means of both, purification of mind [Concentration] is achieved.”²
[314b]

So, if you cannot have Concentration without having Conduct, then you must strive for Conduct for the sake of having Concentration.

The Superknowledges

Through the Concentration born of excellent Conduct, one develops the Superknowledges. And the Superknowledges are the means both for working for the good of others, and for acquiring the Two Equipments. This I showed when I wrote:

“ALL THE BUDDHAS HAVE HELD THAT
 PERFECTING THIS EQUIPMENT,
 THE NATURE OF WHICH IS MERIT AND KNOWLEDGE,
 LIES ESSENTIALLY IN THE SUPERKNOWLEDGES.” [Stanza 34]

Perfecting of the Equipment

Let me show briefly what I mean by this:
 If a man wants to build up the Two Equipments,
 And has the constant desire to work for others' good,
 But has not developed the Superknowledges,
 Then he is acting like a blind man,
 And behaving as though insane –
 A veritable brute beast, as it were.
 If he cannot achieve even his own good,
 How will he [ever] achieve others'?

For the Good of Others

Dangers of Preaching

“JUST AS A BIRD WITH UNFLEDGED WINGS
 CANNOT FLY UP INTO THE SKY,
 SO WITHOUT THE SUPERKNOWLEDGES' POWER,
 ONE CANNOT WORK FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS.” [Stanza 35]

It is absurd to explain the [Buddha's] Teaching and to gather disciples, having only your own Insight from study – when you have not even yet acquired the Superknowledges or developed the Insight born of contemplation.³ Hence the saying “How can it not be madness, to preach before even learning one's own measure?” Or to quote from the *Exhortation to Higher Intention* on this subject of liking to talk [about religion] and observing the evils that result from it:

“Proud of his learning, he has no respect;
 He loves conversations with dispute and debate; [315a]
 He becomes unmindful and loses deliberateness –
 These are the evils of liking to talk.
 His inner thought is quite far away;
 Neither his body nor mind become very pure;

His arrogance is turned into great humiliation –
These are the evils of liking to talk.

He is a child too frail to reflect on the Doctrine;
His thoughts turn unfriendly and become very harsh;
He is a long way off from Calmness and Insight –
These are the evils of liking to talk.

He is ever disrespectful of his Gurus,
And finds his delight in obscene conversation;
Pointlessly he lives and lacking in Insight –
These are the evils of liking to talk. . . .

At the hour of death, this child makes moan:
'Alas! my meditation's so weak! what shall I do?'
So with the depths unfathomed, his suffering is great –
These are the evils of liking to talk.

Like grass in the wind, he is blown to and fro;
His only conviction is that he's in doubt;
Firmness of mind will never be his –
These are the evils of liking to talk.

He is like an actor before a crowd watching
His play: he declaims the hero's virtues
While his own character grows weaker –
These are the evils of liking to talk.

He is a hypocrite and in despair;
He is remorse-stricken ever afterwards;
He is far off from the noble and holy Teaching –
These are the evils of liking to talk.

Of little ability, he is delighted by attention,
And his ignorance makes him impulsive;
His mind is restless as a monkey's:
These are the evils of liking to talk."⁴

Further on, the *Sūtra* continues:

“The man who likes to talk at great length, [315b]
And then still says that he's not had enough,
Would be far better off to reflect on a word,
And that one word would give him infinite delight.

The sugar-cane bark has no juice at all;
The taste-giving delight is all found inside;
The man who chews on only the bark
Cannot find the sugar's sweet taste.

Talking is like the husk of the cane;
But thought and meaning, these are the taste.

So renounce this delight in talking,
And be ever attentive and think on meaning.”⁵

This same *Sūtra* also has this passage:

“The Great Bodhisattva Maitreya questioned the Blessed One in these words:

“The bodhisattva who has rejected the highest Doctrine and is occupied with evil deeds will have very little Insight and his Insight will be impaired, will it not?”

And the Blessed One answered the Great Bodhisattva Maitreya:

“Maitreya, that is exactly how it is. The words you have spoken are true. Bodhisattvas who reject the highest Teaching and are occupied with evil deeds have very little Insight. Maitreya, let me show you, and bear this in mind: bodhisattvas who lack zeal and meditation and renunciation, who do not do their recitation nor seek greater learning, such bodhisattvas have not entered the religious life under the Teaching of the Tathāgata. [316a] Maitreya, this teaching of the Tathāgata unfolds only through meditation and renunciation. It is composed of wisdom and held together by wisdom, and only by great diligence can it be truly unfolded. But there can be no such unfolding in the householder’s way of life with its preoccupations and concern for worldly matters. A householder’s diligence is misplaced; managing business and struggling for worldly success are the things that delight him in this cycle of rebirths. Bodhisattvas should have no desires for such things.”⁶

Need of the Superknowledges

My Guru has spoken on this in his *Chapter on Concentration Equipment*:

“The bodhisattva who has only studied the Doctrine should refrain from preaching it [yet]. The Scriptures do not tell us that we can be helpful to others just from having studied the Teaching, and without first acquiring the superknowledges. . . . Therefore, there should be no preaching of the Doctrine just because we are very

learned. When we have the superknowledges, then at the very earliest we are ready to seek the good of others. . . . A man who is incapable of maturing disciples because he lacks the superknowledges is sinking toward death himself. As Ācārya Śāntideva said:

‘People all have their preferences,
And if even the Victor did not please them,
Then how much less a bad one like me?
So give up the idea of [pleasing] the world.’ ”⁷

So also the great Acārya Nāgārjuna commented on this subject:

“When you have acquired the five Superknowledges –
Powers that will follow you in all rebirths –
Then strive constantly for the complete
Benefit and happiness of all creatures.”⁸

Need of a Guru

But to attempt Contemplation without instruction from a Guru and relying exclusively on one’s own study of texts is prohibited [by the authorities I give] here in the following: even though you strive diligently in such yoga, the Superknowledges still will not come about, for the same reason that you have not yet reached the great and perfect Enlightenment. In the commentaries that treat this subject, the Brahmin Saraha the Great says this in his *Kinds of Ultimate Truth*:

“What we call ‘instruction of the Guru’ is the essence of ambrosia. Anyone who does not drink to satisfaction, as it were, will certainly die of thirst – like a man in the middle of a desert full of treatises.”⁹

And Ārya Nāgārjuna again:

“A man may study a great many Tantras, and even purify himself correctly according to Scripture, but having little regard for a Guru he will not master that Scripture. He only defeats himself, and is mouthing treatises without

authority. For him the texts are only reasons for argument."¹⁰

Relation to Calmness

The two stanzas that begin with the words "THE MERITS WHICH A MAN WITH THE SUPERKNOWLEDGES GAINS IN A SINGLE DAY" [Stanzas 36 and 37] continue the same theme as the preceding ones. Hence, this great and perfect Enlightenment depends upon the Two Equipments [of merit and knowledge]; and the two kinds of Equipment depend upon [effecting] the good of others; and that depends upon the Superknowledges. But the Superknowledges depend upon Calmness;¹¹ and Calmness depends on Conduct; and that is why I taught about Conduct first of all. And so, since Calmness arises from Conduct, and the Superknowledges arise from Calmness, I wrote:

AS LONG AS CALMNESS IS NOT ATTAINED,
THE SUPERKNOWLEDGES WILL NOT OCCUR;
THEREFORE, IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE CALMNESS,
ONE MUST KEEP STRIVING OVER AND OVER. [Stanza 38]

Calmness

The Superknowledges which arise from Calmness, and for which you must [first] gain Calmness, are these: [1] Superknowledge of godlike sight, [2] Superknowledge of godlike hearing, [3] Superknowledge of others' thoughts, [4] [317a] Superknowledge of previous lives, [5] Superknowledge of miraculous powers, [6] Superknowledge that all impurities have been destroyed.¹²

The Nine Limbs

ONE WHO NEGLECTS THE LIMBS OF CALMNESS,
EVEN THOUGH HE STRIVE TO MEDITATE
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, NEVER
WILL ACHIEVE CONCENTRATION. [Stanza 39]

The “Limbs of Calmness” are ninefold, beginning with Renunciation, as presented by my own Guru. The stanza is otherwise easily understood. By “NEGLECTS THE LIMBS” I meant that the nine Limbs given by the venerable Bodhibhadra in his *Chapter on Concentration Equipment* are appropriate for the person who has not as yet achieved Calmness. Here is what he said:

“[1] Renunciation, [2] Preparation, [3] Avoidance, [4] Suppression of anxiety, [5] Dissatisfaction (with the world), [6] Mindfulness of benefits, [7] Diligence, [8] Integrating, and [9] Means of Staying. Besides just learning such Limbs, one must remain in them correctly.”¹³

You should study the *Chapter* itself for the meaning [of each Limb].

Defects and Remedies in Meditation

But here I will write a little on what the last Limb means, giving what my Guru said in his *Chapter*:

“When a man has acquired the [first] eight Limbs, and has provided himself with suitable location and food, and has the appropriate life-style and clothing, and conducive companions, then he should compose his mind. . . .¹⁴ [317b] If he cannot compose it, let him strive again for his Equipment of Merit in things like reading the *Perfection of Insight*, making offerings, and circumambulations. . . . When he does set himself to composing his mind, he must cultivate eight [good] habits which avoid the evils that are opposed to them. [Now the *Classification of the Middle and Extremes* says that]:¹⁵

“The defects in concentrating are held to be fivefold: [1] laziness, [2] forgetfulness of instruction, [3] apathy and anxiety, [4] failure to achieve a level, [5] a false achievement. The remedies against these defects are the eight habits which avoid them; namely: [1] [desiring] this state, [2] [the effort to] remain in it,

[3] [faith, which is] the cause, [4] [and its] result [in self-confidence], [5] mindfulness, [6] awareness of one's apathy or anxiety, [7] habitually avoiding [these defects], and [8] when calm, [actually] entering into the state [of composure].' ”¹⁶

The *Ornament of Sūtras* says:

“The first thing is to make the effort;
The second is to bolster it;
The third is to focus [the attention];
The fourth is the actual remedy [of calmness].”¹⁷

Some prefer another explanation [of the five evils]: [1] craving, [2] ill-will, [3] sloth and drowsiness, [4] anxiety and guilt, and [5] doubt. The retinue of sloth and drowsiness includes things like weariness, lack of zest, restlessness, not taking the proper amount of food, and slackness of mind. These things make the mind depressed. Their remedy is clear thinking. The retinue of anxiety and guilt includes interest in relatives, memories of past distractions, thrills, and frivolities. These do not calm the mind; and their remedy is Calmness.

Topics for Calmness

ONE CAN THEN SET THE MIND IN VIRTUE
FIXED ON ANY TOPIC HE CHOOSES. [Stanza 40]

Here the word “TOPIC” refers to the object of the mind, as in this quote from the *Blaze of Reasoning [on the “Essence] of the Middle Way*”:

“The mind is a rampaging elephant:
Tie it fast with the rope of mindfulness
To the steady post of Topic; [318a]
Then settle the mind in Calm.”¹⁸

My words “ON ANY TOPIC HE CHOOSES” refer to Calmness-with-Signs as well as Calmness-without-Signs.¹⁹ As my Guru says in the *Chapter on Concentration Equipment*:

“Calmness is twofold: [1] with-Signs, and [2] without-Signs. Calmness-with-Signs is twofold: [a] signs that are internal, and [b] signs that are external. [a] The kind that are internal are twofold: topics on the body, and topics on what supports the body. The three topics on body are: the aspect of the god being the body itself;²⁰ the disgusting aspects of it,²¹ such as skeletons, etc.; or a distinctive sign such as a trident.²²

“There are five topics on the supports of the body:²³ the Breath, the Subtle Signs, the Drop, the Limbs of Light Rays, and Joy and Bliss. [b] Signs that are external are of two kinds: the special, and the ordinary.²⁴ The special topics are either [a Buddha’s] body or [a Buddha’s] words. . . .

“[2] Calmness-without-Signs is the same as Investigative Insight,²⁵ whence arises signless Higher Vision, the knowledge which is without discursive reasoning. . . . It is recommended that, rather than resting in Calmness-with-Signs, one proceed toward developing Higher Vision by [first] focusing on Calmness-without-Signs. [318b] For it is only by being firmly established in Higher Vision joined with Calmness that the afflictions are cleansed away and thoroughly subdued – it is the only basis for such a result. . . .

“I do not describe here how to contemplate, for fear of enlarging my text, but also because guidance in contemplation is the kind that requires personal instruction from an experienced Guru. And that is because the details of the teaching on Calmness and Higher Vision must be explained, and because of the difficulty of learning contemplation just from reading books.”²⁶

Practice of the Yogin

The Gurus all say that such a yogin who has achieved Calmness will without doubt gain the five Superknowledges I mentioned before. And, as means of getting them, you should also take to heart the training precepts of the *Sevenfold Way Sūtra: Questions of Avalokiteśvara*, and recite the sūtra itself now and then. Ārya Asaṅga says:

“A bodhisattva who wants to acquire the Superknowledges quickly should diligently, three times a day and three times a night: pay Homage, perform Worship, make Confession of sin, feel Rejoicing, and make the Petition, Entreaty, and Bestowal.”²⁷

And he should also have, for all the equipment of Calmness, such things as few desires, frugality, contentment, and true solitude. That a yogin abiding in Calmness correctly does have few desires and is frugal [is clear from] the holy *One Hundred Thousand Stanza Perfection of Insight*:

“Monks who catch even a little taste for meditation, [319a] think little about clothes and little about food – and [yet] their complexions are healthy.”²⁸

The Yoga of these bodhisattvas is to strive for the Seven Noble Riches when they have renounced attraction to worldly riches. They take the Six Mindfulnesses to heart, and of the six even practise the short Mindfulness of Buddha, Doctrine, and Community.²⁹

And since bodhisattvas are divided into those of keen ability and those of slower ability, the Mindfulness for those of keen faculty should be studied in texts such as the *Perfection of Insight sūtras*, the *Mindfulness of the Buddha Sūtra*, the *Heavenly Treasure Sūtra*, and the *Sūtra Set Forth by Akṣayamati*. Mindfulness for those of slower ability should be studied in the *Producing the Power of Faith Sūtra*, the *Rehearsal of the Buddha, Doctrine, and the Community Sūtra*, and the above *Mindfulness of the Buddha Sūtra* as well as its smaller form, and others in the Mahāyāna Sūtra collection.

The chapter on Mindfulness of the Three Jewels in the *Compendium of Training* should also be studied because it explains the thought behind these sūtras.

Higher Vision also comes to a yogin [who practises Calmness], and that is the subject I will explain next. The practice of the yoga of Calmness and Higher Vision is what is called “Remaining on the Path”; and hence one gradually grows in:³⁰

the Four Applications of Mindfulness,
 the Four Right Efforts,
 the Four Bases of Miraculous Power, [319b]
 the [Five] Dominants and [Five] Powers,
 the [Seven] Limbs of Enlightenment, and
 the Noble Eightfold Path.

THIS COMPLETES THE TEACHING ON THE TRAINING FOR
 HIGHER MEDITATION

Notes to Chapter 5

- 1 In SS: p. 120.
- 2 SS: p. 120.
- 3 Three kinds of Insight are generally given to describe the degree of depth of the knowledge gained; Atīśa mentions two of them here:
 - 1) Insight from Study (*thos-pa'i shes-rab/śrutamayī-prañā*); 2) Insight from Reflection (*bsam-pa las shes-rab/cintāmayī-prajñā*); 3) Insight from Contemplation (*bsgom-pa'i shes-rab/bhāvanāmayī-prajñā*). For Kamalaśīla's explanation of this, see G. Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, Pt. II, p. 160.
- 4 In SS: p. 109.
- 5 In SS: p. 109.
- 6 In SS: p. 112.
- 7 Ot. 5444, Vol. 103:251.4f.
- 8 Ot. 5658, *Precious Garland of Advice for the King*, stanza 481.
- 9 The text is not found in the catalogues by this title as one of Saraha's compositions. Atīśa takes the title and quote from Bodhibhadra's *Chapter on Concentration Equipment* [Ot. 5444, Vol. 103:252.1], but supplies Saraha's name as author, which Bodhibhadra's text does not do.
- 10 Unidentified.
- 11 *zhi-gnas/samatha*: Calmness. The terms Calmness and Higher Vision (*lhag-mthong/viśāyanā*) are found in most of the Mahāyāna sūtras, always paired together. Calmness designates the meditative techniques of yogic concentration, which Atīśa unfolds in this chapter; Higher Vision is the investigative analysis for Emptiness in the Perfection of Insight, which is the subject of the next chapter.
- 12 *mngon-par shes-pa/abhiññā*: superknowledge. The five (or sometimes six) superknowledges have a long historical development in the sūtras. See H. Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine in Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 106–34.
- 13 op. cit., p. 250.5f. The nine limbs are Bodhibhadra's opening outline for his entire treatise, each limb being explained in turn. Briefly summarised, the meaning of each of the Limbs is this:
 - 1) Renunciation (of the worldly life);
 - 2) Preparation (through study with a Guru);
 - 3) Avoidance (of premature effort to seek others' good before having attained realisation oneself);
 - 4) Suppression (of worldly cares and anxieties);
 - 5) Dissatisfaction with the world;
 - 6) Mindfulness of the benefits (of Concentration);
 - 7) Diligence (in the efforts of Concentration);

8) Integrating (Calmness with Higher Vision);

9) Means of Staying (in all the above virtues).

It is remarkable that Atiśa does not mention here the Nine States of Mind (*sems-gnas/citta-sthiti*) in Calmness proposed by Asaṅga in his *Hearer's Level* [Ot. 5537, Vol. 110:100.3ff.] which have become so well known to Tibetan monks through Tsong-kha-pa's *Lam-rim chen-mo*, where they are described at length. Perhaps Atiśa felt that teaching was too advanced for his audience.

- 14 *sems mnyam-par bzhag-pa/citta-samāhita*: lit., the balanced mind, or the mind in concentration. Here it is used as the equivalent of Concentration (*ting-nge-'dzin/samādhi*).
- 15 Ot. 5522, Vol. 108:20–5. Atiśa omits Bodhibhadra's acknowledgement of the source. I have supplied the meaning of the partially cryptic statement of the eight habits which remedy the five defects, following Sthiramati's *Commentary on the "Classification of the Middle and Extremes"* [Ot. 5534, Vol. 109:176.1ff.].
- 16 Bodhibhadra, *Chapter on Concentration Equipment* [Ot. 5459, Vol. 103:266.4].
- 17 Ot. 5521, Vol. 108:15.5.
- 18 Ot. 5256, Vol. 96:26.4.
- 19 *mtshan-ma dang-bcas-pa/sa-nimitta* (with-Signs) and *mtshan-ma med-pa/a-nimitta* (without-Signs) is a common distinction in yogic meditational practice, meaning simply the concentration of the mind on images, or concentrating the mind without the need for that kind of assistance – as the *Commentary* goes on to explain.
- 20 The contemplation of oneself as a god is a common form of Tantric meditation. See A. Wayman, *Fundamentals of Buddhist Tantra*, p. 167.
- 21 *mi-sdug-pa/a-śubha*: disgusting. The traditional Buddhist meditation on the impermanence and foulness of the body, viewing it as a corpse under nine aspects: blue, full of pus, insect-ridden, etc. Atiśa is the author of a short meditation on the subject, *Aśubha-bhāvanā-krama* [Ot. 5454].
- 22 *kha-tvam/khaṭvā*: a staff with triple prongs and a skull at the top, carried by ascetics and yogins. It can be a symbol of Śiva for Brahmanists, and also of Padmasambhava and other yogins for Tibetan Buddhists. For a long list and illustration of such insignia, see L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, pp. 340–1.
- 23 The five topics presented here by Bodhibhadra are of a Tantric nature and as such would be incomprehensible to the uninitiated. They are based on fundamental yogic concepts of breath (*dbug-s/prāna*), subtle signs (*mtshan-ma phra-mo/sūks-ma-nimitta*), and the drop (*thig-le/binḍu*), but with additional liturgical and mystical significances.
- 24 Ordinary external Signs would be any external concentration object whatsoever. Bodhibhadra does not bother with examples.
- 25 *so-sor-rtog-pa'i shes-rab/pratyavekṣanā-jhāna*.
- 26 Bodhibhadra, op. cit., pp. 255.2ff.
- 27 See Chapter 4, note 49.
- 28 In ŚS: pp. 196–7.
- 29 The Six Mindfulnesses are 1) the Buddha, 2) the Doctrine, 3) the Community, 4) Conduct, 5) Renunciation, and 6) the gods. The "short" Mindfulness practice drops the final three.
- 30 The virtues listed here comprise what is known as the "Thirty-seven Enlightenment Wings" (*byang-chub kyi phyogs/bodhipakṣa*). They can be found individually in the Glossary.

PART THREE

Higher Insight

CHAPTER 6

Insight and Means

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Insight and Means

Perfection of Insight

By means of the Insight that knows how to join Means with Insight, both the equipment of merit and the equipment of knowledge are integrated and perfected. As I was reflecting on this, I wrote [the stanzas] beginning:

BUT OBSCURATION IS NOT DESTROYED
WITHOUT THE PERFECTION OF INSIGHT. [Stanza 41b]

Calmness [by itself] cannot remove Karma and [its accompanying] Affliction and Maturation, or the Obscuration [resulting from ignorance] of phenomena.¹ It is only when they are [discovered and] removed by Higher Vision that they are destroyed. Hence you must base yourself in Higher Vision; and that is the meaning of the next stanza:

HENCE, TO REMOVE ALL OBSCURATION
OF HIS AFFLICTION AND HIS KNOWLEDGE,
THE YOGIN MUST CONTINUALLY CULTIVATE THE
PERFECTION OF INSIGHT TOGETHER WITH MEANS. [Stanza 42]

Union of Insight and Means

Let me explain Means and Insight more fully. When I say [in Stanza 43] “SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT BONDAGE IS . . .”, I refer to what both the *Mount Gayā Sūtra* and the *Sūtra Set Forth by Vimalakīrti* declare:

“Insight divorced from Means is bondage.
Means divorced from Insight is also bondage.”²

And to support my saying “THEREFORE, NEGLECT NOT THIS UNION” [in Stanza 43], I quote from glorious Jñānakīrti:³

“One [then] truly progresses in the essence of Perfection of Insight, and in the Means which are Giving and the rest [of the Perfections].” The *Mount Gayā Sūtra* summarises the Bodhisattva Path, citing this very union: “It is Means and Insight.” And then it classifies the Means as the Perfections of Giving and the rest, the [Four] Infinitudes, the [Four] Means of Attraction, and so on. The [*Sūtra Set Forth by*] *Akṣayamati* and the *Cloud of Jewels* and other sūtras say the same thing. [320a] But Insight is the factor that effectively and accurately delineates these Means. When it analyses them correctly, then they are effective; and therefore, when one adopts them for one’s own and others’ good, absolutely no affliction results – it is as though one had a [protecting] mantra against poison. Furthermore, that same Sūtra says: “Means is known as the collecting; Insight is known as accurately defining.” And the *Producing the Power of Faith Sūtra*:

“What is skill in Means? It is known as the gathering up of all virtue. And what is Insight? It is skill in knowing that all phenomena are undifferentiated.”⁴

Necessity of the Union

Even [a bodhisattva already] established in the Levels must be grounded in both [Means and Insight]; therefore, it is not simply a matter of what must be known. That is why sūtras like the *Ten Levels* say: “It is wrong not to practise the rest of the Perfections as well. . . . On all ten of the Bodhisattva Levels all of the Perfections must still be practised.”⁵ And when there was a Bodhisattva who had a particular delight in [practising] the Perfection of Insight, the *Extensive Sūtra: Compendium of All Phenomena* said this on the subject:

“O Maitreya, the six Perfections of Enlightenment are to be understood correctly by the bodhisattvas. Some

foolish men say that a bodhisattva need train only in the Perfection of Insight, and thereby have no need of the other Perfections. By so thinking, they are holding the rest of the Perfections in contempt . . .”⁶ [320b]

And the holy *Perfect Enlightenment of Vairocana*:

“The wisdom of an Omniscient Being, rooted in the Great Compassion, and with the Enlightenment Thought as its cause, has attained the perfection of the Means.”⁷

Since this is the case, one must rely on both [Means and Insight] at all times. And that was the way the Blessed One achieved his Deferred Nirvāṇa.⁸ Through [perfecting] the Means, Giving and the rest, He laid hold of that excellent result, the greatest enjoyment: the Form-Body⁹ and its field of activity and its retinue – and hence does not remain in Nirvāṇa. Through his Perfection of Insight, rejecting what is false, he does not [truly] abide in Samsāra – because it is of the very nature of falseness.

When [the above Sūtra] says, “If everyone who knows lists of phenomena¹⁰ by the dozen, as it were, is supposed to reject those phenomena; then how much more what are not phenomena!” – what it is saying is that one should reject any attachment to what is false in them; and not that one should not continue to exist for the sake of [others’] needs and fulfilment. One should embrace the Truth; that is what it means by saying “Do not grasp at what is false!” And so:

“At all times be based in the Means
Together with the Perfection of Insight;
For because of it and from it,
One passes to the Deferred Nirvāṇa.”

That is what he [Jñānakīrti] and his sources say. And my Guru [Bodhibhadra] also adds:

“If that is true, then one should have both Means and Insight at all times, and should accumulate and integrate the equipments of merit and of knowledge.”¹¹ [321a]

Difference between the Two

Having shown the importance of combining Means with Insight, and that both must be had together, I now explain exactly what they are:

TO REMOVE ANY DOUBTS ABOUT
WHAT INSIGHT IS, AND WHAT ARE MEANS,
I WILL MAKE CLEAR THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE MEANS AND INSIGHT. [Stanza 44]

I said “TO REMOVE ANY DOUBTS” because great Ācāryas of old have spoken variously about the two; for instance some texts are quoted as saying:

“The Means is the Bodhisattva’s
Great Compassion for creatures;
And its components differ according to
The three aspects [that are involved].”¹²

Other sources say “the Means is the Thought of Enlightenment in its relative aspect.”¹³

But in the root text I presented what my Guru, glorious Bodhibhadra, said about this:

THE VICTORS HAVE EXPLAINED THAT THE MEANS
ARE ALL THE EQUIPMENTS OF VIRTUE,
STARTING WITH THE PERFECTION OF GIVING,
UP TO, BUT EXCLUDING, THAT OF INSIGHT. [Stanza 45]

Taking the words “STARTING WITH THE PERFECTION OF GIVING”, Giving can here be distinguished according to the [above-mentioned] three aspects: [a] the Donor, [b] the Substance given, and [c] the Object (of one’s giving). One can be a Donor for the sake of gain, honour, fame, and glory; or because one is besought by others; or out of compassion, or to show respect, and so on. The Substance given can be things like the Teaching or material goods or fearlessness or love. The Object of one’s giving can be the Three Jewels, or a Guru’s sustenance, or any creature of the five destinies. [321b]

The *Four Diamond Seats Tantra* speaks at length [on

Giving] with phrases like “Sixty thousand Śudras took care of one pure Brahmin”; and the Sūtras too, and the *Hundred Explanations of the Doctrine*, when talking about “not relying on another [non-Buddhist] teacher as the spiritual friend”, and so on. In the Yoga Tantra called *Conquest of the Triple World*, the Blessed One says:

“There is a Giving of initiation, a Giving of the Teaching, a Giving of wealth, and a Giving of food, a Giving of fearlessness and a Giving of love. And these [gifts are given] respectively to: a disciple, a mind not [yet] alerted, a religious mendicant, and to Brahmins, the poor, animals, the faint-hearted, and to every creature.”¹⁴

My words “STARTING WITH [GIVING]” indicate that [the Victors] have also explained the rest of the Perfections. In the Perfection of Conduct, for instance, [they teach that] there is the Conduct of a bodhisattva when he gets the first Thought of Enlightenment, and of one who has entered the Practice [Path], of one who will not turn back, of one who has attained Patience in non-arising phenomena, of one who is held back by but one rebirth, and of a bodhisattva in his final life.¹⁵

“THAT THE MEANS ARE ALL THE EQUIPMENTS OF VIRTUE” points out that the Sūtra passages [always] explain the rest of the Perfections in turn. You must consult the Sūtras themselves for the full significance of these Perfections, and the other texts composed to clarify the Sūtras: the *Compendium of Sūtra*, the *Bodhisattva Levels*, the *Progress in Practice*, the *Compendium of Training*, and Ācārya Śūra’s *Conversations on the Perfections*.

The theme of this stanza is exactly what it says:

ONE WHO COMBINES MASTERY OF THE MEANS
WITH A TRUE CULTIVATION OF INSIGHT,
WILL SWIFTLY ATTAIN ENLIGHTENMENT, BUT
NOT BY CULTIVATING MERELY NON-SELF. [Stanza 46]

What is Insight? [322a] It is either innate, or comes from

study, or from reflection, or from contemplation – or as scripture says:

“He who penetrates to what is changeless
In the words and states of all activity,
Let his be proclaimed as
‘Insight of the Diamond Mind’.”

That is what it is. And so I go on to say in the root text:

“INSIGHT” IS FULLY EXPLAINED AS KNOWING
THE EMPTINESS OF INTRINSIC NATURE
IN COMPREHENDING THAT AGGREGATES AND
SENSE-BASES AND ELEMENTS DO NOT ARISE. [Stanza 47]

All external and internal phenomena are included in the Aggregates, Elements, and Sense-bases; as the Blessed One has said, “O Brahmin, the Aggregates, Elements, and Sense-bases are everything meant by the word ‘Everything’.” I will explain the words “DO NOT ARISE” later; but the “FULLY EXPLAINED” means that the Buddhas and Gurus have said so. And I add here:

The Perfections and Means of Conversion,
The Four Infinitudes and Seven Limbs,
The Ten Religious Practices and other acts of virtue,
The Seven Noble Riches and the Six Mindfulnesses;
The maṇḍala and offerings and circumambulation –
Are the Means which are the reason for
the Enjoyment and Apparition Bodies.
But it is the Perfection of Insight alone
That has the Insight which is the cause of
the Body of Truth.¹⁶

Four Great Proofs of Emptiness

O Noble Youth, what sort of method will lead to a direct experience of such “Insight” as this? I say that it is learned by [using] the Four Great Proofs.¹⁷ And what are those Four? They are:

- [A] The Proof that refutes Arising in the Four Extremes;
 [B] The Diamond-Particle Proof;
 [C] The Lack of identity or Plurality Proof; and
 [D] The Dependent Origination Proof. [322b]

I answer your question about what these Proofs are in the next four stanzas [48–51].

Four Extremes.

AN EXISTENT'S ARISING IS IMPOSSIBLE;
 A NON-EXISTENT'S IS LIKE FLOWERS IN THE SKY;¹⁸
 FOR A THING TO BE BOTH IS ABSURD FALLACY;
 SO NEITHER DO THEY ORIGINATE TOGETHER. [Stanza 48]

This is the Proof that refutes Arising in the Four Extremes, in which I show that whatever phenomena already exist will not arise, because they have already arisen. And phenomena that do not exist will also not arise, because it could not be accomplished by themselves [being non-existent], nor is there any cause for their arising. The third supposition, “FOR A THING TO BE BOTH [EXISTENT AND NON-EXISTENT]”, has no reality to it whatsoever! Ācārya Śāntideva also speaks on this subject:

“Why make up causes for
 An entity that [already] exists?
 Or again, if it does not exist,
 What need to find causes for it?
 Not a hundred million causes
 Could change it from non-entity;
 For how could that situation be real?
 And what is there other than what is?
 If there is not entity when no existence,
 Then when does an entity originate?
 Non-entity cannot be separated
 By means of a non-arising entity!
 If there is no separation from non-entity,
 Then there is no chance of an entity existing;
 For that would be the absurdity of a double
 Intrinsic nature: there cannot be a non-entity entity!
 Destruction likewise does not exist;

Nor is there a basis for permanence either.
Hence all these living creatures
Are without an arising and without a cessation.”¹⁹

And he continues at some length on this theme.

Diamond-Particle

In this stanza I show the Diamond-Particle Proof:

SINCE AN ENTITY DOES NOT ARISE FROM ITSELF,
AND IS NOT FROM ANOTHER, OR EVEN FROM BOTH,
NOR IS IT YET WITHOUT CAUSE; THEREFORE IT HAS
NO INTRINSIC NATURE BY WAY OF OWN-EXISTENCE. [Stanza 49]

And so, those who hold an external or internal Creator, such as an Ātman or Fate or Īśvara, [323a] or the Puruṣa or Karma or Prakṛti or the Guṇas or Brahman or Viṣṇu²⁰ – or even those of our own sects who admit that entities arise through the Six Causes and Four Conditions²¹ – are in error in their understanding. To refute them, Nāgārjuna says in his *Basic Stanzas on the Middle Way*: “*Insight*”:

“There are never any entities
In which arising exists,
From themselves, from another,
From both, nor without cause.”²²

But you must study that text itself for the full meaning of this, as well as its six great commentaries and two sub-commentaries,²³ along with the *Middle Way Treatise: “Finely Woven”*, the *Clear Words*, the *Blaze of Reasoning*, and *Supplement to the “Middle Way”*.

Identity and Plurality

I show the Lack of Identity or Plurality Proof in this stanza:

FURTHERMORE, IF ONE ANALYSES ALL THINGS
AS IDENTITIES OR MULTIPLICITIES,
OWN-EXISTENCE IS NOT PERCEIVED; HENCE ONE IS
CERTAIN THAT INTRINSIC NATURES DO NOT EXIST. [Stanza 50]

By “FURTHERMORE” I mean that I am still teaching you about the Proofs. The significance of “ANALYSES ALL THINGS AS IDENTITIES OR MULTIPLICITIES” can be explained by Ācārya Śāntaraksita:

“The entities spoken of as ‘self’ and ‘other’,
In the correct sense are without intrinsic nature;
And because they lack identity and plurality,
Being without intrinsic nature, they are like reflections.”²⁴

Ācārya Śrīgupta says it too:

“This entire internal and external state,
In the correct sense is without intrinsic nature;
And since it lacks identity or multiplicity,
It is therefore like a reflection.”²⁵

But again you must study the texts themselves for the full meaning.

Dependent Origination

The Dependent Origination Proof is shown in the words:²⁶

THE REASONING OF THE SEVENTY STANZAS ON EMPTINESS,
AND OF TEXTS LIKE THE BASIC STANZAS ON THE MIDDLE WAY,
EXPLAINS THE PROOF THAT ALL ENTITIES [323b]
ARE EMPTY OF INTRINSIC NATURE. [Stanza 51]

To understand the meaning of this Proof, you must study those texts themselves. The words “EXPLAINS THE PROOF” signifies that all the great Ācāryās of old taught the proof that all entities are non-arising. And so, with Four Great Proofs such as these, the scholars have well established that absolutely every entity is non-arising, is not permanently fixed, passes beyond the suffering [caused] by intrinsic nature, is pure from its origin, is without root and without foundation, and that every phenomenon whatsoever is without substantiation.

Schools

Middle Way

There is this to note about those scholars of India: Ārya Asaṅga's orderly presentation of the Teaching enunciates the Mind-Only understanding of the Perfection of Insight, and the present day Gurus Suvarṇadvīpa and Śāntipa follow that interpretation. Ācārya Nāgārjuna explained the essence of the Teaching with his personal realisation of the great Middle Way which transcends the existence and non-existence of meaning in the Perfection of Insight. This he enunciated to a long line of other scholars, and the Guru Bodhibhadra and venerable Kusulupa follow his interpretation today.

The nectar of Ārya Nāgārjuna's words
Filled Āryadeva, Candrakīrti, Bhavya
And Śāntideva down to Bodhibhadra too;
Even on me a little has been sprinkled.

And thus with their Four Great Proofs,
I establish the non-arising of all phenomena;
And following the steps of those Ācāryas of old, [324a]
I will hold to the tenets of the great Middle Way.

Or again, let me describe it this way:

There is nowadays a worsening,
Of people, of the times, of vice and views,
And even of life itself. Listening to texts profits not;
So cultivate yoga on their essential meaning.

Were there time to listen to great long texts,
They might be our [rescue] ships in these our days;
But [for now] avoid all disturbance of mind,
And cultivate only the counsel of the holy.

There's so much to be learned in so little while,
And we know not the length of this life's span;
So be like the goose straining milk from water,²⁷
Taking only the pure desires from those you have.

Bibliography of Śāstra

Returning to the words "BASIC STANZAS ON THE MIDDLE

WAY” in my root text [Stanza 51], my reference is to [Nāgārjuna’s] *Insight: Basic Stanzas on the Middle Way*. And when I said “TEXTS LIKE”, I had in mind such works as his *No Fear from Anywhere*, the *Refutation of Objections*, the *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning*, the *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness*, the *Precious Garland*, the *Twenty Stanzas on Mahāyāna*, the *Hundred Syllables*, and [Kamalaśīla’s] *Rice Seedling Sūtra Commentary*.

By “TEXTS LIKE . . .” I also refer to the treatises composed by men such as venerable Āryadeva, the holy Ācārya’s personal disciple, and Candrakīrti, Bhāvaviveka, and Śāntideva.

Āryadeva is the author of the following: the *Great “Finely Woven”*: a *Middle Way Treatise*, the *Length of a Forearm*, the *Finger-Length Instruction*, and the *Heart of Wisdom Compendium*.

The works of Ācārya Candrakīrti are: the *Supplement to [Nāgārjuna’s] “Treatise on the Middle Way”*, the *Commentary on “The Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning”*, the *Five Chapters on the Middle Way*, and the *Clear Words*, and so on. [324b]

Ācārya Bhāvaviveka’s treatises are the *Blaze of Reasoning: [Commentary] On “Essence of the Middle Way”*, the *Lamp for “The Insight” [of Nāgārjuna]*, and others.

There are altogether eight commentaries on [Nāgārjuna’s] *Basic Stanzas on the Middle Way*: “*Insight*” – the *No Fear from Anywhere* by the Ācārya himself, the *Clear Words* by Candrakīrti, the *Lamp for “Insight”* of Bhāvaviveka, Buddhapālita’s commentary, and those composed by the Elder Sthiramati, and the Ācāryas Guṇamati, Guṇaśrī, and Guṇadatta.

In addition, [Bhāvaviveka’s] *Lamp for “The Insight”* has two great sub-commentaries: one composed by Ācārya Avalokitavrata, and Devaśarma’s *White-Shining: On the Middle Way*.

Besides these there are in India today men who have given serious reflection to this near ocean of presentations that the great interpreters of Nāgārjuna’s mind have made. And the reasoning in the texts they [in turn] wrote, also

EXPLAINS THE PROOF THAT ALL ENTITIES
ARE EMPTY OF INTRINSIC NATURE. [Stanza 51]

In each and every one [of all these texts] the Emptiness of all phenomena is conclusively proven. If I were to try [here] to clear up the wrong understanding others have, by using my Four Great Proofs, my own text would become altogether too big. Hence, I have said only a little bit about the subject, and have not elaborated. Here we are simply saying that the tenets of the great Middle Way are thus and so, but have not written about them extensively.

Contemplation

But for yogins who do desire to take these tenets to heart I give a brief synthesis, saying: [325a]

BUT WILL EXPLAIN ONLY PROVEN TENETS
IN ORDER TO FURTHER CONTEMPLATION. [Stanza 52]

I have not written here about cultivation of the Enlightenment Thought of Ultimate Truth²⁸ as a means of assimilating the tenets. One must petition a Guru for that [instruction], after he has been won over.

Emptiness

THUS, NOT TO PERCEIVE INTRINSIC NATURE
IN ANY PHENOMENON WHATEVER
IS TO CONTEMPLATE ITS NON-SELF – WHICH
IS THE SAME AS CONTEMPLATING WITH INSIGHT. [Stanza 53]

I wrote this stanza in accordance with the gist of those tenets.

AND THIS INSIGHT WHICH DOES NOT SEE
INTRINSIC NATURE IN ANY PHENOMENA
IS THAT SAME INSIGHT EXPLAINED AS WISDOM.
CULTIVATE IT WITHOUT CONCEPTUAL THOUGHT. [Stanza 54]

My words “DOES NOT SEE INTRINSIC NATURE IN ANY . . .” mean that in whatever phenomenon you see, you see the

highest Thatness²⁹ of its very non-existence. That is the expression used in many sūtras. And for the meaning of it you should study Ācārya [Ārya-]deva's *Destruction of Errors about the Middle Way*, the *Blaze of Reasoning*, *Supplement to "The Middle Way"*, and Avalokitavrata also.

Wisdom

If this view of all other phenomena itself does not exist absolutely, you may ask, then does one's own mind [which sees] exist itself? To this I answer, "[IT] IS THAT SAME INSIGHT EXPLAINED AS WISDOM". That very investigative Insight by which the view exists, does not exist. And how is it non-existent, you ask? I say "[IT IS] EXPLAINED AS WISDOM". Insight itself is also explained by the Four Great Proofs, and if examined carefully it cannot be established. The Blessed One clearly teaches this meaning in the *Sūtra Setting Forth the Two Truths*:

"In the ultimate sense, when one analyses the Insight of all phenomena, even the examination does not truly exist and is without basis. Even that Insight, in the ultimate sense, does not truly exist and is without basis. Therefore, it is called 'Insight' [only] conventionally; but in the ultimate sense, that Insight has not truly arisen and is non-existent."³⁰

Ārya Nāgārjuna reflects on this [in his *Essay on Enlightenment Thought*]:

"The mind, which all the Buddhas
Have not seen is not a thing to be seen. [325b]
For how could they see an entity
Which has no intrinsic nature?"³¹

And Ācārya Āryadeva in his *Heart of Wisdom Compendium*:

"The scholars do not hold a consciousness either
That [exists] in the ultimate sense;
It would be a very sky-lotus, because of
Its lack of identity or multiplicity."³²

And Nāgārjuna again [in his *Essay*]:

“To refute the grasping at a Self,
The Buddha taught the Aggregates, Elements, and so on.
And the worthy ones destroyed even them
As being a species of the mind alone.

To put down the fear of childish men,
The Sage did preach the words that say
‘All these things are only Mind’;
But in truth, Mind itself *is not!* . . .

Although the Mahāyānists’ delights
Lie in [seeing] this Non-self of phenomena;
Their own mind is non-arisen from the start,
And in short, it *is not!*”³³

Non-discursive Reasoning

And so now, if you have a clear understanding about the Self which outsiders impute [to be real], and about the Aggregates and so on, that [some of] our own sects impute [to be real], and about the [unreality of] mind and illusion – and if you are fixed in these meanings continually – then you must abandon discursive reasoning. As Ārya Nāgārjuna said:

“We hold that the Buddhas’ Enlightenment Thought
Has the pure characteristic of Emptiness,
Unobscured by reasonings on the Self,
On the Aggregates and the rest, and even consciousness.”³⁴

It is the elimination of this discursive reasoning I refer to when I said: [326a]

THE WORLD OF CHANGE SPRINGS FROM CONCEPTUAL
THOUGHT, WHICH IS ITS VERY NATURE;
THE COMPLETE REMOVAL OF SUCH
THOUGHT IS THE HIGHEST NIRVĀṆA. [Stanza 55]

Verses on the Middle Way

In giving the meaning of the texts I have quoted above, I want to follow in the steps of a Guru who reached spiritual

perfection through the counsel of Ārya Nāgārjuna, Nāgārjuna having the gift from Ārya Mañjuḥoṣa [himself]. This Guru acquired the superknowledges, and understands the intent of all the Tantras and Sūtras and the entire Discipline teachings. He sees [all] truth shining simultaneously in his mind, and is, moreover, a Guru of the unbroken lineage [from Mañjuḥoṣa]. The glorious Bodhibhadra is that Guru, [and I follow him here].³⁵

[1] If one analyses reality correctly,
Then the entire examination of all apparent
Phenomena made by various schools
Is in error, and we hold them false.

[2] For example, a diseased eye, because defective,
Sees sewing-needles or comb-hairs [in its vision],
Or sees a double moon, or [as through] honeycomb:
In this there is a knowledge that grasps something.

[3] For example, when asleep, under the power of sleep
And of one's dispositions, one experiences
Pleasure and pain, forms and the like:
In this there is a knowledge that grasps something.

[4] Just so, from the very beginning,
The diseased eye of Ignorance with its defects
Experiences internal and external entities:
In this there is a knowledge that grasps something.

[5] And also from the very beginning,
In the great deep sleep of Ignorance,
Comes that dream of the Four Dispositions:³⁶
In this there is an experience of the mind grasping.

[6] But if one analyses in the actual ultimate sense
What the real nature of these phenomena is,
Those false comprehensions are unable
To prove whether they exist or not.

[7] For example, when the diseased eye is unfit,
One cannot say the comb-hair does not exist;
And when the diseased eye becomes fit,
One cannot say the comb-hair [now] exists.

[8] For example, when one wakes from the sleep
Of Ignorance, one cannot say he sees the dream;
And as long as he is not awakened from the sleep,
He cannot say the dream does not exist.

[9] When one recovers from the blinding disease,
And when one awakens from his sleep, [326b]

- The dream, the comb-hair and the rest, and
 Even the knowledge that grasps them do not exist.
 [10] Just so, if one recovers from the eye-disease
 Of Ignorance, and from the deep sleep of Ignorance,
 Everything that appears and is examined, and
 Even the knowledge of experiencing them do not exist.
 [11] The [very] man who is declaiming “Destruction
 And non-destruction” [views] is destructible!
 In his real nature he does not [even] exist;
 So swiftly does this fool’s analysis perish!
 [12] “Then,” says he, “[your] Ācārya Śāntideva
 Cannot assert this Destructionist [view either];
 For his instruction does not [even] exist,
 And his texts are destructible [then too]!”
 [13] For this man nothing can be made clearer;
 Not [even] the least [principle] can be put down.
 Study correctly what truly exists, and
 By really seeing that you will be saved.
 [14] There are some of our own and others’ schools
 Who have established that phenomena do exist,
 And still others who say that they do not:
 [15] But if one analyses reality correctly,
 “Existence” and “Non-existence” as true extremes
 Themselves do not exist; and therefore
 In no way can they ever be established.
 [16] Although men outside the Guru-tradition
 Have established things like Existence, Non-existence,
 Permanence and Destruction, with their inferring³⁷
 Insights, they will not touch their tiring goal.
 [17] How many texts have been written
 By Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara and the rest –
 Texts of our own scholarly men to refute
 These challenges of the heretics!
 [18] Therefore *I* say, “There is no use in
 Logic for cultivating the ultimate truth.”
 If I put it any other way, then straightway
 [My very] declaration on it is useless [too]!
 [19] So throw out your texts on argumentation
 Which make inference supreme;
 And cultivate the [Guru-] tradition’s counsel,
 With the textual authority of Ārya Nāgārjuna.
 [20] The Middle Way follower knows the Thatness
 Which is freed from the Four Extremes: [327a]

No Existence, no Non-existence,
No both together, nor negated either.³⁸

[21] The Middle Way realises the Thatness
Which is freed from the Four Extremes:

No Permanence, no Destruction,
No both together, nor negated either.

[22] Transcending views of Existence and Non-existence,
And rejecting Permanence and Destruction,
Be freed from knowing and knowledge:
This is the basic text of the great Middle Way.

[23] Those who have made inference supreme,
Talk of Existence and Non-existence, of Permanence
And Destruction, but in not pursuing the real nature,
Their affirmations and negations perish!

[24] For example, although [assertions that] intrinsic
Natures do exist for gold, sky, water and the rest,
Are accompanied apparently by a fallacy,
They do not follow up the fallacy in them.

[25] Abandon [these] affirmations and negations,
And cultivate only the Thatness that frees
With certainty from [false] affirmations;
And do not rest in [any] set of tenets.

[26] Cultivate only the instruction of the lineage
Of Ārya Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva,
Of Candrakīrti, Bhavya, and Śāntideva.

[27] And if there is no one of that tradition,
Then study the texts composed by them
Over and over again.

[28] For they are the door to the “A”³⁹ of all
Phenomena, which from the start do not arise nor cease;
Their real nature is Nirvāṇa;
Of intrinsic nature they are pure.

[29] Even if seen, they are not seen:
What is called the “Seer” and “Thing Seen”
And the “Seeing” do not exist at all!
The Sage is ever in equipoise.⁴⁰

[30] If one abandons all discursive reasoning
And remains in the realm of True Reality,
He does not want such starts and advances⁴¹
Toward the knowledge of the great Yoga.

[31] Hence, those who have attained equipoise
Themselves do not desire Buddhahood –

As explained in the *Non-Conceptual Formula* –⁴²
 While remaining on the [Bodhisattva] Levels.
 [32] I have not enlarged on this subject here; [327b]
 [So] one must beg [its explanation] again and again
 From a Guru who understands my text – after one
 Has [first] made offerings and given him attendance.
 [33] Following in the steps of Bodhibhadra,
 Who belongs to the lineage of that Ārya Nāgārjuna
 Prophesied by the Omniscient One,⁴³
 I shall not hold any tenets whatever!

Proof from Scripture

And now, having proven from reason that all phenomena are non-arising, I [now] show from scripture that this is the case in these stanzas:

MOREOVER, THE BLESSED ONE DECLARED:

“CONCEPTUAL THINKING IS THE GREAT IGNORANCE,
 AND CASTS ONE INTO SAṂSĀRA’S OCEAN; BUT
 CLEAR AS THE SKY IS HIS CONTEMPLATION WHO
 REMAINS IN CONCENTRATION WITHOUT CONCEPTS.” [Stanza 56]

AND HE ALSO SAYS IN THE *NON-CONCEPTUAL PROGRESS FORMULA*:

“WHEN A SON OF THE VICTOR MEDITATES ON
 THIS HOLY DOCTRINE WITHOUT CONCEPTUAL THOUGHT,
 AND TRANSCENDS THE ARDUOUS TRAILS OF SUCH THOUGHT,
 HE GRADUALLY ATTAINS THE NON-CONCEPTUAL.”⁴⁴ [Stanza 57]*

WHEN THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND REASON ONE HAS
 PENETRATED THE NON-INTRINSIC
 NATURE OF ALL NON-ARISING PHENOMENA,
 THEN CONTEMPLATE WITHOUT CONCEPTUAL THOUGHT. [Stanza 58]

Quotations

My root stanzas should be examined [carefully] at this point. The Blessed One spoke on this subject not only in the above but in other sūtras too. He is clearly talking about it in the *Exposition of the Undifferentiated Nature of All Phenomena* when he says:

*Atiśa has apparently abbreviated the root text. See p. 11.

“If you are talking about the realm of True Reality in terms of valid reasonings, then there is neither ultimate nor conventional meaning to it.”⁴⁵

And in the *Bodhisattva Section Sūtra* he says, “There is one Truth, and that is cessation . . .”,⁴⁶ continuing at great length in that sermon. In the *Ornament of the Wisdom Engaging the Sphere of All Buddhas*, he says:

“The Tathāgata [himself] is ever a non-arising phenomenon;
And all phenomena are like the Tathāgata;
So purify the phenomena that do not exist in the worlds;
They are the false delusions of foolish minds.”⁴⁷

And the holy *Moon-Lamp*:

“This ultimate truth that everything is empty of an intrinsic nature means that a phenomenon is without basis and its very nature does not exist. You have not understood my explanation of [causal] conditions – that was to prevent attachment [to phenomena] – but [in reality] there are no words, no statements to be made about the character of a phenomenon.”⁴⁸

In the *Ocean of Discipline*: [328a]

“The extreme of [something being] prior is empty [of reality]; the extreme of [something being] posterior is empty likewise: all Becoming [on the wheel of life] is empty at all points, and empty are the points [of change posited] by the heretics too.”⁴⁹

And the *Descent into Lañka*:

“Conventionally, everything exists; but the ultimate Truth is: intrinsic nature does not exist.
What we explain as correct conventional truth
[In reality] is in error about the non-existence of intrinsic nature.”⁵⁰

In the [*Questions of*] *Suvikrāntavikrāmī Perfection of Insight*:

“The Tathāgata’s wisdom does not see anything at all. And why is that? Because no object exists for his wisdom [to see]!”⁵¹

And the *Deeds of the Conqueror as Mother Sūtra*:

“Because the Blessed One had described the unique paradise of the Tathāgata Akṣobhya to them, the assembled [bodhisattvas] begged him. ‘O Blessed One, please show us that paradise!’ And when he made that [eastern] realm of the world appear for them, and then disappear again, he said, ‘Just as this paradise of the Tathāgata Akṣobhya disappears from the range of sight; so also Body disappears from the range of sight; so also Feeling . . .’⁵²

And he continues at length to speak [of the rest of the Aggregates and phenomena]. The *Chapter of Sadāprarudita* and the *Removal of Ajātaśatru’s Regrets* both treat this subject clearly.

Bibliography of Sūtras

Of course, the entire Sūtra Collection ought to be studied, but the following deserve special attention for their clarity in these matters:

the *Meeting of Father and Son Sūtra*,
 the *Finger-Garland Sūtra*,
 the *Seal of Wisdom Sūtra*,
 the *Secret Tathāgata Sūtra*, [328b]
 the *Tathāgata Set Forth by Vimalakīrti Sūtra*,
 the *Mindfulness of the Buddha Sūtra*,
 the *Subduing by Akāśavarṇa Sūtra*,
 the *Tathāgata Essence Sūtra*,
 the *Sūtra of the Thirty-three*,
 the *Questions of Kāśyapa Sūtra*,
 the *Instruction on Non-Production of All Phenomena Sūtra*,
 the *Tathāgata’s Compassion Sūtra*,

the *King of Meditations Sūtra*,
 the *Seated before the Present Buddha Sūtra*,
 the *Sūtra Setting Forth the Three Bodies*,
 the *Questions of Vimaladatta Sūtra*,
 the *Questions of the Girl Sumati Sūtra*,
 the *Questions of the Girl Vimalasūddha Sūtra*,
 the *Unwavering Light Sūtra on Reality's Own Emptiness of
 Intrinsic Nature*,
 the *Descent into Lañka*,
 the *Sūtra Setting Forth the Two Truths*,
 the *Sūtra of Ākāśagarbha*,
 the *Questions of the Serpent King Anavatapta Sūtra*,
 the *Questions of the Serpent King Sāgara Sūtra*,
 the *Sūtra Showing the Unthinkable Secrets*,
 and the entire set of the *Perfection of Insight Sūtras*.

If I set down all the [pertinent] quotes from these Sūtras here, my text would be altogether too long; so you must be very diligent in your study of all the Mahāyāna Sūtras without exception.

Biography of the Masters

Besides the Sūtra Collection, there are the treatises composed by men who dedicated themselves to the precise and infallible meaning of the essence of the Perfection of Insight; men such as the Āryan Ācāryas Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, [329a] Candrakīrti, Śāntideva, Bhāvaviveka, Aśvaghōṣa and Candramitra.⁵³ Study their texts diligently as well because they unlock in a clear way the sense of the Sūtras. If I were to quote them all here, my text would be too big.

Ārya Nāgārjuna, although widely known and proclaimed to be a Bodhisattva of the First Level by the longer Sūtras and wise men of India, I myself have seen [mentioned] as a Bodhisattva of the Eighth Level in [some] Sūtras. Āryadeva likewise I have seen [referred to] as a Bodhisattva who gained the Eighth Level, because of his

instruction by Nāgārjuna. Candrakīrti had his consecration⁵⁴ to the Truth through the counsel of Nāgārjuna, and attained the realisation of all phenomena as illusory. He lived for four hundred years in India, working solely for the good of others. Śāntideva too received Mañjuḥṣa's gift through Nāgārjuna's instruction, and saw the Truth. Bhavya, through Nāgārjuna's teaching, [became] a master of reasoning and passed on [to Nirvāṇa] in his same lifetime. Aśvaghōṣa, through Āryadeva's instruction, saw the Truth, [329b] and Candramitra also.

Cultivation of Higher Vision

When you have learned these extensive teachings from scripture and reason, and ascertained their purpose, then with all doubts aside cultivate that non-conceptual thinking called "Higher Vision". And how do you do this? First of all, [by remembering] that entities are twofold: those that have form, and those that do not. And when you have cleared them away with the [Four] Great Proofs, you can contemplate [with Higher Vision]. Hence my Guru says in his *Chapter on Concentration Equipment*:

"All phenomena are contained in the mind, and the mind is contained in the body; so you must put the body to work for the realm of Reality also. That is my counsel."⁵⁵

If you know how to do that, there will be no conceptualising anywhere, and no grasping [at objects]; and leaving memory and all reflecting behind, remain in that [state] until that enemy, the [mental] Sign, rises [again]. As Ārya Nāgārjuna said:

"I pay homage to the mind that does not examine
With imaginings, and takes no stand [on anything];
To the mind devoid of memory and reflecting
And of topics, I pay homage."

And again he says:

“The wise man will not view
Even Emptiness as Emptiness . .
The mind devoid of topics,
Rests in the characteristic of space;
To contemplate space
Is to contemplate Emptiness.”⁵⁶

Ācārya Śāntideva says:

“When neither Existence nor Non-Existence
Stand present before the mind,
Then, since it has no other way [to go],
And is objectless, it is truly calmed.”⁵⁷ [330a]

And cultivating this becomes one’s strength, as he goes on to say:

“Through the cultivation of Emptiness
One abandons the tendency toward things [as real].”

Ācārya Śrīgupta also:

“By the power of whatever contemplation
One cultivates, one takes on the nature
Of the non-real essence of all phenomena,
In the same way that he sees [those] entities.”⁵⁸

THIS COMPLETES THE TEACHING ON THE TRAINING IN
HIGHER INSIGHT

Stages of the Path

AND WHEN HE HAS THUS CONTEMPLATED THATNESS,
AND BY STAGES HAS ATTAINED “WARMTH” AND THE REST,
THEN HE WILL GAIN THE “JOYOUS” [LEVEL] AND ON UP:
BUDDHA-ENLIGHTENMENT IS NOT FAR OFF. [Stanza 59]

So, when you have established yourself in the Practice Path

with the yoga of equipoise, you will be well set in the Path of the Perfections in the sense of the Mahāyāna Sūtras I explained earlier. These steps [towards Enlightenment] are given in the eight chapters of the *Ornament for the Realisations*,⁵⁹ the text Maitreya-nātha preached, and which Asaṅga spread widely in India. Vimuktisena⁶⁰ and the glorious Haribhadra⁶¹ explained and commented on it, and it is their explanation you should learn. Unless you study them, the Path and its Results may become confused.

Hence, the yogin who has been in the Equipment Path and set in [its] Emptiness then advances to the Practice Path and develops the basic virtues [called] the Aids to Liberation. The words “BY STAGES HAS ATTAINED ‘WARMTH’ AND THE REST” refer to those [four] aids to one’s conviction: that is, persevering through [1] the three degrees of Warmth, [2] the three degrees of Summits, [3] the three degrees of Patience, and [4] the three degrees of the Highest [Mundane] Phenomena.⁶² [330b]

“THEN HE WILL GAIN THE ‘JOYOUS’ [LEVEL] AND ON UP” refers to the advance to the Path of Vision and its four Concentrations and so on.⁶³ “BUDDHA-ENLIGHTENMENT IS NOT FAR OFF” means that while perfecting the Ten Levels, the Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment is coming about from Moment to Moment [of the Vision Path],⁶⁴ and in no time at all, and swiftly, you will gain the Three Bodies and Five Wisdoms and so on.

I have not written here the details
Of the Practice Path and its start at “Warmth”,
Nor of the Ten Levels that begin in Vision Path,
Nor of the Three Bodies and the rest, because I
Fear too long a text. Study them in Sūtra and
Commentary; there they are well woven.

Another reason I said “BUDDHA-ENLIGHTENMENT IS NOT FAR OFF” was to give [some] encouragement to slothful bodhisattvas. The “three countless aeons”⁶⁵ that scripture speaks of [for attaining Enlightenment] is not very long for Bodhisattvas who stay [in saṃsāra] for the sake of all living beings. As Ambarāja’s words have it:

“As for me, I have no preference or wish
To be a Buddha in [some] distant Enlightenment;
But I shall carry on to the very end of time,
For the sake of one single creature.”⁶⁶

And the *Glorious Original* [Aeon]:

“The wisest man remains in saṃsāra
As long as he can; for then, by choosing
Not to pass into Nirvāṇa, he can seek
The unequalled good of creatures.”⁶⁷

And from the *Resolves* of Nāgārjuna:

“As long as there are any creatures here at all,
And one of them is still not saved,
I will carry on my investigations for them,
Even though I have reached the Highest Enlightenment.”⁶⁸

If you ask why [the saving of others takes so long], I answer
from the Sūtras:

“If all the realms of the world were changed into [331a] a
single tank of water, and if for a thousand years one man
worked at dipping the water from it with the tip of a
single hair – that tank of water might lower somewhat.
But with the realm of creatures there is no such
lessening.”

And from the *Good Practice*:

“The extent of all creatures is as vast as the limits of
space.”⁶⁹

For instance, a bodhisattva is called slothful when he
thinks, “After I have demolished [by analysis for
Emptiness] all the atoms of Mount Meru, king of
mountains, I will reach Enlightenment.” And that is why
Ambarāja says:

“Until the very last rebirth
 In this beginningless saṃsāra,
 I will perform endless deeds
 For the benefit and good of creatures.”⁷⁰

Hence, even I must not desire to be swiftly Enlightened, except to lessen those suffering in the realm of creatures, whether it is diminishing or increasing or not.

It necessarily follows that a bodhisattva of keen ability, endowed with a hero’s great zeal and a mind controlled by compassion for all creatures, will – although he had not desired it – swiftly be directly and perfectly Enlightened.

In his *Lamp of the Three Methods*, Ācārya Tripiṭakamāla says:

“In the depth and in the breadth
 Of its aspiration and execution,
 The Great Vehicle is far superior,
 For it achieves the changeless result . .

The Vehicle of the Perfections is far more exalted than the Vehicle of the Hearers – impress that on your mind.”⁷¹

THIS COMPLETES [THE TEACHING ON] THE VEHICLE OF THE
 PERFECTIONS

Notes to Chapter 6

- 1 See Glossary for technical Buddhist terms here. Calmness pertains merely to yogic method for concentrating one’s mind; the actual removal of the hindrances to liberation is a matter of overcoming ignorance through the investigations of Higher Vision.
- 2 Ot. 843, Vol. 38:85.3.
- 3 *Instruction in the Steps of Contemplation of the Perfection Vehicle*, Ot. 5456, Vol. 103:264.2.
- 4 *dbyer med-pa/asambhinna*: undifferentiated. All phenomena lose any basis for real distinction in their ultimate and true reality of Emptiness.
- 5 Ot. 761 (31).
- 6 This sūtra title is not found in the catalogues, but the title and the quotation here are excerpted from Śāntideva’s SS: pp. 96–99.
- 7 Ot. 126, Vol. 5:241.1.
- 8 *mi-gnas-pa’i mya-ngan-las-’das/apraṭiṣṭhita-nirvāṇa*. The “Deferred Nirvāṇa” is a third addition of Mahāyāna to the two earlier types of Nirvāṇa understood by the Hīnayāna schools; viz.,

- 1) Nirvāṇa-with-remainder (*phung-bo lhag-ma dang bcas-pa'i°/ sa-upadhiṣeṣa-°*); and
- 2) Nirvāṇa-without-remainder (*phung-bo lhag-ma med-pa'i°/ nirupadhiṣeṣa-°*).

For the Hīnayānist, the first type means the cessation of all obscuration caused by any afflicting activity (e.g., any imperfection), but with the body and mind continuing to function – as with the Buddha Śākyamuni after his Enlightenment, continuing his non-afflicting activity of preaching the Doctrine and founding the Community. The second type means the total cessation not only of the obscuration caused by afflicting activity, but of all mental and physical activity as well, as exemplified by the Buddha's final departure into Nirvāṇa, the "Parinirvāṇa", at the age of eighty.

The Mahāyānist add the third type, the Deferred Nirvāṇa, to describe the Bodhisattva who has earned Nirvāṇa by his having overcome not only the obscuration caused by afflicting activity but also that caused by ignorance of the true nature of Non-self; i.e. the all-embracing Emptiness of all apparent reality. This Bodhisattva then, by choice and out of compassion, remains in saṃsāra to devote himself to the salvation of all beings. It is this type which Jñānakīrti proceeds to describe in this passage.

The Mahāyānist view of a third type of Nirvāṇa necessarily gives a slightly different interpretation to the Nirvāṇas of the Buddha Śākyamuni, who for the Mahāyānist is simply one of many Tathāgatas or Bodhisattvas who have appeared in Form or Apparition Bodies to serve living beings. Consequently the first and second types of Nirvāṇa become but different kinds of final release won by those of the Hīnayāna paths: the Hearer with his goal of Arhatship (Nirvāṇa-with-remainder), meaning his afflicting activity has ceased, but a "remainder" of obscuration persists because of his partial ignorance of the true extent of Non-self; i.e. that *all* phenomena are empty of inherent existence. And the Solitary Buddha wins the goal of Buddhahood (Nirvāṇa-without-remainder), completely released from all obscuration, whether caused by afflicting activity or by ignorance of the true extent of non-substantiality, yet less perfect in his Nirvāṇa because of his declining to return to the world of rebirth – as the Bodhisattva – for the sake of others.

See T. R. V. Murti, *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, pp. 271ff.

- 9 See Glossary.
- 10 The reference is to the long analytical lists of component phenomena found in the Abhidharma texts of the Hīnayāna. By comprehending the component elements of any given thing, it was believed that the false view of that thing's real Self (or substantiality) could be eliminated; e.g. comprehending that the apparent Self is composed of the five aggregates, and each of the five aggregates in turn composed of further phenomena. For the Mahāyānist this type of analysis would not be adequate for liberating the mind from ignorance, since the very emptiness of substantiality of the component phenomena themselves is what must be seen and experienced.
- 11 Bodhibhadra, op. cit., pp. 253.4ff.
- 12 The three aspects (*rnam-pa gsum*) of a thing are the Subject-Action-Object involved.
- 13 *kun-rdzob/samvṛtti*: relative, as opposed to the ultimate absolute sense or aspect. These are the two aspects or levels of truth familiar in Buddhist terminology. The ordinary or conventional truths (relative) are valid at the mundane level in the conduct of everyday affairs; the ultimate truths are realities as they truly are in themselves, empty of any inherent existence. In terms of the Enlightenment Thought, Compassion is considered to be the

Thought on the relative level because it deals with creatures in ordinary everyday activity by means of the Perfections. The absolute Thought of Enlightenment is Emptiness itself.

- 14 Ot. 115, Vol. 5:73.3ff and 76.4ff.
 15 The same list of five bodhisattvas at various stages of the Path is found in Chapter 2, p. 45.
 16 The import here is that the Means are basically an exercise of Compassion whereby Enlightened Ones choose to continue their work of liberating all beings. Hence, the Means are the cause of the Apparition Body (which is necessary for working for others in the Desire and Form realms) and of the Enjoyment Body (which is necessary for preaching in the paradises of the Formless realms).
 17 *gtan-tshigs/upapatti*: proof, demonstration. The Four Great Proofs, given with their popular names here, are summarised in the opening stanza of Nāgārjuna's *Basic Stanzas on the Middle Way* [Ot. 5224, Vol. 95:1.1]:

- [A] /'gag pa med pa skye ba med pa/
 [B] /chad med pa rtag med pa/
 [C] /'ong med pa 'gro med pa/
 [D] /ltha dad don min don gcig min/.

The Tibetan translation reverses the sequence of the last two lines of the Sanskrit:

- [A] *anirodham-anutpādam-*
 [B] *anucchedam-aśāśvatam/*
 [C] *anekārtham-anānārtham-*
 [D] *anāgamam-anirgamam/.*

Actually all four proofs will employ Nāgārjuna's famed tetralemma (*mu-bzhi/cātuṣ-kotikā*: four-horned, of four extremes) dialectic in reducing to absurdity that entities exist, or do not exist, or both exist and not exist, or neither exist nor not exist. Hence, aside from the Diamond Particle (*rdo-rje gzegs-ma/vajra-kaṇa*) Proof, Atīśa's popular names for the proofs coincide with the above stanza:

- [A] Non-cessation and Non-arising;
 [B] Non-destruction and Non-permanence (called Diamond Particle because this proof is the most basic enunciation of the tetralemma in terms of existence, and represents the very heart of the gem);
 [C] Non-identity and Non-multiplicity;
 [D] Non-going and Non-coming (another way of expressing the Buddhist Dependent Origination causality).

- 18 *nam-mkha'i me-tog/kha-puṣpam*: sky-flower; a common example in Indian logic for a contradiction in terms; as also a hare's horn, son of a barren woman, etc.
 19 *BCA*: IX:146–50.
 20 The list covers the ultimate principles of all India's major philosophical traditions:

- a) Ātman (*bdag*): the Supreme Self of the Vedānta schools;
 b) Fate (*phya*): both the scepticism of the Carvāka school and fatalism of the Ājīvakas;
 c) Īśvara (*dbang-phyug*): the Lord, or God, of later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika;
 d) Puruṣa (*skyes-bu*): the free and independent self, Person, co-principle with Prakṛti in the Sāṃkhya system;

- e) Karma (*las*): retributive action; held by all schools, including Buddhist, but as an ultimate principle stressed by the Mīmāṃsā and Jaina traditions;
- f) Prakṛti (*rang-bzhin*): ultimate unconscious Nature, co-principle with Puruṣa in Sāṃkhya;
- g) Guṇas (*yon-tan*): the three Attributes of Prakṛti in the Sāṃkhya system (clarity, activity, darkness), whose disturbance starts the process of evolution of the world.
- h) Brahman (*tshangs-pa*): the Supreme Spirit of the Vedānta schools; first of the triad with
- i) Viṣṇu (*khyab-'jug*), and Śiva (whom Atiśa does not mention).
- 21 The reference is to the Hīnayāna schools which held the real production of phenomena (*dharma*) as ultimate constituents, while denying composite substances and a Self as real. Vasubandhu treats the six kinds of causes and the four kinds of conditions in *AK(LVP)*: II: pp. 245ff.
- 22 Ot. 5224, Vol. 95:3.1.
- 23 *ṭī-ka/ṭīkā*: sub-commentary. '*grel-pa/vṛtti*: primary commentary, often by the author himself.
- 24 The quotation is from the great patron of Buddhism in Tibet, co-founder of Bsam-yas, and upādhyāya of the first ordained Tibetan monks. The passage here is not identified any further than the author's name, but is probably from his *Ornament of the Middle Way* and its auto-commentary [Ot. 5284.5]. It is curious that this quotation and the following one from Śrī-gupta are given here for explanation of the Lack of Identity and Plurality Proof, yet neither the names of the authors nor names of their works are mentioned in the final bibliography in this chapter.
- 25 Unidentified.
- 26 Nāgārjuna's investigation of the Twelfefold Chain of Dependent Origination is Chapter 26 of his *Basic Stanzas* [Ot. 5224].
- 27 In the *R̥gveda* the goose is said to be able to separate Soma from water when the two are mixed. In later literature, as here, the ability is to strain milk from water. The final stanza here is also used in Atiśa's *Introduction to the Two Truths* [Ot. 5380, Vol. 103:187.3.].
- 28 *don dam-pa/paramārtha*: ultimate truth. See note 13 of this chapter. Training in the meditational practices on Emptiness requires the guidance of a Guru.
- 29 *de-kho-na-myyid/tattva*: thatness=Emptiness (*stong-pa-nyid/śūnyatā*).
- 30 Ot. 846, Vol. 34:110.5.
- 31 Ot. 5470, Vol. 103: 273.3.
- 32 Ot. 5251, Vol. 95:144.3.
- 33 *ibid*. With these three stanzas excerpted from Nāgārjuna, the Three Turnings of the Wheel are exemplified: 1) the Four Truths [Hīnayāna]; 2) Mind-Only [Yogācārā/Cittamātra]; and 3) Total Emptiness [Mādhymika].
- 34 *ibid*.
- 35 Atiśa's long "Hymn to the Middle Way" begins here, and is his own composition, thirty-two stanzas in length, and of equal quality with the root stanzas of the *Lamp* itself. As he states in the introduction to it, he is imitating Bodhibhadra – specifically his *Composition* [Ot. 5252] on Āryadeva's *Heart of Wisdom Compendium* [Ot. 5251]. Bodhibhadra's treatise is of much greater length; so there is no slavish imitation here, but a quite clear and original work which surprisingly is not found in the Tanjur elsewhere as a separate treatise.
- 36 *bag-chags/vāsanā*: disposition, propensity. The four dispositions alluded to

here are not identified, but are related to the afflictions [see Glossary] and are of an obscuring nature.

- 37 *rje-su dpag/anumāna*: inference, one of the two main sources of knowledge in the Indian systems of epistemology; direct perception (*mngon-sum-du/pratyakṣa*) is the second. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika schools of Brahmanism, as well as Buddhist schools, developed logic to a high degree. Atīśa decries the science both in this and the following stanzas; although he himself assisted in the Tibetan translation of an immense treatise on logic of Ācārya Jaya (or Jina) [Ot. 5720].
- 38 *yod min med min yod med min/*
gnyi ga min pa'ang ma yin pa/.
- 39 *a-yi sgo-can*: “the door of A”. The letter and sound “A” is the seed syllable for mantric meditation on the Perfection of Insight, the “Great Mother of all bodhisattvas”. It is also the smallest of all the variations on the great *Perfection of Wisdom* sūtras, from the 100,000 line version down to the short *Single-Syllable Perfection of Insight Sūtra*:
- “At that time, the Blessed One spoke these words to the Venerable Ānanda, ‘O Ānanda, take hold of this Perfection of Insight called the One-Syllable, because it is of benefit and happiness for all beings. It is like this: A.’ Thus the Blessed One spoke, and Venerable Ānanda and all those monks and great Bodhisattvas realised that Perfection and rejoiced, and praised what had been said by the Blessed One.” [Ot. 741, Vol. 21:741.4].
- 40 *mnyam-par bzhag-pa/samāhita*: equipoise, or the composure of concentration (*ting-nge-'dzin/samādhi*), the culmination of Calmness when distraction has been eliminated.
- 41 *'byung-ba dang 'jug-pa*: starts and advances. The reference is to a yogin who has transcended distraction and discursive thinking, and in his direct intuitional experience does not wish to be going in and out of his state of concentration.
- 42 This is the same sūtra quoted in the root stanza 57. The pertinent section referred to here is:
- “If that bodhisattva abandons those [earlier analyses of phenomena], then the analysis for gaining the other Levels – as when the signs of discursive thinking are clearly perceived – happens and becomes direct experience. It is like this: From the signs of discursive thinking in the analysis for gaining the First Level up to the signs of discursive thinking in the analysis for gaining the Tenth Level, and for gaining Patience in the Non-arising Phenomena . . . even these signs of discursive thinking in his analysis for gaining [the Levels], he completely abandons by not directing his mind to them.” [Ot. 810, Vol. 32:231.3].
- 43 The prophecy occurs in the *Mañjuśrī Basic Tantra* [Ot. 162]. See Bu-ston's mention of it in his short life of Nāgārjuna in his *Chos-'byung* (Obermiller): II:111 and 122.
- 44 The quotation in Stanza 56 is unidentified. The quote in Stanza 57 from the *Non-Conceptual Progress Formula* is Ot. 810, Vol. 32:232.5.
- 45 Ot. 760(8), Vol. 22:192.2.
- 46 Ot. 760(12), Vol. 23:78.2.
- 47 Ot. 768, Vol. 28.
- 48 Ot. 795, Vol. 31.
- 49 Unidentified.
- 50 Ot. 775, Vol. 29:73.4.

- 51 Ot. 736, Vol. 21:195.5.
- 52 Ot. 5029, Vol. 87.
- 53 This passage listing the names of the great Mādhyamika scholars appears to be by a different hand, or at least a later addition made by Atīṣa without consulting his previous spelling of the names. Here the names of Āryadeva and Śāntideva are transliterated from Sanskrit, rather than translated into Tibetan as elsewhere in the *Commentary*. Further, the passage itself seems to be out of place, as these writers have all been mentioned earlier in p. 140 of this chapter, along with the principal writings of each – although the author states here that he does not set down their texts lest it expand his treatise too much. Also to be noted is the fact that Buddhapālita's name is absent from the present list, but Bhavya/Bhavaviveka is included; that is, the founder of the Mādhyamika-Svatantrika school is included, but Bhavya, the founder of the Mādhyamika-Prasaṅgika, is not.
- 54 *byin-gyis brlabs/adhiṣṭhāna*: blessing, consecration. The word connotes the special empowerment through personal contact and initiation by one's Guru. The same word is used for the "consecration" of the bowl and robes in the Ordination ceremony of monks. In the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition, the "Blessed Lineage" is a separate category from the teaching lineages of the Mādhyamika theory, and the Compassion practice.
- 55 Ot. 5444, Vol. 103:255.4.
- 56 *Essay on the Enlightenment Thought* [Ot. 5470, Vol. 103:273.4].
- 57 BCA: IX: 34–5.
- 58 Unidentified.
- 59 Ot. 5184. The eight chapters are titled: [Vol. 88:1.1]
- 1) Knowledge of All Modes (*rnam-pa thams-cad mkhyen-pa*);
 - 2) Knowledge of All Paths (*lam thams-cad mkhyen-pa*);
 - 3) All-Knowledge/Omniscience (*kun mkhyen-pa*);
 - 4) Comprehension of All Modes (*rnam-pa thams-cad rtog-pa*);
 - 5) Practice at the Summit (*rtse-mor phyin-pa'i sbyor-ba*);
 - 6) The Gradual Process (*mthar-gyis bya-ba*);
 - 7) The Instantaneous Realisation of the Sage (*thub-pa'i skad-gcig gcig-pa-yis rtogs-pa*);
 - 8) The Nature of the Sage (*thub-pa'i ngo-bo-nyid*).
- 60 There are two men by this name in the Bka'-gdams-pa lineage of the Broad Practice, distinguished only by their titles: Ārya Vimuktisena is the teacher of *Bhadanta* Vimuktisena, and the author of a treatise which places the topics of the *Ornament for the Realisations* in correspondence with the topics of the *25,000 Line Perfection of Insight Sūtra*, called *Āloka* [Ot. 5185].
- 61 Author of the *Light on the Ornament of Realisations' Exposition of the 8,000 Line Perfection of Insight* [Ot. 5189], whose work became the most popular in the Tibetan monasteries for study of the Perfection of Insight literature. The text was revised by Atīṣa together with Rin-chen bzang-po.
- 62 See Glossary.
- 63 The four Concentrations mentioned here are usually referred to as four "clear realisations" (*mngon-rtogs/abhisamaya*); i.e. one for each of the Four Noble Truths as they are seen in the Vision Path.
- 64 *skad-gcig-ma/kṣana*: moment. Each of the "clear realisations" of the Four Truths in the Vision Path (see above note) is divided into four "Moments" or degrees of growth in the awareness of the Truth involved (Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path), from a stage of eliminating one's ignorance about the Truth on up to full liberating knowledge of it.

- 65 *Explanation of "Treasure of Phenomenology"* [Ot. 5591, Vol. 115:189. 1ff.].
- 66 The quotation is the same as that used in root Stanza 29; however, a different Tibetan translation of the sūtra is used here.
- 67 Ot. 120, Vol. 5:133.4.
- 68 Ot. 5428, Vol. 103:244.3.
- 69 See Chapter 2, note 1, for the same quotation.
- 70 This stanza immediately precedes those used for stanzas 26–31 in the root poem: *Ornament of Mañjuśrī's Buddhafield*, [Ot. 760(15), Vol. 23:129.2].
- 71 Ot. 4530, Vol. 81:113.4.

Vehicle of Mysticism

CHAPTER 7

Tantra

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Tantra

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Tantra

Vehicle of Mantra

Now I must speak about the Vehicle of Mantra. It too is a great vehicle and belongs to the highest Mahāyāna. [331b] When I say that the Mantra Vehicle is eminently superior to the Vehicle of the Perfection of Insight, the textual authority I use is again from the great Ācārya, venerable Tripiṭakamāla:

“The teachings on Mantra are eminently superior
 When mastered by one of keen abilities,
 Because of the many Means [they offer] without
 austerity –
 Provided the one and only Goal is kept, unobscured.”¹

Hence, the bodhisattva who engages in the practice of Mantra must first produce that unmistakable reality, the Thought of Enlightenment in its ultimate sense.² However, I am not going to talk here about the texts that explain the meaning of this. Here and in my root text I [simply] set down some of the means for accumulating the Two Equipments [of merit and knowledge], for a bodhisattva who is in the Generation Stage,³ and confine myself to that.

Rites

The Two Equipments can be swiftly and perfectly achieved in an extraordinary [way] by the system of Mantra. And with this in mind I wrote the stanza:

THROUGH THE RITES OF “APPEASEMENT” AND “PROSPERITY”
 AND THE REST, EFFECTED BY THE FORCE OF MANTRA,
 AND ALSO BY THE STRENGTH OF THE EIGHT GREAT POWERS,
 STARTING WITH THAT OF “GOOD FLASK”, AND OTHERS, [60]

When I say “EFFECTED BY THE FORCE OF MANTRA”, I mean all *dhāraṇī*⁴ rituals in general, but also include the Powers effected on the strength of muttering⁵ Mantras taken from any of the Tantras – such as the *dhāraṇīs* of the Action Tantra. What are these rites? The rituals for “Domination” and “Destruction”, for “APPEASEMENT AND PROSPERITY” and the rest of the eight kinds of ritual.⁶

Powers

“THE EIGHT GREAT POWERS, STARTING WITH THAT OF ‘GOOD FLASK’, AND OTHERS” refers to [1] the Good Flask Power, [2] Fleetness of Foot, [3] the [Invincible] Sword, [4] the Commander, [5] the Underworld [Power], [6] Invisibility, [7] the Wishing-Tree, and [8] Supremacy.⁷ By “AND OTHERS” I mean all the many Powers that are associated with the rites that put an end to anything, and follow upon the [principal] Eight Powers; for example, eye-medicine, pills, flying in the sky, showers of grain, producing various shapes out of a conjured mustard-seed, superknowledge by augury, and the [Four] Miraculous Powers.⁸ When, through Muttering and Concentration, one has accomplished these Eight Great Mundane Powers and the [rites of] Appeasement-Prosperity-Dominion-Destruction, one thereby perfects the Two Equipments of Merit and Knowledge, swiftly and effortlessly. [332a]

Tantra Scripture

Seven Classes of Tantra

What is this “Vehicle of Mantra” from which such Powers come so swiftly and effortlessly? I say:

IT IS MAINTAINED THAT THE EQUIPMENT FOR
ENLIGHTENMENT IS PERFECTED WITH EASE;
AND IF ONE WANTS TO PRACTISE MANTRA AS PRESCRIBED
IN THE TANTRAS: ACTION, PRACTICE, AND ON . . . [Stanza 61]

And these are: [1] Action Tantra, [2] Practice Tantra, [3] Skill Tantra, [4] Combined Tantra, [5] Union Tantra, [6] Great Union Tantra, and [7] Supreme Union Tantra.⁹ The extent of each of these Tantras is immeasurable, as the

Blessed One says about their number in the *Glorious Compendium of Diamond Knowledge: A Great Tantra*:

“There are four thousand Action Tantras. There are eight thousand Practice Tantras. There are four thousand Skill Tantras. There are six thousand Combined Tantras. There are twelve thousand Great Union Tantras. But if these are taken in their complete entirety, they are numberless.”¹⁰

Bibliography of Tantras

- [1] The four thousand Action Tantras include such texts as:
 the *All Dhāraṇīs* [Ot. 141],
 the *Highest Wisdom* [Ot. 402],
 the *Excellent Dancer* [Ot. 424],
 the *True Power Maker* [Ot. 431],
 the [*Questions of*] *Subāhu* [Ot. 428],
 the *Great Basic Tantra of Mañjuśrī* [Ot. 162],
 the *Secret Tantras of Mañjuśrī* [Toh. 544–52],
 the *Diamond Crowners* [Toh. 590–603],
 the *Tantra of Amoghapāśa* [Ot. 365],
 and the *Great Victory Tantras* [Toh. 604–13]. [332b]
- [2] The Practice Tantra with its eight thousand texts has:
 the *Perfect Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra* [Ot. 126],
 and the *Initiation of Vajrapāṇi Tantra* [Ot. 130].
- [3] The four thousand texts in the Skill Tantra collection contain the *Tantra of Tārā's Arising* [Ot. 390], the *Royal Tantra Setting Forth the Triple Pledge* [Ot. 134], and the *Compendium of Skills*.
- [4] Among the Combined Tantra in its six thousand text collection are the *Illusion-like* [Ot. 102] and the *Lord of Lotus Dancers*.
- [5] The Union Tantra contains innumerable texts such as:
 the *Compendium of Thatness* [Ot. 112],
 the *Glorious Original* [Aeon] [Ot. 119],
 the *Conquest of the Triple World* [Ot. 115],
 the *Higher Union Conquest*,
 and the *Diamond Summit* [Ot. 113].

- [6] The Great Union Tantra in its twelve thousand collection contains such texts as the *Glorious Union of the Secret* [Ot. 81] and its Explanatory Tantras [Toh. 443–53], and
 the *Beauty Mark of the Secret Moon* [Ot. 111],
 the *Black Destroyer of Yama* [Ot. 103],
 the *Glorious Original [Aeon]* [Ot. 119],
 the *Assembly of All Gods*,
 the *Secret of All* [Ot. 114],
 the *Unfailing Discipline*,
 the *Compendium of Diamond Knowledge* [Ot. 84],
 the *Marvels of Vairocana* [Ot. 126],
 the short *Space-like [Buddha]* [Ot. 31],
 the *Tantra of Unique [Buddha's] Conquest* [Ot. 87],
 and the *Diamond-Crowners Tantras*.
 In their entirety these texts are numberless.
- [7] The Supreme Union Tantra has fourteen thousand texts in its collection and includes the *Glorious Cakrasaṃvara: the Hundred Thousand Verses of the Space-like Buddha* [Ot. 30; 59], and the *Diamond Imp* [Ot. 18],
 the *Four Diamond Seats* [Ot. 68],
 the *Great Illusion* [Ot. 64],
 the *Buddha-like Practice* [Ot. 8],
 the *Buddha Death's Head* [Ot. 63],
 and the *Five Hundred Thousand Verses on Hevajra* [Ot. 10].

Taken in their entirety the texts would be endless. It is the vastness of each of these Tantra collections that makes the Vehicle of Mantra so extremely broad and unlimited. [333a] The Gurus say that all *dhāraṇīs* without exception, such as the *Dhāraṇīs Blazing From the Mouths of Ghosts* and the *Great Peacock-like Dhāraṇīs*, are Tantras of the Action class.

Initiations

Permission

In the line “IF ONE WANTS TO PRACTISE MANTRA AS

PRESCRIBED”, [Stanza 61], you may ask what is meant by the words “AS PRESCRIBED”, and so I say:

THEN, TO GAIN THE PRECEPTOR-INITIATION,
ONE MUST FIRST WIN A HOLY GURU
BY GIVING HIM ATTENDANCE AND PRECIOUS THINGS
AND BY OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD. [Stanza 62]

That is, if you desire to practise the Mantra Vehicle in the Action Tantras and the rest, I indicate by my mention of “PRECEPTOR-INITIATION” that you must look not merely to your resolution and actually making progress [toward Enlightenment], but you must also receive the Flask Initiation [that is essential to the Preceptor-Initiation ritual],¹¹ because otherwise you would be taking Mantra by yourself. That is why the Tantras say:

“Without [first] winning a Preceptor and
Without [first] acquiring the Initiations,
Even to begin the study [of Tantra]
Would be ineffectiveness itself.”

And again:

“Without even the Permission¹² for Initiation
Is to take Mantra by oneself.”

Taking Mantra by oneself means to perform the *dhāraṇī* rituals while still relying on methods of the Perfection Path in the Mahāyāna sūtra sense – without even [so much as] the Permission of a Guru for entering the Maṇḍala¹³ and for Initiation. It is taking Mantra by oneself when one listens to and cultivates visualisations¹⁴ such as venerable Tārā’s, or practises Muttering [of mantras] or Fire-offering or Food-offering¹⁵ or the Maṇḍala and the like – [without a Guru’s Permission]. [333b] The Permission to enter the Maṇḍala and to receive Initiation is granted [explicitly] by the Preceptor’s saying, “Your god is this one. This is the muttering you must do.”¹⁶ Hence the Tantras say:

“This taking Mantra by oneself
 Leads only to destiny in Hell;
 Even the Mantra is not effective,
 And the body is only wasted in afflictions.”

These are the things I meant by my words “AS PRESCRIBED”, and all the Tantras, all the Ācāryas of old, and every single Guru today say that the prescription is explicit. If someone says that certain persons, because of the dreams and omens of mundane and supramundane deities they have, are persons who practised Mantra in previous lives [and therefore need no Permission], then let a method [for determining] their achievement be applied – [presuming] they had pleased a Guru and were given his blessing and received his Permission to “practise in this certain manner”. The method to be used can be that of the *Setting Forth the Triple Pledge and Palace of the Great Jewel and Glory of the Blessed One, Vaidūrya, Teacher of Healing*: if by these methods they have cleansed themselves of sin and built up their equipment [of merit and knowledge], and then auspicious signs occur, these persons [indeed] had permission to enter Mantrayāna; but they are not thereby [necessarily] persons who [actually] practised it in previous lives. Moreover, their Permission to teach Mantra, or to hear, study and practise it, was not given merely because they had taken the Three Refuges and had the resolution for Enlightenment and made progress toward it. The Paths on which one progresses are each different, and the [methods of] liberation of the particular Vehicles should not be mixed up. [334a] The Blessed One preached the various paths of the Vehicles because He knew the capability of persons, their potential and disposition. And that is why I wrote the way I did in the root text:

IF ONE WANTS TO PRACTISE MANTRA . . .
 THEN TO GAIN THE PRECEPTOR-INITIATION . .

That is, if you wish to enter and practise in the Vehicle of the Perfections, then you must school yourself in the Three Kinds of Training I explained earlier.¹⁷ But if you wish to

practise Mantra and perform visualisations like venerable Tārā's, then you must request the Flask Initiation [that is essential to] the "PRECEPTOR-INITIATION". That is the meaning of my stanza.

Winning a Guru

Now then, if you ask whether this can be done when you have no worldly goods or lofty presents for the initiating Guru, the words "BY GIVING ATTENDANCE AND PRECIOUS THINGS" indicate it cannot. But then, what should those who are poor and bereft of worldly goods do? They should give "OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD". For even men of means must [still] offer their own bodies over and above the Seven Precious Things of Royalty. For example, King Devapāla, after offering his entire kingdom to Ācārya Buddhajñānapāda, offered his queen and himself also.¹⁸ And later he enticed him, as it were, with gold equal [in weight] to both himself and the queen. The poor must make do with repeated offerings of obedience and bodily attendance, of maṇḍalas and flowers, and in this manner they "MUST FIRST WIN A HOLY GURU".

When the Guru has been pleased and won, and Initiation has been acquired, and you are freed from all sin of body [speech, and mind], you will be worthy of achieving all mundane and supramundane Powers, by reason of being cleansed of sin [Stanza 63].

Misunderstanding of Tantra

Having taught that in keeping the Vehicle of Mantra one is effortlessly and swiftly, directly and perfectly Enlightened, and having shown that it is a means that perfects the good of others, I now give [a stanza] to refute two misconceptions about the Mantra Vehicle: [334b]

THE SECRET AND INSIGHT INITIATIONS
SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN BY RELIGIOUS CELIBATES,
BECAUSE IT IS EMPHATICALLY FORBIDDEN
IN THE GREAT TANTRA OF PRIMAL BUDDHA.¹⁹ [Stanza 64]

The misunderstandings of Mantra here are of two [extremes]: either making exaggerations about it, or defaming it. The former we should put an end to; in the latter case, we should defend it.

Exaggeration

Now in this matter there are some who still do not understand the intent of the endless great Tantras of Mantra, and because they trust in even holy Gurus who have not grasped it [either] or in sinful Spiritual Friends, they rely on their interpretations without really having learned the true nature of Mantra. “We are Mantrists!” they claim. “We are doing all the practices with great exactness, and we will all swiftly achieve even the Powers of the Great Seal!”²⁰ But those who continue in this bragging are heading for evil destinies. They heap contempt on the word of the Tathāgata, and, by their defiling religious celibacy, they cause the Teaching of the Buddha to decline. They exercise their Harsh Destruction [Powers to harm others], and, by their keeping women, Expulsion offences are committed.²¹ Here is what glorious Jñānakīrti said about them:

“They proclaim ever more loudly, ‘We have permission for this yoga from the Blessed One!’, and further, they even perform all the practices with exactness, but [alas], they are heading for evil destinies.”²²

And my Guru, the monk Painḍapātika Avadhūtipa:

“If those two Initiations [the “Secret”, and “Insight”] are taken, the Preceptor together with the disciple are both going to evil destinies.”²³ [335a]

The Blessed One says in the *Great Tantra Elucidating Meaning*:

“Those who are in Yoga without guidance,
Are practising [elephant-taming] without the goad;
They say, ‘I am a Yogin!’ [but]
They are treating the Teaching with deceit.

They perform [rituals] even for livelihood
 With their practice of mantras and the Seal;
 And [to avenge] even only tiny offences,
 They use the Harsh Destruction [Powers].

From their knowledge of one certain visualisation
 They will explain the whole great Tantra;
 And whenever some profit may be got,
 They will teach the Holy Doctrine.”²⁴

And He speaks on at length in that vein. The glorious Padmavajra likewise has much to say about the penalties for that kind of behaviour:

“Their practices, and they themselves
 Are all full of sinful activity;
 They keep to a Path that is unholy,
 And are hurrying to their hells.”²⁵

There are indeed many more sources, but my text would become too long. [In short], we must put an end to such [exaggerations] in a compassionate way.

Defamation

Then, in this matter [of defaming Mantra], there are some who say, “Why bother with the Mantra Vehicle when no one knows how the great method of Mantra works? Why not simply make progress in the clear Vehicles of the Perfections, and of the Hearers and Solitary Buddhas? If Expulsion offences against religious celibacy and against the taking of life come from [the Mantrist’s] use of women and the Harsh Destruction [Powers], then that [Vehicle] should not be entered.”

But in so saying these persons are defaming [Mantra] without knowing its [true] intent. It is wide and deep, a sphere of action for those of keen powers, and the [very] heart of the Buddha’s teaching. And he who condemns it as a field of activity for those who have the capacity, disposition, and development for it is going to hell – have no doubt about it – because he is belittling the word of the Tathāgata and rejecting His profound Doctrine. Here is what the holy *Finely Woven Sūtra* says about the [karmic] maturation of an act of rejecting the Doctrine: [335b]

“If anyone says, ‘Some of the Doctrine is good; some of it is bad’, he is rejecting the Doctrine.”²⁶

And that is because he does not see the Doctrine [rightly].
As the Guru-Monk Painḍapātika says:

“Therefore, do not scorn the Mantra Vehicle
By saying it is the talk of the Evil One.
As well reject all Vehicles [then] too!
Indeed, in keeping this one, the Great Seal is got!”²⁷

And so, against such [defamers], we must uphold [Mantra] in a compassionate way.

Defaming is twofold: defaming the Doctrine and defaming persons. The Doctrine should not be defamed, as these words from the *Questions of Kāśyapa* say:

“When one enters into the doctrine taught by the Tathāgatas, and his mind does not understand all the profundities of it concerning the limitlessness of Buddha-enlightenment and the variety of preferences among creatures, and he says, ‘Although I do not understand this, the Tathāgata himself does; He perceives it directly’, [then he does not reject or defame the Doctrine].”²⁸

Study that Sūtra itself, for it is a point I have seen made in all the Sūtras and Tantras. And as to not defaming persons either, [the Blessed One says] in both the *Exhortation to Higher Intention* and the *Instruction on Non-production of All Phenomena*: [336a]

“For one person – except myself or someone [enlightened] like me – to judge the measure of [another] person is harmful.”²⁹

And the evil of [such judgement] is frequently seen in the Sūtras.

Prohibited Initiations

[THE SECRET AND INSIGHT INITIATIONS
SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN BY RELIGIOUS CELIBATES,
BECAUSE IT IS EMPHATICALLY FORBIDDEN]
IN THE GREAT TANTRA OF PRIMAL BUDDHA. [Stanza 64]

[IF THOSE INITIATIONS WERE TAKEN BY ONE WHO STAYS
IN THE AUSTERITY OF A RELIGIOUS CELIBATE,
IT WOULD VIOLATE HIS VOW OF AUSTERITY
SINCE HE WOULD BE PRACTISING WHAT IS FORBIDDEN. [65]

TRANSGRESSIONS WOULD OCCUR WHICH DEFEAT
THE MAN OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE;
AND BY HIS CERTAIN FALL TO BAD DESTINIES,
HE COULD NOT EVEN SUCCEED [IN MANTRA PRACTICE]] [66]

The meaning in these twelve lines I have based on the instruction of Suvarṇadvīpa and the monk who was my [Mantra] Guru, Paiṇḍapātika.

Laymen and Religious

In his *Initiation Set Forth*, this Guru says:

“In this matter, there are two kinds of Initiations: those based on the lay state, and those based on the celibate religious state. Which are based on the lay state? All the Initiations spoken of in all the many Tantras. And which are based on the celibate religious state? All of the same Initiations, except for the Secret and Insight-Knowledge ones. And why are these two excluded? In this way: all the many virtues that have come about in consequence of the Buddha’s Doctrine have happened because His teaching has continued. But the continuation of His teaching depends solely on the celibate religious life; and these two Initiations [are excluded] because they envision states which are not in harmony with religious celibacy. Consequently, these two Initiations cause religious celibacy to perish, and when religious celibacy perishes the teaching of the Buddha will decline. Because of its decline, there would be an end to the gaining of merit. And hence, because of the immeasurable loss of virtue that would come from such a state of affairs, these two [Initiations] are excluded for the religious celibate.”³⁰

*Religious Celibate***Permitted Initiations**

If that is the case, you may say, it is not right for religious celibates to engage in Mantra. But to that I say:

HAVING ACQUIRED THE PRECEPTOR-INITIATION,
HE MAY LISTEN TO ALL TANTRAS AND EXPLAIN THEM; [336b]
PERFORM FIRE-OFFERING, GIFT-WORSHIP AND THE LIKE:³¹
[THERE IS NO WRONG IN WISDOM ABOUT REALITY.] [Stanza 67]

If a celibate Mantrist wants to listen to the Tantras, to study and explain them to others, to perform Fire-offering and Gift-offering and [mantra-] muttering, then every Tantra and every ritual for the Maṇḍalas clearly says that it is all right, [provided he has] the Flask initiation of the “Preceptor-Initiation”. The Guru-Monk Painḍapātika Avadhūtipa says this also:

“If that is so, you may say, then religious celibates [who practise Mantra], although Mahāyānists, are being untrue to Mahāyāna. [But I say,] that would assuredly be treating this matter mistakenly. Whoever has obtained an Ācārya and his Permission and the Flask – because of his [very] Initiation to practise those Tantras, to hear, study, and explain them – is [entirely] true to Mahāyāna. But then, you may say, if that is so, there is no need of the Secret and Insight Initiations even for laymen. [And I say, yes,] it is unnecessary and they are dissuaded from it.”³²

And then he continues at length on that subject.

Wisdom of Thatness

THERE IS NO WRONG IN WISDOM ABOUT REALITY.³³ [Stanza 67]

My Gurus have given much specific instruction to me in this matter, and this is what some of these holy men say:

[a] “If a bodhisattva in his compassion knows the good of creatures and is governed by compassion in all that he does, then wrong does not exist in his Tantra, and in

consequence of it, his merit will even greatly increase.”

This interpretation means he has reached the weak [degree] of Patience.³⁴

- [b] According to other holy men, there could never be wrong [coming] from a yogin who knows all phenomena to be illusion and is wise in the reality [of Emptiness]:

“Any yogin who knows [that all phenomena] [337a]
Are like unto the water-reflected moon,
Will never be clothed in such things
As sin and merit.

All his inner and outer states
Are [of the] mind and illusion-like to him:
He conceptualises no longer [the Proofs of]
Non-permanence and Non-destruction
And of them both taken together;
Untouched by the poison of entity-grasping,
Who has seen his like? Wrong does not exist
In his wisdom [of all] as illusion.”

[This interpretation] means that wrong does not exist for one who has reached the weak [degree of] Highest Mundane Phenomena.³⁵

- [c] As to there being no wrong [according to] the Guru-Monk, Painḍāpatika, you must study that same [previously quoted] text which was made from his lectures. In his interpretation, wrong does not exist even for one who is at the very start of the Beginner’s Level.³⁶

- [d] Still other holy men say:

“There will be no wrong [in practising Mantra] according to methods in such texts as the *Questions of Kāśyapa Sūtra*, the *Injunctions on Dealing with Women Sūtra*, the *Glorious Original [Aeon] Tantra*, the *Unfailing Discipline* and other Tantras in that section, and in [the works of] Ārya Nāgārjuna and Ācārya Āryadeva. This means there is no wrong for one who knows the Thatness [of Emptiness], if he has reached the weak [degree of] Summits.”³⁷

[e] Others again:

“Wrong does not exist for him who has the Enlightenment Thought in the ultimate sense [of] the non-arising of all phenomena, and it is growing in his [conscious] stream; for there can be no wrong when one knows the Thatness of phenomena.”

This [interpretation] means there will be no wrong for those [who are on the Path of] Vision of the Truths.³⁸ Consequently, the yogin who is following the Paths must learn both what is and what is not wrong [for him].³⁹

Concluding Verses

- [1] That wish-granting jewel, the Apparition Body,
Has passed away, and no longer are there
Great scholars like Ārya Nāgārjuna and the rest;
And in these times of the approaching decline
Of the Sage’s holy Doctrine, many persons come forth [337b]
With the erroneous conceptions of madmen.
- [2] They see the libraries of sūtra and śāstra,
But are lost to the guidance of Guru-tradition;
Like blind men, they embark
On scripture’s vast ocean of meaning.
They do not know Mahāyāna’s superior Path, and
Their misunderstanding of it ought not be followed.
- [3] Without a Guru for their eyes,
They have not seen and will not see
The true arrangement of the Mahāyāna Path.
- [4] Like the ocean, Mahāyāna is deep,
And, like the sky, it is very vast;
Yet they preach as they please, without Guru,
Satisfied they’ve seen the books of
Sūtra and śāstra, but no reliance on Guru for them.
- [5] If they do not know even so much
As the steps of the Mahāyāna plan,
How do they view its deep and vast meaning?
- [6] A person whom a holy Guru has chosen
Because of his right disposition for Mahāyāna –
Follow that wise one, whoever he be.
- [7] This is a time of great trepidation,

Now is the hour of the Teaching's decline,
 So ask in what country and which direction
 Lives that man of the good Gurus' tradition,
 Awed by his wise [teachers'] true comprehension –
 And, when you find him, serve him for months or years,
 And in careful attendance you will win him.

[8] Even if this person behaves very badly,
 In the manners he has of body and speech,
 Pay no attention [but instead] accept the holy Doctrine.
 As the bee, for example, in selecting a flower,
 Carries off the honey, leaving the flower behind;
 So a wise man too conducts himself like that,
 Listening to instruction, not looking at manners.

[9] When the mind becomes skilled through his counsel,
 Then for the Enlightenment to be gained in this very life,
 Beg instruction in the Guru tradition [338a]
 On the mantra of *Cakrasamvara*⁴⁰ and the like.
 If you do not learn the method of the Mantra texts,
 Excluding the two Initiations [of Secret and Insight],
 You are chained by much discursive thought,
 And Buddhahood will not be swiftly won.

Again I say:

[1] The lustre of the Sage's teaching now fades,
 And the Teacher's holy Doctrine is perishing.
 If outsiders and inferior men, and even
 The Buddha's own disciples are destroying it,
 Then who cannot destroy the Sage's teaching?

[2] The destruction comes especially from religious:
 Some, in following the Mantra of the Tantras,
 Practise it falsely and teach others to stray;
 And others, not knowing the true meaning of
 The Perfection of Insight as it really is,
 Preach, "Eliminate the relative truths,
 Like cause and effect, and intrinsic nature is pure"!⁴¹

[3] And some have given up everything in
 The training that *Prātimokṣa* and Vinaya teach,
 Mingling with laymen in field and trade,
 Conducting business even in assembly hall.

In the *Descent into Laṅka Sūtra*:

“It will come about in the future [that]
 The wearing of the saffron robe and the
 Preaching that it does not matter,
 Will be the disgrace of my Teaching. . .
 At the end of this Age of Strife,
 The world will not cultivate the Holy Doctrine.”⁴²

And in the words of the great scholar Vasubandhu:

[1] “The Teacher, the Eye of the world, is closed;
 And men of mastery are all but gone. [338b]
 His Teaching is confused in the misunderstanding
 Of men who practise as they please, not having seen
 Thatness. [2] The Self-arisen One has passed
 Excellently to Calm; they that held the Self-arisen
 Teaching dear are deprived of their Lord. Unleashed is
 Corruption, destroying virtue, sporting at will today.
 [3] And so this fair teaching of the Sage
 Emits, as it were, its dying gasp; and knowing
 It is the hour when impurities are in power,
 Those desiring liberation act with care.”⁴³

Colophons

[BENEDICTION]

May the instruction on the Superior Person, set forth
 More fully here, endure as long as the Buddha’s teaching;
 And possessed of the compassionate Enlightenment Thought,
 May you practise it with zeal by day and by night.

[TRANSLATOR’S COLOPHON]

This *Commentary on “The Lamp for the Enlightenment Path”* which ends here, was composed by Dīpaṅkara-śrījñāna of the royal family of Bengal, a great and learned monk of Śākya, who lives the Bodhisattva’s life.

[1] There lives a Bodhisattva who is like a holy Tree:
 Its seed of Conduct was sown in the soil of Faith;
 Its sprout of Love dewed by the water of Concentration;
 Its root is Compassion; Enlightenment Thought its trunk;
 Its boughs are the Perfections, leaves the Attractions;

It flowers with the Seven Riches,
Bears the fruit of the Six Mindfulnesses,
And is filled with the Ten Virtues' fragrance;
Birds of disciples are its [friendly] flock.

[2] Dīpaṃkaraśrīpāda is he, born of Bengal,
Envoy of the Buddha's race in our present day,
Born like a Sun in the midst of men,
In fame renowned, wise in true religion,
By his vows well bound, and a scholar of ability,
Worthy to be Guru to those of rank.

[3] Cherished like an only child by the Buddhas,
With a mind and high intention like gold and crescent moon,
He is a teacher attuned to the thoughts and ways [339a]
Of those who stray from the explanation of Doctrine.
He would never think to avoid these persons
Who have no faith, as though they were poison;
But simply rejecting their bad ways, his own unharmed,
His friendly strength is instantly ready.

[4] Born in cultured country because of good karma,
Born of royal family, a good rebirth;
Born of Mahāyāna Family, the good tradition;
Born a Buddha's Son by his good resolve.

[5] Such is this Guru Bodhisattva,
Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, the Compassionate One;
And the disciple who aspires [to be] his "Superior Person"
Is this Śākya monk, Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba.

[6] And he says, having given his own careful
Service with reverence and faith, that [this text]
Is the essence of [Atīśa's] solemn oath: "This is the
Heart of hearts of the *Royal Union Tantra: Cakrasaṃvara*;
As well of the 84,000 collections of Doctrine;
Cultivate in the mind all your days and nights."

[7] There has never been another Tibetan disciple
Besides myself alone, Nag-tsho, to whom he granted
So unstintingly of his personal instruction.
With faith and devotion, I will always pay homage
To that Guru, with my body and speech and mind.

Translated and corrected by the great Indian scholar and
Bodhisattva Guru, the Bengali Śrī-dīpaṃkarajñānapāda,
and the monk-translator, Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba.

[Sde-dge version ends here].

[SECOND BENEDICTION]

In fame renowned, versed in the best religious tradition,
 Like the Sun, labouring only for others' good;
 Such is this holy and Venerable One
 Who reformed Mnga'-ris' three regions in Holy Doctrine.

When Byang-chub-'od and Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba
 With sincere mind and heart begged a *Commentary* [339b]
 On the *Lamp for the Path*, this is what he composed,
 With wisdom and love as the heart of the matter.

"Do not show it to all," he said; "class it as secret."⁴⁴

Since he wrote this for virtue's sake,
 May I and all others understand the entire meaning
 Of this text exactly, and swiftly attain the rank
 Of the Omniscient King, and may the measureless
 Good of creatures be marvellously achieved!

Notes to Chapter 7

- 1 Ot. 4530, Vol. 81:115.2. Tripiṭakamāla was quoted at the end of the preceding chapter, concluding the explanation of the Perfection Vehicle; hence the statement "And again . . .". The "one and only Goal" which both the Perfection Vehicle and the Mantra Vehicle have in common is the resulting Enlightenment. The Goal must be kept "unobscured" (*ma-rmong/ asammūḍha*); that is, the Mantra Vehicle must be as carefully and correctly followed in its proper order and details as the Vehicle of the Perfections and its paths.
- 2 The Enlightenment Thought in its ultimate sense (as opposed to its relative sense) refers again to the cultivation of Emptiness. Mādhyamika teaching on Emptiness is the basis of Mantrayāna. See Chapter 6, note 13.
- 3 *bskyed-pa'i rim-pa/utpatti-krama*: Generation Stage. Two stages are referred to in the practice of the highest class of Tantra, the Supreme Union:

- 1) Generation Stage,
- 2) Completion Stage (*rdzogs-pa'i rim-pa/sampanna-krama*).

The first refers to preparatory study, initiations, and practices in the lower classes of Tantra as well as of Supreme Union Tantra itself; the second is the ultimate initiation and experience in Supreme Union. See A. Wayman, *FBT*, Chapter 9; and *TBT*, pp. 47–8.

- 4 *gzungs/dhāraṇī*: the actual syllables and sounds of a mantra, often with no meaning outside of their applied symbolism. The word *mantra* is more generic; *dhāraṇīs* are the specific mantras of particular deities and Vajrasattvas as found in their particular Tantras.
- 5 *bzlas-brjod/jāpa*: muttering, or whispering.
- 6 Atiśa mentions *eight* kinds of rites, but lists only the four more commonly known ones:

- 1) Appeasement (*zhi-ba/sāntikam*);
- 2) Prosperity (*rgyas-pa/pauṣṭikam*);

- 3) Domination (*dbang-du byed-pa/vaṣī-karaṇam*);
 4) Destruction (*mngon-spyod = drag-shul spyod-pa/ābhicārikam*).
- 7 There are various listings of the Eight Great Powers (*dnagos-grub/siddhi*) in both Brahmanic and Buddhist tantric practice. See *Yogasūtra*, III:46ff., for an example of the former. Wayman (*FBT*, p. 220, n. 13) has equivalated the Tibetan and Sanskrit terms for most of the powers in Atiṣa's list:
- 1) Good Flask (*bum-pa bzang-po/gola-bhadra*);
 - 2) Fleetness of Foot (*rkang mgyogs/pādālepa*);
 - 3) Sword (*ral-gri/khaḍga*);
 - 4) Commander (*mngag-gzhug/presaka*);
 - 5) Underworld (*sa-'og/pātāla-siddhi*);
 - 6) Invisibility (*mi-s nang-ba/antardhāna*);
 - 7) Wishing-Tree (*dpag-bsam gyi shing = kalpa vṛkṣa*);
 - 8) Royalty (*rgyal-srid/rājya*).
- 8 See Glossary for the Four Bases of Miraculous Powers.
- 9 Atiṣa's division of Tantras into seven classes differs from the division of four classes established by Bu-ston for the arrangement of the Tantra in *Kanjur*. Bu-ston's *Rgyud-sde spyi'i rnam-par-bzhag rgyud-sde rin-po-che'i mdzes-rgyan* [Ot. 1, Vol. 1] is the opening treatise of the entire Tibetan canon, listing the Tantras in order, beginning with the highest, and their individual sub-groupings according to Tantric "Family" (*rigs/kula*) with its Progenitor (*gtso-bo/kuleśa*) and progeny (*rigs-can*). The four classes of Tantra of Bu-ston have been described by Wayman [*TBT*, p. 33] in this way:
- 1) Supreme Union (*rnal-'byor bla-na-med/anuttara*): for those who delight in inner concentration completely;
 - 2) Union (*rnal-'byor/yoga*): for those who delight predominantly in inner concentration over external ritual;
 - 3) Practice (*spyod/caryā*): for those who delight equally in external ritual and inner concentration;
 - 4) Action (*bya-ba/kriyā*): for those who delight mainly in external ritual over inner concentration.
- As will be seen from Atiṣa's following quotation, still another division of *five* classes of Tantra exists. Judging from the titles which Atiṣa later presents for bibliography of his seven classes, it becomes apparent that his division is simply a more detailed listing and designation of the same groupings which Bu-ston has under only four classes. For example, Bu-ston's Supreme Union class contains two important divisions of Mother Tantras (stressing Wisdom and Insight) and Father Tantras (stressing Means). Atiṣa's Supreme Union corresponds to Bu-ston's Mother Tantra; his Great Union, to the Father Tantra.
- 10 Ot. 84, Vol. 3:253.3.
- 11 *slob-dpon dbang-bskur/ācārya-abhiśeka*. The full title of this Initiation in the Union and Supreme Union Tantra class is "Vajra-Preceptor" (*rdo-rje slob-dpon/vajra-ācārya*). In this section of the *Commentary*, I translate *ācārya* with the English "Preceptor" to distinguish this office and Initiation from the connotations of *Ācārya* seen in the Path of the Perfections and in the Prātimokṣa sense. See Chart II, and Wayman, *FBT*, pp. 311–17.
- 12 *rjes-gnang/anujñā*.
- 13 *maṇḍala*. A symbolic representation of a deity's realm of existence, generally a geometric design showing all aspects of the universe. "Entering the maṇḍala" is the meditational construction of this representation within

oneself, seeing and experiencing the Emptiness of the universe. Such meditation is both part of Sevenfold Worship (see Glossary) and of Tantric Initiation.

- 14 *sgrub-thabs/sādhana*: the formal yogic meditation procedure of exercise of evoking a deity within oneself or in front of oneself. Hundreds of such *sādhana*s are found in the Tantra section of the *Tanjur*; for example, Atīśa's own *Tārā-bhaṭṭārikā-sādhana* [Ot. 4508] for his own patroness, whom he mentions here.
- 15 *sbyin-sreg/homa*: fire-offering.
gtor-ma/bali: food-offering.
- 16 The devotee must be assigned a deity and the mantra appropriate to its service; for example, Tārā (the "Saviouress") and her mantra: *Om tā-re tuttāre tu-re svā-hā*.
- 17 See root stanza 32 and its commentary.
- 18 For the account of this Ācārya and the king, see the sources from Tāranātha and 'Gos lo-tsa-va given by A. Chattopadhyaya, *Atīśa and Tibet*, pp. 47ff. Substantially they are in agreement with Atīśa's statements here.
- 19 *Ādi-buddha-mahā-tantra* = *Kālacakra-tantra* [Ot. 4, Vol. 1]. This Tantra is classified by Bu-ston as "Neither Father nor Mother" tantra of the Supreme Union class, and strangely is omitted from Atīśa's bibliography in this chapter of the *Commentary*.

Stanza 64 states the two of the Initiations which are parts of the Preceptor-Initiation (see Chart II) are forbidden to religious celibates – the "Secret Initiation" (*gsang-ba/guhyā*) and the "Insight Initiation" (*shes-rab/prajñā*). These two Initiations involve contemplative yogic practices with a female partner called the "Wisdom" (*rig/vidyā*) or sometimes the "Seal" (*phyag-rgya/mudrā*); the basic symbolism being that of the union of Emptiness (female = mother) and Means (male = father), but, in the terminology of Tantra, the union of Emptiness and Bliss. The symbolism of the sexual union is very complex and profound in Tantra, and the interpretation of Tantric practice allows for both the contemplation of the sexual embrace with the *mudrā/vidyā* mentally, and contemplation of it with an actual or "concrete" partner. (See Chart II, under "Seal".) It is the latter type that is involved in the Secret and Insight Initiations of the Preceptor-Initiation, and which is forbidden to religious celibates by the *Kālacakra* itself, by the very nature of the Prātimokṣa vows and the chastity it implies. Because of the abuse of Tantra in Tibet at the time, and its literal and unguided practice, Atīśa's view (as he validates from his teachers) is that the two Initiations are dangerous, not to say forbidden, to laymen as well.

Because the language of Tantric literature is correctly known only to those who have been initiated and carefully guided by a Guru, the Sde-gzhung Rin-po-che has kindly pointed out to me the passages in the *Kālacakra* (*Great Tantra of Primal Buddha*) where the prohibitions mentioned by Atīśa are found. Both places occur in Chapter 5 (*ye-shes/jñāna*) of the famous scripture [Ot. 4, Vol. 1], the first in indirect language which indicates that physical continence must be preserved [p. 166.4ff], and the second [p. 168.4f] where it states that those yogins who are observing the vows [of religious celibacy] must at all times avoid the practices involved in the yogic union with a woman in the Insight-Wisdom Initiations.

- 20 *phyag-rgya chen-po/mahā-mudrā*: Great Seal. The pledge (*dam-tshig/samaya*) of the Great Seal is part of the Preceptor-Initiation. See Chart II, and Wayman, *FBT*, pp. 225–39.
- 21 For Expulsion offences, see Chapter 3, note 4.

- 22 The quote is possibly from Jñānakīrti's general commentary on Tantra classes and the Vehicles at the end of the *Tanjur* Tantra section: *Tattva-avatāra-sakala-vacas-vyākhyā-pra-karṇa* [Ot. 4532].
- 23 *ya-ba-di-pa*. According to sources in A. Chattopadhyaya, op.cit., p. 74, Painḍapātika = Avadhūtipa = Advayavajra = Maitripa. For a brief history of this early Tantric teacher of Atīśa, see *Blue Annals* (Roerich), II, p. 732.
- 24 Ot. 83, Vol. 3: 233.3f.
- 25 For identification of this author, see A. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, pp. 485f.
- 26 Ot. 893, Vol. 35:121.5
- 27 Unidentified.
- 28 Ot. 760(43), Vol. 24:189.3
- 29 Ot. 760(25) and Ot. 847. The same quotation occurs in SS:102.
- 30 Ot. 3097, Vol. 68. What is given as an actual quotation from this short text by Painḍapātika (= Maitripa) is Atīśa's own synopsis of it, interpreting the meaning of his Guru.
- 31 Atīśa's "Thirteen Mantras" are good examples of the types of ritual suggested here: [Ot. 4856–68]
- 1) *Mantrārtha-avatāra* (*sngags-kyi don 'jug-pa*),
 - 2) *Seka-upadeśa* (*dbang-gi man-ngag*),
 - 3) *Samaya-gupti* (*dam-tshig sbas-pa*),
 - 4) *Saudha-dāna* (*gzhal-yas-khang sbyin-pa*),
 - 5) *Peyotkṣepa-vidhi* (*chu-gtor-gyi cho-ga*),
 - 6) *Homa-vidhi* (*sbyin-sreg-gi cho-ga*),
 - 7) *Deva-pūjā-krama* (*lha-mchod-pa'i rim-pa*),
 - 8) *Āyuh-sādhana* (*tshe bsgrub-pa'i thabs*),
 - 9) *Mṛtyu-vañcana* (*'chi-ba slu-ba*),
 - 10) *Mumūrṣu-sāstra* (*'chi-ka-ma'i bstan-bcos*),
 - 11) *Śma-homa* (*ro bsreg-pa*),
 - 12) *Sapta-parva-vidhi* (*bdun-tshigs-kyi cho-ga*),
 - 13) *Cūtā-vidhi* (*tsha-tsha'i cho-ga*).
- 32 Ot. 3097, Vol. 68. See note 30 above. The quotation is again Atīśa's paraphrasing of his Guru's instruction.
- 33 */de nyid rig la nyes pa med/*. The line is open to interpretation because of the word *rig* (= *vidyā*), which can also refer to the female partner of the Secret and Insight Initiations, as well as the meaning I have translated here, viz. "wisdom".
- 34 See Chart I and Glossary: Aids to Conviction.
- 35 See Chart I and Glossary: Aids to Conviction.
- 36 See Chart I.
- 37 See Chart I and Glossary: Aids to Conviction.
- 38 See Chart I.
- 39 The importance of learning what is and what is not wrong in practice is stressed in all Paths and Vehicles, from the Hearer's knowledge of his Prātimokṣa rules to the Bodhisattva's "Prātimokṣa" for his Conduct, and now for the Mantrayāna as well. See Wayman, *FBT*, pp. 328–9.
- 40 This is the same Supreme Union Tantra mentioned in the bibliography given earlier in the chapter. The Vajrasattva to whom it is dedicated is also the being to whom Atīśa paid obeisance at the opening of the *Commentary*.
- 41 The very concise statement means that it is a false understanding of the Perfection of Insight to think that mere analysis of entities (such as cause and effect) for their emptiness of intrinsic nature is complete on the level of relative or everyday knowledge. The Insight must penetrate to the level of Ultimate Truth as well, seeing the emptiness of Emptiness.

42 Ot. 775, Vol. 29:77.1 and 84.1.

43 *Explanation of the "Treasure of Phenomenology"*, Ot. 5591, Vol. 115:277.4.

44 */kun la ma bstan bar gsang bar rigs so gsungs/*. The meaning of "secret" here must be taken in the sense that his text should be taught only to those who are fit and sincere.

Appendices

Chart I The Five Paths

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|---------------|--------|
| SUPRAMUNDANE PATHS | V <i>ADEPT PATH</i> 1 Truth-body 2 Enjoyment-body 3 Apparition-body | BUDDHA LEVEL [Time of] | TIME OF PATHS | RESULT |
| | IV <i>CONTEMPLATION PATH</i> [Gradual elimination of Obscurations; growth in the Perfections in Desire Realm; Insight through Eight Contemplative States in Form and Formless Realms.] | BODHISATTVA LEVELS 10 Dharma Cloud 9 True Mind 8 Unshakeable 7 Far-Reaching 6 Face to Face 5 Invincible 4 Flaming 3 Luminous 2 Stainless | | |
| | III <i>VISION PATH</i> [Patience and Knowledge of Four Truths in all Three Realms] | 1 Joyous | | |
| MUNDANE PATHS | II <i>PRACTICE PATH:</i> 4 Highest Mundane Dharmas 3 Patience 2 Summits 1 Warmth | DEVOUTNESS LEVEL | CAUSE | |
| | I <i>EQUIPMENT PATH:</i> 5 Insight 4 Concentration 3 Mindfulness 2 Zeal 1 Faith | BEGINNER LEVEL [Begetting the Thought] | | |

Chart II Initiations in the Four Tantras

[Permission of the Guru and Entrance to Maṇḍala must precede.]

| <i>ACTION</i> | <i>PRACTICE</i> | <i>UNION</i> | <i>SUPREME UNION</i> |
|---|--|---|---|
| [1] Garland [<i>phreng</i>] [2] Water [<i>chu</i>] [3] Diadem [<i>cod-pan</i>] | [4] Vajra [<i>rdo-rje</i>] [5] Bell [<i>dril-bu</i>] [6] Name [<i>ming</i>] | [7] PRECEPTOR-INITIATION* [<i>slob-dpon dbang-bskur</i>] [After Five Wisdom Initiations]: Three Pledges: (<i>dam-tshig</i>) 1 Vajra 2 Bell 3 Seal <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> Mental Insight Concrete Insight </div> [a] FLASK [<i>bum-pa</i>] [b] SECRET* [<i>gsang-ba</i>] [c] INSIGHT* [<i>shes-rab</i>] [d] SYLLABLE [<i>tshigs</i>] |  |
| FIVE [2-6] WISDOM INITIATIONS [<i>rig-pa'i dbang</i>] | | | |

* Referred to in Stanzas 62-66.

Glossary

Ācārya (slob-dpon). Sanskrit title for formal teachers and great authors.

Afflictions (nyon-mongs/kleśa). That aspect of human activity which induces and produces karmic consequences. One of the two sources of obscuration (q.v.) or obstacles to Enlightenment. Often taken as three fetters or poisons: attraction, revulsion, and illusion. Also listed as ten: 1) desire, 2) aversion, 3) pride, 4) ignorance, 5) doubt, 6) view that holds a real person, 7) view that holds extremes, 8) false views, 9) holding one's own views as best, 10) holding one's own conduct and vowed life as best.

Aggregates (phung-bo/skandha). The five groups of phenomena that make up the apparent "self": 1) body or form, 2) feelings, 3) perceptions, 4) habits, 5) consciousness.

Aids to Conviction (nges-par byed-pa'i cha dang mthun-pa/nirvedha-bhāgīya). The four basic virtuous achievements of the Practice Path (see Chart I), each in its degrees of weak-medium-strong: 1) Warmth: so called from the great fire that has been kindled to burn up the afflictions. 2) Summits: so called because it is a higher achievement than just the basic virtues, and from it one ascends to higher states. 3) Patience: devout perseverance in virtue as one approaches the Vision Path. 4) Highest Mundane Phenomena: so called because one experiences all phenomena of the world as essentially full of suffering, and on that account is ready for the Path of Vision and seeing the Four Truths in their entirety.

Aids to Liberation (thar-pa'i cha dang mthun-pa/mokṣa-bhāgīya). The five basic virtues of the Equipment Path (see Chart I), necessary for the beginning of progress toward Enlightenment: 1) Faith, 2) Zeal, 3) Mindfulness, 4) Concentration, 5) Insight.

Apparition Body (sprul-sku/nirmāṇa-kāya). One of the Three Bodies of Buddha (q.v.). A miraculously created body which appears in the lower realms, like that of Gautama in the sixth century BC, and for Tibetans, like the Dalai Lama and other incarnate lamas who are reincarnations of Buddhas.

Arhat (dgra-bcom-pa). One who has attained the highest level and goal of the Hīnayāna system, after passing through four stages of perfection: stream-entering, once-returning, never-returning, and arhatship. The Arhat has achieved nirvāṇa, but not Buddhahood, because he does not return out of compassion to teach others as the Mahāyāna bodhisattva does.

Asaṅga (thogs-med). Third-century AD saint and author, reputed founder of the Mind-Only (cittamātra) school of Mahāyāna, inspired by Maitreya. Composer of the *Levels of Yoga Practice*, and numerous other important works which Atīśa follows in his teaching on Calmness and the superknowledges.

- Bodhibhadra** (byang-chug bzang-po). One of Atiṣa's early teachers at Nālandā university, whose *Chapter on Concentration Equipment* is used extensively in the *Commentary*.
- Bodhisattva** (byang-chub sems-dpa'). An "Enlightenment-being", used in the sense both of anyone pursuing the Mahāyāna paths to Enlightenment and of one who has already achieved Buddhahood but continues to return to teach others, referring as well to the eternal Buddhas who have always been so.
- Broad Practice** (rgya-chen spyod/vistīṛṇa-caryā). The common way of referring to the practice of the Perfections, motivated by compassion for others in the pursuit of one's own Enlightenment.
- Buddha-field** (sangs-rgyas kyi khams/buddha-kṣetra). Realm of existence of a Buddha.
- Byang-chub-'od** (Bodhi-prabhā). Royal prince of Mnga'-ris and ordained monk who invited Atiṣa to Tibet and became his disciple.
- Cakrasaṃvara** ('khor-lo sdom-pa/bde-mchog). Name of an Enlightened Being around whom a group of Tantric texts and practices centre. Known as the Triple-Pledge King because of the special Tantric vows taken with initiation in his maṇḍala.
- Calmness** (zhi-gnas/samatha). Goal of yogic practice, always paired with Higher Vision, connoting perfect attainment of concentration.
- Celibate**. See Pure Life.
- Community** (dge-'dun/saṅgha). Originally denoting the monastic communities; later embracing all who accept the Buddhist doctrine.
- Concentration** (ting-nge-'dzin/samādhi). The culmination of the steps of yogic exercises in achieving single-pointed focus of awareness beyond the senses and mental activity.
- Conceptual Thought** (rnam-rtog/vikalpa). The ideation process of the mind, the forming of concepts and discursive thinking.
- Conduct** (tshul-khrims/śīla). Second of the Ten Perfections, involving the observance of vows, growth in virtuous actions, and seeking the good of others.
- Conscious Stream** (rgyud/saṃtana). Buddhist term for describing the individual so-called person, which ultimately is constituted in a flowing series of phenomena (chos/dharma), and what in other systems would be called the soul or self (bdag/ātman).
- Dependent Origination** (rten-cing-'brel-bar 'byung-ba/pratītya-samutpāda). The Buddha's twelvefold "chain of causality" explaining the factors involved in continued rebirth in saṃsāra, called "Dependent Origination" rather than "Causal Chain" because there can be no real or true cause-effect relation in a world in which there are no real substances (the doctrine of Non-Self). Hence, the twelve links of the chain are merely *conditions* under which the following link arises in dependence on the former endlessly. Only the cessation of the links of the ignorance-condition and thirst-condition can break the chain and make liberation possible. The twelve conditions or links are: 1) ignorance, 2) impressions, 3) consciousness, 4) name-and-form, 5) the six sense-organs, 6) contact of senses with objects, 7) feeling,

8) thirst or desire, 9) grasping, 10) becoming, 11) birth, and 12) old age and death.

In the tradition of the Middle Way school, Dependent Origination is used to show the relativity of all phenomena, and hence the proof of the emptiness of inherent existence in all things.

Destinies ('gro-ba/gati). The six principal rebirths possible in saṃsāra, depending on one's karma. Three good destinies: human, gods, demi-gods; three bad destinies: animals, hell-beings, hungry ghosts.

Discipline ('dul-ba/vinaya). One of the Three Baskets of Buddhist scripture, containing the narratives of how the Buddha established the monastic life and rules.

Discipline-Master ('dul-ba 'dzin-pa/vinaya-dhara). Scholar-monk who specialises in the study and interpretation of the monastic rule; also famous authors of commentaries on the *Discipline*.

Doctrine (chos/dharma). Second of the Three Jewels; the Buddhist teaching in general.

Eightfold Path ('phags-pa'i lam yan-lag brgyad). Fourth of the Four Truths, the way to bring about the cessation of the origin of suffering: 1) Right view, 2) Right thought, 3) Right speech, 4) Right conduct, 5) Right livelihood, 6) Right effort, 7) Right mindfulness, and 8) Right concentration.

Eight Great Powers (dngos-grub/siddhi). Magical and preternatural capabilities developed through Tantric yoga practice, to be used only for the good of others. See *Commentary*, Chapter 7.

Eight Unfavourable Conditions (mi-khom-pa brgyad/aṣṭav-akṣana). Aspects of saṃsāra that render the pursuit of liberation especially difficult: rebirth 1) in a hell, 2) as an animal, 3) as a hungry ghost, 4) as one of the long-lived gods, or 5) in a barbarian country, and 6) having impaired faculties, or 7) false views, or 8) living when no Tathāgata appears.

Elements (kham/dhātu). The eighteen phenomena which compose the stream of consciousness (q.v.); that is, each of the six sense-bases (organ + object) with its activating consciousness (rnam-shes/vijñāna).

Emptiness (stong-pa-nyid/śūnyatā). The absolute nature of all existence, void of own-nature in respect to both person and phenomena in the Mahāyāna system.

Enjoyment Body (longs-spyod sku/saṃbhoga-kāya). The body of Buddha as it exists in the Buddha paradises (fields) and upper realms, teaching the Doctrine to bodhisattvas who are at that stage. This body is fully adorned with the unique physical characteristics of a Buddha.

Enlightenment Thought (byang-chub-sems/bodhicitta). The basic attitude and motivation of attaining Buddhahood for the sake of all living beings; contains two stages: resolution (q.v.) and actual progress (q.v.) in compassion and insight.

Equipment. See Two Equipments.

Equipoise (mnyam-par bzhag-pa/samāhita). The culmination of yogic concentration, steadiness in holding the composure of Calmness when the lower levels of distraction have been eliminated.

- Essential Reality** (chos-nyid/dharmatā). The true nature of a thing as it is in itself, not as perceived or apprehended.
- Five Aggregates.** See Aggregates.
- Five Bovine Articles** (ba'i rnam lnga/pañca-gavya). Products of the cow, commonly used in India as housing material: dung, urine, spittle, mucus, milk.
- Five Branches of Knowledge** (rig-pa'i gnas lnga/pañca-vidyā-sthā-nāni). Five classical sciences of: grammar, logic, the Self, healing, and crafts.
- Five Dominants** (dbang-po/indriyāṇi). Same virtues as the Aids to Liberation (q.v.).
- Five Eyes** (mig/cakṣu). The fleshly eye, the religious eye, the insight eye, the divine eye, the Buddha eye.
- Five Paths** (lam/mārga). The five major stages of growth through which one must pass to reach either nirvāṇa or Buddhahood: 1) Equipment Path, 2) Practice Path, 3) Vision Path, 4) Contemplation Path, and 5) Adept Path. These stages will occur whether one is of the Hearer's or Solitary Buddha's Vehicle seeking the goal of Arhatship in nirvāṇa, or of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva's Vehicle seeking Buddhahood for the sake of others. The first two Paths are considered Mundane in that the virtues being practised do not yet entail direct personal experience of the Four Truths. The remaining three Paths are called Supramundane because the seeker's experience is now a personal awareness and growth in the insights and wisdom which constitute the Enlightenment above and beyond even the ordinary good person's practice of virtue. See Chart I.
- Five Powers** (stobs/balāni). Same as Aids to Liberation (q.v.).
- Five Precepts** (bslab-pa'i gzhi/śikṣāpada). Five rules of the Lay Devotee (q.v.).
- Five Wisdoms** (ye-shes/jñānāni). 1) Wisdom about the purified nature of the Ultimate Element, 2) Mirror-like Wisdom, 3) Wisdom of Equanimity, 4) Investigative Wisdom, 5) Wisdom about what needs to be done.
- Four Applications of Mindfulness** (dran-pa nye-bar bzhag-pa/smṛti-upasthānāni). Directing one's awareness to: 1) body, 2) feelings, 3) thoughts, 4) phenomena.
- Four Bases of Miraculous Powers** (rdzu-'phrul gyi rkang-pa/ṛddhi-pādāḥ). Elements necessary for an adept to work wonders for others: 1) desire to do so, 2) diligence in practice, 3) thought, 4) examination.
- Four Basic Sins** (pham-par byung-ba/pārājika). The four most serious offences against the monastic rule; the transgressions comprising the Expulsion class in the Prātimokṣa (q.v.): 1) sexual intercourse, 2) theft, 3) homicide, 4) lying to praise self.
- Four Infinitudes** (tshad-med/apramāṇa). 1) love, 2) compassion, 3) gladness about others' happiness, 4) equanimity.
- Four Means of Attraction** (bsdu-pa'i dngos-po/saṃgraha-vastūni). Four ways of making the Doctrine appealing to others: 1) showing generosity, 2) speaking in a kind and loving manner, 3) working for the benefit of others, 4) practising what one preaches.

- Four Modes of Life** (tshul/kāra-ka-dharmāḥ). Four exhortations made in the monk's ordination ceremony: 1) not to revile if reviled, 2) not to be angry when provoked, 3) not cursing when cursed, 4) not striking back if struck.
- Four Resources** (rtēn bzhi). Promises made in the ordination ceremony of novices and monks: 1) to live under trees, 2) to live by alms, 3) to live in rags, 4) to use simple medicines.
- Four Right Efforts** (yang-dag-par spong-ba/saṃyak-prahāṇāni). 1) to prevent evil which has not yet occurred, 2) to forsake evil which already exists, 3) to bring about good which does not yet exist, 4) to develop goodness which already exists.
- Four Truths** (bden-pa/satya). 1) All existence is suffering, 2) and this suffering has its origin in self-grasping, 3) and that origination of suffering can be stopped, 4) by means of the Eightfold Path (q.v.).
- Good Flask** (bum-pa bzang-po/gola-bhadra). One of the Eight Great Powers (q.v.).
- Guru** (bla-ma). Spiritual teacher.
- Hearer** (nyan-thos/śrāvaka). Follower of the Theravādin teaching; one who is seeking his own liberation and striving to become an arhat (q.v.).
- Higher Intention** (lhag-bsam/adhyāśaya). See Three Higher Trainings.
- Higher Vision** (lhag-mthong/vipaśyanā). See Three Higher Trainings.
- Initiation** (dbang/abhiśeka). A series of spiritual empowerments conferred ritually by a qualified Tantric master, necessary for effective practice of different levels in the Mantra vehicle. The Union and Supreme Union tantras have an initiation called the Preceptor-Initiation which includes four parts: 1) Flask, 2) Secret, 3) Insight, 4) Syllable. For explanation of these, see *Commentary*, Chapter 7, notes 11 and 19.
- Insight** (shes-rab/prajñā). The sixth of the Ten Perfections (q.v.), always paired with Means as the two requisites for Enlightenment. Specifically, Insight is the experience of the total emptiness of existence in all intrinsic natures, developed through study, reflection, and one's own growth in it.
- Insight-Initiation**. See Initiation.
- Intermediate State** (bar-ma-do'i srid-pa/antarā-bhava). State between death and rebirth, lasting anywhere from a moment to forty-nine days, when the conscious stream (q.v.) is passing to the new kind of body determined by its habits-aggregate of the previous existence.
- Intrinsic Nature** (ngo-bo-nyid/svabhāva). The apparently real self-identity of things.
- Investigative Insight** (so-sor rtog-pa'i shes-rab/pratyavekṣanā-prajñā). Type of analysis necessary for realisation of the emptiness of inherent existence in all phenomena.
- Joyous Level** (rab-tu dga'-ba/pramuditā). See Ten Levels.
- Karma** (las). Moral action and its consequences, or the totality of one's actions insofar as they have merited one's present rebirth and condition and will continue to have future consequence.

Lay Devotee (dge-bsnyen/upāsaka). First and lowest of the Seven Ranks of Prātimokṣa in the Buddhist community; lay persons who take five basic vows: 1) to renounce all taking of life, 2) to renounce all unlawful sexual activity, 3) to refrain from taking what is not given, 4) to avoid speaking untruths, and 5) to abstain from intoxicating drink and places of vulgar amusement.

Levels. See Ten Levels.

Limbs of Calmness (yan-lag/aṅga). See *Commentary*, Chapter 5, note 13.

Lord of the World ('jig-rten mgon/lokeśvara). Epithet of the Buddha.

Maitreya (byams-pa). The Bodhisattva of Love, whose Buddha-field is presently the Tuṣita heaven, and who will come into the world as the next Buddha after Gautama. He is the inspirer of Aśaṅga (q.v.) in the teaching of the extensive practice of compassion.

Maṇḍala (dkyil-'khor). A geometric symbolic representation of the universe in all its directions, constructed either of actual graphic materials (paint, ink, sand) or mentally visualised according to prescribed rules of particular Tantras. The maṇḍala is used as a means of offering the universe to the Buddha, or in higher Tantras, of invoking one's assigned deity.

Mañjuḥoṣa ('jam-pa'i dbyangs). Another name of Mañjuśrī.

Mañjuśrī ('jam-dpal). Bodhisattva of Wisdom, inspirer of Nāgārjuna in the teaching of the profound view of Emptiness.

Mantra (gsang-sngags). Specific words or syllables whose recitation in Tantric practice confers merit and power of the deity to whom they belong.

Means (thabs/upāya). The frequent sūtra term for the Perfections of the virtues, Giving, Conduct, Patience, and so on, but excluding the Perfection of Insight. Means and Insight are always mentioned as a pair, the former Perfections denoting those which produce increasing karmic merit for better rebirths and purifying one's stream of consciousness, while the Perfection of Insight is the virtue itself through which Enlightenment is accomplished.

Meru (ri-rab). Himalayan mountain sacred in both Buddhist and Hindu tradition as the centre of the universe.

Middle Way (dbu-ma/madhyāmika). The Mahāyāna school, also called the Emptiness system, which is based on the *Perfection of Wisdom* sūtras and the writings of Nāgārjuna and his lineage, inspired by Mañjuśrī. Called "Middle Way" because of its insistence that Enlightenment is found somewhere between assertions of eternal realities and nothingness. Chapter 6 of the *Commentary* is Atiśa's endorsement of this school.

Monk (dge-slong/bhikṣu). Ordained member of the Community who has successfully passed through the training and observed the vows of the Lay Devotee and Novice, and who is formally committed to the rules of the Prātimokṣa by his acceptance into the Community in the ordination ceremony.

Mundane Paths ('jig-rten-pa'i lam/laukika-mārga). See Five Paths.

Nāgārjuna (klu-sgrub). Second-century AD saint and author, reputed founder of the Middle Way (mādhyamika) school of Mahāyāna, inspired by Mañjuśrī. Composer of the *Basic Stanzas on the Middle Way* and numerous other important works which Atīśa follows in his teaching on Higher Insight.

Nirvāṇa (mya-ngan-las-'das). Literally, "blown out" as with a candle's flame. The ultimate state of bliss and extinction of all possible cause of suffering. Three kinds of Nirvāṇa: 1) with-remainder, 2) without-remainder, 3) deferred. From the Mahāyāna point of view, Nirvāṇa-with-remainder is that of the Hīnayāna Arhat whose afflicting obscurations (q.v.) have ceased so that Nirvāṇa is achieved, but who retains some obscuration about what should have been known concerning the true nature of reality, that is the total non-inherent existence of both person and things. Nirvāṇa-without-remainder is that of the Solitary Buddha, all of whose obscurations have ceased, but whose state is less complete because of his declining to return to the world of saṃsāra for the sake of others. Deferred-Nirvāṇa describes the state of the Mahāyāna bodhisattva who has earned Nirvāṇa by eliminating all his obscurations, but by choice remains in saṃsāra to continue working for the liberation of others out of compassion.

Non-self (bdag-med/anātman). Basic characteristic of Buddhist teaching. In Hīnayāna, taken to mean the non-existence of soul or person; in Mahāyāna, extended to mean the non-existence both of person and of any inherently existing thing whatsoever.

Nun (dge-slong-ma/bhikṣuṇī). Feminine counterpart of monk (q.v.) with an additional stage of probation, and commitment to her appropriate vows in formal ordination ceremony.

Obscuration (sgrib/āvāraṇa). Frequent Mahāyāna term denoting the hindrances and obstacles that stand in the way of Enlightenment. Of two kinds: 1) afflictions (q.v.), those which have karmic consequences in terms of one's habitual tendencies, and 2) what still remains to be known (shes-bya/jñeya), that is the Insight yet to be gained concerning the emptiness of inherently existing things.

Ornaments of Virtuous Practice (dge-sbyong-gi rgyan/śramaṇa-alaṃ-kāra). Seventeen virtues pertaining to religious life; e.g., having faith, suffering little ill health, having few needs, having greater patience, and so on.

Own-Existence (rang-bzhin/svabhāva). An inherently existing thing having its own nature and substance.

Perfection. See Ten Perfections.

Phenomenon (chos/dharma). Technical term denoting in the Hīnayāna the ultimately real constitutive elements of the apparent world, conceived of as constantly appearing and disappearing instants of energy; hence "phenomenon". In Mahāyāna, even phenomena have no real inherent existence.

Poṣadha (gso-sbyong). Buddhist "sabbath day", fortnightly religious observances at new and full moon of each month, marked especially for monks by community recitation of the *Prātimokṣa*.

Powers. See Five Powers and Eight Great Powers.

Prātimokṣa (so-sor-thar-pa). Literally, “individual liberation”. Used in two senses: 1) referring to the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra* which contains the list of some two hundred rules to which monks are vowed, or 2) referring to the vowed Buddhist religious community and its seven ranks. See *Commentary*, Chapter 3.

Preceptor-Initiation (slob-dpon dbang/ācārya-abhiśeka). See Initiation.

Profound View (zab-mo lta-ba/gambhīra-dṛṣṭi). Middle Way school term for its teaching on the emptiness of inherent existence of both person and phenomena.

Progress Mind/Thought ('jug-sems/avatāra-citta). Second of the two stages of development of the Enlightenment-Thought, the first being Resolution (q.v.). The distinction arises because of the question of whether the simple resolve to achieve Enlightenment for the sake of others is sufficient for achieving the goal, and at what point one's resolve continues into actual achievement.

Pure Life/Celibacy (tshangs-par spyod-pa/brahma-cāryam). Originally the Indian term designating the student stage of life, which implied abstention from sexual activity. Later, the technical term for sexual purity and renunciation of marriage for religious pursuits; specifically, the monk's primary vow of religious celibacy for life in imitation of the Gautama Buddha.

Qualities of Purification (sbyangs-pa'i yon-tan/dhūta-guṇa). Twelve items having to do with the frugal equipment of monastic life, often paired with the Ornaments of Virtuous Practice (q.v.); such as dust-heap rags cleaned for making the monastic robes, alms, possessing a single mat for meditation, and so on.

Realm of True Reality (chos-kyi-dbyings/dharma-dhātu). For Mahāyānists, the ultimate reality underlying phenomena; that is, their non-existence as intrinsic natures, or Emptiness.

Refuges. See Three Refuges.

Relative Truth. See Two Truths.

Religious Life (rab-tu byung-ba/pravrajyā). Technical term for monastic community life according to vowed rules, as with novices and monks, and essentially implying celibacy; as opposed to lay-persons' life or the householder who is married, such as the Lay Devotee.

Resolution/Resolve-Mind/Resolve-Thought (smon-sems/prañidhāna-citta). The first determination of one who has the Enlightenment Thought (bodhicitta) to seek Enlightenment for the sake of others. The commitment that precedes the Progress-Mind/Thought (q.v.).

Samsāra ('khor-ba). The cycle of rebirth and transmigration. See Destinies.

Śāntideva (zhi-ba-lha). Eighth-century AD saint and scholar, author of the *Compendium of Training* and *Progress in Practice*, frequently quoted in the *Commentary* of Atīśa. Inspired by Mañjuḥṣa as the primary teacher of the lineage which combines the practice of the Perfections with Middle Way school's theory of Insight.

Śāstra (bstan-bcos). Secondary texts, explanations and commentaries; as opposed to primary sources such as the sūtras.

Secret-Initiation. See Initiation.

Sense-Bases (skye-mched/āyātana). Traditional Buddhist analysis of the apparent Self, along with the aggregates and elements (q.v.), to describe the process of cognition. Called “sense-base” because it combines six sensing organs or faculties with their proper objects; that is, the usual five senses and objects, and the mind and its object (which is phenomena) as the sixth.

Sevenfold Worship (mchod-pa'i yan-lag/pujanā-aṅga). Practices preparatory to meditation: 1) Homage to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, 2) Offering of pleasing objects, 3) Confession of sins, 4) Rejoicing at virtue, 5) Entreaty for the doctrine, 6) Petition for the Buddha's blessing, 7) Bestowal of merit on others. See *Commentary*, Chapter 1.

Seven Limbs of Enlightenment (byang-chub kyi yan-lag/bodhi-aṅga). 1) Mindfulness, 2) Investigation of phenomena, 3) Diligence, 4) Joy, 5) Purity, 6) Concentration, 7) Equanimity.

Seven Noble Riches ('phags-pa'i nor/ārya-dhanāni). 1) Faith, 2) Conduct, 3) Sense of shame, 4) Dread of blame, 5) Learning, 6) Renunciation, 7) Insight.

Seven Precious Things (rin-po-che/ratnāni). Traditional marks of royalty; 1) court, 2) elephants, 3) horses, 4) jewels, 5) harem, 6) subjects, 7) ministers.

Seven Ranks of Prātimokṣa. The two lay states: 1) Layman Devotee, and 2) Laywoman Devotee; and the five states in monastic life: 3) male Novice, 4) female Novice, 5) Nun-probationer, 6) Nun, and 7) Monk. Each state has its own particular rules of vowed observance and formal commitment ceremony.

Six Perfections. See Ten Perfections.

Solitary Buddha (rang sangs-rgyas/pratyeka-buddha). A self-taught Buddha, one of the two Hīnayāna paths (see Five Paths), whose nirvāṇa (q.v.) is more complete than the Arhat's, and who does not return as a Bodhisattva to help teach others out of compassion.

Spiritual Friend (dge-ba'i bshes-gnyen/kalyāṇa-mitra). Respectful title for one's guru or lama.

Stream of Consciousness. See Conscious Stream.

Suffering (sdug-bsngal/duḥkha). One of the primary marks of Buddhist teaching, that all is suffering; a reference to the first of the Four Holy Truths.

Superknowledges (mngon-shes/abhijñā). The five (or six) preternatural gifts arising from the practice of yoga and calming: 1) godlike sight, 2) godlike hearing, 3) knowledge of others' thoughts, 4) recollection of previous lives, 5) miraculous powers, 6) knowledge of having overcome obscurations. All are achievements to be used for the good of others. See *Commentary*, Chapter 5.

Suvarṇadvīpa (gser-gling-pa). One of Atiśa's principal teachers, also called Dharmakīrti, from whom he received both the Mind-Only and the Middle Way schools' teachings.

- Tantra** (rgyud). Canonical texts of the Mantra Vehicle, divided into seven classes by Atiśa, but later reduced to four: 1) Action (kriyā), 2) Practice (cārya), 3) Union (yoga), and 4) Supreme Union (anuttara-yoga). Tantras contain the swift mystical path of Buddhism, and are treated in the *Commentary*, Chapter 7.
- Tārā** (sgrol-ma). “Saviouress”, the compassionate goddess, partner of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Atiśa’s patroness, and subsequently Tibet’s favourite goddess because of Atiśa’s introducing her devotion.
- Tathāgata** (de-bzhin-gshegs-pa). “One who has gone thus.” Epithet of a Buddha, emphasising the unique and indescribable quality of Buddhahood.
- Ten Directions** (phyogs bcu/daśa-diś). The four cardinal directions of north-south-east-west with their intermediate points, plus zenith and nadir.
- Ten Favourable Conditions** (’byor bcu). 1) human rebirth, 2) rebirth in a civilised country, 3) having sound sense faculties, 4) having karma that can be improved, 5) faith in the Buddha’s doctrine, 6) appearance of a Buddha, 7) that the Buddha’s teaching exists, 8) continuance of his teaching, 9) being a follower of his teaching, 10) living among virtuous Buddhists.
- Ten Levels** (sa bcu/daśa-bhūmi). Also called Bodhisattva Levels. Mahāyāna designation of ten stages through which bodhisattvas progress, beginning in the Vision Path (see Five Paths) through Contemplation Path to Adept stage: 1) Joyous, 2) Stainless, 3) Luminous, 4) Flaming, 5) Invincible, 6) Face-to-Face, 7) Far-reaching, 8) Unshakeable, 9) True Mind, 10) Dharma-cloud. Each Level is traditionally paired with one of the Ten Perfections (q.v.).
- Ten Perfections** (pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa/pāramitā). Cardinal virtues of Bodhisattva practice, originally listed as six in Mahāyāna sūtras, with four more added in later śāstras: 1) Giving, 2) Conduct, 3) Patience, 4) Diligence, 5) Concentration, 6) Insight, and 7) Resolution, 8) Skill-in-Means, 9) Power, 10) Knowledge.
- Ten Religious Practices** (chos-spyod/dharma-caryā). 1) Writing, 2) worship, 3) giving, 4) listening, 5) reading, 6) understanding, 7) explaining, 8) reciting, 9) reflecting, 10) contemplating.
- Ten Thoughts of Enlightenment**. An unclear reference in the *Commentary*, possibly referring the bodhisattva’s practice of the Ten Perfections (q.v.) on the Ten Levels.
- Ten Unvirtuous Acts** (mid-dge-ba’i chos/akuśala-dharma). The Buddhist “Ten Commandments”; actions which merit bad karmic consequences. 1) Killing, 2) stealing, 3) sexual misconduct, 4) lying, 5) harsh speech, 6) slander, 7) idle speech, 8) covetousness, 9) ill-will, 10) false views.
- Ten Virtuous Acts**. The opposites of the Ten Unvirtuous Acts.
- Thatness** (de-nyid/tattva). Reality; what is actually and truly real, as opposed to what is apparently true and real. Term for ultimate reality, emptiness of all misconception.

- Thirty-two Marks.** Extraordinary physical characteristics of a superman, traditional in Indian literature and applied to the Buddhas; e.g. golden-hued skin, long toes and fingers, hair-tuft between eyebrows, dark-blue eyes, and so on.
- Thirty-seven Enlightenment Wings** (byang-chub kyi phyogs/bodhipakṣa). Mahāyāna formula embracing essential principles and practices of the bodhisattva path: the Four Applications, the Four Right Efforts, the Four Bases of Miraculous Power, the Five Dominants, the Five Powers, the Seven Limbs of Enlightenment, the Eightfold Path.
- Three Bad Destinies** (ngan-song gsum/tri-durgati). See Destinies.
- Three Bodies of a Buddha** (sku-gsum/trikāya). Three modes under which Buddhas exist: Truth Body, Enjoyment Body, and Apparition Body. See each individually.
- Three Heaps** (phung-bo gsum/tri-skandha). Practices which store up and increase merit: confession of one's sins, rejoicing in virtue wherever found, entreaty for the preaching of the doctrine.
- Three Higher Trainings** (lhag-pa'i bslab-pa/adhiṣṭā). Bodhisattva practices designated as "higher" than Hīnayāna arhats' training because motivated by greater compassion and pursuing the complete realisation of emptiness: 1) Higher Conduct, 2) Higher Concentration, 3) Higher Insight. The latter two are the equivalent of Calmness (q.v.) and Higher Vision.
- Three Jewels** (dkon-mchog gsum/tri-ratna). The Buddha, his Doctrine, and the Community.
- Three Refuges** (skyabs-'gro gsum/tri-śaraṇa-gamana). Formula declaring one's commitment to the Three Jewels.
- True Nature** (chos-nyid/dharmatā). The ultimate reality of things, their emptiness of inherent existence, a synonym of Thatness.
- Truth Body** (chos-sku/dharma-kāya). Highest and most perfect mode of Buddhahood; the Buddha-nature as it is in itself, omniscience: ultimate reality. See Three Bodies.
- Tshul-Khrims Rgyal-ba.** Tibetan monk, disciple and constant companion of Atiṣa from India to Tibet; principal translator of most of Atiṣa's writings.
- Two Equipments** (tshogs/sambhāra). Merit and Knowledge. Traditional designation of the necessary qualities with which one must "equip" oneself for the pursuit of Enlightenment. Merit increases through the practice of virtue; knowledge, through the Perfection of Insight.
- Two Truths** (bden-pa gnyis/satya-dvaya). Mahāyāna distinction of the dual aspect of all objects of cognition: 1) relative truth (kun-rdzob bden-pa/saṃvṛtti-satya); the ordinary worldly and conventional perception and expression of the apparent reality of things; and 2) ultimate truth (don-dam bden-pa/paramārtha-satya), the emptiness of inherent existences, reality as it truly is.
- Ultimate Element** (chos-kyi dbyings/dharma-dhātu). See Realm of True Reality.
- Ultimate Reality** (de-kho-na-nyid/tattva). Same as Thatness (q.v.)
- Ultimate Truth.** See Two Truths.

Vasubandhu (nor-gyi rtsa-lag/dbyig-gnyen). Third-century AD saint and scholar, brother of Asaṅga (q.v.), author of numerous Mahāyāna treatises, and source of Atīśa's division of three types of persons in the *Lamp* and *Commentary*.

Vehicle (theg-pa/yāna). The most generic term for the three Buddhist ways of theory and practice which can carry one to Enlightenment: 1) the Lesser Vehicle (Hīnayāna) or Hearers' Vehicle (Śrāvakayāna); also called Theravāda, 2) the Greater Vehicle (Mahāyāna), and 3) the Vehicle of Mantra or Tantra (Mantrayāna), the swift way to Enlightenment.

Wagons (shing-rta/ratha). Epithet in the same metaphor as Vehicle, used especially for the great writers and saints of Mahāyāna, Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga.

Warmth (drod/uṣma). See Aids to Conviction.

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[*Tibetan and Sanskrit titles are given as they appear in Atiṣa's texts; although they are frequently not the full titles as listed in the Catalogues. Several scriptures cannot be identified, either because they were not included in the Tibetan Canon compiled three centuries later or because they were known by different titles by that time.*]

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Non-conceptual Progress Formula

Avikalpa-praveśa-dhāraṇī

Rnam par mi rtog par 'jug pa'i gzungs (Ot. 810)

Ocean of Discipline

'Dul ba rgya mtsho (?)

One Hundred Thousand Stanza Perfection of Insight Sūtra

Śatasāhasrika-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra

Stong phrag brgya pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa (Ot. 730)

- One Letter Perfection of Insight Sūtra*
Eka-akṣarī-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra
Yi ge gcig ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa (Ot. 741)
- Ornament of Mañjuśrī's Buddha-field*
Mañjuśrī-buddhakṣetra-guṇa-vyūha
'Jam dpal gyi sangs rgyas kyi zhing gi yon tan bkod pa (Ot. 760:15)
- Ornament of Sūtras by Maitreyanatha*
Sūtra-alamkāra
Mdo sde rgyan (Ot. 5521)
- Ornament for the Realisations by Maitreyanatha*
Abhisamaya-alamkāra
Mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan (Ot. 5184)
- Ornament of the Wisdom Engaging the Sphere of All Buddhas*
Buddha-viśaya-avatāra-jñāna-āloka-alamkāra
Sangs rgyas kyi yul la 'jug pa ye shes snang ba'i rgyan (Ot. 768)
- Palace of the Great Jewel*
Maṇi-vipula-vimāna
Nor bu rgyas pa'i zhal med khang (Ot. 138)
- Perfect Enlightenment of Vairocana*
Vairocana-abhisambodhi
Rnam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub pa (Ot. 126)
- Perfection of Insight Sūtras*
Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra
Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa
- Praise of Ultimate Truths by Nāgārjuna*
Paramārtha-stava
Don dam par bstod pa (Ot. 2014)
- Prātimokṣa Sūtra*
So so thar pa'i mdo (Ot. 1031)
- Precious Garland of Advice for the King by Nāgārjuna*
Rāja-parikathā-ratnāvali
Rgyal po la gtam bya ba rin po che'i phreng ba (Ot. 5658)
- Precious Garland of Discourses by Śūra*
Ratna-karaṇḍaka-kathā
Rin po che phreng ba lta bu'i gtam (Toh. 5424)
- Producing the Power of Faith Sūtra*
Śraddhā-balā-dhāna-sūtra
Dad pa'i stobs bskyed pa'i mdo (Ot. 867)
- Progress in Knowledge by Kātyāyanīputra*
Jñāna-prasthāna
Ye shes la 'jug pa
- Progress in [Bodhisattva] Practice by Śāntideva*
Bodhisattva-caryā-avatāra
Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa (Ot. 5272)
- Questions of Celestial King Druma Sūtra*
Druma-kinnara-rāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Mi 'am ci'i rgyal po ljon pas zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 824)

- Questions of the Girl Sumati Sūtra*
Sumati-dārikā-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Bu mo blo gros bzang mos zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:30)
- Questions of the Girl Vimalasūddha Sūtra*
Dārikā-vimalasūddha-sūtra
Bu mo rnam dag dad pas zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:40)
- Questions of Kāśyapa Sūtra*
Kāśyapa-paripṛcchā-sūtra
'Od srungs kyi zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:43)
- Questions of King Udayanavatsa Sūtra*
Udayana-vatsa-rāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Rgyal po shar ba'i bus zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:29)
- Questions of Sāgaramati Sūtra*
Sāgaramati-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Blo gros rgya misho'i zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 819)
- Questions of the Serpent King Anavatapta Sūtra*
Anavatapta-nāga-rāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Klu'i rgyal po ma dros pas zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 823)
- Questions of the Serpent King Sāgara Sūtra*
Sāgara-nāga-rāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Klu'i rgyal po rgya mishos zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 820)
- Questions of Subāhu Tantra*
Subāhu-paripṛcchā-tantra
Dpung-bzang gi rgyud (Ot. 428)
- Questions of Suvikrāntivikrami Perfection of Insight Sūtra*
Suvikrāntivikrami-paripṛcchā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra
Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa rab kyi rtsal gyis rnam par gnong pa'i zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 736)
- Questions of Ugra Sūtra*
Ugra-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Drag shul gyis zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:19)
- Questions of Upāli Sūtra*
Upāli-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Nye bar 'khor gyis zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:24)
- Questions of Vimaladatta Sūtra*
Vimaladatta-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Dri ma med pas zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:33)
- Questions of Vīradatta Sūtra*
Vīradatta-paripṛcchā-sūtra
Dpa' sbyin gyis zhus pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:28)
- Refutation of Objections by Nāgārjuna*
Vigraha-vyāvartanī
Rtsod pa bzlog pa (Ot. 5228)
- Rehearsal of the Buddha, Doctrine, and Community Sūtra*
Buddha-dharma-saṅgha-saṅgiti-sūtra
Sangs rgyas bgro ba dang chos bgro ba dang dge 'dun bgro ba'i mdo
 (Toh. 228)

- Removal of Action's Obscuration*
Karma-avāraṇa-pratipraśrabdhi
Las kyi sgrub pa rgyun gcod pa (Toh. 219)
- Removal of Ajātaśatru's Regrets Sūtra*
Ajataśatru-kaukr̥tti-avinodana-sūtra
Ma skyes dgra'i gyod pa bsal ba'i mdo (Ot. 882)
- Resolutions of Nāgārjuna by Nāgārjuna*
Nāgārjuna-pranīdhāna
Klu sgrub kyi smon lam (Ot. 5932)
- Rice Seedling Sūtra Commentary by Kamalaśīla*
Śālistambaka-sūtra-ṭīkā
Sā lu ljang pa'i 'grel pa (Ot. 5502)
- Ritual for Begetting the Thought by Atiśa*
Citta-utpāda-vidhi
Sems bskyed pa'i cho ga (Ot. 5364)
- Ritual for Confession of Failings by Atiśa*
Āpatti-deśanā-vidhi
Ltung ba bshags pa'i cho ga (Ot. 5369)
- River of Brine Sūtra*
Ba tsha'i chu klung gi mdo (?)
- Royal Resolves of Samantabhadra (= Good Practice Resolves)*
- Royal Tantra Setting Forth the Triple Pledge*
Tri-samaya-vyūha-rāja-tantra
Dam tshig gsum bkod pa'i rgyal po (Ot. 134)
- Royal Union Tantra: Cakrasaṃvara (= Glorious Cakrasaṃvara)*
- Science of Preaching by Vasubandhu*
Vyākhyā-yukti
Rnam par bshad pa'i rigs pa (Ot. 5562)
- Seal of Wisdom Sūtra*
Jñāna-mudrā-sūtra
Ye shes kyi phyag rgya'i mdo (Ot. 799)
- Seal, Worship, and Center of Concentration Sūtra*
Samādhi-cakra-sūtra
Ting nge 'dzin gyi 'khor lo'i mchod pa'i phyag rgya'i mdo (Ot. 907)
- Seated Before the Present Buddha Sūtra*
Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukha-avasthita-sūtra
Da ltar gyi sangs rgyas mngon du bzhugs pa'i mdo (Ot. 801)
- Secret of All Tantra*
Sarva-rahasya-tantra
Thams cad gsang ba'i rgyud (Ot. 114)
- Secret Tantras of Mañjuśrī*
Mañjuśrī-guhya-tantra
'Jam dpal gsang ba'i rgyud (Toh. 544–52)
- Secret Tathāgata Sūtra*
Tathāgata-guhya-sūtra
De bzhin gshegs pa'i gsang ba'i mdo (?)
- Sevenfold Way Sūtra: Questions of Avalokiteśvara*
Avalokiteśvara-paripṛcchā-sapta-dharmaka-sūtra
Spyan ras gzigs dband phyug gis zhus pa'i chos bdun pa (Ot. 817)

- Seventy Resolves* by Aśvaghōṣa
Pranīdhāna-saptati
Smṓn lam bdun cu (Ot. 5430)
- Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness* by Nāgārjuna
Śūnyatā-saptati
Stong pa nyid bdun cu pa (Ot. 5227)
- Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* by Nāgārjuna
Yukti-ṣaṣṭika
Rigs pa drug cu (Ot. 5225)
- Space-like Buddha Tantra*
Khasama-tantra
Nam mkha' dang mnyam pa (Ot. 31)
- Stalks in Array Sūtra*
Gaṇḍa-vyūha-sūtra
Sdōng po bkod pa'i mdo (Ot. 761:45)
- Subduing* by Ākāśavarṇa Sūtra
Nam mkha' mdog gis 'dul ba'i mdo (?)
- Supplement to the Middle Way* by Candrakīrti
Madhyamaka-avatāra
Dbu ma la 'jug pa (Ot. 5261)
- Sūtra of Ākāśagarbha*
Ākāśagarbha-sūtra
Nam mkha' snying po'i mdo (Ot. 926)
- Sūtra of the Thirty-three*
Trayatrīmśat-parivarta-sūtra
Sum cu rtsa gsum gi le'u (Ot. 889)
- Sūtra on the Ten Levels*
Daśabhūmika-sūtra
Sa bcu pa'i mdo (Ot. 761:31)
- Sūtra Set Forth* by Akṣayamati
Akṣayamati-nirdeśa-sūtra
Blō gros mi zad pas bstan pa'i mdo (Ot. 842)
- Sūtra Set Forth* by Vimalakīrti
Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra
Dri ma med par grags pas bstan pa'i mdo (Ot. 843)
- Sūtra Setting Forth the Three Bodies*
Trikāya-nirdeśa-sūtra
Sku gsum bstan pa'i mdo (Toh. 283)
- Sūtra Setting Forth the Two Truths*
Satya-dvaya-nirdeśa-sūtra
Bden pa gnyis bstan pa'i mdo (Ot. 846)
- Sūtra Showing the Unthinkable Secrets*
Acintya-guhya-sūtra
Gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i mdo (Ot. 760:3)
- Tantra of Amoghapāśa*
Amoghapāśa-tantra
A mo gha pā sha (Ot. 365)

- Tantra of Tārā's Arising*
Tārā-bhava-tantra
Sgrol ma 'byung ba'i rgyud (Ot. 390)
- Tathāgata's Compassion Sūtra*
Tathāgata-karūṇā-sūtra
De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying rje'i mdo (Ot. 814)
- Tathāgata Essence Sūtra*
Tathāgata-garbha-sūtra
De bzhin gshegs pa'i mdzod kyi mdo (Ot. 924)
- Teaching in Sevens: Sexuality* (Hīnayāna Sūtra)
Sapta-maithuna-samyukta
'Khrig pa bdun bstan pa theg pa chung ba'i mdo
- Three Heaps Sūtra*
Triskandhaka-sūtra
Phung bo gsum gi mdo (Ot. 950)
- Three Jewels Praise by Vasubandhu*
Triratna-stotra
Dkon mchog gsum gyi bstod pa (Ot. 2037)
- True Power Maker Tantra*
Susiddhi-kara-tantra
Rab tu grub par byed pa (Ot. 431)
- Twenty Stanzas on Mahāyāna* by Nāgārjuna
Mahāyāna-vimśaka
Theg pa chen po nyi shu pa (Ot. 5233)
- Twenty Verses on the Bodhisattva Vow* by Candragomin
Bodhisattva-saṃvara-vimśaka
Byang chub sems dpa'i sdom pa nyi shu pa (Ot. 5582)
- Twenty Verses on Gathering Merit* by Nāgārjuna
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Amogha-vinaya
'Dul ba don yod pa (?)
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Chos nyid rang gi ngo bo nyid las mi g.yo bas tha dad par bstan pa'i mdo (Ot. 7906)
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Vajrapāṇi-abhiśeka-tantra
Lag na rdo rje dbang skur ba'i rgyud (Ot. 130)
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Paramādi-buddha-mahā-tantra-kālacakra-nāma
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Dbu ma dkar po 'char ba (?)

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