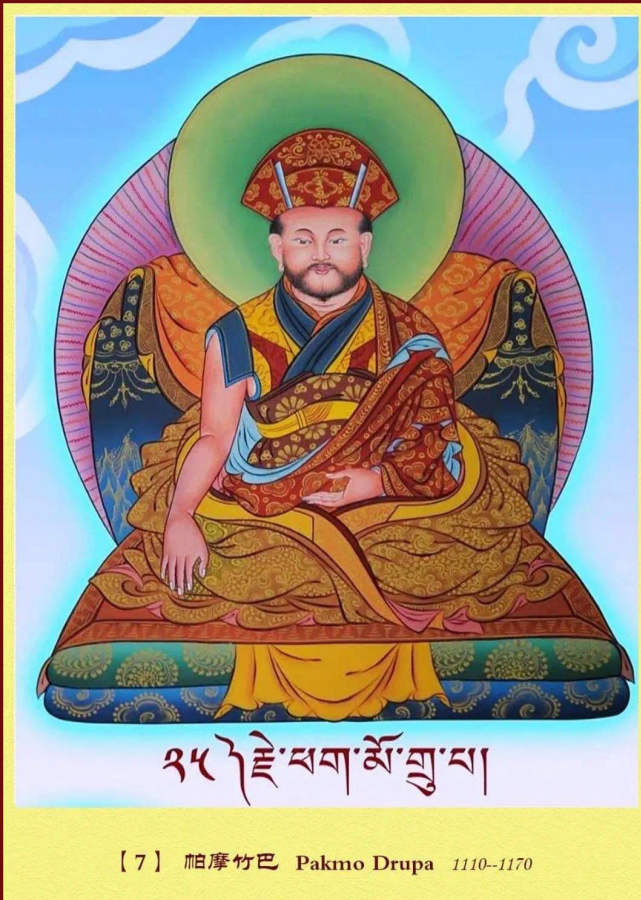




ENGAGING BY STAGES IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA



THE ROOT TEXT

THE INVOCATION

Om svasti!

*To the yidam¹, to the great Refuge Three Jewels², and to the lama³
Who through completely pure, superior intention⁴
Collected the accumulations⁵ for the benefit of others for a long time, and
In so doing purified the faults of wrong-doing and
Came to have the bountiful good qualities⁶ –
My three doors respectfully bow down with admiration⁷.*

*I will write down in accordance with scripture and the speech of the lama
The way to engage in the teachings of the Buddha by stages.*



THE ROOT VERSES

The faithful person of awakened karmic lot is taught to:

Venerate a qualified lama on the crown of one's head;

Meditate on the difficult-to-find pleasures and endowments, and on death;
Through this, the mind turns away from this world.

Contemplate the disadvantages of cyclic wandering through the three realms;
Through this the mind turns away from cyclic existence and the Intention to
achieve liberation is born.

Contemplate:

“Who is able to provide Refuge from this cyclic existence?”, and so
Generate trust in the Three Jewels;

“Wheel-Wielding Emperor, Indra, Brahma, and the like are unable
To provide that Refuge; only the Three Jewels are able to provide it.”

Take the vow of going for Refuge, the practice of this;

Meditate on cause and result;

Because cyclic existence and nirvana are not without causes and did not arise
from non-accordant causes.

Develop trust in karma and result, and so maintain both the
Purification of previously generated negative-karma obscurations, and the
Restraint of no longer generating them.

Take a vow of individual liberation, the practice of this;

Protect the vow of individual liberation but

Not practice by striving solely for self-benefit;

Because this does not obtain the elemental passed enlightenment, but instead



The state-of-rest nirvana of the Hearer or Solitary Realizer, whose
Paths were taught in profound Sutra to be of provisional meaning.

Strive for unsurpassed enlightenment for the benefit of others, and so
Meditate on loving-kindness and compassion;
Because the state of the Omniscient One, the bountiful result of dual benefit.
Arises from the bodhichitta-cause, which is
Completed by a method rooted in compassion.

Arouse effective loving-kindness and compassion;
Through this, the mindset of working for self-benefit is abandoned and
The mindset of accomplishing enlightenment for the benefit of others is born.

Take the bodhisattva vow, the practice of this;

Train respectfully in the precepts of the three trainings;

Meditate on inseparable emptiness-compassion,
The training in samadhi and discriminating awareness;
Through this, the mind turns away from holder and held.

Perfect the meditation on emptiness-compassion,
Purify the faults of wrong-doing, and
Attain the three kayas.



EXPLANATIONS OF THE ROOT VERSES

1 PERSONS AND FAITH

*I pay homage through my respectful three doors
To the lama, to the yidam, and to the Three Jewels.*

What is the meaning of ‘awakened karmic lot’ in “faithful person of awakened karmic lot”? People, who in former lives collect the accumulations and make completely pure aspiration prayers, attain the body of leisure and endowment for this life and effortlessly meet with positive conditions. After effortlessly arriving at the condition of being a good person, their previously generated karmic lot is awakened by a condition such as seeing representations of the Three Jewels, or hearing the Dharma, or other similar things.

What is the meaning of ‘faithful’? By the awakening of the karmic lot, the three faiths are born:

- Longing faith: After one understands cyclic existence to have a nature of suffering, one longs to abandon suffering and the causes of suffering, and one longs to be liberated from cyclic existence and to attain liberation-nirvana.
- Clear faith: Keeping the Three Jewels in mind as having good qualities, and liking and delighting in their good qualities.
- Trusting faith: After one comes to trust karmic causality one does not contravene Dharma through attachment, aversion, ignorance, or fear.

It was said:

One who does not give up Dharma
Due to desire, hatred, fear, or ignorance
Is called ‘faithful’.



The benefits of faith, from the *Sutra of the Triple-Jewel Lamp*:

If one who has faith in the Conquerors⁸, in the Dharma of the
Conquerors and In the conduct of the Children of the Buddhas⁹
Also has faith in the unsurpassable enlightenment,
The mindset of the great beings¹⁰ will be born.

Faith, cultivated like a mother leading her children,
Makes all the qualities arise and multiply.
It dispels anxiety and rescues one from all the rivers.¹¹
Faith is the road-map to the cities of happiness and goodness.¹²

.....

Faith is the root consolidator of virtue, acting as:
Treasure, wealth, legs in prime condition, and hands.¹³

.....

Those who always have faith and respect for the Buddha
Do not abandon the training of moral conduct; and
Those who do not abandon the training of moral conduct
Have good qualities and are praised due to having those good qualities.

Those who always have faith and respect for the Dharma
Never get enough of listening to the Dharma of the
Conquerors;
They have unconceivable devotion to that Dharma.

Those who always have faith and respect for the Sangha
Have non-returning faith in the Sangha; and
Those who have excellent non-returning faith in the Sangha
Will become non-returners through the strength of that faith.



And there were many other similar such things said in that sutra.

From *the Sutra of the Ten Dharmas*:

For whoever desires to definitely emerge
To the state of the Guide¹⁴,
Faith is the supreme vehicle;
Therefore, wise ones should adhere to the way of faith.

From *the Sutra of the Heap of Jewels*:

In those without faith, Positive deeds are not born;
In the seed that has been burned by fire,
How can there be a green sprout?

From *the Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

With this very faith the ultimate meaning¹⁵
Realized by the Self-Arisen Ones¹⁶ is realized;
Those without eyes cannot
See the sun's blazing light.



My advice, summarizing this section with reason:

If even for the lesser goals of worldly actions,
Results are not obtained when the goals are not pursued and
Actions to obtain them are not engaged in;
It is then logical to generate this faith, the root of happiness and goodness,

Since if one does not have faith in accomplishing
The greater goals of temporary higher status and liberation.
One will not come to engage in actions to reach them, and therefore
One will not obtain those results.

Thus ends the first section of
Engaging by Stages in the Teachings of the Buddha,
concerning persons and faith.



2 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A LAMA

There are six topics concerning the teaching to “Venerate a qualified lama on the crown of one’s head”:

- The necessity of adhering to a lama
- The type of lama to whom one should adhere
- The intentions to have when receiving Dharma and instruction from the lama
- The ways to venerate the lama
- The advantages of adhering to and respecting the lama
- The disadvantages of not adhering to and not respecting the lama

The necessity of adhering to a lama

The Buddha’s instruction on the necessity of adhering to a lama;
from the *Sutra requested by Rāshtrapāla*:

Completely adhere to good spiritual friends and
Completely abandon bad spiritual friends.
Those disciples who do this are always led on the true path and
Are always turned away from false paths.

From the *Sutra of the Condensed Prajñāparamita* in Verse:

As patients adhere to a doctor in order to be healed,
Adhere unfailingly to virtuous spiritual friends.

Examining this with reasoning: Since one needs to increase one’s good qualities more and more, one needs to adhere to a lama. Since one needs to abandon all one’s mental afflictions and faults, one needs to adhere to a lama. Since one needs to drop the latent tendency to think, “I will not become enlightened in this life, but in later lives”, one needs to adhere to a lama.



The type of lama to whom one should adhere

From the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*, spoken by Lord Maitreya:

Adhere to a spiritual friend who is tamed, pacified, and fully pacified;
Who has more good qualities, possesses diligence, and is rich in scripture;
Who has perfectly realized thatness¹⁷, has skillful speech and a nature of
Compassion, and is not limited by physical and mental fatigue.

The lama is 'tamed' due to taming the sense-faculties through moral conduct; 'pacified' due to abiding peacefully in the mind through samadhi; 'fully pacified' due to fully pacifying the closely-held mental afflictions through discriminating awareness; 'one who has more good qualities' due to not being equal to or lesser than the disciples; 'one who possesses diligence' due to being one who does not neglect the benefit of others; 'rich in scripture' due to not being one of few studies; 'one who has perfectly realized thatness' due to having internalized thatness; 'one who has skillful speech' due to having Dharma speech through abandoning ignorance and faithfully explaining the Dharma; 'one who has a nature of compassion' due to not having interest in signs of status; and 'one who is not limited by mental fatigue' due to continuously teaching the Dharma.

Acharya Nagarjuna taught:

Well-studied, of great discriminating awareness,
Not seeking the benefits of material acquisitions or of signs of status,
Possessed of bodhichitta, of great compassion,
Patient with difficulties, of scant mental and physical fatigue,
Possessed of oral instructions of lineage, liberated from lesser paths,
Skilled in knowing which family¹⁸ people are in, and
In knowing the degree of spiritual realization of disciples -
One should adhere to a lama who has these twelve qualities.

Acharya Shantideva taught:

The continuously virtuous spiritual friend
Is skilled in the methods of the Great Vehicle and
Will not abandon the supreme discipline of the bodhisattva,
Even for the sake of staying alive.



Lord Atisha taught:

It was taught that one needs to adhere to a lama who has these four qualities: does not use skill to disparage the views of others; does not use piety to disparage others' upholding of the Vinaya-code; does not seek the goals of this life; and does seek the goal of enlightenment.

Jetsun Gampopa said:

It was taught [that a qualified lama] has three qualities:
great discriminating awareness that leads the way for others,
great compassion that cannot tolerate the suffering of migrating beings,
and no attachment to this life.

The precious lama also said, concerning the characteristics of a lama who is a suitable object toward which to direct one's supplication prayers:

I bow to the lotus-feet of the lama, the
Holder of the Vajra¹⁹, the jewel-like body,
Through whose kindness the Great Bliss²⁰ itself
Dawns at this very instant.

The intentions to have when receiving Dharma and instruction from the lama

There are three topics concerning the intentions to have when receiving Dharma and instruction from the lama:²¹

First, being possessed of the bodhichitta intention²², when preparing for the teaching, one contemplates: "I have abandoned the intentions of this life, the intentions of cyclic existence, and the intentions of the Lesser Vehicle²³, and now I am listening to this Dharma in order to attain buddhahood, and then lift all sentient beings from cyclic existence."



Second, one has the Five Cognitions.

From the *Sutra of Planting the Noble Stalk*:

Khyeu Paljung said to Norsang, “Son of Mahayana family, you should regard yourself as a patient, the spiritual friend as a doctor, the instructions as medicine, and your conscientiously practicing the teachings as the healing.”

And one should regard one’s companions who are of pure conduct as nurses.

Finally, one abandons ‘the three faults of the pot’ using the three aspects of discriminating awareness. When using the discriminating awareness of hearing, one abandons the fault that is like a pot turned upside down, and so pays attention to the teachings without distraction. When using the discriminating awareness of contemplation, one abandons the fault that is like a pot with a leaky bottom, and so maintains the teachings in mind without forgetting them. When using the discriminating awareness of meditation, one abandons the fault that is like a pot containing poison, and so the teachings act as antidotes to the afflictions.

The ways to venerate the lama

There are two ways to venerate the lama:

the veneration with respectful three doors and the veneration with practice.

Veneration with respectful body is abandonment of all impure, worldly ways of conduct such as jumping, running, and so forth, and instead doing what pleases the lama from the door of the body, such as attending the lama and so forth.

Veneration with respectful speech is abandonment of all bad, worldly talk such as harsh words and so forth, and instead doing what pleases the lama from the door of the speech, such as using honorific words, praise, and so forth.

Veneration with respectful mind is abandonment of all non-respectful mindset such as pride, non-faith, examination into faults of the lama and so forth, and instead regarding the lama as a buddha.



Does one regard the lama as a buddha based on the fact that the lama is actually a buddha, or does one regard the lama as a buddha based on the fact that the lama is actually not a buddha? This cognition is generated based on the fact that the lama is actually a buddha; that this is the case is approached in two ways.

Approached by way of the ultimate meaning, the lama is a buddha:

Buddhahood is the nature of the dharmakaya, and the suchness²⁴ of the lama and the dharmakaya are without separation, therefore the lama is a buddha. The lama is a buddha approached by way of the conventional meaning as well, because buddhas work for the benefit of sentient beings by emanating as lamas.

The latter was stated directly by the Buddha: The Buddha, accompanied by his retinue, went to a high mountain in the south of India, and a bodhisattva from within the retinue named Thongwa Tonyö thought, “Alas! Now I have the Buddha whom I can listen to for Dharma, but when he has passed away, what shall I do?” To this the Buddha replied, “O, Thongwa Tonyö! In the future, I shall teach using the body of the acharya.” Again bodhisattva Thongwa Tonyö thought, “The Buddha is liberated from birth, old age, sickness, and death, but acharya are not.” And to this the Buddha replied, “O, Thongwa Tonyö! Although I have come to not have the sufferings of birth, death, being sick, or growing old, I display the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness, and death for the benefit of sentient beings.” Another perspective on the lama being a buddha is the different perceptions of buddhas by different types of trainees: To those of pure appearance, buddhas appear as the dharmakaya;²⁵ to bodhisattvas who have attained the grounds²⁶, buddhas appear as the sambhogakaya; to bodhisattvas who have not attained the first ground down to and including those on the greater path of accumulation, to Hearers, and to Solitary Realizers, buddhas appear as the nirmanakaya; and to beginners who do not have the good fortune of seeing buddhas benefitting beings arisen in the guises of the bodhisattva²⁷, buddhas benefit beings arisen in the guise of the lama. And another perspective: Buddhas increase the four confidences in trainees, and since the lama also increases them, the lama is a buddha. The four confidences are: not being one who does not have meaningful confidence, but being one who has it; not being one who does not have the Dharma to rely on, but being one who has it; not being one who increases the mental afflictions, but being one who reduces them; and not being one who teaches the advantages and causes of cyclic existence, but being one who teaches the advantages and causes of nirvana.



Lord Atisha taught:

While the Buddha explicitly abided, the lama was the fourth Jewel. After the Buddha passed away, if a lama was of the pure retinue²⁸, that lama was equivalent to the Buddha. Now, there are three reasons for saying that the lama exceeds the Buddha. As the lama subsumes the activities of all buddhas, the lama exceeds the Buddha. By giving Refuge in the time of defilement, the lama exceeds the Buddha. By explicitly teaching the path to enlightenment, the lama exceeds the Buddha.

And as the lama exceeds the Buddha, I pay homage to the one who teaches even though facing great difficulties. I pay homage to the one who lifts sentient beings from their miserable abode. I pay homage to the one who explicitly teaches and is free of defilement. I pay homage to the one with the most magnificent accumulations of merit and wisdom.

.....

Even if the lama does not exceed the Buddha, since the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha blessed the body, speech, and mind of the lama as a person with the eye of the Dharma²⁹ who is held to be an ordinary person, the blessings of the lama are equivalent to those of the Buddha. If that were not the case, as an ordinary person a lama would not be able to benefit even one other person, but because this is the case, one regards the lama as a buddha.

Geshe Tolungpa³⁰ taught:

I say, “Regard me as the Buddha,” and you may think, “If I regard you, old man, as the Buddha, you’ll be happy about that, I’m sure; I’ll regard you that way for now because you said so but I’ll soon drop it.” To that I say, “If you don’t regard me that way, then you don’t regard me that way, it’s your choices; but watch to see who will be the one harmed.”

All of the above are true; therefore, if genuine cognition of the lama as a buddha is born, all the superior provisional and ultimate good qualities will arise.



There are two aspects to veneration with practice: abandoning mental afflictions and faulty behavior and striving for virtue. It was taught that if one does not practice in these ways, one will break the order of the lama³¹.

Protector Maitreya taught:

Adhere to the spiritual friend by way of veneration,
Offering one's acquisitions, service, and practice.

The advantages of adhering to and respecting the lama

There are two types of advantages of adhering to and respecting the lama: enumerated and non-enumerated. There are seven enumerated advantages:

- If one adheres to and respects the lama, denigration of one's worldly misdeeds by others does not arise.
- The three obstacles: ripening of previously committed non-virtues; faults of contravening the three vows; and hindrances to preserving one's life, attaining temporary higher status, and attaining liberation, do not arise.
- The good qualities of the three trainings and so forth arise.
- All worldly and transcendent peace and happiness increase continually.
- In future worlds one meets the lamas who are bodhisattvas and the like.
- One who is looked after by a lama is henceforth never born again in the three miserable realms.
- Just as the magnificent Naropa followed Tilopa for twelve years as his attendant and attained the highest attainment through the conduct of the twelve trials, one will attain the shared and supreme attainments, even though one has not practiced for them.



The non-enumerated advantages: Since the limitless good qualities of a buddha arise while adhering to the lama, the advantages are unnumerable; from the *Sutra of Planting the Noble Stalk*:

Khyeu Paljung said to Norsang, “Son of Mahayana family, the bodhisattvas who are authentically looked after by a virtuous spiritual friend do not fall into miserable migrations, but are born into happy migrations.

Why is this ? The bodhisattvas who are looked after by a virtuous spiritual friend do not contravene the bodhisattva trainings even for the sake of their lives. The bodhisattvas who are protected by a virtuous spiritual friend become manifestly superior to worldly people by attaining the distinctive body, resources, and virtue. The bodhisattvas who venerate a virtuous spiritual friend conduct themselves without forgetting proper conduct due to trusting in all the conduct of the virtuous spiritual friend to whom they adhere. The bodhisattvas who are completely held by the virtuous spiritual friend are resistant to all karma and mental afflictions. The lama causes them to internalize what is virtuous to do and what is not virtuous. They authentically turn away from the objects of heedlessness.³² They are lifted out of the city of cyclic existence.”

Also from the same sutra:

Child of Mahayana family, the buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, are pleased by bodhisattvas who have engaged in the instructions of a virtuous spiritual friend. For bodhisattvas who abide in not contravening the words of a virtuous spiritual friend, omniscience is near. For those without doubt about holding to the words of a virtuous spiritual friend, all virtuous spiritual friends are close by. After one is not separated from thinking of the virtuous friend, all longed-for goals manifest.

And another perspective:

None of the Sublime Ones will send one away.

If one is close to them, even though one has not intentionally put the Dust of their qualities on oneself, one comes to be covered by it.

A bird that lives on the golden side of Mount Meru

Loses its natural color and becomes itself golden.



The disadvantages of not adhering to and not respecting the lama

The disadvantages of not adhering to and not respecting the lama are the opposite of the advantages; and if one adheres to those who are not to be adhered to, one will come to have the same faults as those bad companions.

It is said:

If arrow-rubbing poison is poured into a quiver, the arrows,
Although not rubbed with poison, will become poisonous.

.....

People in this world wrap spoiling fish
With purifying kusha grass
But then, even if it does not remain long,
The kusha grass soon smells just like the fish.



My advice, summarizing this section with reason:

If even a traveler carrying little wealth for one day
Seeks a good escort who knows the road,
It is then reasonable for those who have entered the path to liberation
with superior wealth
To adhere to a good spiritual friend who knows the path.

*Thus ends the second section of
Engaging by Stages in the Teachings of the Buddha,
a teaching on the characteristics of a lama.*



3. THE DIFFICULT-TO-FIND LEISURES AND ENDOWMENTS

If a person who has collected the accumulations and who has met a good lama also understands without difficulty inseparable emptiness-compassion, then the Four Thoughts That Turn the Mind³³ also arises effortlessly. For the person who does not understand inseparable emptiness-compassion in this way, there is a way to engage by stages in the teachings. A qualified lama leads such people gradually, as a conscientious mother nurtures her baby, starting with the teaching to “Meditate on the difficult-to-find pleasures and endowments, and on death”.

The pleasures and endowments

First it should be known that the body support that accomplishes enlightenment is that which has the pleasures and endowments.

From the Sutra of the *Teaching on the Inconceivable Secrets of the Tathagata*:

An arising buddha is found only rarely, and
Birth as a human is found through great difficulty;
But friends with faith who listen to the Dharma
Are difficult to find even in a 100 kalpas.

From *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

The pleasures and endowments are very difficult to find;
If a person does not strive in that body
To attain the realization of the goal,
How could they be authentically acquired again in later lives?

What is the essence of these pleasures and endowments? It is a human body that has no unfavorable conditions and the complete set of favorable conditions with which to accomplish enlightenment.



The Leisures

What are these 'leisures'? They are release from the eight states of non-freedom. Concerning the eight states of non-freedom, Acharya Nagarjuna taught:

Hell-being, hungry ghost, and animal,
Barbarian, long-lived god, and wrong view,
Devoid of a buddha, and mentally or sensorily deficient -
These are the eight non-freedoms.

These states are 'non-freedoms', because while in them, one does not have the good fortune and freedom with which to achieve enlightenment.

The three realms of misery

Due to the torment caused by the suffering in each of the three realms of misery³⁴, one is not free to achieve enlightenment while being in any of them.

The long-lived gods

From the *Treasury of Abhidharma*: "On one side of Greater Result³⁵ / Abide the cognitionless gods." To elaborate: on one side of the form-god realm called Greater Result, residing in the manner of a monastery away from the town, are those who meditate only on the dense calm-abiding of the equilibrium of non-cognition. By holding to that meditation, which is not the path of attaining liberation, as a path that is, one is born into this state of a non-cognition god. Having misunderstood this meditation, which is not liberation, as being liberation, the mind is stolen by dense calm-abiding, and so one does not have the good fortune of achieving enlightenment while in that state. At the time of death, a wrong view that "it is possible to attain liberation and then revert back" arise: and, since most then go to the realms of misery, being born into this state is a 'non-freedom.



The barbarians

In describing the non-freedom of 'the barbarians of the border lands,' it should be known that there are two lands, central lands and border lands. And there are two 'central lands': the good-quality central lands and the geographic central land good-quality central lands are wherever the Dharma is genuine.

The geographic of central land is Magadha³⁶. Regarding these, the good-quality central lands are the main ones. Those which are not the central lands are called 'border lands' and the people who are born in such places are called 'barbarians'. Being born among these people is a 'non-freedom' due to one not having the good fortune of achieving enlightenment while in that state.

Mentally or sensorily deficient

It is also a 'non-freedom' if one's faculties of sight and the others are not intact, due to one not having the good fortune of achieving enlightenment while in that state.

Wrong view

Wrong view, maintaining that the Dharma is not true and twisting whatever goes into the mind into wrong ideas, is a 'non-freedom,' due to one not having the good fortune of achieving enlightenment while in that state.

Place devoid of a buddha

If one is born into a place devoid of a buddha, since even the word 'Dharma' is not heard there, this is a 'non-freedom,' due to not having the good fortune of achieving enlightenment while in that state.



The Endowments

Is simply release from the eight states of non-freedom sufficient? As this is only separation from the unfavorable conditions, this is not sufficient; since one also needs the complete favorable conditions, one needs the endowments. There are ten endowments needed: five self-endowments and five other-endowments.

The five self-endowments:

- obtaining the human body
- being born in a good-quality central land
- having all the faculties
- being unperturbed by the Five Immediates³⁷
- having manifest faith in the objects of refuge.

The five other-endowments:

- a buddha has come into the world
- that buddha has taught the Dharma
- that buddha's teachings remain
- there are other people who practice those teachings
- there are those who have compassion for others.

Finding the leisure and endowments

It is very difficult to find the leisure and endowment that is complete with all these eighteen; from *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

Concerning just that, the Blessed One taught:

“The extraordinary difficulty of obtaining a human body

Is like the improbability of a turtle's neck winding up in the hole of a wooden yoke

That is drifting around on the great ocean. “

Is merely obtaining a human body really so difficult? Yes it is.



Finding the Leisures

The leisures are difficult to obtain:

It was taught that among the three realms of misery, the hell beings are the most numerous; the hungry ghosts are a thousand times fewer than the hell beings; and the animals are a thousand times fewer than the hungry ghosts. Here is an example for analyzing this through reason and finding it to be correct: Just as water naturally flows downhill, our minds go the way of mental afflictions and non-virtue even if we do not direct them that way, and our minds do not go the way of virtue even if we direct them that way. Therefore since the cause of birth in the three realms of misery easily arise, more beings exist in the lowest of the three realms of misery, since it is easy to go there, and life there is long. Concerning the fact that animal beings are the least numerous within the three realms of misery: Animals are said to exist in the great oceans as numerously as the grains fermented to produce prime chang³⁸; those that live on dry land are scattered everywhere; and there are said to be 80,000 species of small creatures in the human body alone. There are said to be 500 cities of *mouse-phallus-creatures*³⁹ in the bodies of all these creatures down to the smallest, but these we cannot see. Since there are that many creatures inside just oneself and similar numbers in all the animals that one can directly see, it is difficult to find the leisure of release from the three realms of misery.

The long-lived gods are also very numerous. Countries that have Dharma are very few and the barbarians born in the vast border-lands are very numerous. Those who have trust in karmic causality and the Three Jewels are very few, and wrongview holders are boundless. Places where a buddha has not come to are also boundless. Therefore, it is difficult to find the leisure of release from all of these non-freedoms.



Finding the Endowments

The self-endowments

Since the eight leisure and the five self-endowments of the ten endowments are only separate in the sense that one group is the separation aspect and one group is the possessing aspect, they are one in essence. Furthermore, since it is very rare to obtain a human body during a time in which the teachings remain, to be born in a central land, to have complete sense-faculties, to have faith in the Three Jewels and in other trustworthy objects of refuge⁴⁰, and with all one's heart to not abandon the actions that shun non-virtue, it is very difficult to find the five self-endowments.

The other-endowments

The difficulty in finding the circumstances of 'a buddha has come into the world'

No buddha came to our universe of non-overwhelming worlds⁴¹ for the 40 previous intermediate kalpas, and in this great kalpa, a buddha does not come for a total of 60 intermediate kalpas. In this current single good kalpa, these 60 intermediate kalpas (20 intermediate kalpas, each of destruction, vacuity, and formation) are also lacking in the action-methods of a buddha. Even in the 20 intermediate kalpas of persistence, a buddha does not arise during the times of increasing lifespan, as at those times the sentient beings have less suffering, and knowing little sadness, are not tamed by the buddha.

Now is the time of the long-opening kalpa⁴². From the time when the human life span was countless years up until now, more than four buddhas have not come. From now on, the human lifespan will diminish until it reaches ten years and then it will increase until it reaches 80,000 years; the 1002 buddhas of this good kalpa will arise during the times of diminishing lifespan in each of eighteen similar cycles.

Therefore, it is very difficult to be present when a buddha arises.



The difficulty of finding the circumstances of 'a buddha having taught Dharma'

After Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and so forth⁴³ became buddhas, they did not see any worthy vessels for many years, and so did not teach the Dharma during that time.

The world-honored one, Shakyamuni, also had the intention to not teach the Dharma, and for seven weeks after his enlightenment did not teach the Dharma until Brahma and Indra offered him a gold wheel with 1000 spokes and requested that he teach it. Therefore, it is difficult to find the circumstance of a buddha having taught Dharma.

The difficulty of finding the circumstance of 'a continuously abiding teaching'

The teachings of a sage abide for 5000 years. There are two assertions concerning our current position in that time period: that people now generally die in their seventies or that they now generally die in their sixties; at any rate, much of the time period has passed, and what is more, the 500 years at the end will be the time of merely holding to the external signs of the Dharma. Therefore, it is difficult to find the circumstances of an abiding teaching.

The difficulty of finding the circumstance of being near people who are practicing those teachings'

There are just a few beings that, guided by the Great Vehicle, are not seeking the goals of this life, of good conditions in cyclic existence, or of peace and happiness for themselves, but instead bring into their minds the dharmic goal of attaining enlightenment for the benefit of others. Due to this, it is difficult to find the circumstance of being near people who are practicing the teachings.



The difficulty in finding the two types of rare ones who are compassionate to others

The 'explainers who are compassionate to others' are those who explain the Dharma to others with the mindset of benefit without consideration of offerings of acquisitions, and service, and so forth. The 'compassionate sponsors' are those people who provide the livelihood of practitioners without considering their own interests. These two are very difficult to find. Nowadays, even if one practices the Dharma with all one's heart, one is barely able to find such compassionate ones. From the Buddha down to the current lamas, adulterations have not entered into the oral instructions of the aural-lineage; this lineage of words and meaning⁴⁴ has not been cut: the lineage is free of degenerated samaya⁴⁵.

Lamas that are currently able to transmit the benefits of this lineage to others are rare; after they pass away, meeting such a lamas again is unlikely.

Why the leisures and endowments are needed

Why does one need to obtain these difficult-to-find leisures and endowments? Supported by a body with these leisures and endowments, a person can accomplish the goals of temporary higher status and liberation.

From the *Letter of Training*:

Whoever obtains [such a body] and then expels the ocean of births to
the edge and
Plants the virtuous seeds of bodhichitta,
Is a person with good qualities exceeding even those of the wish-fulfilling
jewel;
Who can do without this result?

From *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

Relying on this boat of a human body,
Free yourself from the great ocean of suffering;
Since this boat will later be difficult to find,
It is not the time to be lazy, foolish one!



My advice, summarizing this section with reason:

If even one who has a trifling job in this life
Continually strives at it through fear of its loss,
It is then logical to strive for the great goals, and so not squander
This human life that is difficult to find and easy to lose

Thus ends the third section of

Engaging by Stages in the Teachings of the Buddha.
concerning the difficult-to-find pleasures and endowments.



4. THE RECOLLECTION OF DEATH

Is it sufficient to only obtain a human body of leisure and endowment that is of great benefit and difficult to find? It is not. Since one needs to habituate recollection of death in order to understand that this precious body disintegrates without difficulty, there is the teaching to “meditate ... on death”. This meditation has three parts: meditation on the certainty of death, meditation on the unpredictable time of death, and meditation on the fact that one is helped by no one and nothing while dying.

Meditation on the certainty of death

Meditating on the certainty of death has three aspects:

First, since no one from previous times remains, not having died, death is certain.

Acharya Ashvaghosha said:

Some born on this earth or
To temporary higher status do not die -
Have you seen one such being?
Well, maybe not; have you heard of one?
Do you doubt me?

From the *Sutra of the Extensive Enjoyment*:

Where is there a place not affected by death?
This place does not exist anywhere:
Not in outer space or in the depths of the oceans,
Nor does it exist in the folds of the great mountains.

Second, since life is a composite phenomenon, its death is certain;

From the *Sutra Requested by Four Youths*:

Since an instance of a composite phenomenon
Becoming permanent is not found,
All composite phenomena are impermanent.
So do not lament, Ananda!



Lastly, because life does not stay still for even an instant, death is certain.

Acharya Shantideva taught:

If this life does not stay still during the day or night,
Is always diminishing, and to which
There is no possibility of augmentation -
How will death not come to me?

Examining each aspect with reasoning:

No one from former times is seen or heard of as remaining, not
having died.

The end of all accumulation is exhaustion; the end of all birth is death;
the end of all bringing together is separation; and
the end of all raising up is falling down - since this is the nature of
these things, these four make for a natural syllogism⁴⁶.

Lastly, as every moment of life is different, life does not stay still.
Established by reason, death is certain.

Meditation on the unpredictable time of death

Meditating on the unpredictable time of death has three aspects:

First, since there is no certain knowledge of the lifespan, the time of death is unpredictable.

From the *Vinaya*:

Life happens in stages: Some people are young,
Some people are in the prime of life, and
Some people are old; but on the other hand:
Some are seen to die in the womb;
Some die at the time of infancy; and
Some die at the time they only crawl -
So in calling a particular person 'young',
One assumes a measure of assurance of their continued living.



Second, since there are many causes of dying, the time of death is unpredictable.

Acharya Nagarjuna taught:

Since the causes of dying are many and
Since the few causes of living
Can also be causes of dying,
Always practice the Dharma!

Lastly, since the life-force is not robust, the time of death is unpredictable.

From the *Vinaya*:

The drops of dew on kusha grass
Quickly evaporate
When the sun is fully arisen;
Likewise departs the life-force of people.

From *Letter to a Friend*:

If this life is more impermanent than even a water-bubble
Blown by the winds of many harms,
Then breathing in after breathing out and
Awakening from sleep are such amazing freedoms!

Examining each aspect with reasoning:

Consider your own relatives, friends, and countrymen. You have seen those who are older than you, younger than you, and the same age as you die.

It was taught that even the buddhas and bodhisattvas would not finish enumerating the causes of death. Regarding outer causes of death: Of all the things that exist, there are none that have not been a cause of death for some person at some time. Regarding the inner causes of death: Since the body is made up of the four principal elements, it is like a poisonous snake; during the short periods when the elements are balanced, the body is healthy, but a small imbalance of the elements brings sickness and a large imbalance of the elements brings death.

This body is not solid or firm: one can die if a nerve merely the size of one strand 'a horse's tail is severed or a wound only the size of the eye of a needle arises.



Meditation on the fact that while dying, one is helped by no one and no thing

Meditating on the fact that one is helped by no one and no thing while dying has three aspects:

First, accumulated wealth will not help one.

Acharya Schantideva taught:

Although you have acquired many things and
Have enjoyed them for a long time,
You will go to the next life naked and empty-handed,
Just like one who has been robbed by a thief.

From another text:

If you have abandoned your belongings, as they are like poisonous food, and
Have departed to other places alone,
Now virtue is your only good friend;
So what is there to do but fully train your mind?

Second, relatives and friends will not help one.

From the *Vinaya*:

When the hour of your death arrives,
Your children will not be a refuge,
Nor your parents, nor your friends;
You will not have anyone as a refuge.

Lastly, even one's own body will not help one.

From *Letter to a Friend*:

Know this: The body ends with burning, or drying out, or rotting;
Later on the unclean remains, devoid of essence,
Fully disintegrated and decomposed,
Become just scattered bits.



From *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

If muscles and bones that were born attached
Become separated after death,
What need is there to discuss what will happen
With you and your close ones?

Examining each aspect with reasoning:

Even if you have filled a billion-world-system universe⁴⁷ with the seven precious items at the time of dying they all will remain, as you will not have the power to carry even one tiny one with you; others will fight for the sake of that wealth; and the Sublime Ones will chastise you by saying “Now that you have accumulated so much wealth, what are you going to do with it?”

Even if you have huge numbers of sons and grandsons, see that at the time of dying not even one has the power to guide you. Furthermore, for the benefit of your relatives you accumulate non-virtues, and when you are at the point of your death your relatives will just make you miserable.

By having committed non-virtues for your own benefit, harm will come to you. Your body will naturally become foul-smelling. Reflect upon the fact that some who have become sick even jump to their deaths.

Meditate again and again in these ways.

Another method with which to habituate the recollection of death: Every time you see death with your eyes, hear of death with your ears, or remember death with your mind, contemplate “I will also die, just like that person.” Every time you see external objects be impermanent and change, contemplate: “I am also impermanent and will die just like this.”

Lord Gampopa taught:

Meditating on death is important in the beginning, as it is the cause of entering the Dharma; is important in the middle, as it is the whip of perseverance; and is important at the end, as it is the clarifying method of dharmakaya.

Therefore, it is important to meditate on death.

There are good qualities that arise from meditation on death: clarity of faith is established, perseverance is assisted, attachment and aversion are quickly separated from, and equality of phenomena is quickly realized. If these good qualities have not arisen, one has not adequately meditated on death. For example, it was once said to me by my lama: “Although you have meditated on it, it has not been born in your mindstream.”



My advice, summarizing this section with reason:

If even the extremely hard Resplendent Supreme Mountain⁴⁸
Will be destroyed by the kalpa-ending fire,⁴⁹
It is certain that one's body, like a delicate water bubble,
Will be destroyed by conditions beyond one's control.

By meditating in this way on the difficult-to-find pleasures and endowments and on death one's mind turns away from this life⁵⁰. For example, if one plans to cross a pass the next day and not return, one does not make plans for what exists on this side of the pass, but one does whatever will be for benefit to one's life on the other side. Likewise, because no matter how much planning one has done for this life, one will need to drop everything and leave the world without having a choice in the matter, the mindset should arise of doing whatever will be of benefit to one's existence on the other side of death.

Thus ends the fourth section of
Engaging by Stages in the Teachings of the Buddha,
Concerning the recollection of death.



5 THE DISADVANTAGES OF CYCLIC EXISTENCE

When one has not achieved liberation in reliance upon the body of leisure and endowment that is difficult to find and easy to lose, one continually cycles through cyclic existence and experiences suffering. Therefore, in order to generate dissatisfaction toward cyclic existence and to generate the insight that actualizes liberation, there is the teaching to meditate on the disadvantages of cyclic existence: “Contemplate the disadvantages of cyclic wandering through the three realms⁵¹; / Through this the mind turns away from cyclic existence and the / Intention to achieve liberation is born.”

In this there are two topics: the direct teaching on the disadvantages of cyclic existence and the teaching on the vow of going for Refuge, that which is to be practiced while cycling in cyclic existence.⁵² The first has two topics: the teaching on the suffering in the three realms of misery and the teaching on the suffering of temporary higher status.

The Suffering in the three realms of misery

The Suffering in the hell realm

First, from among the suffering in the realms of misery, the suffering in hell is wicked, intolerable, and long.

From *Letter to a Friend*:

The inexhaustible suffering of being very forcefully stabbed by
Three hundred spears for one whole day in our world
Is very small in comparison to the suffering in hell.

In fact, this comparison does not follow; these two are so far apart,
they cannot be paired together.



Acharya Vasubandhu, on the long duration of life in hell:

The time it would take to empty a full dzang⁵³ of sesame seeds
By removing one every hundred years
Is the lifespan in the hell of the Blistered Ones, and
The lifespans in the others are multiplied successively by twenty.

Although the suffering in the eight cold hells can be inferred in one's mind-stream from their names – Blistering, Bursting Blisters, Saying A-Chu, Saying Kyi-Hoo, Chattering Teeth, Splitting Like a Lotus, Splitting Like a Great Lotus, and Splitting like the Utpal Flower⁵⁴ – the suffering in these eight cold hells is impossible to withstand.

The eight hot hells are named: Reviving, Black Line, Crushing Together, Wailing, Great Wailing, Heating, Extreme Heating, and Unrivaled Torment. In the Reviving hell the beings take turns killing each other and are revived each time by a resounding sound saying 'may all be revived'; the beings there suffer by continually killing each other and being revived again. In the Black Line hell the beings are marked by black lines and the emanations of the Lord of Death continually slice them up along the lines with blades. In the Crushing Together hell the beings are crushed in between huge mountains. In the Wailing hell the beings continually cry from intolerable suffering. In the Great Wailing hell the beings make great wailing sounds from intolerable suffering that is even greater than the previous hell. In the Heating hell the beings roll about on a ground of red-hot iron.⁵⁵ In the Extreme Heating hell the beings remain continually stuck to the red-hot iron ground, unable to roll about. In the Unrivaled Torment hell, beings are burned by eleven blazing fires – a mass of fire from each of the ten directions and a fire form within each being; there is no torment with greater suffering than that.

The lifespan of the beings in the hot hells: 50 human years is one day in the realm of the four classes of great King Gods. Thirty such days make one of their months;



twelve such months make one of their years; 500 of these gods' years is one day in the Reviving hell. Thirty such days make up one of their months; twelve such months make up one of their years; the lifespan in the Reviving hell is 500 such years. Likewise, one day in the god realms from Thirty Three up to Controlling Other's Manifestations⁵⁶ are 100, 200, 400, 800, and 1,600 human years, respectively. 1,000, 2,000, 4,000, 8,000, and 16,000 of those gods' years are one day in the Black Line hell up to the Heating hell, respectively. The lifespans in these hells are 1,000, 2,000, 4,000, 8,000, and 16,000 such years.⁵⁷ The lifespan in the Extreme Heating hell is one half of a great intermediate kalpa. In the Unrivalled Torment hell the lifespan is one great intermediate kalpa, so the beings there will not be released before the destruction kalpa begins.⁵⁸

Another hell is described in the tantras.

From the *Tantra of Comprehending the Place of the Blazing Volcanoes*⁵⁹:

Even if the conduct of those that abide in the samaya hell⁶⁰
Is nothing but virtuous action,
There are no desired results from that action;
All the results are undesired.
From resources, sons,
Wives, relatives, and friends
They are quickly separated and not reunited.

Quickly driven from their composite lives,
They then suffer and burn in hell.
When will they be released from hell?
They will be released when all existence has been emptied or
When that result has been exhausted
Through the compassion of all the buddhas.



From the *Tantra of Matrix of Illusion*⁶¹:

If the root and branch samaya of disciples –
Who have become ignorant with regard to the vajra master
From whom they have obtained empowerment and so forth –
Has degenerated through preparation, the actual act,
And rejoicing in the act's completion,
Wise disciples should quickly confess and abandon;
If the time of confessing and abandoning is put off,
They will experience suffering for as long as it would take
To empty the water of the great oceans using only one strand of hair –
This is known as the vajra hell.

In the four directions surrounding the eight hot hells, beings suffer by continually needing to go through swamps of putrefied corpses, path filled with razor blades, unfordable great rivers of hot ash, and jungles with leaves like swords – these are the neighboring hells. The close hells are those of the sentient beings that exist like brooms and the like.⁶² The suffering in these two hells is also wicked, intolerable, and long.

The Suffering in the hungry ghost realm

The suffering of the hungry ghosts is also wicked, intolerable, and long; from
Letter to a Friend:

Take heed! In the hungry ghost realm, the continuous suffering
Generated by being bereft of one's desires is inexhaustible.
The suffering generated from hunger and thirst, cold and heat,
Fatigue and fear, is completely inexhaustible.

The mouths of some are just like the eye of a needle,
But their stomachs look just like mountains; these are tormented by hunger.
They do not have the strength to search for even
The smallest food-like materials discarded as low and unclean.



.....

Some of these beings who have been bound tightly
By the karmic lasso of faulty conduct,
Suffering without interruption,
Are unable to die for 5,000, 6,000, even up to 10,000 years.

There are four types of hungry ghosts:⁶³

The *outwardly obscured* ones perceive whatever food and drink is around them as that which is undesired by anyone as sustenance – namely pus, lymph, blood, and the like.

The *inwardly obscured* ones abide with mouths as small as the eye of a needle, throats slender as a bow-string, and stomachs just like a mountain. Mostly they do not find anything to eat; even though they may find a bit of nasty snot or other such things, it cannot pass through their mouths or throats, and so their stomachs do not fill up with anything; furthermore, their limbs cannot support their bodies.

For those with the *obscuration of the nine doors*, all of whatever they put in their mouths as food turns into blazing red-hot iron and boiling lava, and goes down into their stomachs.

The *general obscuration* of the hungry ghosts, even the charnel-ground flesheaters, is that even if they spot food and drink, they cannot take a possession of it by themselves as it is protected by other beings.

The lifespan of these beings: One human month is one of these beings' days and since they live for up to 500 such years, they live for up to 15,000 human years.



The Suffering in the animal realm

The suffering in the animal realm is also wicked, intolerable, and long.

From *Letter to a Friend*:

And in the place of animal birth are those beings with a
Variety of sufferings: slaughter, fettering, being beaten, and the like;
These down-trodden, virtue-less beings
Never stop eating one another.

Some die for their pearls, fur,
Bones, blood, meat or skin.
Powerless, others strike them with their hands and
Press them into service with whips and installed iron rings.

This suffering can also be inferred from one's own experience: The animals that abide in the ocean, as numerous as the fermenting grains used to produce fine chang, have the sufferings of eating one another and of eating themselves⁶⁴; the animals scattered everywhere, pigs and the like, have suffering of slaughter; and dzo⁶⁵, horses, and the like have the suffering of servile conduct – these sufferings and the like are impossible to withstand.

These beings' next life will again come with great suffering.

From *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

Experiencing only such suffering,
[A being] does not become fully free of it;
While experiencing suffering in this way,
More non-virtues are fully created.

In other words, most animals naturally commit non-virtue and do not have the action-methods of virtue, so practicing a method that would release them from that state is difficult.

Abandoning non-virtue, the cause of the suffering of the three realms of misery, from fearing that suffering and desiring release from it is the birth of the mind-set of the lesser-scope person.



The Suffering of temporary higher status

So then, are things pleasant in the realms of temporary higher status? No, things are not pleasant there either.

The suffering in the human realm

There are eleven human sufferings (that other migrating beings also certainly have): birth, aging, sickness, and death; meeting with hated enemies, and the fear of meeting with them; separating from loved ones, and the fear of separating from them; being unable to look after and protect what one has; not finding through striving those things that one does not have; and the suffering of change, the suffering of formatives, and suffering of suffering.

The *suffering of meeting with hated enemies* is being killed, having one's wealth stolen, and so forth. The *suffering of the fear of meeting enemies* is having to think carefully about how to deal with them, to plan how to strike them, and so forth. The *suffering of separating from loved ones* is that one is stricken with misery after one's loved ones, from whom one is unable to separate for even an instant, die. The *suffering of the fear of separating from them* is that stricken with the suffering of fearing that one's loved ones will soon die, one must do Bon-style rituals⁶⁶ and so forth. The *suffering of being unable to look after and protect what one has* is that it is difficult to have even trifling things, and stricken by the suffering of fearing that those things that one has will be lost, one examines the backs of one's servants⁶⁷ and so forth. The *suffering of not finding through striving those things that one does not have* is that although one strives day and night for the sake of food and clothing, one does not obtain the desired benefit. The *suffering of change*: All happiness will later change to suffering; one may be without enemies and sickness for now, but this will suddenly change; one may now have resources but they will suddenly be lost; and so on. The *suffering of formatives*: The cause of future suffering is conducting oneself in non-virtue. The *suffering of suffering*: In addition to the suffering of being sick, an enemy arises to further torment you and so forth.

These beings' next life will again come with great suffering: After most people die, due to previous non-virtuous actions they will be born in the three realms of misery and the like.



From *Letter to a Friend*:

Even if one has been born as the Wheel-Wielding Emperor himself,
In the next life again to cyclic existence one will come, as his servant's
servant.

The suffering in the demigod realm

Even if one is born as a demigod, one does not have peace and happiness. Since the demigods have great pride and like to fight and argue, they have the sufferings of indignation at the glory of the gods and of fighting with the gods, and the suffering of fighting with each other. Due to these actions, their bodies are always covered with wounds and their minds are always full of hatred, and so their suffering is impossible to withstand. Their next life will again come with great suffering, as most of them will be born in the three realms of misery.

The suffering in the god realm

Do the gods have peace and happiness? They do not. The desire-realm gods have the suffering of desire-driven non-satisfaction, the suffering of fighting and arguing with the demigods, and the suffering of the infectious fever-illnesses of the desire realm. They have the suffering of seeing their impending death seven days beforehand, which is like the suffering of a fish left on hot sand or of those on a boat destroyed in the middle of the ocean; this suffering is sixteen times greater than the suffering of the Reviving hell. And the duration of this suffering is long, since in these seven days of the *yatawa*⁶⁸ there are innumerable human lifetimes.

Their next life will again come as great suffering, since apart from those in the five pure form-realm abodes, most will fall to lower realms.



From *Letter to a Friend*:

Even one who has become Indra, Worthy of Worship himself,
Will fall to earth through the power of karma.

.....

Take heed! Having attained the immense happiness and desires of the
god-land
And the bliss of non-attachment – birth into the Brahma realms⁶⁹,
In the next life the suffering of serving as fuel for the
Fires of the Unrivaled Torment hell will be uninterrupted.

.....

Having attained the state of the sun or moon god,
The light of your body illuminates the entire world,
But going to darkness and gloom in the next life,
You will not even see your outstretched hand.

Becoming mentally fatigued with cyclic existence by meditating on its disadvantages in this way, one desires, with all one's heart, to be liberated from it. Desiring to abandon the causes of cyclic existence and to strive for liberation from it is the birth of the mindset of the middle-scope person.

My teaching, summarizing this section with reason:

If even one who faces only a few months or years of suffering in a
prison camp,
Through some difficult methods, escapes to one's homeland,
It is then reasonable for one to escape to one's true homeland, the city
of liberation,
From the permanent suffering in this dungeon that is cyclic existence.



6 GOING FOR REFUGE

Well then, "...Who is able to provide Refuge from this cyclic existence?" It is taught that nothing other than the Three Jewels are able to provide that Refuge, so there are the teachings to "Generate trust in the Three Jewels; / 'Wheel-Wielding Emperor, Indra, Brahma, and the like are unable / To provide that Refuge; only the Three Jewels are able to provide it'", and to "Take the vow of going for Refuge, the practice of this."

Not one of Wheel-Wielding Emperor, Indra, Brahma, or the like is able to provide refuge from this cyclic existence because none of them are free of cyclic existence themselves. However, since the Refuge Three Jewels are able to provide that Refuge, 'going for Refuge' is taught. In this there are eight topics: essence, precise definitions, classifications, distinctions, advantages, ceremony, trainings, and occasions of obtaining and losing.

Essence

There are three aspects to the essence of going for Refuge: knowing the good qualities, asserting it, and not saying it to any other.

The good qualities of the places of refuge should be known from this saying and others: "Of all those with two legs, the Buddha is supreme; of all that is free of desire-attachment, the Dharma is supreme; of all assemblages, the Sangha is supreme."

Asserting is making a commitment;
from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

[Going for Refuge] is asserting one's acceptance of the explicit [Three Jewels], and furthermore, know that this arises from compassion.

Those who desire to attain buddhahood assert their commitment to the Three Jewels that are held in others' mindstreams: the Teacher; the Path; and the Companions While Practicing the Path – in other words, to the cause. They also assert their commitment to the Three Jewels that will come to arise in their own mindstreams - In other words, to the result.



The first, causal Refuge, is held, without distinction, by people in the Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva families; the second, result Refuge, is held by the three families of people with the Sangha, the Dharma, and the Buddha as the result, respectively.

Both the causal and the result types of going for Refuge are taken at the same time, but this does not mean that those who have only one do not need the other. Furthermore, although the result is said to be different, in general, for the three families of people, those who practice the Great Vehicle commit to all three results by asserting: “I will manifestly, completely attain buddhahood and then turn the wheel of Dharma and bring together the Assembly.” Although this appears to be indistinct from the generation of bodhichitta, it is not the same, because the intention of bodhichitta generation is solely for enlightenment.

‘Not saying it to any other’ is not saying that you go for Refuge to teachers other than the Buddha such as Shiva, Kapila⁷⁰ and so forth; to paths other than the Buddhadharma, or to companions such as Jains and so forth, and not saying that you want any result other than the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Precise definitions

“Going for Refuge” means holding to the Three Jewels as a support for liberation from the great fears that engulf oneself and others in suffering. “Relying on this cause – the Three Jewels – one will be liberated from the great fears” – holding in this way to the cause as the support is “going for Refuge to the cause”. “Relying on my manifestation of this result – the Three Jewels – the great fears will be transcended” – holding in this way to the result as the support is “going for Refuge to the result.”

Classifications

There are two classifications of going for Refuge, shared and distinctive. The first is that of the Lesser Vehicle and the second is that of the Great Vehicle.



Distinctions

There are four distinctions between the shared Refuge and the Great-Vehicle Refuge: the cause, the objects, the timespan, and the objective.

Distinction by the cause

The cause of the shared Refuge is longing faith – desiring one's own liberation from Cyclic existence. The cause of the distinctive Refuge is compassion.

Distinction by the objects

Those who take the shared Refuge accept that it is going for Refuge to the Buddha as the three kayas, to the Dharma as both the Dharma of scripture and the Dharma of realization, and to the Sangha as the noble ones known as the eight individuals in four pairs. Those who take the distinctive Refuge go for Refuge to the Buddha as the dharmakaya, to the Dharma as the Dharma of ultimate meaning, and to the Sangha of bodhisattvas; the others – the Dharma of conventional meaning, the Sangha of the Hearers and Solitary Realizers, and so forth are accepted as places of collecting the accumulations, but not as a final Refuge.

From the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

Because they are abandoned, because they are deceptive phenomena,
Because [they are ultimately] non-existing, and because they are
accompanied by fear

The cessation and path Noble Truths and the Noble Assembly
Are not the supreme, final Refuge.

The refuge of going to the ultimate meaning
Is solely the Buddha
Because the Sage is the Body of the Dharma, and
Because the Sage is the finality of all Assemblies.

In studying the textual tradition, I have come to the following understanding, which can be known from the previous quotation.

In the distinctive causal Refuge as well, the Buddha is the three kayas and the Dharma is both the Dharma of scripture and the Dharma of realization; and the Sangha is comprised of the on-returning bodhisattvas⁷¹.



Although it takes the Buddha as the Teacher, for the most part it takes the Teacher to be the two form kayas; although it takes the path as the Dharma, it first takes the Dharma of scripture to be the path, and then later takes the truth of the path⁷² to be the path; and it takes the bodhisattvas that will not return as the companions on the path. The place of distinctive result Refuge is solely the Buddha because the Dharma of scripture and even the Dharma of the truth of the path will be cast away at the time of attaining buddhahood, because the ultimate truth of cessation is the dharmakaya, and because the final achievement of the Sangha as well is the Buddha. As the three noble ones are accompanied by fear they are not the final refuge.

The full establishment of the three results is done under the influence of the three families of people. It was said this same way in the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

The Teacher, the Teaching, and the Disciples –
Influenced by devotion to the three Vehicles that attain them
And to the three actions performed by them
The three Refuges were fully established.

For those who desire to attain the realization of the Teacher Buddha, having been influenced by the Great Vehicle, the Buddha will be established as the object of Refuge. For those who desire to attain the realization of the sublime Dharma Teachings, having been influenced by the Solitary Realizer vehicle, the Dharma will be established as the object of Refuge. For those who desire to attain the realization of the Disciple Sangha, having been influenced by the Hearer vehicle, the Sangha will be established as the object of Refuge. And influenced by those devoted: to the Buddha performing the actions of teaching, to the Dharma performing the actions of the path, and to the Sangha performing the actions of companionship, these three were fully established as the Three Refuges.



Distinction by the timespan

Those who take the shared Refuge go for Refuge for whatever time remains of their current life, but those who take the distinctive Refuge go for Refuge until they reach the heart of enlightenment.

Distinction by the objective

The objective of those who take the shared Refuge is their own benefit, but motivated by compassion, the objective of those who take the distinctive Refuge is the benefit of others.

Advantages

There are enumerated and non-enumerated aspects of the advantages of going for refuge.

Enumerated, there are eight advantages of going for Refuge:

- One becomes a Buddhist
- One is now suitable as a support for all further vows
- Afflictions and evil deeds are diluted and then exhausted
- All one's wishes come to be just as one's mind desired
- One obtains a vast accumulation of merit
- One is not harmed by human and non-human worldly beings
- One quickly achieves manifest, complete buddhahood
- While one has not attained Buddhahood, one is not born in the three realms of misery

Concerning the advantage that 'one is now suitable as support for all further vows', Acharya Chandrakīrti taught:

Whoever goes for Refuge to the Three [Jewels]
Is the root for the eight vows [of individual liberation];
The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha
Are the Refuges of those who desire liberation.



And similarly, Acharya Vasabandhu taught:

All [religions] are said to have the one-day vow,
But it does not exist for those who have not gone for Refuge.

The non-enumerated advantages of going for Refuge are countless, but Acharya Surata said:

If the merit of going for Refuge existed as form
Even the entire three realms would be too small a container to hold it all.

There are also the four advantages of:

- Attaining vast merit
- Attaining a joyous mind
- Attaining supremely vast joy
- Attaining completely pure samadhi.

And another four:

- Having a great guardian
- All obscurations of wrong devotion are diluted, exhausted, and then meet their end
- One is counted by the Noble Ones
- One will be loved and adored by the gods who have faith in the Teacher, those of pure conduct, and the Teachings; and those who compose aphorisms because of important happenings will compose one because of your action of going for Refuge.

Ceremony

The first time one goes for Refuge, before the eyes of a lama, or of representations of the Three Jewels if a lama is not available, one takes the shared and distinctive vows of going for Refuge while they arise from the ceremonial text.

One then continues to go for Refuge at least three times every day and three times every night.



Trainings

There are taught four shared trainings, three unshared trainings, and three aspect-similarity trainings involved in going for Refuge:

The four shared trainings:

- The training in recalling the advantages of going for Refuge, and therefore going for Refuge again and again
- The training in offerings
- The training in not abandoning the sublime Three Jewels, even for the sake of preserving one's life or for reward
- The training in not seeking other methods of Refuge, even when important work arises.

The three sub-trainings in the training in offering:

- Offering with the select portion of whatever is used as food and drink
- Continually offering according to one's ability
- Offering on special occasions.

The three unshared trainings:

- Having gone for Refuge to the Buddha, not paying homage or going for refuge to other, worldly deities
- Having gone for Refuge to the Dharma, abandoning harm and harmfulness to sentient beings
- Having gone for Refuge to the Sangha, not adhering to non-Buddhists.

The three aspect-similarity trainings:

- Having gone for Refuge to the Buddha, abandoning lack of respect, and instead showing vast respect for the cast, drawn, and formed representations of the Buddha Jewel.
- Having gone for Refuge to the Dharma, abandoning lack of respect, and instead showing vast respect for the books and bound volumes that are representations of the Dharma and Jewel, even a single letter of them.



- Having gone for Refuge to the Sangha, abandoning lack of respect, and instead showing vast respect for the Sangha of ordinary beings that represent the Sangha Jewel, even those who merely wear the golden cloth and up from there representative of the Sangha Jewel.

There is also another set of “four trainings”:

- Adhering firmly to sublime people
- Listening to the sublime Dharma
- Contemplating in a like manner
- Practicing Dharma in accordance with the Dharma.

And another four:

- Having unagitated sense faculties
- Taking up the basis of the trainings perfectly
- Striving to make offerings of jewels from time to time
- Having compassion for sentient beings.

Occasions of obtaining and losing

One obtains the shared vow of going for Refuge in the last of the three recitations of the verse that states the vow of going for Refuge when one fears the suffering of cyclic existence and desires to adhere to the Three Jewels with all one’s heart for the purpose of protecting oneself of this.

One obtains the distinctive vow of going for Refuge in the last of the three recitations of the verse that states the vow of going for Refuge when, in addition to the previous motivation, one has intolerance for the suffering of others due to workable loving-kindness and compassion and desires to adhere to the Three Jewels with all one’s heart for the purpose of protecting others from suffering.

The occasions of losing the vow of going for Refuge: If wrong views are born, it is lost; if the Refuge Three Jewels are abandoned, it is lost; and if the trainings degenerate, it is lost.



My teaching, summarizing this section with reason:

If from fearing small harm from others
People adhere to a powerful lord,
It is then reasonable for people who fear the enemy of the four maras
To adhere to the Great Refuge Three Jewels.

Thus ends the sixth section of
Engaging by Stages in the Teachings of the Buddha
concerning going for refuge.



7 KARMIC CAUSALITY AND THE VOWS OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERATION

Well then, for those uncertain about the truth of these statements:

- Cyclic existence is the nature of suffering.
- The protector that protects one from this existence is the Three Jewels.
- There exists a method of liberation from this existence.

Karmic causality is taught for the purpose of making them trust their truth.

There are four topics concerning the teaching to: “Meditate on cause and result; / Because cyclic existence and nirvana are not / Without causes and did not arise from non-accordant causes” – the classifications of karmic actions and results, the teaching on the nature of each of them, the teaching on their proof, and the teaching on the vows of individual liberation that rely on them.

The classification of karmic actions and results and the teaching on the nature of each of them

There are two classifications of karmic actions and results: afflicted karmic actions and results, and unafflicted karmic actions and results.

Afflicted karmic actions and results

There are three types of afflicted karmic actions and results: non-meritorious karmic actions and results, meritorious karmic actions and results, and unshakable karmic actions and results.

Non-meritorious karmic actions are the non-virtues, the karmic cause of birth in the three realms of misery. Meritorious karmic actions are the afflicted virtues – mainly generosity, moral conduct, and patience – the cause of birth in the desire realm as a human, demigod, or god. Unshakable karmic actions are the samadhis of calm abiding, the cause of birth as a god of the form or formless realms.



Non-meritorious karmic actions and results

To elaborate, the non-meritorious actions are collected into the Ten Non-Virtues, for the most part; and there are three aspects to their results: the fully-ripened result, the accordant-with-the-cause result, and the result of the power.

Fully ripened result

Fully completing the Ten Non-Virtues, the completely ripened results are the three realms of misery. The Buddha taught that the result of killing, divisive speech, harsh words, and ill will is the hell realm; the result of taking what is not offered, desirous sexual misconduct, and covetousness is the hungry ghost realm; and the result of lying, heedless talk, and wrong views is the animal realm.

Also, for each of the Ten Non-Virtues, birth in the three realms of misery occurs by the distinctions of: the weight of the object, the weight of the affliction, and the weight of the count.

Weight of the object

Committing any of the Ten Non-Virtues toward distinctive objects such as the Three Jewels and so forth are as follows:

From among the various acts of:

- Killing – killing one’s father who is also a pratyekabuddha or one’s mother who is also an arhat
- Taking what is not offered – taking what is not offered of offerings that were made to the Three Jewels
- Desirous sexual misconduct – such conduct with one’s mother who is also an arhat
- Lying – purposefully confusing the khenpo or lopon
- Divisive speech – creating schisms in the Sangha
- Harsh words – speaking badly to the Sangha
- Heedless talk – disturbing a meditating fully-ordained monk
- Covetousness – coveting the wealth of the Three Jewels
- Ill will – planning the Five Immediates
- Wrong view – denigrating karmic causality.

Since these are greater non-virtues, they lead to the heavy fully ripened result of birth in the hell realm.



Committing any of the Ten Non-Virtues toward any ordinary people for the most part results in birth as a hungry ghost. Committing any of the Ten Non-Virtues towards lower status migrating beings such as animals and the like, for the most part results in birth as an animal.

Weight of the affliction

Actions motivated by hatred result in birth in hell, primarily; actions motivated by desire result in birth as a hungry ghost, primarily; actions motivated by ignorance result in birth as an animal, primarily.

Weight of count

A countless number of non-virtuous actions results in birth in hell; a middling number in birth as a hungry ghost; and a fewer number in birth as an animal.

According-with-the-cause result

There are two types of accordant-with-the cause result: 'doing' accordant-with-the-cause result and 'experiencing' accordant-with-the-cause result.

'Doing' accordant-with-the-cause result

It is difficult to turn away from a lifestyle of enjoying killing, desiring to kill, and growing accustomed to killing; and one should know that the rest of the Ten Non-Virtues are also like that.

'Experiencing' accordant-with-the-cause result

If one goes to the three realms of misery due to killing, even if it is possible to gain release from there, when one comes back to the human realm one will have a short life and many illnesses; if due to desirous sexual misconduct, one will keep company with a bad spouse or be conceived in the womb of a vulgar or leprous mother; if due to lying, one will be confused and deceived by others; if due to divisive speech, one will be isolated and unloved by the people surrounding one; if due to heedless talk, one will have unheeded speech; if due to covetousness, others will resent one's wealth; if due to ill will, there will be baseless hateful talk about one; and if one gets out of a hell birth that was due to wrong view, one will not meet with the Protector Three Jewels.



Result of the power

If one goes to the three realms of misery due to killing, even if it is possible to gain release from there after a hundred kalpas, when one comes back to the human realm one is born in an inauspicious and unhealthy-looking land; if due to taking what is not offered, one is born in a land with a lot of frost and hail; if due to desirous sexual misconduct, one is born in a land tormented by heat; if due to lying, one is born in a land of non-delicious food; if due to divisive speech, one is born in a place of salt-marsh and desert; if due to harsh words, one is born in a place of ravines and cliffs; if due to heedless talk, one is born in a land where summer and winter are reversed; if due to covetousness one is born in a land of little grain harvest; if due to ill will, one is born in a land of bitter grains; and if due to wrong views, one is born in a land that has no grain.

Meritorious karmic actions and results

The result of meritorious karmic action is birth in the desire realm as a human, demigod, or god. If one has performed afflicted virtue with greater hatred, ignorance, or desire affliction, one is born as a human, demigod, or god respectively.

Unshakable karmic actions and results

The result of unshakable karmic actions⁷³ is birth as a god of the form or formless realm.

Unafflicted karmic actions and results

According to the general language of Abhidharma, if one's meditation is selflessness of persons and one's inter-related conduct⁷⁴ is virtue of the method⁷⁵, one attains the Hearer's enlightenment. If in addition to this, one's meditation is nature less held-sense-objects and one's inter-related conduct is virtue of the method, one attains the Solitary Realizer's enlightenment. If in addition to this, one's meditation is nature-less inner-holding-mind and one's inter-related conduct is virtue of the method, one attains the unsurpassed enlightenment.



Proof of karmic causality

There are two methods of proving karmic causality: scriptural proof and reasoning proof.

Scriptural proof

The first five scriptural proofs is that karmic action and result were spoken of as existents:

Just as sweepings are
Scattered everywhere when the wind blows,
Likewise is the person who is driven by karma.
The person not driven by karma becomes like the sky.

The second is the certainty that karmic action and result are separate:

From hot seeds, hot fruits ripen;
From sweet seeds, sweet fruits ripen –
Through negative actions, suffering;
Through virtuous actions, happiness.

The third is the certainty that until meeting its antidote, karma does not lose its potency:

The karmas of the embodied ones
Do not lose potency even in a hundred kalpas;
When the conditions fall into place and the time arrives,
They ripen to their particular results.



The fourth is the certainty of experiencing one's own results, from *Precious Garland of Advice for the King*:

When a king dies, afflicted by time,
His resources, relatives, and friends will not follow him;
But wherever that great person goes,
His karma follows after him like a shadow.

The last is the certainty that from a small cause a great result is produced:

Do not underestimate small non-virtues
By thinking they will do no harm –
Just a single small spark
Burns a mountain-size grass-heap; and

Do not underestimate small virtues
By thinking they will do no benefit –
One who collects drops of water
Slowly fills a large container.

Was the Buddha who made these statements sometimes right, sometimes wrong? To prove that the Buddha was always right, consider the following: It is taught that all that is direct in the Excellent Speech, the Teachings of the Buddha, is not contradicted by direct perception of reality; all that is non-obvious is not contradicted by inference; and all that is very non-obvious is not mutually contradictory in the scriptures⁷⁶. So by direct and indirect ways in the profound and vast teachings, methods that benefit sentient beings and make them happy are taught, and methods that harm them are not taught. Those who concentrate on altering the scriptures for the current times, although they have altered them in a manner like the teachings of the Buddha, they do not know even a facet of the actual teachings.⁷⁷ Therefore, the speaker of those teachings certainly was a buddha who had exhausted all faults, was compassionate, and unperversely taught the meaning.



Reasoning proof

Examined through reasoning, karmic causality is certainly true:

It is said that beings go to the land of the dead⁷⁸ after dying, but do all those born in this world come from previous lives or not? If they come from previous lives and are born here, after they die and transmigrate from here, where can they go that they will not be born again? If they do not come from previous lives, what cause could there be for those born without a prior cause to go to the land of the dead after dying?

Even though we are not taught the easy actions of eating and drinking, going and staying, crying and so on, right from birth they are known; and even though we are taught for a long time the difficult actions of engaging in the Dharma and so on, they are difficult to know – this is due to the power of prior habituation and non-habituation; and since it is seen that in our current life it is easy for us to engage in actions that were preciously habituated, and difficult to engage in unhabituated actions this is certainly karmic patterning.

After dying, one does not cease to exist: When waking from sleep and blackouts, one arises again based on the continuity of one's prior awareness; likewise, at the time of dying, based on the continuity of prior awareness, one also certainly arises again.

Virtuous and non-virtuous actions have the results of happiness and suffering: In one's current life it is directly apparent that the reply of one person to whom benefit or harm has been done by another person is to benefit or harm that person; this is karmic cause and result.

Therefore, since karmic causality is certainly true, from now on engage in it by meditatively rejoicing in previously performed virtuous actions and by striving solely for virtuous actions.

The vows of individual liberation that rely on karmic causality

To maintain both the abandonment of previously committed non-virtues and the restraint of henceforth not committing them again, there is the teaching to "Take a vow of individual liberation, the practice of this." In this there are eight topics: the essence of the individual liberation vows, the classifications, from whom a vow is taken, the ceremony of taking a vow, the beneficial effects, the precepts, the occasions of obtaining and losing the vow, and the methods of restoring the vow if it is damaged.



Essence

The Hearers accept that the vows are substantive⁷⁹; that this vow-form's cause is generated by the perceptible aspects of the vow ceremony; that its essence is imperceptible form that is unrevealed and non-impeding; and that its abandonments are the four defeats or the seven speech and body non-virtues, along with the specific precepts. The others, in common, accept that the vows are the opposite of both harming sentient beings, the seven speech and body non-virtues, and of that which functions as a basis for that harm, the three mind non-virtues.

Classification

The vow takes four forms: fully ordained, novice, lay-person, and intermediate nun; taking male and female body-supports into consideration, there are seven types of the vow in total: fully ordained monk and nun, novice monk and nun, male and female lay person, and intermediate nun.

From whom the vow is taken

The ones from whom the vow is taken need to be holders of the vow, to be an assembled group of ten or five, and to be of sound faculties so that the vow can be a 'firm branch' on which to build one's practice.

The ceremony of taking the vow

Regarding the ceremony of taking the vow, one needs the Ten Presences to be present and to have the Three Intentions. The Ten Presences are: the presence of the Buddha, the presence of the Dharma, the presence of the Sangha, the presence of the khenpo, the presence of the lopon, the presence of the person, the presence of the monastic articles, the supplication, the absence of obstacles, and the expression of the actions.⁸⁰ The Three Intention are: the firm intention to achieve nirvana, the intention to guard the precepts without interruption, and the intention to take all the precepts, not leaving any out.



The beneficial effects

There are eleven beneficial effects: If one has moral conduct, then food, clothing, and so forth are found without hardship; due to being ornamented by moral conduct, one's 'flag of fame' is well-known in the ten directions: the Dharma-protecting deities impart radiance to one's body; one is worthy of having no rival; harmful sentient beings cease harming one and instead begin to benefit one; distinctive samadhis are born in one's mindstream; all the Dharma of the Buddha ripens in one's mindstream; one sleeps soundly and has good dreams; at the time of death, one has no remorse and dies with a feeling of happiness; one obtains the bountiful results of the highest-status gods and humans; and one attains the definite goodness, the three aspects of enlightenment.

The precepts

If one thinks that those beneficial effects will come about by merely taking the vow, then one is mistaken. Since one needs to guard the precepts as undamaged after taking the vow, the sixth topic, the precepts, is taught. Fully ordained ones have 253 main precepts along with the subsidiary precepts; intermediate nuns have 22 main precepts along with the subsidiary precepts; novice monks and nuns have ten main precepts along with the subsidiary precepts; lay-people have the four root precepts plus the precept to not take intoxicants, making five main precepts, along with the subsidiary precepts, the Ten Non-Virtues; and those taking the one-day vow have the eight branch precepts along with the subsidiary precepts, the Ten Non-Virtues. The particular precepts should be known from the Vinaya scriptures.



The occasions of obtaining and losing the vow

One who has gone for Refuge to the sublime Three Jewels, who trusts karmic action and result, and who has the Three Intentions and the Ten Presences, obtains the vow on the last of the three expressions of the actions.

Concerning the occasions of losing the vow, from the *Treasury of Abhidharma*:

Offering the training back, death-transmigration,
A cut root [from strong wrong view], the passing of the night, or
The arising of hermaphroditism⁸¹ –
In these ways the vow of individual liberation is lost.

The one-day vow is lost with the passing of the night; the other seven types of vow have in common the other four causes of losing the vow.

Another aspect: If any of the four root precepts are broken with all the four branches, since one is then defeated by non-virtue, the vow is lost.⁸²

The methods of restoring the vow if it is damaged

There are two topics concerning the methods of restoring a damaged vow: restoring a damaged main precept, and restoring a damaged subsidiary precept.

There are three situations concerning restoring a damaged main precept:

One who has offered back the vow but whose moral conduct is uncorrupted, and now wants the vow back, nonetheless needs to take the vow from the beginning.⁸³

One who has offered back the vow and whose moral conduct is corrupted, and now wants the vow back also needs to take the vow from the beginning.

For one who has not offered back the vow and whose moral conduct is corrupted, according to the tradition that accepts the concealment of a damaged precept to be one of the branches that obstructs the vow, if there was no concealment of the damaged precept, the vow can be repaired through penance⁸⁴.

If there was concealment, since the vow cannot be taken again, one should abandon that concealed non-virtue using the Four Powers.⁸⁵

Concerning restoring a damaged subsidiary precept: There are no damaged subsidiary precepts that will not be purified by abandonment.



My advice, summarizing the above through reason:

If worried about exacerbating even a small illness,
One shuns discordant food,
It is then reasonable to renounce the cause of continued suffering –
Non-virtuous action – and to strive to actualize virtue.

*Thus ends the seventh section of
Engaging by Stages in the Teachings of the Buddha
a teaching on karmic causality and the vows of individual liberation.*



8 MEDITATING ON LOVE AND COMPASSION

It is not sufficient to protect one's vow of individual liberation, practicing solely for one's own benefit; hence one is taught to: "Protect the vow of individual liberation but / Not practice by striving solely for self-benefit; / Because this does not obtain the unsurpassed enlightenment, but instead / The state-of-rest nirvana of the Hearer or Solitary Realizer, whose / Paths were taught in profound Sutra to be of provisional meaning."

Although one does actualize one's own benefit through protecting one's vow of individual liberation, the final nirvana is not obtained this way.

From the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

Therefore, until attaining Buddhahood
Nirvana is not attained;
Without light and light rays
There is no seeing the sun.

So what was the Buddha's intention in teaching that the Hearers and the Solitary Realizers reach a Nirvana?

This is spoken of in the *Sutra of Goddess Shrimala*:

Establishing the nirvana of the Arhat and Solitary Realizer as a basis
for their practice and calling it the 'World-Honored One Nirvana' is a
method of the tathagatas.

Just as Leader Skilled in Means⁸⁶ emanated a city in the center of a desolate land for those exhausted by their long journey, this nirvana was taught by the Sublime Lord of the Dharma, the Authentically Perfected Buddha, saying "It is a method to ensure that lesser sentient beings do not turn away from the path." It is taught that all the Arhats and Solitary Realizers will need to train in the path of the Great Vehicle, building on that basis:



Concerning those who have entered the path of peace,
Those with the cognition that nirvana has been attained,
It is taught in the sublime Dharma of the White Lotus and other Sutras that
The One Who Teaches Phenomenal Suchness
Ripens them to the Supreme Vehicle –
By turning them away from holding to their state of rest and
Impelling their complete embrace of method and discriminating awareness –
And then prophesies their supreme enlightenment.

(A presentation of the Three Vehicles: The Hearers realize the Four Truths as only the selflessness of persons and are able to abandon only the afflictional obscurations that are subsumed by the self-grasping of persons. Those that practice the Solitary Realizer vehicle realize only the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena of outer meaning as natureless grasped objects. They are able to abandon only the afflictional obscurations and the grasped-thought sub-section of the cognitional obscurations. These solitary conquerors can be categorized into two groups: the rhinoceros-like solitary realizers abiding alone and the group-conduct solitary realizers conducting themselves together with groups of disciples. Since those who practice the Great Vehicle realize the selflessness of persons and all of the selflessness of natureless phenomena – all phenomena subsumed by both grasped objects and grasping subjects – they are able to abandon, without remainder, the afflictional obscurations and the cognitional obscurations that are subsumed by both grasped-thought and grasping-thought.)

Therefore, it is taught that one needs to strive for enlightenment from the beginning, since on one occasion of fording a river one will not make two crossings⁸⁷:

“Strive for unsurpassed enlightenment for the benefit of others.” From the very beginning one should strive for unsurpassed enlightenment for the benefit of others.

What are the causes and conditions of that enlightenment? “... the state of the Omniscient One, the bountiful result of dual benefit, / Arises from the bodhichitta-cause, which is / Completed by a method rooted in compassion.” And from sutra:

“The One Omniscient of Superficies himself arose from a bodhichitta-cause that was perfected by a method that possessed a compassion-root.”



Therefore, since one needs to generate bodhichitta, the mindset of striving for enlightenment for the benefit of others, and since the cause of that is loving-kindness and compassion, a meditation on them is taught: “Meditate on loving-kindness and compassion.”

The meditation on loving-kindness

The essence of loving-kindness is desiring to actualize benefit and happiness in the mindstreams of others.

The meditation on that starts with meditation on the great kindness of one’s current mother:

Her great kindness through serving as the basis-place for my good body of leisure and endowment, caring for me the entire time of abiding in her womb for ten months with the thoughts: “What I wouldn’t do for this to be born a living child⁸⁸ with a sound and beautiful body and bountiful results of good qualities”; with the work of arranging various *mo*, Bon, and astrological readings, text recitations, and so forth that would benefit me; and with the taking care of abandon the food, drink, and conduct that would be harmful to me and instead eating and doing what would be beneficial.

Then, immediately after I was born, to that insignificant unclean bundle, not dead, not alive, she said, “my child” and sustained my life in the palms of her hands and against her warm body; she gave me her milk and later appropriate food and drink; she removed my snot, vomit, and the like with her hands and mouth: and all heat and cold, hunger and thirst, that even a little of was intolerable for herself in the past, she tolerated for my benefit.

Then, even after I grew larger, she haggled over my food’s weights and measures in the market and she was able to give to me all her wealth collected through various happinesses and sufferings without reservations – not only that, but if she had had the ability, she would have given all of the royal articles of the Wheel-Wielding Emperor to me, without reservation or the stinginess that thinks of greatness and value in even the limitless good qualities of the Buddha, looking at me with loving eyes and thinking of me with a compassionate mind, she would have actualized all of my wishes, benefit, and happiness.



Ponder with thoughts of closeness and longing that since she protected you from all harm and suffering, she was as kind as buddha, until your eyes fill with tears or your body-hair stands up merely by thinking this way; make these thoughts of closeness and longing arise as much as you are able.

Furthermore, contemplate that this mother has not only served as your mother in this birth; from *Letter to a Friend*: “The total of contacts with this mother – this cannot be enumerated / Even by counting out clay-pellets the size of juniperberries made from the entire earth,” but also in other births from beginningless cyclic existence, having served again and again as my mother, father and others, she has actualized my benefit and happiness. They were all kind ones who have protected me from harm and suffering:

The food and drink she has given me just in this birth is not the full extent of her generosity – over innumerable lifetimes she has given me more food and drink than exists today in this entire worldly realm; the clothing she has clothed me with just in this birth is not the full extent of her clothing of me – over innumerable lifetimes she has clothed me with more clothing than exists today in this entire worldly realm; the assistance she has given me just in this birth is not the full extent of her assistance to me – over innumerable lifetimes she has given me assistance that is more than all the work being performed today in this entire worldly realm; and above and beyond these great acts, the occasions she has served as my teacher or saved my life are uncountable.

Likewise, I will repay this very kind mother with kindness in return; and anytime I am able to benefit her, I will do so no matter what happens.

When I am able to do benefit with my body, I will benefit her by giving her my head, the first of the limbs; my eyes, the best of the sense organs; my heart, the essence inside me; and all of my flesh, blood, and resources. I will benefit her by giving her all the roots of virtue that have grown in the three times. Furthermore, I will benefit her with a mindset free of expectation of anything in return; I will benefit her with a mindset free of reservation or stinginess; I will benefit her with a mindset free of ambivalence; I will establish her in happiness.

Furthermore, contemplate that like the benefit given me by my current mother, all of the sentient beings of the ten directions have benefited me by serving as father, mother, closely connected ones and so forth. And, as that is the case, they have similarly benefited me with food, clothing, and so forth:



Each of the sentient beings
Having again and again served as my mother-
How much milk have I drunk?
More than the water of the four oceans!

.....

Each sentient being having served as my father –
To hold even the horses and elephants given to me
The billion-world-system universe is too small a container,
And the other beasts of burden are equally numerous!

Likewise, think of how these kind ones: have actualized your benefit and happiness, have protected you from harm and suffering, have thought of you with compassionate minds, and have looked at you with loving eyes.

Ponder with closeness and longing until merely by thinking this way your bodyhair stands up or your eyes well up with tears.

And just as they have benefited me, I also need to repay them with kindness in return. Furthermore, if I say “This is my friend” and can give even my life to other people who now benefit me with small amounts of food, clothing, and so forth, why am I not now also benefiting those who have benefitted me in that very immense way?

Furthermore, when I am able to benefit them:

I will follow through no matter what happens; I will benefit them with my body, my resources, and all my roots of virtue; I will benefit them with a mindset free of expectation of anything in return, free of reservation or stinginess, and free of ambivalence; I will establish them in happiness; and I will establish them in the happiness of the final, non-leavable nirvana.

That was the all-at-once mediation on loving-kindness.

The step-wise meditation on loving-kindness: One meditates on loving-kindness for one’s current mother until the meditation is up-to-par, and then inferring from that, one expands the meditation to one other sentient being, then to two, four, eight, and so on, then to all sentient beings in Dzambuling, then to all sentient beings in the billion-world-system universe, and finally to all sentient beings.

When, with all one’s heart, the intention arises of actualizing the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings, that is immeasurable loving-kindness.



THE MEDITATION ON COMPASSION

Although one desires to actualize the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings in that way, when one observes sentient beings and sees that they exist stricken with suffering, the hindrance to happiness, and since in not separating from that they are without happiness, one needs to meditate on the compassion that desires them to be freed from suffering. In this, there are two meditations: the all-at-once meditation and the step-wise meditation. The all-at-once meditation starts with meditating on compassion for one's current mother:

If my current mother were sentenced to the king's punishments and so burned in a fire, or cast into an ice-pit, or whipped with iron thorns, or had her flesh ripped off by pliers, or her eyes plucked out, or her digits and limbs cut off, or the like, would I feel compassion for her or not? I would feel compassion for her.

Would the responsibility to protect her from that suffering fall to me or not? The responsibility would fall to me. If that happened and I did not protect her, would she be sad or not? She would be sad. If I did not protect her would others ridicule me or not? They would ridicule me. Would I be happy about her being punished or not? I would not be happy about it.

If I gasp "How horrible!" in considering merely that suffering she would experience, what if she were to be born as a sentient being in the hot hells, or a sentient being in the cold hells or the like? Her corresponding suffering would then be a hundred thousand times greater, or a million times greater, or so on as great as those wordly punishments; and since my corresponding compassion would then also be a hundred thousand times greater, or a million times greater, or so on as great, the responsibility to protect her from that falls to me.

Likewise, if my current mother were to come under the power of a cruel local lord and so be continually beaten and reprimanded, banished from the household by wicked words, and then bound into servitude even just for an instant, would I feel compassion for her or not? I would feel compassion for her. (Continue contemplating fully, as above: Would the responsibility ... etc.)

If I gasp "How horrible!" in considering merely that suffering that she would experience, if she were to be born as an animal, since her corresponding suffering, and hence my corresponding compassion, would be a hundred thousand times as great, the responsibility to protect her from that falls to me.



Even if my mother were to be born again as human, I would have compassion for her since she would be stricken by the suffering of farming, busy-ness, and poverty, and the responsibility to protect her from that falls to me.

Even if she were to be born as a demigod, I would feel strong compassion for her since she would be continually afflicted by suffering of pride, quarrelling and fighting and the like, and the responsibility to protect her from that falls to me.

Even if she were to be born as a god, I would feel strong compassion for her since she would be afflicted by the suffering of dying-transmigrating, falling down to the lower realms, and the like, and the responsibility to protect her from that falls to me.

Likewise, since my mother's continual conduct consists of actions and mental afflictions that are the causes of those sufferings and since the result of that conduct is her being continually afflicted by great suffering as the six types of migrating beings, I have strong compassion for her, and the responsibility to protect her from that falls to me.

You should mediate in this way.

After meditating in this way, if with all your heart you can no longer bear your current mother's suffering and intend to protect her from that suffering, the next step is meditation on compassion for all sentient beings.

If you observe the sentient beings reaching to the end of space as your migrator-mothers, whose benefit and happiness you are now working to actualize, you see that in all the six realms of migrating beings they are continually suffering from both the cause and result of suffering.

Because they are controlled by the cause of suffering, there is nothing for the sentient beings of today to think other than mental afflictions and nothing for them to do other than negative actions.

Since they are motivated by mental afflictions they can only commit the Ten Non-Virtues, the Five Immediates, and the Five Near-Immediates and contravene the vow of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vow, and the commitments of Secret Mantra.



They are each their own worst enemy; they confuse themselves; through great attention to non-virtue they are one in not having a place to go other than the realms of misery – in particular, consider the hungry ghosts: Since through negative actions they have received a miserable body and since for them all sentient beings are objects that increase their mental afflictions, they accumulate only negative karma.

Think of these mother-beings with compassion, since the time for them to emerge from the realms of misery will not come.

The results of their negative karma: those born in the hells suffer from heat and cold, cutting and chopping, boiling and burning, and the like; those born as hungry ghosts continually suffer from hunger and thirst and the like; those born as animals suffer through servile conduct and the like due to their foolishness and stupidity; those born as people continually suffer through farming, busy-ness and poverty, and the like; those born as demigods continually suffer from pride, quarreling and fighting, and the like; those born as gods continually suffer from death-transmigration, loss of status, and the like.

Since in merely contemplating “Oh my mother-migrators! How horrible!” your bodyhairs stand up or your eyes are disturbed by tears, and since the liberation of these mother-migrators from suffering is your responsibility, contemplate: “I will liberate all these beings from suffering and permanently establish them in the inseparably unsurpassed enlightenment.” This is the all-at-once meditation on compassion.

The step-wise meditation on compassion: First, one’s meditation on compassion for one’s current mother comes up-to-par, and then one meditates on compassion for one other sentient being, then for two, four, eight, and so on, then for all sentient beings in Dzambuling, and then for all sentient beings in the billion-world-system universe.

When the mindset is born that cannot tolerate the suffering of any sentient being and desires with all one’s heart to liberate them all from suffering, that is immeasurable compassion.



There are three types of compassion: compassion with reference to sentient beings, compassion with reference to phenomena, and non-referent compassion.

In the first, the compassion meditator, by not being free of clinging to whatever “I” as real, desires inherently real sentient beings to be freed from inherently real suffering. The great beings that practice the non-Buddhist traditions also have this type of compassion meditation.

In the second, the compassion meditator, in understanding whatever “I” as merely an interdependently arisen phenomenon, desires merely phenomenal sentient beings to be freed from merely phenomenal suffering. The Hearers and Solitary Realizers have this type of compassion meditation.

In the third, while still seeing dualistic appearance – although totally non-existent “I-ness” is understood as like space – the sentient beings, totally non-existent, but like an illusion of confusion’s appearances, are desired to be freed from illusion-like suffering.

This is the non-referent compassion of the bodhisattvas, those who train in the Great Vehicle. The compassion of the no-more-training buddha liberates sentient beings from cyclic existence through unceasing enlightened activities that spontaneously arise due to the power of prior impetus.⁸⁹ This non-referent type of compassion exists solely in the Great Vehicle.

By meditating in these ways on loving-kindness and compassion, one turns one’s mindset away from working for one’s own benefit and the mindset of working for other’s benefit arises: “Arouse effective loving-kindness and compassion; / Through this, the mindset of self-benefit is abandoned and / The mindset of accomplishing enlightenment for the benefit of others is born.”

Desiring with all one’s heart to actualize the benefit and happiness of sentient beings and to free them from suffering is ‘effective loving-kindness and compassion.’ So then, ‘the mindset of working for self-benefit is turned away from’ is the arising of the mindset: “since it is not acceptable to liberate only myself from cyclic existence, the responsibility falls to me to liberate the sentient beings of the six realms from cyclic existence, and to establish them in the unsurpassed happiness.” ‘The mindset of accomplishing enlightenment for the benefit of others is born’:



Well then, with what methods will you be able to liberate sentient beings from suffering and establish them in happiness? None of Indra, Brahma, or the like, or even those who have attained the enlightenment of the Hearers or the Solitary Realizers is able to give this benefit to sentient beings, but if one who has not attained the enlightenment of the Hearers or the Solitary Realizers attains buddhahood, that one will be able to give this benefit to them.

Why is it that if one attains buddhahood one is able to give his benefit to sentient beings?

First, when the Buddha generated the mindset of supreme enlightenment, it was generated for the benefit of others; in the middle, whenever the Buddha collected the accumulations during the three limitless kalpas it was for the benefit of others; and finally, when the Buddha became manifestly, completely enlightened, it was for the benefit of others – and all the Buddha’s deeds were performed solely for others’ benefit.

And three other answers to the question:

A buddha is directly aware of all objects of knowledge; from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

The wisdom that knows all discretely
Is to all object of knowledge always unimpeded.

In this way, a buddha is able to benefit all sentient beings.

As one of great compassion who works for the benefit of all sentient beings without discrimination, favoring, or disfavoring, treating all beings as a mother thinks about her only child, a buddha is able to benefit all sentient beings.



Again for the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

I pay homage to You, the enlightened mindset of benefit –
Who sees all worldly beings individually
In the six periods of the day and night and
Has great compassion for them all.

As one skilled in methods who works for the benefit of beings by teaching in various bodies, appropriately taming whatever being with whatever method, a buddha is able to benefit all sentient beings. Likewise it is said, paraphrasing, “I pay homage to Venerable Avalokiteśvara, who teaches particular methods to particular beings, taming all beings using all methods.” If that is the case, the good qualities of the buddhas are immeasurable; even if a buddha were to express the good qualities of a single buddha from now until the end of the kalpa, that buddha would not be able to finish:

Even a fraction of the good qualities
Of the Unceasing Self-Arisen Ones
Will not be comprehended;
The buddhas and their dharmas are inconceivable.

For all these reasons, if one attains buddhahood, one will be able to benefit sentient beings.

.....

In this way, an insightful mindset arises: “If others have trusted this authentic contemplation on the good qualities of buddhahood, and then attained that buddhahood, the possibility exists to be able to work for the benefit of all sentient beings; therefore, for the benefit of all sentient beings I will achieve enlightenment.”



My advice, summarizing the above through reason:

If to someone who has benefited one with mere food, clothes, and the like
One needs to say, “What a kind person you are” and to repay that kindness,
It is then reasonable that for sentient beings who have benefitted one for
such a long time
One needs to benefit them by actualizing happiness and abandoning suffering.

*Thus ends the eighth section of
Engaging by Stages in the Teachings of the Buddha,
the meditation on loving-kindness and compassion.*



9 GENERATION OF BODHICHITTA

It is taught that one who desires, due to workable loving-kindness and compassion, to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of others, needs to generate bodhichitta through the vow of the bodhisattva: “Take the bodhisattva vow, the practice of this.” In this, there are 11 topics: the essence of bodhichitta generation; its classifications, distinctions, and advantages; the who can support the vow; from whom the vow is taken; the ceremony; the disadvantages of not generating bodhichitta; the precepts; the occasions of obtaining and losing; and the methods of restoring a damaged vow.

Essence

The essence of bodhichitta generation, from the *Ornament of Manifest Realization*:

Bodhichitta generation is desiring authentic,
Perfected enlightenment for the sake of others’ benefit.

Bodhichitta is the mindset that desires to attain unsurpassed enlightenment for the benefit of others, accompanied by its seeds⁹⁰.

Classifications

Essence classification

There are two classifications from the perspective of the essence; from *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

This mindset of enlightenment, briefly stated,
Should be known in two aspects:
A mindset of aspiring to enlightenment and
The engagement toward that enlightenment.

Therefore, there are the two: aspirational bodhichitta generation and engagement bodhichitta generation.



Border-line Classifications

Concerning classification by way of border-lines,
from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Generation of bodhichitta: Devotional bodhichitta,
Pure-superior-intentional bodhichitta, and full-ripened bodhichitta
Are held by those on the bodhisattva grounds;
Tahtāgatas, abandoned-obscurations bodhichitta.

Therefore, there are four types of bodhichitta of the bodhisattva: on the paths of accumulation and connection there is the bodhichitta of devotional conduct (attained by striving, established as the nature of one's aspiration prayers); up to the seventh ground (grounds one through seven), the bodhichitta of fully pure superior intention (by seeing self and other as not separate); on the eighth ground and above, the fully ripened bodhichitta (established as a treasury of good qualities); and on the ground of buddhahood, the bodhichitta that is without obscuration (through having permanently defeated all latent tendencies without remainder).

Distinctions

Although there are many positions on the distinctions between the types of bodhichitta, Lord Atisha accepted that aspirational bodhichitta is commitment to the result, and engagement bodhichitta is commitment to the cause. As for the meaning of this: aspirational bodhichitta, the commitment to the result, is the commitment:

"I will attain the result, enlightenment, for the benefit of others"; engagement bodhichitta, the commitment to the cause, is the commitment: "for the sake of attaining enlightenment for the benefit of others I will train in its cause, the bodhisattva trainings". In looking into the textual tradition, I have come to this understanding: desiring to attain enlightenment for the benefit of others is aspirational bodhichitta, and desiring to train in the trainings for the purpose of attaining enlightenment for the benefit of others is engagement bodhichitta. But engagement bodhichitta is not only desiring to train in the trainings: since enlightenment is its action-purpose objective and the training is its explicit objective⁹¹, I accept both bodhichittas as desiring to attain the result and desiring to train in the cause. Acharya Shantideva and Lord Atisha also understood that it is thus.



Advantages

There are two types of advantages: enumerated and non-enumerated.

The seven enumerated advantages. If one has bodhichitta generation:

- One is included in the category of the Great Vehicle
- All one's non-virtues and mental afflictions are severed at the root
- One obtains vast, inexhaustible merit
- One is a basis for wholly perfecting the root of virtue⁹²
- All the buddhas and bodhisattvas guard and protect one⁹³
- At the time of dying, one dies without any regret
- One quickly, manifestly, perfectly achieves buddhahood; and until achieving buddhahood, one is not separated from the Dharma of the Great Vehicle.

The non-enumerated advantages,
from the *Sutra of the Teaching on the Inconceivable Secrets of the Tathāgata*:

If all the merit of bodhichitta
Became form
It would fill all the realm of space
And be more still.

From the *Sutra requested by Shridatta*:

Whoever presses one's palms together and
Bows one's mind to enlightenment
Makes an offering distinctly superior to that of
A person who fills as many buddhafiels as
There are grains of sand of the Ganges
With the precious jewels,
And then offers them to the World Protector⁹⁴ –
This offering has no such limit.



From *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

One who desires to defeat the hundreds of existential sufferings,
Who desires to dispel the unhappiness of sentient beings, and
Who desires to enjoy the hundreds of many-blisses
Should never give up this very mindset of enlightenment.

When bodhichitta is born in them, instantly
Those pathetic ones locked up in the prison of cyclic existence
Are called “Children of the Sugatas” and the
Worldly gods and humans pay them homage.

Because one can use it, like alchemy,
To take this unclean body and transform it into the
Priceless jewel of the body of the Conqueror,
Hold exceptionally firmly to that which is called ‘bodhichitta’.

Since this sole captain of migrating beings is seen as precious
When well and wholly examined by an immeasurable mindset,
One who desires to be free of the place of the migrating beings
Should hold exceptionally firmly to this jewel, the good bodhichitta.

Virtue: All other’s is like a water-tree,
Having grown its fruit once, it is spent;
The wood-tree of the bodhisattva, again and again
Giving fruit, is not spent, but flourishes, inexhaustibly.⁹⁵

One has committed horrible non-virtues; however, one can
Adhere to a strong-man and have great fear, or
Adhere to bodhichitta and be quickly liberated –
Why do heedful ones not adhere to this?

Through that adhering, just like the world in the kalpa-end fires,
Great non-virtues are surely burned in an instant.
These boundless advantages of bodhichitta
The wise Lord Maitreya explained to Norsang.



From the *Sutra of Planting the Noble Stalk*:

Child of Mahayana family, bodhichitta is like the *seed* of all the qualities of the Buddha; it is like the *field* since it fully multiplies the good deeds of all migrating beings; it is like the *ground* since it supports all sentient beings; it is like the *father* since it wholly guards all bodhisattvas; it is like *Vaishravana* since it cuts all poverty; it is like the *king of the wish-fulfilling jewels* since it authentically actualizes all benefit; it is like the *treasure-vase* since it wholly fulfills all wishes; it is like the *spear* in acting to defeat the affliction-enemies; it is like *armor* since it stops attention to that which is inappropriate⁹⁶; it is like the *sword* since it lops off the head of the mental afflictions; it is like the *ax* since it chops the wood of the mental afflictions; it is like *weapons* since it turn back all harm; it is like the *hook* since it fetches out those abiding in the river of cyclic existence; it is like the *wind-disk*⁹⁷ since it completely scatters all roots of obscurations and haughtiness; it is like the *synopsis* because it subsumes all bodhisattva conduct and aspiration; and it is like the *holy shrine* in the world of gods, humans, and demigods.

Child of Mahayana family, bodhichitta has these good qualities, and other specific good qualities.

There are individual advantages of aspirational and engagement bodhichitta.

The advantages of aspirational bodhichitta, from the *Sutra of Planting the Noble Stalk*:

Child of Mahayana family, consider this example: Even if a diamond cracks, it still outshines all distinctly superior golden ornaments, it has not lost the name 'diamond', and it still completely dispels all poverty.

Child of Mahayana family, likewise, even if the diamond of the one who has generated the mindset of omniscience loses engagement, that one still outshines all the ornaments of good qualities of the Hearers and Solitary Realizers, does not lose the name 'bodhisattva', and will still dispel all deficiencies of cyclic existence.



The advantages of engagement bodhichitta, from *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

For one who has authentically taken up that mindset
With the intention 'I will not turn back'
In order to excellently liberate the limitless
Spheres of heedless conduct of sentient beings
Held since whenever – from that time forward,
Even during sleep and heedlessness,
Many strong uninterrupted merits
Excellently arise to equal the sky.

From *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*:

Without vowing engagement bodhichitta,
Authentic aspirational bodhichitta does not flourish.



The person who can support the vow

The person who has six qualities can support the vow:

- faith and devotion to the Dharma of the Great Vehicle
- hears and understands
- is of the Mahayana family
- respects the lama
- has a firm aspiration
- has one of the seven types of individual liberation vows of Lord Atisha's tradition.

Concerning 'is of the Mahayana family', from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

In preparing to practice, compassionate and devoted;
Patient in the practice; and
Authentically delighting in the virtue generated by the practice –
These were definitively explained as the signs of the Mahayana family.

Having compassion to sentient beings and devotion to the Dharma of the Great Vehicle before practicing; having patience that gives no thought to enduring difficulties that arise in practice; and authentically delighting in the roots of virtue of the essence of the transcendent actions⁹⁸ – these are the four signs.

Concerning 'respects the lama': It is regarding the lama as a buddha, as taught earlier.



From whom the vow is taken

There are two topics concerning from whom the vow is taken: with and without an actual vow-bestower. With an actual vow-bestower: Although the characteristics of a lama were explained above, Acharya Chandragomin⁹⁹ gives three qualities they must have:

Take the vow from a lama who abides in the vow,
Who is skilled in the vow, and who has the ability to give the vow.

Lord Atisha accepted that a lama must have four qualities, adding compassion to those three; from the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*:

Is skilled in the ceremony of the vow,
Abides in the vow himself,
Is capable of bestowing the vow, and has compassion –
Know this one to be a qualified spiritual master.

Without an actual vow-bestower: It is written in the scriptures to search for such a lama up to its becoming an obstacle to preserving one's life, practice of virtue, or vows; if such a lama is then not found, arrange offerings of whatever one has in the presence of the Three Jewels and take the vow on one's own.

The Ceremony

There are three aspects to the ceremony of taking the bodhisattva vow: the ceremonies of preparing to take the vow, of actually taking the vow, and of after the taking the vow.

In the ceremony of preparing to take the vow there are two sections: collecting the accumulations and taking the distinctive Refuge. There are three aspects of collecting the accumulations: To collect the accumulations with the Sangha, one sponsors a Dharma assembly of at least four sangha members with whatever one has, with offerings for those assembled. To collect the accumulations in adhering to a lama, one pays homage, makes offerings, touches the lama's feet, offers a gift, and makes a supplication. To collect the accumulations in relying on the Three Jewels, one pays homage and makes offerings.

The ceremonies of actually taking the vow and of after having taken the vow should be known from other texts.¹⁰⁰



The disadvantages of not having bodhichitta generation

The disadvantages of not having bodhichitta generation are the opposite of the advantages of having bodhichitta generation. Furthermore, from scripture:

This Great Vehicle is supreme
Because it explains bodhichitta;
So through equipoise and striving
Generate this bodhichitta.

If one does not generate bodhichitta
Buddhahood will never be attained;
And in cyclic existence, there is never any other
Cause of bountiful results for self and other.

There are also disadvantages to a damaged commitment to bodhichitta generation;
from *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

If one commits in this way and then
Does not strive with actions
One will be deceiving all these sentient beings-
So what will have happened to “my migrating beings”?

If it was taught that whoever
Considers offering even a trifling ordinary thing
And then does not offer it
Becomes a hungry ghost,

Then if one invites, with all one’s heart,
All migrating beings as guests [to partake of the]
Unsurpassed happiness and then deceives them,
How can happiness come?



Whoever gives up the mindset of enlightenment ...

For bodhisattvas, that
Is the heaviest of all downfalls;
If this happens
There is a reduction in benefit for all sentient beings.

If in disrupting the happiness of even
One sentient being, one's own is damaged,
What need is there to speak of disrupting the
Happiness of the embodied ones filling all space?

The Precepts

It is taught that after generating bodhichitta, one needs to train in the precepts: “Train respectfully in the precepts of the three-trainings.” In this, there are two topics: the precepts of aspirational bodhichitta and the precepts of engagement bodhichitta.

The precepts of aspirational bodhichitta

There are five main precepts of aspirational bodhichitta:

- to train to see and to meditate on the advantages of the mindset of enlightenment
- to train diligently to strive to learn the mindset of enlightenment
- to train diligently to strive to collect the two accumulations
- to abandon the Four Unwholesome Deeds and to train in the Four Wholesome Deeds
- to train not to abandon sentient beings in one's mind.



To train to see and to meditate on the advantages of the mindset of enlightenment

The first main precept is to continually contemplate the advantages that were explained earlier. This is needed because after delighting in one's own mindstream in the accumulations collection and in the advantages described earlier, one will diligently engage in the mindset of enlightenment, the cause of actually achieving them.

To train diligently to strive to learn the mindset of enlightenment

The second main precept is to contemplate in these and similar ways:

"I will do whatever it takes to attain enlightenment for the benefit of others."

"I took up the mindset of enlightenment entirely, and so am performing whatever I can of the roots of virtue: intention for enlightenment, faith in enlightenment, seeking enlightenment, and aspiration for enlightenment."

"For the sake of attaining buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings, I will practice the seven branches."¹⁰¹

From the *Sutra of Advising the King*:

Therefore, great *king*, you have much to do, and many ways in which to do it. You are not able to train in the transcendent actions of complete generosity up through the transcendent actions of discriminating awareness in all parts of the day and night. As that is the case, great king, whenever you are walking, whenever you are sitting, whenever you are sleeping, whenever you are awake, whenever you are eating, whenever you are drinking: always and continually remember, hold in your mind, and meditate your intention for, faith in, seeking of, and aspiration toward authentically perfected enlightenment.

Combine all the roots of virtue collected by all buddhas, bodhisattvas, aryan Hearers, Solitary Realizers, ordinary beings, and yourself in all past, future, and present times; add them up in your mind and rejoice in them. Rejoice in them with the most supreme of rejoicing – from being like the sky up to equaling nirvana. After rejoicing in them, offer them to all buddhas, bodhisattvas, aryan Hearers, and Solitary Realizers.



After offering them, share the merit with all sentient beings. Then, dedicate that merit to their unsurpassed, authentically perfected enlightenment in the three times as is happening today with those sentient beings attaining up to omniscience and wholly completing all the buddha-qualities.

Great king, if you engage in this way, you do all that is possible for a king: All your kingly actions will not decline and all your accumulations for enlightenment will be quickly completed.

Generate the mindset of enlightenment by reciting, three times in the day and three times in the night:

To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Supreme Assembly¹⁰²
I go for Refuge until I attain enlightenment;
By the merit of my generosity and the rest
May I attain buddhahood in order to benefit all migrating beings.

To train diligently to strive to collect the two accumulations

The third main precept is to train in collecting the two accumulations: the accumulation of merit and the accumulation of wisdom. This training is the Six Transcendent Actions, since they cover all aspects of the two accumulations.



To abandon the Four Unwholesome Deeds and to train in the Four Wholesome Deeds

The fourth main precept is to abandon the Four Unwholesome Deeds and to train in the Four Wholesome Deeds.

The Four Unwholesome Deeds, from *the Sutra of the Heap of Jewels*:

Kashyapa¹⁰³, if one commits four deeds, the mindset of enlightenment will be forgotten. What are these four? They are: deceiving the khenpo¹⁰⁴, lupon¹⁰⁵, lama, or sponsor; convincing those without remorse in practicing virtuous deeds to have remorse; using non-praising, unpleasant, not-to-be-expressed¹⁰⁶, or informal words¹⁰⁷ when speaking to bodhisattvas who are authentically engaged in the Great Vehicle; and making use of others through pretense and craftiness – the opposite of superior intention.

The complete abandonment of these is the Four Wholesome Deeds; from the same sutra:

Kashyapa, if a bodhisattva performs four deeds, in all births the mindset of enlightenment will manifest as soon as that bodhisattva is born and its importance will not be forgotten up to reaching the heart of enlightenment. What are these four? Not speaking false words, even for the sake of as great a result as preserving one's life or as small a result as laughter; abiding in the presence of all sentient beings with the superior intention, without pretense or craftiness; regarding all bodhisattvas as buddhas and proclaiming authentic praise of them to the four directions; and engaging all sentient beings who are wholly ripening to not accept the vehicles of lesser extent but to authentically hold to unsurpassed, authentically perfected enlightenment – Kashyapa, these are the four.



To train not to abandon sentient beings in one's mind

The fifth main precept is to train to not abandon sentient beings in one's mind. Since one has generated the mindset of supreme enlightenment and has committed to working for the benefit of all sentient beings, it is not acceptable to give up on any being by thinking, "I will never associate with you." Do not benefit that being by associating with that being; benefit that being in another way: although one needs to keep away from beings that harm one, by thinking, "Since I am not benefiting you now, I will work for your benefit until I attain enlightenment", one will not give up on that being.

The precept of engagement mindset generation

The precepts of engagement bodhichitta, from *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

There is nothing that the
Children of the Conquerors¹⁰⁸ do not learn.

However, if these are summarized, there are three classifications:

- the moral conduct of restraining
- the moral conduct of accumulating virtuous deeds
- the moral conduct of working for the benefit of sentient beings.

The essence of 'restraint' is a virtuous mindset, accompanied by its seeds¹⁰⁹. The essence of 'moral conduct of restraint' is a mindset that abandons whatever does not accord with bodhisattva restraint, accompanied by its seeds; from *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:

The mindset of abandoning [harm], attained
Was explained as the transcendent moral conduct.

The essence of 'moral conduct of accumulating virtuous deeds' is a virtuous mindset that actualizes virtuous deeds, accompanied by its seeds.

The essence of 'moral conduct of working for the benefit of sentient beings' is a virtuous mind that works for the benefit of sentient beings in all possible ways, accompanied by its seeds.



The moral conduct of restraint

There are two types of moral conduct of restraint:

- the training in the shared abandonments: abandoning the Ten Non-Virtues
- the training in the unshared abandonments: abandoning the root downfalls and the various faults in the categories of infractions.

Whether the Ten Non-Virtues are committed by one who has the bodhisattva vow or by one who does not, they obstruct temporary higher status and liberation and cause cyclic existence and birth in the realms of misery; so since all those who seek temporary higher status and liberation need to abandon them, they are known as ‘shared abandonments’. If the second type of abandonments are committed by one who has the bodhisattva vow, they become a root downfall; if they are committed by one who does not, it is uncertain whether they become a root downfall; therefore they are known as ‘unshared abandonments’.

The training in the shared abandonments- abandoning the Ten Non-Virtues

Concerning the Ten Non-Virtues, Acharya Ashvagoshā taught:

The ten paths of non-virtuous karmic-action,
As explained earlier, are misdeeds;
Those who seek happiness
Need to abandon these ten.

There are two topics to be taught:

- the classifications of the Ten Non-Virtues
- the antidotes of the Ten Non-Virtues – the Ten Virtues



The classifications of the Ten Non-Virtues

The three classifications of each of the Ten Non-Virtues:

- killing – due to desire-attachment, due to aversion, due to ignorance
- taking what is not offered – by force, by sneaking, by craftiness and pretence
- desirous sexual misconduct – with one protected by the Dharma; with one protected by a spouse, with one protected by the family line¹¹⁰
- lying – defeating¹¹¹, major, minor
- divisive speech – forceful, to-the-side, covert¹¹²
- harsh words – harsh due to hatred in one's mindstream, harsh in reply, harsh seen as a good quality¹¹³
- heedless talk – worldly, untrue, authentic
- covetousness – of one's own belongings, of others' belongings, of both one's and others' belongings
- ill will – impelling others to do harm, a black mind towards associates of adversaries, goading others to fight one
- wrong view – denigrating thusness¹¹⁴, denigrating karmic causality, worldly wrong view.

The antidotes of the Ten Non-Virtues – the Ten Virtues

The antidotes of the Ten Non Virtues, the Ten Virtues, are abandoning each of the non-virtues and instead doing its opposite: saving lives; performing unattached generosity; abiding in pure conduct; drawing in others with truth and straightforwardness; reconciling discordant ones; using calm, restrained, sincere speech; giving meaningful advice; being satisfied with what one has; meditating on loving-kindness and compassion; and generating trust in thusness, karmic causality, and the Three Jewels, and going for Refuge to them.



The training in the unshared abandonments - abandoning the root downfalls and the infractions

Abandoning the root downfalls

In the root downfalls taken from the *Essence of Space Sutra*, there are five of king bodhisattvas and five of minister bodhisattvas; four of each of these are common to both, making six downfalls in total; and there are eight of ordinary bodhisattvas – so the downfalls from this Sutra are counted as totalling fourteen or eighteen. Add to this the downfall of ‘giving up the mindset of enlightenment’ and the four downfalls described by Arya Asanga – except for his first one, as it is already covered by the fifth of the ordinary bodhisattva’s downfalls from *Essence of Space* – and all together there are 22 root downfalls. The downfalls in verse:

1. (1,6) To steal the wealth of the Three Jewels,
Is accepted as a powerfully defeating downfall.
2. (2,7) To cause someone to abandon the sublime Dharma,
Was taught by the Sage as the second downfall;
3. (3,8) Of even a lax fully ordained one:
To take away his robes, to strike him,
To send him to prison,
Or to bring him down from ordination;
4. (4,9) To commit the Five Immediates;
5. (5) To hold wrong views;
6. (10) To destroy towns and cities –
These were spoken of by the Conquerer as root downfalls.
7. (11) To express emptiness to
Sentient beings who have not trained their minds;
8. (12) To turn back from perfected enlightenment
Those engaged towards buddhahood;
9. (13) To connect to the Great Vehicle
By wholly abandoning individual liberation;
10. (14) To believe that attachment and so forth
Cannot be abandoned using the training vehicle¹¹⁵ or
To cause any other to believe this;



11. (15) To express one's good qualities or
Belittle others' [good qualities] due to desiring
Acquisitions, service, or flattering words;
12. (16) To say wrongly:
"I have tolerance of the profound"¹¹⁶
13. (17) To cause virtue-practitioners to be punished,
To give away donations made to the Three Jewels, and
To take donations meant for the Three Jewels;
14. (18) To disturb calm-abiding meditation, and
To give the resources of retreatants to
Those who recite prayers –
These root downfalls
Are the cause of the sentient beings' great hell. ...
15. (19) To completely give up the mindset of enlightenment;
16. (20) To not give¹¹⁷ to supplicants due to
Strong attachment or miserliness;
17. (21) To not accept the proper
Apologies of sentient beings but to
Instead strike them in anger;
18. (22) To teach an artificial Dharma-likeness
Created by according one's afflictions with other teachings.

All of these are connected with a particular body-support, cause, object, nature, and circumstance. If these are performed with less than all five, it is something lesser than, and not an actual downfall, and so is referred to as "not in default".



There are two aspects to this:

- It is no always a fault to perform these actions with less than all five of the particulars.¹¹⁸
- If there was fault in performing these actions with less than all five of the particulars, then that fault is not treated as a downfall, but as an infraction.

Detailing the five particulars for each downfall:

1. *Body-support* Kings and ministers who have the bodhisattva vow (The body-support is the same for the next three downfalls.) *Cause* Desire-attachment. *Object* The materials offered to the Three Jewels by others, with all their hearts. *Nature* Stealing such material oneself or causing others to do likewise. *Circumstance* When of sound mind. (The circumstance is the same for all the remaining downfalls.)
2. *Cause* Ignorance. *Object* All the Dharma of the Three Vehicles. *Nature* Abandoning that Dharma oneself or causing others to abandon it.
3. *Cause* Aversion. *Object* Those who hold the signs of being Buddhist, whether they have moral conduct or not. *Nature* Taking away the monastic robes and so forth.
4. *Cause* Aversion. *Object* Father, mother, arhats; reconciled Sangha members; buddhas. *Nature* Killing; causing a schism in the retinue¹¹⁹; drawing blood with bad intent.

From the *Tantra requested by Subahu*:

Concerning those who kill arhats, their fathers, or their mothers;
Those who cause schisms in the Sangha of the Sage; and
Those who draw blood from tathāgatas
With a mindset of aversion to those tathāgatas –
These overwhelming karmic-actions were
Taught by the Conqueror to be the Five Immediates.

Destroying stupas, killing bodhisattvas,
Belittling “mothers” who are free of afflictions,
Killing trainees¹²⁰, and stealing a
Little or a lot of the assembled Sangha’s valuables –
The Tathāgata taught that these are the Five Near-Immediates.



5. *Body-support* Kings who have the bodhisattva vow. *Cause* Ignorance. *Object* Karmic action: virtue and non-virtue, cause and result. *Nature* Believing that these are not real or causing others to believe this.
6. *Body support* Ministers who have the bodhisattva vow. *Cause* Aversion. *Object* Towns and cities that other countries consider to be theirs. *Nature* Destroying towns and cities.

Thus, this completes the two sections of five downfalls each of the king and minister bodhisattvas, with four held in common and two held separately.

7. *Body support* Those who have the bodhisattva vow, other than kings and ministers. (The body support is the same for all eight downfalls of these ordinary bodhisattvas.) *Cause* Ignorance (The cause is the same for the next three downfalls.) *Object* Sentient beings who have not done general mind training. *Nature* Frightening them by teaching profound emptiness and so turning them away from bodhichitta.
8. *Object* Those engaged towards buddhahood. *Nature* Turning them away from this and establishing them in the Lesser Vehicle.
- 9.,10. *Object* The textual tradition of the two Vehicles. *Nature* Oneself abandoning the Lesser Vehicle by saying “this is not the path of abandonment”, or turning others away from it in this way, and then establishing oneself or others in the Great Vehicle.
11. *Cause* Attachment to acquisitions and service. *Object* Oneself or others. *Nature* Praising oneself or belittling others.
12. *Cause* Ignorance. *Object* A person who understands the meaning of this statement, and emptiness itself. *Nature* Transforming that person’s regard or oneself in saying “I have seen emptiness.”
13. *Cause* Aversion. *Object* Ruling class people, virtue-practitioners, the wealth of the Sangha, and the like. *Nature* Due to a schism, a virtue-practitioner robbing offerings, and then keeping them or giving them away.
14. *Cause* Aversion. *Object* The calm-abiding meditation of virtue-practitioners; and the resources of those striving for abandonment. *Nature* By way of bad conduct and the like, disturbing calm-abiding meditation, and giving the resources of those who enjoy abandonment to those who enjoy chanting prayers.



The remaining downfalls are capable of being committed by all bodhisattvas:

15. “To completely give up the mindset of enlightenment.” *Body support* Those who have the bodhisattva vow. *Cause* Laziness and the like. *Nature* Abandoning the mindset of enlightenment and abiding in attention to the Lesser Vehicle.

The disadvantages of committing this downfall, from the *Sutra of Condensed Prajñāparamita in Verse*:

If one generates the intention to become a pratyekabuddha or arhat and Conducts oneself in the ten paths of virtuous actions for ten million kalpas, During all that time one’s moral conduct is faulty and corrupted; That mindset generation is the heaviest of the powerfully defeating downfalls.

By saying this, this downfall was established as more serious for a bodhisattva than all the other downfalls, which do not have this basis. Since the first downfall explained in Arya Asanga’s tradition:

“[1] To praise oneself or belittle others / Through attachment to acquisitions or service” was explained earlier in the fifth downfall of the beginner bodhisattvas, it will not be explained here.

16. “[2] To not give to supplicants due to / Strong attachment or miserliness.” *Body support* Those who have the bodhisattva vow and have Dharma and wealth. *Cause* Miserliness. *Object* Those who are suffering and are without a protector, who desire Dharma or wealth with all their hearts. *Nature* Not giving Dharma or wealth to them.
17. “[3] To not accept the proper / Apologies of sentient beings but to / Instead strike them in anger.” *Cause* Aversion. *Object* Those who had grudges against oneself who apologize with all their hearts in accordance with the Dharma. *Nature* Not accepting their apologies and instead becoming angry at them and so forth.
18. “[4] To teach an artificial Dharma-likeness / Created by according one’s afflictions with other teachings.” *Cause* Ignorance. *Object* The Great Vehicle Dharma, and the Dharma-likeness. *Nature* Abandoning the former, and establishing a textual tradition of the latter.



How can there be separate fully-established groupings of downfalls – those in the *Essence of Space Sutra* and those from Arya Asanga? Although there are many discordant positions, my position is that the four from Asanga are a full classification of all possible downfalls and that all of the eighteen downfalls listed in the *Essence of Space Sutra* are subsumed in the four from Arya Asanga.

How are the four from Arya Asanga a full classification of all possible downfalls? They are a full classification of root downfalls of the bodhisattva vow in relation to how the four *root* downfalls of the vow of individual liberation of the Hearer vehicle were generated from the three principal mental afflictions: the two root downfalls of sexual conduct and stealing, from *attachment* to sentient beings and material things, respectively; the root downfall of killing, from *aversion*; and the root downfall of speaking lies, from *ignorance*. Likewise, in just the same fashion, the first two downfalls given by Arya Asanga are generated from desire-attachment, the third from aversion, and the fourth from ignorance.

However, I am uncertain if Acharya Shantideva would have accepted this argument; he likely would have argued: It is unreasonable to write both groupings if one accepts that one is subsumed by the other. By guarding against the four downfalls given by Arya Asanga, those in the *Sutra* will not be guarded against; the only downfalls that one needs to guard against with certainty are those explained in *Sutra* to be downfalls. The downfalls explained in the *Sutra* can only be summarized with the four from Arya Asanga in relation to their generation from the three-poisons cause.

Others have reasonably argued, using the argument style represented by the expressions ‘oil-load’ and ‘staff’¹²¹, that the four downfalls from Arya Asanga are understood through their underlying meaning to be root downfalls of the bodhisattva vow like the four root downfalls of individual liberation. Arya Asanga’s downfalls for the bodhisattva vow are: praising oneself or denigrating others due to attachment to acquisitions and service; not giving one’s wealth to others due to miserliness; hitting others due to anger; and teaching an artificial Dharma-likeness due to ignorance – one can just see and not have to discuss the similarity of that sequence with that of the four root downfalls of the individual liberation vow: sexual conduct due to attachment to others; stealing the wealth of others; killing others; and speaking lies.

On the other hand, bodhisattvas are not to comply with the Hearer’s vows in all circumstances: Killing and other actions that are root downfalls for Hearers are not always downfalls for bodhisattvas.



Abandoning the infractions

All of the faults in the categories of infractions of the bodhisattva fow, “Not offering the three to the Three Jewels” and the rest, should be known from other sources.

The moral conduct of accumulating virtuous deeds

The moral conduct of accumulating virtuous deeds is the Six Transcendent Actions. There are ten topics concerning the Six Transcendent Actions: essences, precise definitions, meditating, characteristics, differentiations, the teaching on the authentic and the principle, distinctions, results, definite count, and definite order.

Essence

The essence of transcendent generosity, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*: “Giving things”¹²²; giving whatever is desired by takers.

The essence of transcendent moral conduct, from *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*: “The mindset of abandoning [harm], attained / Is explained as the transcendent moral conduct”; abandoning non-accordance with accepted vow.

The essence of transcendent patience, from *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*: “The mindset of anger, overcome”; fully pacifying anger.

The essence of transcendent perseverance, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*: “Authentically delighting in virtue”; delighting in virtue for the purpose of attaining enlightenment.

The essence of transcendent meditative concentration, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*: “Abiding inside the mind”; abiding inside a virtuous mind.

The essence of transcendent discriminating awareness, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*: “The authentic, best, full uncovering of the objects of knowledge” and “Suchness is understood because of having discriminating awareness”; fully and unpervertedly uncovering the objects of knowledge, and understanding suchness.



Precise definitions

The precise definitions of the Six Transcendent Actions, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

They were explained as transcendent because of
Dispelling poverty, attaining coolness, remaining patient to anger,
Practicing the supreme, holding mind, and
Knowing the ultimate meaning.

‘Dispelling poverty’ is transcendent generosity. ‘Attaining coolness’ is transcendent moral conduct because one who has transcendent moral conduct does not have the stricken-by-heat like oppression of object-related conceptual structures. ‘Remaining patient with anger’ of others is transcendent patience. ‘Practicing the supreme’ is transcendent perseverance because it is practicing virtuous deeds. ‘Holding (inside the) mind’ is transcendent meditative concentration. Through this discriminating awareness one ‘knows the ultimate meaning,’ so this is *transcendent* discriminating awareness.

Meditating

Meditating on the transcendent actions is, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

“Likewise bringing into the mind”; there are four aspects to such meditation: Bringing ‘devoting’ into the mind is devoting oneself to all the Dharma of transcendent actions. Bringing ‘experiencing the taste’ into the mind is experiencing the taste by way of looking to the good qualities in the transcendent actions. Bringing ‘rejoicing’ into the mind is rejoicing in the generosity and the rest of all sentient beings in all worldly realms. Bringing ‘wanting to manifest’ into the mind is wanting the transcendent actions of oneself and all others to manifest better and better in the future.



Characteristics

The four characteristics of the transcendent generosity of bodhisattvas, from the Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section:

Eliminated generosity non-accordance;
Possessed of non-discursive wisdom;
Entirely fulfilling wishes; and
The three aspects of fully ripening sentient beings.

And likewise, up through discriminating awareness, similar verses follow with the four characteristics of each of the remaining transcendent actions of the bodhisattvas.

Non-accordances are eliminated because miserliness, lax moral conduct, anger, laziness, distraction by aspects, and lax discriminating awareness have been abandoned.

Non-discursive wisdom is possessed because realization of the selflessness of phenomena is possessed.

Wishes are entirely fulfilled by giving whatever is wished for to whom ever is wishing for something, authentically vowing all body and speech to the benefit of others, being patient with those who do one harm, being a friend to others, being satisfied, and cutting through doubt.

The three aspects of fully ripening sentient beings: Fostered by transcendent generosity and the rest, those who have a karmic disposition for the Three Vehicles are connected to the Three Vehicles in exactly the right way.



Differentiations

Opening the differentiations

Differentiating each of the transcendent actions, there are three actions in each:

- generosity – giving Dharma, giving material things, and giving non-fear
- moral conduct – moral conduct of restraint, moral conduct of accumulating virtuous deeds, and moral conduct of working for the benefit of sentient beings
- patience – tolerance of not having a thought against those who harm one, tolerance of welcoming suffering, and tolerance of definite realization of phenomena
- perseverance – perseverance of armor, perseverance of practice, and perseverance of not accepting ‘sufficient’
- meditative concentration – with both general and fine analysis, without general analysis and with just fine analysis, and without general or fine analysis or: with joy, with ease, and with equanimity
- discriminating awareness – worldly, transcending the world, and greatly transcending the world
 - or: discriminating awareness of hearing, discriminating awareness of contemplating, and discriminating awareness of meditating
 - or, as some accept: discriminating awareness of knowing conventional

meaning, discriminating awareness of knowing ultimate meaning, and discriminating awareness of knowing the non-separate.

Each of these eighteen differentiated actions has a further differentiation into six aspects: performing it for the benefit of sentient beings; in performing it, not harming sentient beings, performing it while tolerating its difficulty, performing it with enjoyment and uninterrupted by other actions, performing it with an undistracted mind, performing it with the awareness that all of it is empty and like illusion. With each of the eighteen having these six aspects, they total 108 differentiated actions.



Collecting the differentiations

If all 108 differentiated actions are collected, they collect into the two accumulations: generosity and moral conduct are the accumulation of merit, discriminating awareness is the accumulation of wisdom, and the other three are both.¹²³ And if the other five are possessed of discriminating awareness, they are the accumulation of wisdom. Regarding this, Protector Maitreya taught in the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Generosity and moral conduct are accumulation of merit;
Discriminating awareness, accumulation of wisdom;
The other three, both accumulations.
The five¹²⁴ also can be accumulation of wisdom.

Lord Atisha accepted that the five are method¹²⁵ and separate from discriminating awareness¹²⁶, and wrote in *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*:

All virtuous deeds of
Transcendent generosity and the rest that are
Without transcendent discriminating awareness
Were explained by the Conquerors to be method.



The teaching on the authentic and the principle

The teaching on the authentic and the principle transcendent actions begins with authentic transcendent actions;
from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Generosity free of expectation,
Moral conduct without the desire for [good] rebirth,
Patience towards everyone
Perseverance that is a source of all good qualities,

Meditative concentration that is not stuck in the formless realm, and
Discriminating awareness that is possessed of method –
Thus the Six transcendent Actions
Are authentically practiced by the Stable Ones¹²⁷.

The principle transcendent actions, from the Ornament of the *Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Giving Dharma, pure moral conduct¹²⁸,
Attaining tolerance of the Unborn¹²⁹,
Undertaking the perseverance of the Great Vehicle,
Abiding in the final concentration with compassion, and
Discriminating awareness – Insightful Ones¹³⁰
Accept these as the principle transcendent actions.

The principle transcendent actions are giving Dharma, unafflicted moral conduct that pleases the Superior Ones, tolerance of the unborn Dharma, undertaking preserverance in the deeds of the Great Vehicle, the fourth concentration with immeasurable compassion, and the discriminating awareness of knowing the ultimate meaning.



Distinctions

There are two distinctions made in the practice of the transcendent actions: the distinction between non-accordances and antidotes, and the distinction between contrived and authentic.

The distinction between non-accordance and antidotes

Attachment to resources, possessing [unconfessed] faults,
Pride, weak merit,
Enjoying the taste of meditative bliss, and discursive thought –
These corrupt the Stable Ones;
Because the bodhisattvas

Who abide in their antidotes
Turn away from these non-accordances, the antidotes should be known
As the deeds that possess distinctive good fortune.

The non-accordance of the Six Transcendent Actions are the deeds that damage good fortune. The antidotes of these should be known as the deeds that lead to distinctive good fortune.

The distinction between contrived and authentic

From the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Emanating generosity, contriving moral conduct,
Putting on a nice face,
Engaging in situational perseverance,
Pacifying only body and speech, and
Speaking with overabundant skill –

These ones without accomplishment
Were explained by all bodhisattvas
To be non-authentic.
Those opposite in action were explained by the
Excellent Practicing Ones to be authentic.



Results

There are three types of results of practicing the Six Transcendent Actions: the fully ripened result, the accordant-with-the-cause result, and the result of the power.

Fully ripened result: The six Transcendent Actions ripen well, and the well-completed, fully ripened result is the three kayas, accompanied by the enlightened deeds.

In the two types of accordant-with-the-cause result, the first is 'doing' accordant-with-the cause result: It is difficult to turn away from a lifestyle of desiring to be generous, enjoying being generous, and growing accustomed to being generous, which continues all the way until one attains buddhahood; and one should know that the other five transcendent actions are also like that.

'Experiencing' accordant-with-the-cause result: Due to transcendent generosity, bountiful and varied resources arise; due to transcendent moral conduct, the body of leisure and endowment arises; due to transcendent patience, an excellent and beautifully formed body arises; due to transcendent perseverance, all positive qualities increase more and more; due to transcendent meditative concentration, the six manifest awarenesses¹³¹ are obtained; due to transcendent discriminating awareness, the natures of all phenomena are known and all afflictions are abandoned.

The result of the power is birth in a place where the Six Transcendent, Sublime Actions are being practiced.



Definite count

Under the influence of the three trainings, there are definitely only Six Transcendent Actions. Transcendent moral conduct is directly the training in higher moral conduct. If one does not look to enjoyments due to generosity, moral conduct is authentically taken up, and one who has authentically taken up moral conduct is able, through patience, to not return criticism in the face of criticism and so on; therefore, transcendent generosity and transcendent patience accompany the training in higher moral conduct. Transcendent meditative concentration is directly the training in higher mind. Transcendent discriminating awareness is directly the training in higher discriminating awareness. Transcendent perseverance assists all three higher trainings.

From the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

The Conqueror authentically explained the Six Transcendent Actions
As under the influence of the three trainings:
Three as the first training,
Two as the last two trainings, and
One included in all three trainings.



Definite order

From the same text:

Relying on the former, the latter are born;
They abide as lesser and greater; and
They abide as less subtle and more subtle; for these reasons
Transcendent action was taught using graduated stages.

The Six Transcendent Actions are taught as graduated stages for three reasons:

Since by relying on the former, the latter are born: One who does not place inordinate focus on accumulating resources authentically takes up moral conduct; if one has moral conduct, one becomes patient; if one has patience, one will undertake perseverance; if one has undertaken perseverance, one will give birth to samadhi; and if one's mind has become equipoised, one will become excellently aware of the Authentic¹³², exactly as it is.

Since the former are lesser and the latter are greater: Generosity is lesser and moral conduct is greater, likewise up through meditative concentration being lesser and discriminating awareness being greater.

Since the former are less subtle and the latter are more subtle: Since it is easy to begin and to continue with generosity, it is less subtle, and since it is more difficult to begin and continue with moral conduct, it is more subtle. Likewise, up through meditative concentration being less subtle and discriminating awareness being more subtle.

The moral conduct of working for the benefit of sentient beings

The moral conduct of working for the benefit of sentient beings is the Four Means of Fostering Practitioners. This is taught in four topics: the essence of the four means; the effect of the action of the four means; the transcendent action which is being practiced when practitioners are fostered using the four means; and how the four means are practiced.



Essence

The essence of the Four Means of Fostering Practitioners,
from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Generosity, as taught previously; teaching the transcendent actions;
Encouraging others to take them up; and engaging in them oneself –
These last three are named:
Speaking pleasantly, conducting meaningfully, and according meaningfully.

The essence of *generosity* is giving to takers whatever they desire, the same generosity as was taught in the section on the Six Transcendent Actions. The essence of *speaking pleasantly* is teaching the transcend actions to others. The essence of *conducting meaningfully* is encouraging others to authentically take up the transcendent actions. The essence of *according meaningfully* is engaging in the transcendent actions oneself.

Effect of the action

The effect of the action of the Four Means of Fostering Practitioners:

Through the first means, beings are made vessels;
Through the second, devotees;
Through the third, practitioners; and
Through the fourth, complete trainees.

Giving material things to beings causes them to become suitable vessels for the Dharma because it makes them able to listen to Dharma. Speaking pleasantly makes beings devoted to the Dharma because it makes them aware, in detail, of the meaning of the Dharma, and dispels their doubts about it. Conducting beings meaningfully makes them practice Dharmically. According meaningfully makes those practitioners completely train because they follow the example of one's long-term practice.



The transcendent action which is being practiced when practitioners are fostered using the four means

When practitioners are fostered using the four means, this is practice of *transcendent generosity*: fostering practitioners with generosity is practicing the *generosity of giving material things*; fostering practitioners through speaking pleasantly and conducting meaningfully is practicing the *generosity of giving Dharma*; fostering practitioners through according meaningfully is practicing the *generosity of giving non-fear*.

Some say this moral conduct of benefiting beings is actually the practice of transcendent moral conduct.

How the four means are practiced

Each of the Four Means of Fostering Practitioners is practiced in four ways: fostering by way of everything, fostering by way of difficulty, fostering with all methods, and the fostering of a sublime being.

There are three types of fostering with ‘difficult’ generosity: giving one’s last belongings, giving what one has attained through great hardship, and giving what one cherishes.

Fostering with ‘all methods’ generosity is giving all that one has and then on top of that acquiring things from others and giving them as well.

Fostering with ‘sublime being’ generosity is giving and dedicating the virtue of that giving for the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings.

There are three types of fostering through ‘everything’ speaking pleasantly: speaking pleasantly without scowling or turning away one’s face; speaking pleasantly without envy of the other’s wealth or fame; and speaking pleasantly expressing the supreme advice.

There are three types of fostering through ‘difficult’ speaking pleasantly: speaking pleasantly even to one who deceives lamas and others worthy of offerings; speaking pleasantly, saying “I will work for your benefit”, even to one who is one’s or one’s associate’s, enemy; and speaking pleasantly without distaste to people of dull faculties.



There are three types of fostering through ‘all methods’ speaking pleasantly: first, speaking pleasantly causing others to use the Four Powers to abandon their non-virtues; second, speaking pleasantly causing others to entrust their minds to the Four Noble Truths, and to have loving-kindness for their enemies; and finally, speaking pleasantly saying “this is how to abandon the four root downfalls and the rest”, and “this is how to take up transcendent generosity and the rest”.

Fostering through ‘sublime being’ speaking pleasantly is speaking pleasantly in order to make all sentient beings attain benefit and happiness.

There are two types of fostering through ‘everything’ conducting meaningfully: ripening the unripened and liberating the ripened.

There are four types of fostering through ‘difficult’ conducting meaningfully: encouraging those who have not previously collected the accumulations to collect them; connecting clinging ones, those with an entrenched inability to give, to the practice of generosity; connecting non-Buddhists to the Buddhadharmas; and connecting those with lax discriminating awareness to authentic discriminating awareness.

Fostering through ‘all methods’ conducting meaningfully is to meaningfully conduct sentient beings into the practice of the transcendent actions by way of the various bodhisattva activities.

Fostering through ‘sublime being’ conducting meaningfully is similar to the earlier ones.

Fostering through according meaningfully is according oneself with the Dharma: In order to make sure that the beings who have been conducted meaningfully into the practice of the transcendent actions do not fall back from that practice, one also practices Dharmically.



Occasions of obtaining and losing the bodhisattva vow

If one's intentions have become expansive through: the collection of the accumulations¹³³; the training of one's mindstream through the stages of the three scopes of persons¹³⁴; and through loving-kindness and compassion having become effective, then, on the last of the three expressions of the actions of a ceremony whose preparation, ceremony, and actual ceremony are performed in the proper manner, one obtains the bodhisattva vow.

If wrong views arise, the vow is lost; if the Protector Three Jewels are abandoned, the vow is lost; if aspirational bodhichitta is lost, engagement bodhichitta is also lost; and if the precepts are damaged, the vow is lost.

Aspirational bodhichitta is said¹³⁵ to be lost through the Four Unwholesome Deeds and by abandoning sentient beings in one's mind. Engagement bodhichitta is lost through a downfall of either those described in the *Essence of Space Sutra* when the branches are complete, or the four of Arya Asanga's tradition when motivated by the great entanglements. To what does this 'great entanglements' refer? Bodhisattvas who always conduct themselves unceasingly in the four deeds of attachment to acquisitions and service and the rest like an ordinary person, who do not generate even a little bit of shame or deference about it, who make themselves content with that conduct and enjoy it, and who see themselves as one of good qualities for having engaged in that conduct, are greatly entangled in strong afflictions.

The methods of restoring a damaged vow

If the bodhisattva vow is lost, is one without the good fortune of authentically taking the vow again in this life, as is the case for the vow of individual liberation when a defeat arises? This is not the case for the bodhisattva vow; from *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*: "One should take the vow again." Therefore, there is the teaching on the methods of restoring a damaged vow:

One should confess and abandon any damaged commitments in the presence of bodhisattva Akashagarbha.

By reciting the *Three Heaps Sutra* and
Relying on the Conquerors and bodhisattvas
In the three times of the day and of the night,
The remainder of that downfall will be pacified.



The obscurations of damaged commitment such as those from the *Essence of Space Sutra* and from the other sources should be abandoned by way of the Four Powers.

The next step for one who needs to retake a vow lost through a complete downfall

If one can find a lama who has the characteristics explained earlier, retake the vow in front of that lama using the proper ceremony. If one cannot find a qualified lama, from *Bodhisattva Stages*:

If no lama is available who has good qualities such as these, in front of a representation of Bodhisattva Tathāgata, one should authentically take the vow of bodhisattva moral conduct on one's own, in this way:

Hang the upper rope on one shoulder, place the right shin on the ground or squat, and say: "I, [state your name], supplicate the tathāgatas of the ten directions and all the great bodhisattvas abiding on the great grounds¹³⁶; in front of them all, I authentically take up: all the basis of the bodhisattva training; all the moral conduct of restraint that applies to all bodhisattva conduct, all the moral conduct of gathering virtuous deeds, and all the moral conduct of working for the benefit of sentient beings; and whatever has been trained in by all past bodhisattvas, whatever will be trained in by all future bodhisattvas, and whatever is now being trained in by all current bodhisattvas in the ten directions."

After repeating this a second, and then a third time, one will have retaken the vow. The preparation ceremony, and all that follows the actual ceremony, are the same as were explained earlier.



***The next step for one who needs to restore a vow
that has been damaged by an incomplete downfall due
to middling mental afflictions, a “middling corruption”***

How is the vow restored when incomplete downfalls arise from middling mental afflictions, a situation with all but one of the four characteristics of entanglement? From the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*: “One with a ‘middling corruption’ should confess and abandon to three bodhisattvas.”

If a bodhisattva comes to have committed defeat-like deeds that were motivated by middling entanglement, these are handled as infractions. These ‘middling corruptions’ should be confessed and abandoned with three or more practitioners of the Hearer or bodhisattva vehicles who are able to understand and retain one’s words.

After sitting in their presence, first admit one’s deeds, then say: “You who have a virtuous life, please consider me! I, [state your name], now have infraction-faults of contravening the bodhisattva training, based on what I have just admitted. These, to you who have a virtuous life, I confess and abandon without concealment. Since I have confessed and abandoned, I am abiding in touching happiness; if I had not confessed or abandoned, I would not now be abiding in happiness. To your question “Do you see these as faults?”, I answer “I see them as faults.” To your question “From now on, will you keep the vow?”, I answer, “The vow, as the Dharma and as the training, I will keep very well on the crown of my head.” Repeat this a second, then a third time.



The next step for one who needs to restore a vow that has been damaged by a incomplete downfall due to lesser mental afflictions, a ‘reminder’

How is the vow restored when a bodhisattva comes to have committed defeat-like deeds that were motivated by lesser entanglement?

From the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*: “Remainders’ are confessed in the presence of one bodhisattva.”

“Remainders” are non-complete downfalls committed through lesser corruption, and are handled as infractions. These remainders should be confessed and abandoned in the presence of one bodhisattva in the same manner as the ‘middling corruptions’.

Restoring a vow that has been damage due to an infraction

How is the vow restored from the infraction types “possessing mental afflictions” and “non-mental-affliction infractions” – “Not offering to the Three Jewels” and the rest?

From *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*: “Mental afflictions or no [mental afflictions], one’s mind or similar.” If no person thinking in the following way is available, one should confess and abandon in the presence of one’s own mind: “In my mind, under the influence of deference, shame, self-discipline, pacification, and intention to henceforth not repeat the deed I will confess.” If a person thinking in this way is available, one should confess and abandon in the presence of that person – this is the meaning of words “or similar” in the above quote.

This method of confessing and abandoning in the presence of oneself when no suitable person is available also applies to faults arising from middling and lesser corruption.



My teaching, summarizing this section with reason:

If one strives continuously with many hardships
To provide even the favored things of one's close ones,
It is then reasonable to strive excellently in actualizing the trainings
After generating the mindset of enlightenment for the benefit of others.

Thus ends the ninth section of
Engaging by stages in the Teachings of the Buddha,
concerning the generation of the Buddha



10 THE RESULT, THE THREE KAYAS

The training in meditative concentration and discriminating awareness, the principle training of all the bodhisattva's precepts of restraint, three trainings, and Six Transcendent Actions, is meditating inseparably on emptiness and compassion:

“Meditate on inseparable emptiness-compassion, / The training in samadhi and discriminating awareness.”

This meditation is established through scripture, through reasoning, and through the lama's instructions. Establishing it through reasoning should be known from hearing and contemplating Dharma teachings. Establishing it through instructions should be known from the lama directly.

There are five aspects to establishing it through scripture; the Buddha taught:

- All dharmas are emptiness.
- That “all dharmas are emptiness” is insufficient; it must be realized.
- It is necessary to meditate on the realized meaning.
- It is necessary to interconnect method and discriminating awareness.
- It is necessary to first meditate on method and then meditate on discriminating awareness.

All Dharmas are emptiness

From the *Heart Sutra*:

All dharmas are emptiness, without characteristics, unproduced, unstopped, without stain, without having become separated from stains, without having lost anything, and without having gained anything.¹³⁷

From another sutra:

‘All appearance-existence arose from mind;
Mindness¹³⁸ of mind is never revealed’ –
Those skilled in this way may look for the suchness of mind,
But with mind, mindness is never seen.



From *Root Stanzas of the Middle Way* called “Prajña”:

Why is it that there are no
Phenomena that are not interdependently arisen?
It is because there are no
Phenomena that are not empty.

***That “all dharmas are emptiness” is insufficient;
it must be realized***

From *Full Commentary on the Compendium of Pramāṇa*:

Faultiness is not completely stopped by
Loving-kindness and so forth unfree of ignorance;
That is achieved by these meditations subsequent to
Being freed [of faultiness’ grasp] by the observation of emptiness.¹³⁹

From the *Sutra of the Condensed Prajñāparamita in Verse*:

The nature of sentient beings is taught to be enlightenment itself;
The nature of enlightenment, all sentient beings.
Sentient beings and enlightenment are not separate –
When this is realized, one becomes a supreme person.



It is necessary to meditate on the realized meaning

From the *Heart Sutra*:

Authentically observe all these five aggregates as inherently empty.

From the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

Emptiness is the antidote for the darkness of the
Obscurations of mental afflictions and to objects of knowledge;
Why do those who desire to quickly attain omniscience
Not meditate on this?

From another text:

Just as the taste of molasses is not experienced
Through an explanation 'molasses has a sweet taste',
But if just one time molasses is eaten,
The taste of sweetness is experienced;

Likewise, through the explanation
"These are the meanings of emptiness" its taste is not experienced,
But when one has meditated, bowed to the mandala,
Self-awareness of its meaning is born.



*It is necessary to interconnect method and
discriminating awareness*

Lord Atisha taught, in *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*:

Since it is taught that all
Discriminating awareness separated from method and all
Method separated from discriminating awareness
Is “bondage” no matter what its purpose, do not abandon either of the two.

From the *Sutra of the Teaching Given by Vimalakirti*:

Discriminating awareness separated from method is bondage.
Discriminating Awareness possessed of method is liberation.
Method separated from discriminating awareness is bondage.
Method possessed of discriminating awareness is liberation.

From the *Treasury of Dohas*:

No one engaged in emptiness separated from compassion
Will find the supreme path.
And on the other hand, even if one meditates solely on compassion
Liberation from this cyclic existence will not be attained.
But whoever is able to practice both
Will not abide in cyclic existence and will not abide in nirvana.



It is necessary to first meditate on method and then meditate on discriminating awareness

From *Sutra of the Condensed Prajñaparamita in Verse*:

Those who have method¹⁴⁰ should practice transcendent discriminating awareness.

Without the guide, discriminating awareness, buddhahood will not be attained.

Concerning the understanding of all dharmas as emptiness established through scripture and reasoning: Since the view established through hearing and contemplation is only a meaning-generalty understanding, in order to realize as direct perception the definitive meaning, it is necessary to meditate on the aural-lineage instructions of a sublime lama;

From the *Treasury of Dohas*:

For whoever does not drink their fill of the
Cool and refreshing nectar of the lama's instructions, the
Anguishing thirst in the desert of the many-topic treatises¹⁴¹
Ceases only with death.

After establishing an understanding of all dharmas through scripture and reasoning, by meditating on the lama's instructions one will realize the inseparable emptiness-compassion of the empty-of-two self-other and the empty-of-two holder-held. Since this is realized, there is the teaching on turning away from holder and held:

“Through this, the mind turns away from holder and held.” By realizing inseparable emptiness-compassion, since one has then understood that there is neither self and other nor holder and held, one's mind will turn away from these dualisms.

While having an unsevered root of self-grasping:
Thinking “I have studied Dharma” is mental effort;
Thinking “I have meditated” is mental construct;
Thinking “I have understood” is super-imposition;
Thinking “I have realized” is conceit.



But as soon as the root, self-grasping, is severed
Self and others are understood to be non-dual.

That called “understanding the two selflessnesses”¹⁴²
is inseparable emptiness-compassion.

All the stages of the paths and grounds
are subsumed inside emptiness-compassion.¹⁴³

Therefore, meditate on emptiness-compassion!

From the *Dohas of the Great Brāhmin*¹⁴⁴:

Grounds, paths, buddhas – one taste!
Innate wisdom¹⁴⁵ – ask yourself!
This is the mind of the sugatas.
This is what is expressed in profound Sutra and tantra.
This is the experience of all great meditators.

Therefore,
Venerate your lama on the crown of your head!
From the bottom of your heart, regard your lama as a buddha!
Drink the nectar, the aural-lineage instructions!

Cast aside the actions of this life!
Make your perseverance for accomplishment blaze like fire!

If you practice in this manner
Heart-conviction will be born,
The root of self-grasping will be severed,
Self and others will be understood as non-dual,
Emptiness and compassion will be mixed together¹⁴⁶,
The spontaneously-present self-state¹⁴⁷ will be seized,
Your permanent task¹⁴⁸ will come into being, and
The differentiations between cyclic existence and nirvana will be laid bare.

Son, this is my heart-advice; bear it in mind!

.....



Having meditated in that way on inseparable emptiness-compassion, the two accumulations are completed and the two obscurations are purified; and then the result, the three kayas, is attained: “Perfect the meditation on emptiness-compassion, / Purify the faults of wrong-doing, and / Attain the three kayas.”

After having meditated on inseparable emptiness-compassion, the two obscurations – adventitious defilements and faults of wrong-doing – that have formed like clouds in the sky-like, inherently fully pure suchness will be purified.

There are many explanation-traditions of the two obscurations; here I will present the tradition from the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

All discursive thought of the three spheres is
Accepted to be the obscuration to objects of knowledge;
All discursive thought of miserliness and the rest is
Accepted to be the obscuration of mental afflictions.

This means that the Six Transcendent Actions with thought in the three spheres is the obscuration to objects of knowledge, the discursive thought of holding and held meaning. The discursive thought of the non-accordances of the Six Transcendent Actions, miserliness and the rest, is the obscuration of mental afflictions.

And there are discordant acceptance-traditions of the way these obscurations are abandoned: abandoning the obscurations of mental afflictions and only then abandoning the obscurations to objects of knowledge, and so on. Although it is true that one is able to abandon the manifest-cause mental afflictions¹⁴⁹ before the obscurations to objects of knowledge have been abandoned by meditating on unattractiveness and so forth, abandoning mental afflictions from the root is done at the same time as abandoning the obscurations to objects of knowledge: The root of both obscurations is discursive thought; when the root, discursive thought, has been severed and purified in its own place, in one purification of both obscurations, neither remain unpurified.

Purified adventitious defilement in inherently full pure suchness is called “the two-fold purity”.



From the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Suchness, all have
Without distinction; purified, it is
The tathagata itself – therefore
All migrating beings possess its essence

.....

Know that the three kayas
Subsume the buddha-kayas:
The three kayas teach as these benefits of self and other,
And as that which is possessed of a body support.¹⁵⁰

Therefore, the two-fold purity is the dharmakaya.

The dharmakaya is, from the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

Uncompounded, spontaneously present, and
Not realized through an other-beings contributory cause

.....

Called ‘uncompounded’ since its nature is
Free of beginning, center, or boundary;
‘Spontaneously present’ since it possesses the
Kaya of pacification and dharma¹⁵¹; and
‘Not realized through an other-beings contributory cause’ since it is
Realized by oneself alone.

From *Asanga’s commentary on this text*:

‘Uncompounded’ should be known by way of knowing its opposite, ‘compounded’. Having recognized birth, abiding, and cessation in all phenomena, one calls them ‘compounded’. Since it is without these, the buddha itself, that which is free of beginning, or middle, or end, is uncompounded – see that this excellently lays bare the dharmakaya. The dharmakaya is ‘spontaneously present’ because all elaboration¹⁵² and discursive thought is fully pacified. It is ‘not realized through an other-beings contributory cause’ because it is realized through self-arisen wisdom



From the *Sutra of the Ornament of Wisdom-Appearance, the Engaged Object of all Buddhas*:

Thus it was said: “Manjushri! This name ‘The Birthless and Deathless One’ is a stand-in-phrase for the part of the name ‘tathāgata’ arhat, authentically perfected buddha.”

It was then taught that this name ‘The Birthless and Deathless One’ is interchangeable with ‘tathāgata’, the characteristic of uncompoundedness.

Later in the same text:

Just as Indra does not stir but his reflection appears in the pure ground of lapis lazuli and so forth and benefits the gods there, likewise, the tathāgata, arhat, authentically perfected buddha: does not stir (body), does not mentally direct (speech), does not elaborate (mind), does not comprehend, does not comprehend through superfluous (since free of grasping to wrong appearances), is without comprehension (since wrongly grasping is pacified), is without mental directionality (since does not have only present-time direct-perception), is without bringing -into-the mind (since does not have intention to attain anything in the future), is cooled (since is unfazed by illusion or trickery), is without production (since is not an arisen result), is without cessation (since there is no end to suffering), is unseen (it cannot be understood by the eye), is unheard (by the ear), is unsmelled (by the nose), is untasted (by the tongue), is untouched (by the body), is unconceptualized (since is unable to be inferred through signs), is without being fully understood (since is not an entity that is known in separation from conceptualization), and is not something to be fully understood (since is not an entity to be known). As it pacifies all discursive thought and elaboration in these self-deeds (buddha activities), the tathāgata is spontaneous presence itself.¹⁵³

Therefore, the self-benefit is the dharmakaya and the kaya of the ultimate meaning.



From the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

The source of one's own endowment
Is the kaya of the ultimate meaning.

How do the two form kayas, the others-benefit, arise from the dharmakaya?
The Buddha, while practicing the path, collected the accumulations and made aspiration prayers for the benefit of trainees, and the trainees collected the accumulation of merit and made aspiration prayers to meet with a buddha, and had faith – the form kayas arose from these appearances.¹⁵⁴

From the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

Similarly, for one with stainless faith and the rest
Who has meditated on the good qualities of faith and the rest
The appearance to them is one who has the
Major and minor marks of a perfected buddha
Walking around; or standing; or
Sitting; or sleeping; or
Performing various activities; or
Teaching the dharma of pacification; or
Not teaching, equipoised; or
Making various miraculous phenomena; or
Possessing an able body
Seen by sentient beings

From seeing these aspects of the Buddha, aspiring ones
Excellently set out for the (attainment of that) buddhahood,
Authentically practice the causes of that buddhahood,
And then attain that aspired to state.

These appearances are completely
Without discursive thought or stirring
But by greatly benefitting the world,
Fully abide in the world.



Ordinary beings are not aware
That these (appearances of the body of a buddha) are 'self-mind-
appearances'¹⁵⁵
But they see the forms and
They receive the benefit.

By stages, relying on seeing these buddha appearances
Those that abide in the vehicle
Will see the kaya of inner sublime dharma
With their wisdom eye.

The enjoyment kaya, or sambhogakaya, the first of the two form kayas, arises as appearance for pure trainee bodhisattvas, those of the tenth and close grounds; its kaya, possessing the entity of the 32 major marks and 80 minor marks, is distinctly superior¹⁵⁶.

From *Ornament of Manifest Realization*:

Because this entity of thirty-two great marks and
Eighty minor marks fully enjoys the great vehicle,
It is accepted to be the complete enjoyment kaya of the Sage.

This kaya is like the moon of the sky.

The emanation kaya, or *nirmānakāya*, is a reflection of the enjoyment kaya.

From *Ornament of Manifest Realization*:

All the enjoyment kaya, for as long as existence exists,
As the kayas performing various benefit
Equally to all migrating beings
Art the uncut continuity of emanation kayas of the Sage.



Teaching trainees through various deeds as various bodies until cyclic existence is completely empty, they benefit all sentient beings without discrimination through various methods:

For far distant, unpurified trainees – those bodhisattvas on the ground of devotional conduct, Hearers, and Solitary Realizers – there is the appearance as the twelve-deeds supreme emanation.

There is also the appearance as artisan emanations, as when, for the purpose of taming the gandharva king Very Joyful who was being prideful since he did not have the good fortune of seeing the supreme emanation, an emanation body taught him as a second Very Joyful.

There is also the appearance as birth emanations, the Six Sages¹⁵⁷ and so forth.

Form the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

By continually teaching through artistry,
Birth, and great enlightenment / parinirvana
This buddha emanation kaya is
A great method of full liberation.

This kaya is like the reflection of the moon in the sky as the moon in water;
from the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

For those far and near due to their purity
The two aspects of the form kaya are seen
In the mandala of the world conqueror
As the moon-forms in the water and sky.



As a buddha, free of discursive thought, the benefit of others is worked for through spontaneously present, uninterrupted enlightened activities of the enlightened body, speech and mind:

Activities of enlightened body, form the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

Just as the reflection of Indra's body
Appears in the clean ground of lapis lazuli,
Likewise, in the clean ground of migrating beings' minds the
Reflection of the Lord of Sages' body dawns.

Whether the reflection dawns or sets in the migrating beings
Is entirely dependent on their unsullied or sullied minds.

As a buddha does not have discursive thought, the example used is the ground: In the lapis lazuli ground, when clean, the reflection dawns of: Lord of the Gods Indra, his retinue, that complete conqueror's palace, and so forth, and the material resources of the gods along with various other things. These reflections dawn even though Indra does not have the intentional thought to show these reflections. Likewise, to those with a fully pure faith-mindset, the body of the Buddha appears. It is not the case that the Buddha was only seen in the past and so forth, and when the Buddha no longer appears, does not exist: Without the ground of lapis lazuli, the reflection of Indra does not appear; likewise, to those with an unclean faith-mindset, the Buddha does not appear.

Activities of enlightened speech, from the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

In the god realm, the sound of the
Drum of the Gods arises from the gods' karma;
Likewise, although the Dharma of the Sage is taught
To worldly beings, it arises from their own karma.

Just as that sound, free of striving, action-origin,
Body, and mind, pacifies the gods, likewise,
The Dharma, free of striving and the rest,
Pacifies the worldly beings.



That sound, without mental or physical striving, a collection of agents¹⁵⁸, a body, or a mind, actualizes the peace of the gods; likewise, all the Buddha's speech, free of all these four, actualizes the peace of the trainees.

Activities of enlightened mind, form the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*:

The clouds of summer are the
Cause of the harvest's abundant result;
Their masses of water continually
Rain down to the ground without striving.

Likewise, from the clouds of compassion the
Rainwater of the sublime Dharma of the Conquerors, the
Cause of the migrating beings' harvest of virtue,
Rains down without discursive thought.

The compassionate enlightened activities from a buddha free of discursive thought are like the falling rain from the clouds free of discursive thought; the cause of the migrating beings' harvest of virtue is the falling rain of the sublime Dharma.

There are the two acceptance-traditions in this presentation of the state of buddhahood: that it is *with* or *without* wisdom that possesses appearance.

The acceptance-tradition that the state of buddhahood *does* have wisdom that possesses appearance:

That which is freed from adventitious defilements in the inherently fully pure suchness is called "the unafflicted expanse" or "the dharmakaya". In dependence on that, four wisdoms arise: mirror-like wisdom, equality wisdom, individually comprehending wisdom, and action accomplishment wisdom.¹⁵⁹

Mirror-like wisdom is the support and is unfluctuating. The other three wisdoms are supported by this wisdom and fluctuate.



From the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Mirror wisdom is unfluctuating;
The three other wisdoms are supported by that and
Are exclusively: equality, individually
Comprehending, and action accomplishment.

Mirror-like wisdom, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Mirror wisdom is without 'mine'¹⁶⁰,
Wholly uncut-off, possesses 'always', is
Not ignorant of any object of knowledge, and
Never directs itself to objects of knowledge.

Mirror-like wisdom never has any sense of 'mine'; since it is engaged in all objects, it is 'wholly un-cut-off' in terms of objects; in terms of time, it possesses 'always'; because it is always free of obscurations, it is not ignorant of any object of knowledge; and because it is undeclining, it does not direct itself toward objects of knowledge.

From the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Because it is the cause-characteristics of all wisdoms,
It is like the 'great source wisdom'; and
It is the complete enjoyment buddha itself
Because reflection wisdoms arise.

Because it is the cause of these three, equality wisdom and the rest, mirror-like wisdom is like the source of all wisdoms. This wisdom is the complete enjoyment buddha and called 'mirror-like' because in it the reflections arise that are the wisdoms or equality and the rest.

Equality wisdom, from *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

The equality of self and other through pure meditation
Is accepted as the *arising* of equality wisdom;
Having entered into non-abiding peace (in neither cyclic existence
or nirvana)
Is accepted *to be* the equality wisdom



When a bodhisattva manifestly realizes the truth of the first ground, what is attained is knowing the equality of one's self to all sentient beings; when enlightenment is attained by way of pure meditation on this realization, having entered into the non-abiding nirvana is accepted to be the equality wisdom. And this equality wisdom, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

In all times, continually possesses
Great and pure loving kindness and compassion;
To all sentient beings, in the matter in which they are devoted, the
Buddhakāya is definitely revealed.

In all times, it is possessed of great loving-kindness and possessed of great compassion, and to all sentient beings, in exactly the way in which they are devoted, the buddhakāya makes itself definitely revealed; in this way, it is said "some sentient beings see the tathāgata as blue, some see as golden" and so on.

Individually comprehending wisdom, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

Knows by being always unobstructed towards all objects of knowledge
(of the three times);
Is exclusively like a treasure-trove of samadhi (going heroically and the rest)
and
Dhārani (word-dhārani and the rest); and
Teaches all endowed ones in
All mandalas of the retinue¹⁶¹,
Cutting off all doubts –
This great Dharma rain is a downpour.

Action accomplishment wisdom, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra Section*:

By various emanations in completely all realms and
By innumerable, inconceivable emanations, the
Benefit of all sentient beings is actualized.¹⁶²



Action accomplishment wisdom is: Various aspect emanations in all worldly realms and innumerable, inconceivable emanations, all working for the benefit of sentient beings.

The cause of these four wisdoms, from the *Ornament of the Mahayana Section*:

Because of holding, because of equal mind,
Because of teaching authentic Dharma on many occasions, and
Because of action actualizing
The four wisdoms authentically arise.

From the four actions of: retaining the Dharma that is heard, meditating self and other as equal to all sentient beings, unperversedly teaching Dharma, and actualizing the benefit of sentient beings, the four wisdoms arise, respectively.

.....

The acceptance-tradition that the state of buddhahood *does not* have wisdom that possesses appearance:

That which is freed from adventitious defilements in the inherently fully pure suchness is the self-benefit dharmakaya, and the two form-kayas are its appearance to others. They arise from the appearances of: the Buddha, while practicing the path, collecting the accumulations and making aspiration prayers for the benefit of others, and the trainees collecting the accumulations and making aspirations prayers to meet a buddha. And this is known by way of the earlier quotations from the *Unsurpassed Continuum Shastra*: “Similarly, for one with stainless faith and the rest...” and “For those far and near due to their purity...”

.....

In the fully pure nature,
Recall-awareness adventitious defilement is purified –
Free of the extremes of with or without wisdom, it is the
Un-thought, un-expressed wisdom.



My advice, summarizing this section with reason:

If even having done only a bit of farming in the springtime
An abundantly bountiful harvest appears in autumn,
Then if for a long time the accumulations are respectfully collected
It is certain that the bountiful dual-benefit result, the three kayas,
will be attained.

Thus ends the tenth section of
Engaging stages in the Teachings of the Buddha,
he teaching on the three-kayas result



This way to engage by stages in the Sage's teachings
Was written in dependence on the lama's speech and scripture;
Through all the obtained virtues arising from this
May all migrating beings not travel wrong paths, but instead
Engage in the authentic path and attain the three kayas.

As for myself, may I propagate the Sage's teachings,
Engage in the authentic path, attain the three kayas, and then through
Spontaneously present, uninterrupted enlightened activities
Liberate the migrating beings, equal with space.

Engaging by Stages in the Teachings of the Buddha,
Written by the Glorious Phagmodrupa,
is completed.





*“May All Beings Be Happy
and Free From Sufferings”*



TIBETAN MEDITATION CENTER
MARYLAND - U.S.A



PHAGMODRUPA
Engaging by Stages
in the Teaching of the BUDDHA



Teaching by
Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzin Rinpoche

Every TUESDAYS & SATURDAYS

Starting on **November 9th**

U.S.A (New York) 9:00 am - 11:00 am

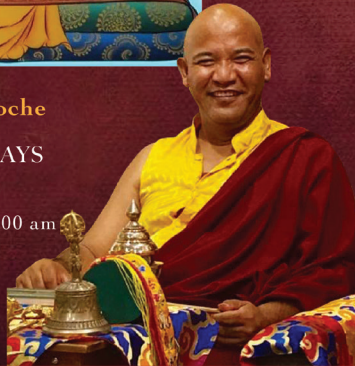
Vietnam / Jakarta 9:00 pm

Singapore 10:00 pm

Zoom Meeting ID:

217-404-8716

Password: drikungtmc



*This PDF was created to support the teaching of
Ven. Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzin Rinpoche*

*Retyped by Tamara Treabert
PDF Layout and design by Elen Badra*

