

NAGARJUNA'S *Letter to a Friend*

with commentary by
Kyabje
Kangyur Rinpoche



translated by the
PADMAKARA
Translation Group

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WITH COMMENTARY BY KANGYUR RINPOCHE



Buddha Shakyamuni

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NAGARJUNA'S *Letter to a Friend*

WITH COMMENTARY BY KANGYUR RINPOCHE

LETTER TO A FRIEND

by Nagarjuna • The Root Text

THE NECTAR-LIKE WORDS OF THE TEACHER

by Longchen Yeshe Dorje, Kangyur Rinpoche • The Commentary

Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group

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Foreword

THE GREAT INDIAN MASTER Arya Nagarjuna was remarkable for his ability to condense the whole of the Buddha's teachings into comprehensive works without in any way diluting them. As predicted by Shakyamuni Buddha himself, he is especially noted for having expounded the profound meanings of the doctrine.

The work presented in this book is a letter that he wrote to his friend and student King Dechö Zangpo (as he is known in Tibetan), and as such it provides a frank yet subtly pointed exposition of the entire Buddhist path, from the basic foundations of discipline to the profundities of the Mahayana view. It is addressed to anyone, whether an ordained monk or nun or a lay person, who sincerely wishes to practice the Buddha's teaching as a means to become free from samsara.

If Nagarjuna's approach in his *Letter to a Friend* sometimes does not appear to entertain us, we should understand that he is, in a clear and unadorned manner, showing us the path to liberation, not writing a novel. His aim is not to seek fame as a best-selling author, but to benefit his friend and anyone else willing to respond to the honest advice he gives.

I am happy that Nagarjuna's message, complemented by Kangyur Rinpoche's commentary, is being made available for English readers seeking an authentic spiritual path.

Jigme Khyentse
Dordogne, 2005

Translator's Introduction

Few people who have begun studying Tibetan Buddhism can remain unaware for long of the importance of Nagarjuna's *Letter to a Friend* (*Suhrillekha* in Sanskrit), for even if they have not had the opportunity to read it on its own, they will sooner or later come across quotations from Nagarjuna's poem in the many written and oral commentaries on other texts that the Tibetan tradition has produced. The *Letter to a Friend*, despite its short length, is a monument of the Indian shastra tradition, for it covers the whole Mahayana path with unusual clarity and memorable imagery. For many students of Buddhism the original canonical texts—that is, the sutras and other works that recorded the Buddha's teachings and were translated in the Tibetan Kangyur—could prove somewhat daunting, for there is a vast number of them and they often confine themselves to specific subjects, being in most cases delivered in response to specific situations. To gain an overall perspective of the whole Buddhist path required not only an exceptional memory but also a formidable ability to order and synthesize the material expressed in the sutras. It was to enable students to better grasp the real message of the whole scope and variety of the Buddha's teachings that, centuries after the Buddha had left this world, Indian masters like Nagarjuna composed the many shastras of the later canonical tradition that were translated in the Tibetan Tengyur. To think of the shastras simply as commentaries is not always entirely meaningful, for such works as the *Letter to a Friend* and Shantideva's *The Way of the Bodhisattva* condense rather than expand on the Buddha's original teachings. They are, all the same, entirely based on the Buddha's words, and indeed many lines in the *Letter to a Friend* specifically refer to passages in the sutras. These references serve as keys to jog the reader's memory, though they assume, of course, that the reader is already familiar with these same sutras. A glance at the last two lines of verse 68, and at the corresponding section in the commentary with its quotation from the sutra alluded to, provides a good illustration of this. It also shows why it has

been necessary for subsequent masters, both in India and Tibet, to in their turn compose commentaries that explain and expand on these shastras. Works like the *Letter to a Friend*, which could be easily memorized, thus provided a framework on which the Buddhist practitioner could “hang” the detailed expositions to be found in the sutras. And, since they covered a wide range of topics, they were useful as scriptural sources to be quoted by Tibetan writers explaining specific points of the Buddhist teachings.

NAGARJUNA

Nagarjuna is generally considered with Asanga to be the most important figure in Mahayana Buddhism. Acknowledged as the father of Madhyamika, it was he who brought to the human world the *Prajñāparamita in One Hundred Thousand Verses* (hitherto hidden in the realm of the nagas) which inspired his own *Mulamadhyamaka-karika*, on which the entire Madhyamika is based. A prolific writer, his works include the *Six Texts on Reasoning*, hymns of praise, and a number of discourses (including the *Letter to a Friend*). As principal abbot of Nalanda he was largely responsible for increasing this great monastic university's reputation as a seat of learning and pure conduct. Most of the details of his life, however, have come down to us largely in the form of legend, and as with many great masters of the first few hundred years after the Buddha's parinirvana, it is difficult to form a clear picture from all the numerous and varied accounts available. The Buddha himself predicted that Nagarjuna would be born four hundred years after his own parinirvana, and that he would live six hundred years. This in fact correlates with the dates most scholars attribute for him, which lie somewhere around the first and second centuries of the Christian era, falling roughly in the middle of the period foretold by the Buddha.

Despite this prediction of longevity, it seemed at first that Nagarjuna's life would be a short one. A soothsayer consulted soon after his birth told his parents that the baby would only survive seven days unless they were to make offerings to one hundred monks, which condition they were only too happy to fulfill. But having been told subsequently that nothing could be done to extend the boy's life longer than seven years, they sent him away shortly before his seventh birthday so that they would not have to endure the sorrow of seeing their son's corpse. It was as a result of his

arrival at Nalanda, where he was ordained and initiated into a tantric practice conferring immortality by the great master Saraha (also known in this context as Rahulabhadra), that he not only survived this second deadline but went on to become a learned scholar and fully accomplished practitioner, mastering the teachings of the sutras and tantras, and even the science of alchemy. Throughout his life he significantly benefited the doctrine and sentient beings, on many occasions using miraculous powers. The special relationship he cultivated with the nagas, and which enabled him to retrieve the *Prajñāparamita in One Hundred Thousand Verses*, is reflected not only in his name but in numerous representations of him depicting the nagas' cobralike heads shading him from the sun as he taught the Dharma.

KING SURABHIBHADRA

While contemporary Sanskrit sources have provided modern scholars with some idea of Nagarjuna's life, it is impossible to identify the friend for whom he wrote his *Letter* because no Sanskrit version of this work has survived. His original name can only be surmised by translating back into Sanskrit the two Tibetan names that exist in different versions of the text. As a result, we find him variously referred to in different translations of the *Letter* as Surabhibhadra (the name we have adopted here, albeit arbitrarily), Udayibhadra, Udayana, Gautamiputra, Kanishka, Shatavahana, and so on. All we can say is that he was probably one of a number of Andhran kings ruling in Central India at the time Nagarjuna lived there. Nonetheless, even if a knowledge of the historical background to a work of literature can sometimes give valuable insights into the text itself, in this case precise identification of the king is not crucial to understanding Nagarjuna's message and does not affect its value as a basis for Buddhist practice.

LETTER TO A FRIEND

The *Letter to a Friend* is unusual in that it covers the entire Mahayana path in no more than 123 verses, and it is hardly surprising that many passages need a certain amount of explanation if they are to be properly understood. A number of commentaries were written on it in Tibet, of

which two, one by the Nyingmapa Lama Mipham (1846-1912) and the other by the fourteenth-century Sakya master Jetsun Rendawa, have been translated into English. The present translation is of a commentary by Kyabje Kangyur Rinpoche, and is a further tribute to him as the founding father and abiding inspiration of the Padmakara Translation Group, which has already translated his commentary on Jigme Lingpa's *Treasury of Precious Qualities*.

KYABJE KANGYUR RINPOCHE (1897-1975)

Kangyur Rinpoche, Longchen Yeshe Dorje, was born in Eastern Tibet and began studying the Dharma and practicing from an early age. His root guru was Jedrung Rinpoche, Trinle Jampa Jungne, of Riwoche Monastery, famous for its nonsectarian approach and its annual festival in which its two main colleges, one Nyingmapa and the other belonging to the Taklung Kagyu tradition, used to practice together. His former life as Namkhai Nyingpo, one of Guru Padmasambhava's twenty-five closest disciples, became evident in the revealing of teachings he had received and hidden during that time and which in this life he rediscovered as spiritual treasures (*terma*).

Kangyur Rinpoche's life broadly falls into two periods. The first half of his life, in fulfillment of his teachers' wishes, he devoted to study and practice. After receiving the empowerment of Mañjushri from Mipham Rinpoche, he was able to memorize any text at a single reading. His diligence in study was unmatched, and he would read far into the night, his only source of light the glowing tip of an incense stick on which he blew from time to time to make it brighter. In this way he became extraordinarily learned, not only in the whole range of subjects taught in the different schools of Tibetan Buddhism, but in a wide variety of practical subjects as well. At the same time, he combined perfect observance of his monastic vows (his only possessions were his monk's robes) with a number of long retreats, thus adding profound meditational experience and accomplishment to his immense scholarship. He was thus able to contribute in no small measure to all aspects of the life of Riwoche Monastery and eventually held the most important posts there.

His disregard for status of any sort led to his abandoning his position in the monastery and taking to the life of a wandering hermit. Although

he never ceased to study and practice, this second period of his life was characterized by his extraordinary humanity and his work in helping others, in particular the four activities he cherished most—caring for the chronically ill (he was a skilled doctor), looking after the aged, helping travellers, and caring for orphans—and his work in preserving and spreading the teachings. The latter included not only the numerous occasions on which he transmitted the teachings—he was named Kangyur Rinpoche for his having given the reading transmission of the hundred or so volumes that make up the Tibetan Kangyur no fewer than twenty-four times—but also the important work of restoring monasteries and stupas. It is a measure of his deep humility that in these and other projects his role was by no means confined to organizing, funding, and providing inspiration, for he took an active part in them and surprised many by displaying unexpected talents, doing the work of a mason, for example, as if he had exercised that particular trade all his life.

The preservation of the Dharma became Kangyur Rinpoche's principal concern in the last twenty years of his life as he realized the future of Buddhism in Tibet was threatened. He and his family brought to India many rare books that might otherwise have been lost, and in India he took every opportunity to ensure that the Buddha's teachings were transmitted to the next generation, eventually founding a monastery in Darjeeling where Tibetan children could be given a traditional education from an early age. Although he never fulfilled his expressed wish to visit Europe or America, it was clearly important to him that the Dharma should become established in the West. He gave unsparingly of his time to Westerners who came to see him, and a number of them spent many months practicing under his guidance. Due to his personal requests to other great masters, among them Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and Dudjom Rinpoche, and also as a result of his inspiration in the activities of his sons Taklung Tsetrul Pema Wangyal Rinpoche, Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, and Rangdrol Rinpoche, many Westerners have now been able to study and practice the Dharma, some of them in the context of the traditional three-year retreat.

THE COMMENTARY

Kangyur Rinpoche's commentary broadly serves three purposes. First of all it provides a structural outline (*sa bcad*) for Nagarjuna's text, furnish-

ing appropriate headings with each change in topic; effectively this occurs almost with each new verse. On a casual reading of the root text, it is by no means easy to follow Nagarjuna's argument and a structural outline is essential if readers are to have an overview of the entire work and keep their bearings as they read. Texts of this kind are open to more than a single interpretation and it is therefore possible to have more than one structural outline, which is indeed the case for *Letter to a Friend*. Jetsun Rendawa's outline, for example, divides the text into three main sections: general advice concerning virtuous practices, developing aversion to samsara, and pursuing the path to nirvana. Sakya Pandita's outline views the *Letter to a Friend* more in terms of how it presents the Three Trainings, while the commentary by the Gelugpa Geshe Lobsang Jinba divides the text into practices for the three kinds of beings.¹ Kangyur Rinpoche's outline puts the emphasis on the six transcendent perfections, and in this respect it is very similar to the outline that determines Lama Mipham's commentary.

Secondly, the commentary furnishes explanations on the more difficult points in Nagarjuna's poem by the insertion of notes between the words of the root text. These notes vary in their scope and purpose. Some constitute the simple insertion of synonyms to provide clarification of ambiguous words or modern equivalents for anachronistic expressions. Other notes explain what Nagarjuna means by particular terms. In some cases, Kangyur Rinpoche inserts quotations from the sutras and shastras, and for a number of topics he has written entire pages of detailed commentary.

The third purpose of Kangyur Rinpoche's commentary is to render the original, sometimes cryptic, verse into relatively straightforward prose. While it would have been interesting to have reproduced the commentary in English exactly as it is in the Tibetan, the structural differences between the two languages make this almost impossible without the result appearing stilted and difficult to read. We have therefore approached the task of translation more with the authors' original intentions in mind. Our aim has been, on the one hand, to render Kangyur Rinpoche's annotated version as prose that, even if occasionally cumbersome on account of the density of ideas it contains, can be understood without great difficulty by practicing Buddhists; and on the other hand, to attempt to use the expressive powers of language to emulate Nagarjuna's original poem and present his message in a form that is at once inspiring and memorable.

The requirements of meter and rhythm for the latter have involved certain choices and shortcuts regarding vocabulary. While we have attempted to maintain accuracy and consistency in the translation of the commentary, some divergence and approximation have proved necessary in translating the poem. Thus "positive action" has often been rendered as "virtue" or simply "good," while for "negative actions" we have reverted to "evil deeds" and, with some reluctance, "sin." In some instances, however, we have used different equivalents in the commentary and poem for the sake of richness and to indicate a greater range of meaning than might otherwise have been conveyed with a strictly consistent use of vocabulary. Words from the root text have been highlighted in the commentary (as they are in the Tibetan) to indicate the correspondence with the root text, but, for the reasons just given, they do not necessarily appear in the same order and are in some cases synonyms or equivalents of the words to be found in the translated root text.

Not everyone will find our imperfect attempt at rendering the translation of Nagarjuna's text as poetry entirely to their taste. Some will argue that certain verses require too great an effort to be understood. While we have tried to make the translation as clear and readable as possible, we have, wherever possible, avoided adding anything that is not Nagarjuna's. In taking a traditional view that it is the function of the commentary, not of the translators, to explain the text, we hope that, where readers encounter passages in the root text that seem difficult or even incomprehensible, they will seek clarification in the relevant sections of the commentary. We would also suggest that reading the poem aloud may resolve certain difficulties.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Given that Nagarjuna's poem condenses the entire Bodhisattva path into 123 four-line verses, with a structural outline running to several pages and going some twenty levels deep, it is not always easy to keep track of the direction the text is taking. The following general overview may therefore prove helpful, particularly for those unfamiliar with the classical structural outline.

As is traditional with Indian shastras, the author begins with a commitment to compose the text, followed by encouragement to the reader on

how to approach the text properly. He then introduces the principal subject of his poem, the Bodhisattva path. He starts with a brief reminder (verses 4 to 7) of six subjects (common to all the Buddhist vehicles) that one needs to keep in mind in order to inspire faith: the Three Jewels, the value of positive actions, generosity, and discipline. Nagarjuna then loses no time in moving onto his main subject, the six transcendent perfections (Skt. *paramitas*), which makes up the bulk of the poem. The first four perfections (generosity, discipline, patience, and diligence) are dealt with only briefly in the next eleven verses, and it is only the last two, concentration and wisdom, that Nagarjuna discusses in any detail.

Concentration (verses 21-44), according to Nagarjuna, requires careful preparation and implies assiduously avoiding distraction. To this he allots some nineteen verses, emphasizing the dangers of worldly preoccupations, including sexual desire. A final verse on the preparation for concentration is dedicated to the four boundless thoughts (love, compassion, and so on). The actual practice of concentration is dealt with in a single verse, which provides an outline of the four concentrations (Skt. *samadhis*). This section concludes with three verses that discuss the postmeditational practice in as far as concentration is concerned, in particular the factors that can hinder one's concentration.

Nagarjuna now comes to the heart of his subject, dedicating no less than seventy verses (45-115)—about half of the entire poem—to the perfection of wisdom. One might expect here that, as the father of Madhyamika, he would treat the reader to a debate establishing the Madhyamika view, much as does Shantideva in the ninth chapter of the *Bodhicharyavatara* or Chandrakirti in the *Madhyamakavatara*, but he has of course written elsewhere on this. In the *Letter to a Friend* Nagarjuna's discussion of the two truths consists mainly of an extensive analysis of relative truth. After a preamble on the factors that favor the cultivation of wisdom, in which he briefly presents the path of joining and introduces us to the correct view, he touches on a presentation of the absolute truth, or emptiness, in verses 49 and 50 before proceeding to an explanation of the training in wisdom. It is at this point that readers accustomed to the graded approach of the *lam rim* teachings may feel slightly disorientated, for while those texts begin with basic subjects such as the rarity of the precious human body, impermanence, and the defects of samsara long before they make any mention of the transcendent perfection of wisdom, it is these "preliminaries" that

Nagarjuna now discusses at considerable length, devoting no fewer than fifty verses to them, and they form the first part of the training in wisdom. This is divided into two, a presentation in terms of this present life of impermanence (verses 55-58) and the rarity of human birth (59-64); and a detailed discussion, with a view to getting out of samsara completely, (a) of how nothing in samsara can be relied on (66-75) and (b) of the suffering in the different realms (77-102). Nagarjuna seems to want the reader to understand that it is in mastering these topics that the realization of Madhyamika will come naturally. Only then does he continue with the second part of the training which, in just eleven verses, covers the paths of seeing and meditation and includes an overview of the important subject of interdependence.

Nagarjuna rounds off this highly condensed description of the Bodhisattva path with three or four verses of encouragement, reassuring the king that the path, however difficult it may seem, is possible even for ordinary individuals. Stick to the essential, and do your best, he says, before concluding his poem with the traditional dedication of merit, in which he gives us a glimpse of the final result, Buddhahood.

Some people might reasonably wonder whether a classical text in the form of advice addressed to an Indian king living almost two thousand years ago has much relevance for members of Western society in the twenty-first century. And yet as we read the *Letter* it is worth asking ourselves what sort of person Nagarjuna's "friend" is. On the assumption that the author's advice was originally intended for King Surabhibhadra personally (along with his court, perhaps), and that he did not go out of his way to flatter him, we can glean a number of clues as to the king's character from the text itself. Despite leading a busy court life with the usual responsibilities of royalty, he appears already to have a good knowledge of the Buddha's teachings (verse 3), and Nagarjuna makes frequent allusions to passages in the sutras, which must assume more than a passing acquaintance with the latter. The manner in which Nagarjuna addresses him would suggest that the king is essentially a good and indeed devout man, though at the same time prone to distraction and easily enticed by the pleasures of court life. Nagarjuna evidently feels it necessary to warn him to keep a roving eye off other people's wives (verse 21) and, as for the king's own marriage, Nagarjuna clearly considers it important to give him some

advice on the matter and devotes no less than two verses to this. Nor does he allow the king a few mild fantasies as to the life he can expect in the celestial realms as a reward for suitable behavior in the present life, but reminds him that even the greatest happiness that might result from positive deeds is bound to end (verse 70 et seq.). Elsewhere (verse 33, for example) Nagarjuna advises the king against other temptations to which it seems he might easily fall prey, and the admonition not to prowl around at night comes as something of a surprise if we are to take it as a reflection on the king's habits. Again, the essential advice on eating habits a few verses later would suggest that Surabhibhadra is something of a *bon vivant*. Yet when it comes to practicing the Buddhist path, he would seem to be prone to doubts, for shortly before concluding his letter Nagarjuna provides a few lines of reassurance: the great Bodhisattvas were all once perfectly ordinary people like you, he tells him, so you can be sure that you will get enlightened too.

If some of the above is speculative, it hopefully provides a picture of Nagarjuna's friend as an essentially human person, prone to the weaknesses and doubts that we all have in common. We may not be heads-of-state or wealthy aristocrats, but many Buddhists in the West do share with King Surabhibhadra a relatively comfortable background and lifestyle, and no shortage of worldly distractions. Seen in this light, Nagarjuna's advice is as valid and contemporary as it was when he wrote it. True, there are a number of points that have to be understood in their ancient Indian context and adapted accordingly. Not many Americans or Europeans are likely to find themselves tempted, for example, to commit negative actions for the sake of brahmins (verse 30), but it is nevertheless important not to fall under the misconception that to do something negative, thinking that it is for one's teacher's sake, lets one off the karmic hook. Similarly, the advice to reflect on women's bodies as being unclean has to be understood in its proper context as an important meditational device for remedying attachment, in this case addressed to a heterosexual layman but applicable, with an appropriate change in wording, to anyone for whom sexual desire is likely to prove a distraction from meditation. Far from being a misogynistic tirade, it is intended to make us take a cool, objective look at what it is that makes us slaves to our passions and thus see them for what they are with a little less frustration and even a certain sense of humor. Other passages that may seem difficult to relate to if taken at face value include the

traditional descriptions of the different realms of samsara. Here it is important to understand that, according to Buddhist teachings, the six realms of samsara are all illusions, hallucinations perceived by the minds that have created them, and that the descriptions found in the texts are broad generalizations of an infinite number of such hallucinations that are possible. The hells are experiences of intense anger and fear arising from attitudes dominated by aversion and hatred. It is these very emotions that create the torment and confusion perceived, in its furious, extroverted form, as the hot hells, and in a more introverted form as the cold hells. The fate of the pretas in the realm of hungry ghosts reflects the attitudes, grossly magnified, of minds driven in earlier lives by intense desire and an inability to give anything away. And the fact that these states are generally associated with specific individual realms does not prevent them from being experienced less intensely in other realms. Who among us in the human realm has not experienced the paralyzing effect of cold hatred or the unbearable paranoia of jealousy, or observed the truth in the saying, "Pride comes before a fall"?

A work of this sort that covers such a wide range of subjects is bound to contain many unexplained technical points. We have done our best to provide short explanations of many of them by providing notes and a glossary of technical terms. Readers who wish to explore subjects in greater detail are invited to consult other larger works on the Mahayana path, in particular *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, in which Kangyur Rinpoche provides further commentary on many of the subjects treated here, Patrul Rinpoche's *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, and other books mentioned in the Bibliography.

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This book was inspired by Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche, Pema Wangyal, who has devoted much effort to ensuring that the writings of Kangyur Rinpoche and other great masters are preserved in correct Tibetan editions and to seeing important Buddhist works made available in other languages. As well as according us the immense privilege of translating this commentary on the *Suhrillekha* into English and giving the oral transmission of this work, he and Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche spent many hours supervising

the project and patiently clarifying numerous points of translation. No printed acknowledgment could hope to convey the debt of gratitude we owe them. We would also like to extend our thanks to Alak Zenkar Rinpoche, who as well as answering a number of questions kindly sent us a copy of another commentary for us to refer to, and to Khenpo Pema Sherab and Lobpon Nyima Dondrup for their advice on some difficult points.

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Nagarjuna (1st-2nd centuries A.D.)

༡། །ཤེ་པའི་སྤྱིང་ཡ་ ཅེས་བྱ་བ་བལྟ་ མོ། །

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འ དཔལ་གཞི་ནུར་གྱུར་པ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚེལ་ལོ། །

ཡོན་ཏན་རང་བཞིན་དག་འོས་བདག་གིས་ནི། །
བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པའི་གསུང་བསྟན་ལས་བྱུང་བའི། །
བསོད་ནམས་འདུན་སྟོན་འཕགས་པའི་དབྱངས་འདི་དག །
ཅུང་ཟད་ཅིག་བསྐྱེབས་ཚུངས་ཀྱིས་གསན་བར་རིགས། །

ཇི་ལྟར་བདེ་གཤེགས་སྐྱ་གཟུགས་ཤིང་ལས་ཀྱང། །
བགྱིས་པ་ཅི་འདྲ་འདྲུང་སྟེ་མཁས་པས་མཚོད། །
དེ་བཞིན་བདག་གི་སྟོན་པའི་འདི་འདྲ་ཡང། །
དམ་ཚེས་བརྗོད་ལ་བསྐྱེན་སྟོན་སྟོན་མི་བགྱིད། །

སྐབ་པ་ཚེན་པའི་བཀའ་ནི་སྟོན་དགུ་ཞིག། །
ཚུངས་ཀྱི་ཕྱག་སྐྱ་ལྟ་ཡང་རྒྱུད་མོད་ཀྱི། །
རྗོད་ལ་ལས་བགྱིས་དགུང་རྒྱུད་འོད་ཀྱིས་ནི། །
ཚེས་དཀར་ཉིད་དུ་ཅི་སྟེ་མི་བགྱིད་ལགས། །

Nagarjuna's *Letter to a Friend*

In Sanskrit: Suhrillekha

In Tibetan: bshes pa'i spring yig

In English: Letter to a Friend

Homage to the Gentle and Glorious Youth (Mañjugosha).

1

Listen now to these few lines of noble song
That I've composed for those with many virtues, fit for good,
To help them yearn for merit springing from
The sacred words of He Who's Gone to Bliss.

2

The wise will always honor and bow down
To Buddha statues, though they're made of wood;
So too, although these lines of mine be poor,
Do not feel scorn, they teach the Holy Way.

3

While you have surely learned and understood
The Mighty Buddha's many lovely words,
Is it not so that something made of chalk
By moonlight lit shines gleaming whiter still?

རྒྱལ་བས་སངས་རྒྱལ་ཚེས་དང་དགའ་འདྲུ་དང་། །
གཏོང་དང་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམ་ ལྷ་རྗེས་བྲན་པ་དྲུག་ །
རབ་ཏུ་བཀའ་སྤྲུལ་དེ་དག་སོ་སོ་ཡི། །
ཡོན་ཏན་ཚུ་ གྱི་རྗེས་སུ་བྲན་པར་བགྱིད། །

ད བའི་ལས་ལམ་བཅུ་པོ་ལྷུས་དང་ནི། །
དག་དང་ཡིད་གྱིས་ཏྲག་ཏུ་བསྐྱེན་བགྱིད་ཅིང་། །
ཚང་རྣམས་ལས་ལྡོག་དེ་བཞི་ དགའ་བ་ཡི། །
འ བ་ལ་ཡང་མངོན་པར་དབྱེས་པར་མཛོད། །

ཡོངས་སྤྱོད་གཡོ་བ་སྤྱིང་པོ་མེད་ གྱེ བས། །
ད སྤོང་བམ་ཟེ་བ་གཉེན་དང་བཤེ རྣམས་ལ། །
སྤྱི པ་ཚུ་ བཞི་ སྤྲུལ་བགྱི་པ་རོལ་ཏུ། །
སྤྱི ལས་གཞན་པའི་གཉེ མཚོགས་མཚི སོ། །

ཁྱོད་གྱིས་ཚུ་ ཁྲིམ་ མ་ཉམས་མོད་མི་དམའ། །
མའདེ མ་སྤྲུགས་པ་དག་བསྐྱེན་པར་མཛོད། །
ཁྲིམ་ བྱི་རྒྱ་དང་མི་རྒྱུ་འས་བཞི་ དུ། །
ཡོན་ཏན་ཀུན་གྱི་གཞི་རྟེན་ལགས་པར་གསུངས། །

སྤྱི དང་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམ་ བཟོད་བརྗོན་བསམ་གཏན་དང་། །
དེ་བཞི་ རབ་གཞལ་མེད་པ་རོལ་སྤྱིན། །
འདི་དག་རྒྱལ་མཛོད་སྤྱིད་པའི་རྒྱལ་ཚེ་ཡི། །
པ་རོལ་བུ་ པ་རྒྱལ་བའི་དབང་པོར་མཛོད། །

4

Six things there are the Buddhas have explained,
And all their virtues you must keep in mind:
The Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, bounteous acts,
And moral laws and gods—each one recall.

5

With body, speech, and mind always rely
On wholesome deeds, the tenfold virtuous path.
Avoiding liquor at all costs, thus find
True joy to lead a life of virtuous deeds.

6

Possessions are ephemeral and essenceless—
Know this and give them generously to monks,
To brahmins, to the poor, and to your friends:
Beyond there is no greater friend than gift.

7

Keep your vows unbroken, undegraded,
Uncorrupted, and quite free of stain.
Just as the earth's the base for all that's still or moves,
On discipline, it's said, is founded all that's good.

8

Generosity and discipline, patience, diligence,
Concentration, and the wisdom that knows thusness—
Those measureless perfections, make them grow,
And be a Mighty Conqueror who's crossed samsara's sea.

གང་ལ་པ་དང་མ་དག་མཚོད་བྱེད་པའི། །
 ༢ དེ་ཚོངས་བཅས་སློབ་དཔོན་བཅས་པའང་ལགས། །
 དེ་དག་ལ་མཚོད་གྲགས་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དང་། །
 སྲིད་མ་ལ་ཡང་མཐོ་རི་ས་ཐོབ་འགྱུར་ལགས། །

 འཚོ་དང་ཚོམ་རྒྱན་འབྲིག་པ་བརྟུ །དང་ནི། །
 ཆང་དང་དུས་མ །ཟས་ལ་ཆགས་པ་དང་། །
 མལ་སྟན་མཐོལ་དགའ་དང་སྲུ་དག་དང་། །
 གར་དང་སྲེང་བའི་བྱུང་པར་རྣམས་སྲུང་ཞིང་། །

 དག་བཅོམ་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམ །རྗེས་སུ་བྱེད་པ་ཡི། །
 ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་པོ་འདི་དག་དང་ལྷན་ན། །
 གསེ་སྲོང་འདོད་སྲོད་ལྟ་ལུས་ཡིད་འོང་བ། །
 སྲུ །པ་བུད་མེད་དག་ལ་སྲོལ་བར་བགྱི ། །

 སེར་སྲུག་ཡོ་སྲུ་ཆགས་དང་སྟོམ་ལས་དང་། །
 མདོན་པའི་ད་རྒྱལ་འདོད་ཆགས་ཞེ་སྲང་དང་། །
 ༢ །དང་གཟུ །དང་ཐོས་པ་ལང་ཚོ་དང་། །
 དབང་ཤང་ཆེ་བའི་རྒྱགས་དགོ་དག་བཞིན་གཟི ། །

 བག་ཡོད་བདུ །ཕྱིའགནས་ཏེ་བག་མེད་པ། །
 འ །བའི་གནས་སུ་ཐུབ་པས་བཀའ་སྲུལ་ཏེ། །
 དེ་བས་ཁྱོད་གྱི་དགོ་ཚོས་སྲེལ་སྲིད་དུ། །
 ལུས་པས་རྟག་ཏུ་བག་དང་བཅས་པར་མཛོད། །

9

Those who show their parents great respect
With Brahma or a Master will be linked;
By venerating them they'll win repute,
In future they'll attain the higher realms.

10

Eschew all harm, don't steal, make love, or lie,
Abstain from drink, untimely greed for food,
Indulging in high beds, and singing too,
Refrain from dancing, all adornments shun.

11

For men and women who keep this eight-branched vow
And emulate the vows the Arhats took,
Their wish to nurture and to cleanse will grant
Them handsome bodies as celestial gods.

12

Stinginess and cunning, greed and sloth
And arrogance, attachment, hate, and pride
("I've breeding, good looks, learning, youth, and power")—
Such traits are seen as enemies of good.

13

Carefulness is the way to deathlessness,
While carelessness is death, the Buddha taught.
And thus, so that your virtuous deeds may grow,
Be careful, constantly and with respect.

གང་ཞིག་སྒྲིབ་ཚད་བཀའ་མེད་གྱུར་པ་ལ། །
 ལྷོ་མ་བཀའ་དང་ལྷན་པར་གྱུར་དེ་ཡང་། །
 རྒྱུ་བ་སྒྲིབ་བུལ་བཞི་ འུ་ཚུ་མ་ཚོས་ཏེ། །
 ༥ བོ་སོར་སྤོང་མ་སྤོང་ལྷན་བདེ་བྱེད་བཞི། ། །

འདི་ལྟར་བཟོད་མ་ཚུངས་དཀའ་བྱུང་མ་མཚེ བས། །
 རྒྱེད་གྱིས་ཚོ་བའི་གོ་སྐབས་དབྱེ་མི་བགྱི། །
 ཚོ་བ་སྤངས་པས་སྤྱིར་མི་ལྡོག་པ་ཉིད། །
 འཕྲོབ་པར་འགྱུར་བ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཞལ་གྱིས་བཞེ། ། །

བ བེ་འདི་ རྒྱུ་སའདི་ བཏག་པམ་པར་བྱས། །
 འ ཡིས་བདག་གི་ཚོར་འཕྲོག་གྱུར་ཏེ་ཞེས། །
 རོལ་དུ་འཛིན་པས་འབྱུ རོང་རྣམས་སྤྱེད་དེ། །
 རོལ་འཛིན་རྣམས་སྤངས་བདེ་བར་གཉིད་ལོག་འགྱུར། །

ས བྱི་རྒྱུ་དང་ས་དང་དོ་བ་ལ། །
 རི་མོར་བྲིས་པ་དེ་འདྲར་རིག་པར་བགྱི། །
 ༥ བཏེ་ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་ལ་དང་པོ་ནི། །
 མཚོག་སྤྲེ་ཚོས་འདོད་རྣམས་ལ་ཐམ་ལགས། །

རྒྱུལ་བས་སྤྱིང་ལ་འབབ་དང་བདེ་ བ་དང་། །
 རོ་ག་པར་སྐྱུ་ལྷན་སྤྱེས་བུ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ནི། །
 སྤྱང་རྩེ་མེ་ཏོག་མི་གཙང་ལྟ་བུ་འཛིག། །
 རྣམ་གསུ བཀའ་རྒྱུལ་དེ་ལས་ཐམ་སྤྱང་། །

14

Those who formerly were careless
But then took heed are beautiful and fair,
As is the moon emerging from the clouds,
Like Nanda, Angulimala, Darshaka, Udayana.

15

Hard to practice, patience knows no peer,
So never allow yourself a moment's rage.
Avoid all anger and you will become
A Non-Returner, so the Buddha said.

16

"He's abused me, struck, defeated me,
And all my money too he has purloined!"
To harbor such resentment leads to strife;
Give up your grudge and sleep will easily come.

17

Understand your thoughts to be like figures drawn
On water, sandy soil, or carved in stone.
Of these, for tainted thoughts the first's the best,
While when you long for Dharma, it's the last.

18

Three kinds of speech are used by humankind,
And these the Victor variously described:
Like honey, sweet; like flowers, true; like filth,
Improper speech—the last of these eschew.

སྒྲུང་ནས་སྒྲུང་བའི་མཐར་ཐུག་ལུན་པ་ནས། །
མ་བའི་མཐར་ཐུག་སྒྲུང་ནས་ལུན་མཐར་ཐུག། །
མ་ནས་སྒྲུང་བའི་མཐར་ཐུག་གང་ཟག་ནི། །
བ་སྟེ་དཀ་རྒྱལ་ས་ཀྱི་དང་པོར་མཛོད། །

མི་ནི་སྤྲི་འབྲས་བཞི་མ་སྤྲིན་ལ། །
སྤྲིན་པ་དང་འདྲ་སྤྲིན་ལ་མ་སྤྲིན་འདྲ། །
མ་སྤྲིན་མ་སྤྲིན་པར་ཡང་སྤྲིན་པ་ལ། །
སྤྲིན་པར་སྒྲུང་ཞེས་བཤྱི་བ་འདྲར་རྟོགས་མཛོད། །

ག་ཀྱི་རྒྱུང་མ་མི་བཟུ་མཐོང་ན་ཡང་། །
ནཚ་མཐུ་པར་མ་དང་བུ་མོ་དང་། །
སྤྲིང་མེ་འི་འདུ་སྟེ་བཤྱི་ཚགས་ཀྱུར་ན། །
མི་གཙང་ཉིད་དུ་ཡང་དག་བསམ་པར་བཤྱི། །

གཡོ་བའི་སེམ་ཅི་ཐོས་མཚུངས་བུ་ལྟ་བུར། །
གཏེར་བཞི་སྟོག་དང་འདྲ་བར་བསྐྱུང་བཤྱི་སྟེ། །
ག་པ་དུག་དང་མཚོ་དང་དབྱེ་བོ་དང་། །
མེ་བཞི་འདོད་པའི་བདེ་ལ་ཡིད་འབྱུང་མཛོད། །

འདོད་པ་རྒྱལ་ས་ནི་སྤྱང་ཁོལ་སྐྱེད་པ་སྟེ། །
རྒྱལ་བའི་དབང་པོས་ཀུན་པའི་འབྲས་འདྲར་གསུངས། །
དེ་དག་སྤྱང་བཤྱི་དེ་ཡི་ལྷགས་སྐྱོག་གིས། །
འཁོར་བའི་བཙོན་རར་འཛིག་རྟོན་འདི་དག་བཙོངས། །

19

Some there are who go from light to light,
And some whose end from dark is darkness still,
While some from light to dark, or dark to light
End up, thus four, of these be as the first.

20

Men, like mangoes, can be sour and yet look ripe,
Some though ripe look green, and others green
Are sour indeed, while others still look ripe
And ripe they are: from this know how to act.

21

Do not gaze on others' wives, but if you do,
Regard them as your mother, child, or sib,
Depending on their age. Should lust arise,
Think well: they are by nature unclean filth.

22

Guard this fickle mind as you would do
Your learning, children, treasure, or your life.
Renounce all sensual pleasure as if it were
A viper, poison, weapon, foe, or fire.

23

The pleasures we desire will bring us ruin,
They're like the kimba fruit, the Buddha said.
Eschew them, it's their chains that tightly bind
The worldly in samsara's prison-house.

གང་དག་དབང་པོ་དྲུག་ཡུལ་རྣམས་ལ་ནི། །
 ཏྲག་ཏུ་མི་བརྟན་གཡོ་དང་གང་དག་གཅིག་ །
 བ། རོར་དགའ་ཚེ ལས་རྒྱལ་དེ་དག་ལས། །
 མ། རྣམས་དང་པོ་དཔའ་རབ་ལགས་པར་འཚོལ། །

བ། མེད་གཞོན་ཚུའ་ལུས་ནི་ལོགས་ལེ ། ཉ། །
 སྲིང་བ་དང་སྐོ་དགུ་དོད་པ་དང། །
 མི་གཙང་ཀུན་སྐོད་འབྲ་བ་དགང་དཀའ་དང། །
 པ། པས་ ཡོག་ དང་རྒྱན་ཡང་ལོག ལེ བཟི ། །

ཇི་ལྟར་མཛེ་ཅན་སྲིན་བུས་ཉེན་པ་ནི། །
 བ། བ་དོན་དུ་མེ་ལ་ཀུན་ སྟེ གྲང། །
 ཞི་བར་མི་འགྱུར་དེ་དང་འབྲ་བར་ནི། །
 འདོད་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ཆགས་པའང་མཁྱེན་པར་མཛོད། །

དོན་དམ་གཟི པར་བགྱི་སྐྱད་དངོས་རྣམས་ལ། །
 ཚུལ་བཞི ཡིད་ལ་བགྱི པ་དེ་གོ་མས་མཛོད། །
 དེ་དང་འབྲ་བའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ལྡན་པ་ཡི། །
 ཚོས་གཞན་འགའ་ཡང་མཆི པ་མ་ལགས་སོ། །

སྐྱེ བུ་རིག བཟུ ཐོས་དང་ལྡན་རྣམས་གྲང། །
 ལེ རབ་ཚེ ཁྲིམ བུལ་བ་བཀུར་མ་ལགས། །
 དེ་ལྟས་གང་ལ་ཡོན་ཏན་འདི ཉི ལྡན། །
 དེ་ནི་ཡོན་ཏན་གཞན་དང་བུལ་ཡང་མཚོད། །

24

Of he whose fickle senses are controlled—
These six that never cease to dart at things—
And he who's fought and conquered many foes,
The first is truly brave, the wise have said.

25

Regard a young girl's body on its own,
Its smell so foul, its openings nine—a pot
Of filth, insatiable, and clothed with skin.
Regard too her adornments on their own.

26

A man with leprosy, consumed by germs,
Will stand before the fire for comfort's sake
But still find no relief, so know the same is true
For those attached to the pleasures they desire.

27

In order that you see the absolute,
Get used to truly understanding things.
No other practice is there such as this
Possessed of special virtues such as these.

28

To those possessed of breeding, learning, handsome looks,
Who have no wisdom, neither discipline, you need not bow.
But those who do have these two qualities,
Though lacking other virtues, you should revere.

འཇིག་རྟེན་མ་བྱེན་པ་རྗེད་དང་མ་རྗེད་དང་། །
 བ དང་མི་བདེ་སྟོན་དང་མི་སྟོན་དང་། །
 བསྟོད་སྟོན་ཅེས་བགྱི རི རྟེན་ཚོས་བརྒྱད་པོ། །
 བ གི་ཡིད་ཡུལ་མིན་པར་མགོ་སྟོམ་མཛོད། །

རྟོད་ཀྱིས་བུམ་ཟེད་གཞི་ལྟ་དང་ནི། །
 མ་གྲོན་དང་ཡབ་ཡུམ་དག་དང་བཙུན་མོ་དང་། །
 འཁོར་གྱི་སྟོན་དུའང་སྤྲིག་པ་མི་བགྱི་སྟེ། །
 ད བའི་རྣམ་སྤྲིན་སྐལ་ལོད་འགའ་མ་མཚི ། །

ལྷ བའི་ལས་རྣམས་སྟུན་པ་འགའ་ཡང་ནི། །
 དེ་ཡི་མོད་ལ་མཚོ བཞི མི་གཙོད་ཀྱང་། །
 འ བའི་དུས་ལ་བབ་ན་སྤྲིག་པ་ཡི། །
 ལས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་གང་ལགས་མཛོན་པ་འགྱུར། །

དད་དང་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམ ཐོས་དང་གཏོང་བ་དང་། །
 སྤྲིམ་དངོ །ཉ དང་ཁྲིལ་ཡོད་དང་། །
 །ཉ ར་བཞོར་བདུ ལགས་པར་ཐུབ་པས་གསུངས། །
 ཞོར་གཞན་པལ་བ་དོན་མ་མཚི རྟོགས་མཛོད། །

རྒྱན་པོ་འགྲུ དང་འདུ ལ་ལྟ་བ་དང་། །
 ལེ་ལོ་སྟེ བའི་ོག ལ་བརྟེ བ་དང་། །
 ཆང་དང་མཚན་མོ་རྒྱུ་བ་བཞེས་དུ། །
 ལྷ བ་ཉམས་པར་འགྱུར་བའི་དེ་དུག་སྟངས། །

29

You who know the world, take gain and loss,
Or bliss and pain, or kind words and abuse,
Or praise and blame—these eight mundane concerns—
Make them the same, and don't disturb your mind.

30

Perform no evil, even for the sake
Of brahmins, bhikshus, gods, or honored guests,
Your father, mother, queen, or for your court.
The ripened fruit in hell's for you alone.

31

Although performing wrong and evil deeds
Does not at once, like swords, create a gash,
When death arrives, those evil acts will show,
Their karmic fruit will clearly be revealed.

32

Faith and ethics, learning, bounteousness,
A flawless sense of shame and decency,
And wisdom are the seven riches Buddha taught.
Know, other common riches have no worth.

33

Gambling, public spectacles and shows,
And indolence, bad company, strong drink,
And nightly prowls—these six will lead to lower realms
And damage your good name, so give them up.

བོད་རྣམས་ཀུན་གྱི་ནང་ལ་ཚོགས་ པ། །
 རབ་མཚོག་ལགས་པར་ལྟ་མི་འཇོན་པས་གསུངས། །
 ཀ་ ཏུ་ག ་ རྩ ཅ ཚོགས་ལྟེན་ལ། །
 བོད་མི་བདོག་གྲང་ཡང་དག་འབྱོར་བ་ལགས། །

ད པ་བདོག་མང་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱབ་བསྐྱེལ་བ། །
 འདོད་པ་རྒྱུང་རྣམས་དེ་ལྟ་མ་ལགས་ཏེ། །
 ལྷུ་མཚོག་རྣམས་ལ་མཁོ་བོ་ཇི་སྟེ པ། །
 དེ་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་སྐྱབ་བསྐྱེལ་དེ་སྟེ་དོ། །

རང་བཞི དག་འབྲེ གཤེ མ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་། །
 གྱི ཐབས་བརྟམས་བཤི་ཇོ་མོ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་། །
 རྒྱུང་བྱུང་རྒྱ་བཚོམ་རྒྱུན་ལྟ་བུ་ཡི། །
 རྒྱུང་མ་གསུ པོ་དེ་ཡང་རྣམ་པར་སྤང་། །

སྤིང་མོ་ལྟ་བུར་རྗེས་མཐུ གང་ཡིན་དང་། །
 མཚོའ་མོ་བཞི ཏུ་སྤྱིང་ལ་འབབ་པ་དང་། །
 མ་བཞི ཐབས་པར་འདོད་དང་བྲལ་མོ་བཞི ། །
 དབང་གྲུང་གང་ཡིན་རིག གྱི་ལྟ་བཞི བཀུར། །

ལ་ཐབས་སྐྱབ་དང་འདྲ་བར་རིག པ་ཡིས། །
 འདོད་ཆགས་ཞེ་སྤང་མེད་པར་བསྟེན་བཤི་སྟེ། །
 རྒྱ སྤིང་མ་ལགས་ རྟེ པའི་སྤིང་མ་ལགས། །
 མཚོ སྤིང་མ་ལགས་ལུས་གནས་འབའལ སྤིར། །

34

Of all great wealth, contentment is supreme,
Said he who taught and guided gods and men.
So always be content; if you know this
Yet have no wealth, true riches you'll have found.

35

Kind Sir, to own a lot brings so much misery,
There's no such grief for those with few desires.
The more the naga lords possess of heads,
The more their headaches, the more they have of cares.

36

A murderess who sides with enemies,
A queen who holds her husband in contempt,
A thieving wife who steals the smallest thing—
It's these three kinds of wife you must avoid.

37

A wife who like a sister follows you,
Affectionate like a true and loving friend,
Supportive like a mother, obedient like a maid—
She must be honored like a family god.

38

Take food as medicine, in the right amount,
Without attachment, without hatefulness:
Don't eat for vanity, for pride or ego's sake,
Eat only for your body's sustenance.

ིག་ བའི་བདག་ཉིད་ཉིན་པར་མཐའ་དག་དང་། །
 མ་ མོ་ཐུན་གྱི་སྟོང་སྟོང་བརྒྱས་ནས་ནི། །
 མ་ ཚ ང་འབྲས་བུ་མེད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་བར། །
 དཔུང་དང་ལྡན་པར་དེ་དག་བར་དུ་མཛོལ། །

བྱ དང་སྟོང་རྗེ་དག་དང་དག་འབ་དང་། །
 བཏང་སྟོམས་ཏྟག་ཏུ་ཡང་དག་སྟོམ་མཛོད་ཅིག། །
 གོང་མ་བརྟེས་པར་མ་གྱུར་དེ་ལྟན་འང་། །
 ཚངས་པའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་བདེ་བ་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར། །

འདོད་སྦྱོང་དག་འདང་བདེ་དང་སྦྱག་བསྐྱེད་དག། །
 རྣམ་པར་སྤངས་པའི་བསམ་གཏན་བཞི་པོ་ཡིས། །
 ཚངས་པའི་སྟོང་གསལ་དག་དང་དགོ་རྒྱས་དང་། །
 འ བུ་ཆེ་ལྷ་རྣམས་དང་སྐལ་མཉམ་འཕྲོག། །

ཏྟག་དང་མཛོན་པར་ཞེན་དང་གཉེ པོ་མེད། །
 ཡོན་ཏན་གཙོ་བོ་ལྡན་གཞི་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་ལས། །
 ད དང་མི་དགོ་རྣམས་ལྷ་ཆེན་པོ་སྟེ། །
 དེ་བས་དགོ་བ་སྦྱོང་ལ་བརྩོན་པར་བསྟེ། །

ལན་ལྟ་སྤང་འགས་རྒྱ་ནི་ཉུང་དུ་ཞིག། །
 རོ་བསྐྱུར་རུས་གྱི་གཞི་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ། །
 དེ་བཞིན་སྟོན་པའི་ལས་ནི་རྒྱུང་དུ་ཡང་། །
 ད བའི་རྩ་བ་ཡངས་ལ་མཁྱེན་པར་བསྟེ། །

39

O Knowledgeable One, recite all day
And in the first and last watch of the night.
Then in between these two sleep mindfully
So that your slumbers are not spent in vain.

40

Constantly and perfectly reflect
On love, compassion, joy, impartiality.
And should you not attain the higher state,
At least you will find bliss in Brahma's world.

41

The four samadhis, which in turn discard
Pursuit of pleasure, joy and bliss and pain,
Will lead to fortune equal to the gods'
In Brahma, Light, Great Virtue, or Great Fruit.

42

Great good and evil deeds are of five kinds,
Determined by their constancy, their zeal,
Their lack of counteragent, their perfect fields.
So strive in this respect to practice good.¹

43

A pinch of salt can give its salty taste
To a little water, but not to the Ganges stream.
So know that, likewise, minor evil deeds
Can never change a mighty source of good.

མེད་དང་འབྲུན་དང་མེད་ ུག བ་དང་། །
 ག དང་འདོད་ལ་འ དང་ཐེ་ཚོམ་སྟེ། །
 ལྷ བ་ལྷ་ལོ་འདི་དག་དགོས འོར། །
 འཕྲོག་པའི་ཚོམ་རྒྱལ བ་མ་མཁུན་པར་མཛོ། ། །

དད་དང་བཟོན་འགྲུས་དག་དང་བྲན་པ་དང་། །
 ཉིང་འཛི ལེ རབ་ཚོས་མ་ཚོག་ལྷ་ཉིད་དེ། །
 འ ལ་མ་འོན་བཟོན་མ ཅིག་འདི་དག་ནི། །
 ལྷོབ དབང་ཞེས་བགྲི་ཕྱེ་མོར་གྱུར་པའང་ལགས། །

བླ་འཚི་སྟུག་བལ་དང་དེ་བཞི ཏུ། །
 ལས་ནི་བདག་གི་གྲུས་ལས་མ་འདས་ཞེས། །
 དེ་ལྟར་ཡང་དང་ཡང་དུ་སེ བ་ནི། །
 དེ་ཡི་གཉེན ། འོན་པར་རྒྱལ་ས་མི་འགྱུར། །

གལ་ཉེ་མཐོ་ཤིས་ཐར་པ་མ་འོན་བཞེད་ན། །
 ཡང་དག་ལྷ་ལ་གོ་མ བ་ཉིད་དུ་མཛོ། ། །
 གང་ཟག་ལོག་པར་ལྷ་བས་ལེ སྤྱད་གྱུང་། །
 ཐ ཅད་རྣམ་པར་སྤྲིན་པའི་བཟད་ལྷན། །

མི་ནི་ཡང་དག་ཉིད་དུ་མི་བདེ་ནིང་། །
 མི་རྟག་བདག་མེད་མི་གཙང་ཤིག་པར་བགྲི། །
 དྲན་པ་ཉེ་བར་མ་གཞག་རྣམས་གྲིས་ནི། །
 སྤྱི ཅི་ལོག་བཞིར་ལྷ་བ་སྤྱད་ཁོལ་བ། །

44

Wildness and remorse, and hateful thoughts,
And dullness-somnolence, and yearning lust,
And doubt are hindrances—please know these five
Are thieves that steal the gem of virtuous deeds.

45

With faith and diligence and mindfulness,
And concentration, wisdom, five in all,
You must strive hard to reach the “highest state”:
As “powers” these “forces” take you to the “peak.”

46

“I’m not beyond my karma, the deeds I’ve done;
I’ll still fall ill, age, die, and leave my friends.”
Think like this again and yet again
And with this remedy avoid all arrogance.

47

If higher birth and freedom is your quest,
You must become accustomed to right views.
Those who practice good with inverse views
Will yet experience terrible results.

48

Know this truth: that men are ever sad,
Impermanent, devoid of self, impure.
Those who do not have close mindfulness,
Their view four times inverted, head for ruin.

ག བྱིབ་དག་མ་ཡིན་ཞེས་གསུངས་ཏེ་བདག །
 ག དང་ལྡན་མ་གཟུ ལ་བདག་གནས་མིན། །
 བ ལ་གཟུ མི་གནས་ཏེ་དེ་བཞིན་དུ། །
 ཡུང་པོ་ལྷག་མ་བཞི་ཡང་སྟོང་རྟོགས་བགྱི། །

ཡུང་པོ་འདོད་རྒྱལ་ལས་མིན་དུས་ལས་མིན། །
 རང་བཞིན་ལས་མ རོ་བོ་ཉིད་ལས་མ ། །
 དབང་ལྷག་ལས་མིན་རྒྱུ་མེད་ཅན་མིན་ཏེ། །
 །ཤེ ལས་དང་སྲེད་ལས་བྱུང་རིག་ རྗ ། །

ཚ ཁྲིམ་ བརྟ རྟུག་ མཚོག་འཛིན་རང་ལུས་ལ། །
 ལྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་པར་ལྷ་དང་ཐེ་ཚོམ་སྟེ། །
 ཀ ཏུ་སྟོང་བ་འདི་གསུ ཐར་པ་ཡི། །
 རྩོད་ལྷོར་སྒོ་འགོ ལགས་པར་མཁྱེན་པར་གྱིས། །

ཐར་པ་བདག་ལ་རག་ལས་འདི་ལ་ནི། །
 གཞན་གྱིས་གྲོགས་བགྱིར་ཅི་ཡང་མ་མཚེས་པས། །
 ཐོས་དང་རྩེ་ལ་ཁྲིམ་ བསམ་གཏན་ལྡན་པ་ཡིས། །
 བདེ པ་རྣམ་པ་བཞི་ལ་འབད་པ་མཛོད། །

ལྷག་པའི་ཚ ཁྲིམ་ ལྷག་ །ཤེ རབ་དང། །
 ལྷག་པའི་སེམ ལ་རྟུག་ཏུ་བསྐྱབ་པར་བགྱི། །
 བ པ་བརྒྱུ་རྩེ་ལྷ་བརྟུ་ལྷག་གཅི སྟེ། །
 ག པོ་འདི་ནང་ཡང་དག་འདུ་བར་འཇུར། །

49

Form is not the self, the Buddha taught,
And self does not have form, nor dwell in form,
While form dwells not in self. Thus you must see
The four remaining aggregates are empty too.

50

The aggregates are not a simple whim,
From neither time nor nature do they come,
Nor by themselves, from God, or without cause;
Their source, you ought to know, is ignorance,
From karmic deeds and craving have they come.

51

To feel that one is ethically superior,
To view one's body wrongly, and to doubt—
With these three fetters, you should understand,
The way through freedom's city gates is blocked.

52

Freedom will depend on you alone
And there is no one else, no friend can help.
So bring endeavor to the Four Noble Truths
With study, discipline, and concentration.

53

Train always in superior discipline,
Superior wisdom, and superior mind.
Monks' vows exceed a hundred and five tens,
Yet they are all included in these three.

དབང་ཕྱུག་ལུས་ རིག་ དྲན་པ་བདེ་ ལེ་ གྱིས། །
 བཤོད་པ་གཅི་ པའི་ལམ་དུ་ཉེ་བར་བསྟན། །
 དེ་ནི་བསྐྱིམ་ བས་མངོན་པར་བསྐྱུང་བཀྲི་སྟེ། །
 དྲན་པ་ཉམས་པས་ཚེས་ཀུན་ རི་ པར་འབྱུང། །

ཚེ་ནི་གཞོན་མང་སྐྱུང་གིས་བཏབ་པ་ཡི། །
 ཚུ་ཡི་ཚུ་བུར་བས་ཀྱང་མི་རྟག་ན། །
 ད་ རྩུབ་དབུ་ འབྱུང་གཉི་ གྱི་ལོ་ག་པ་ལས། །
 སང་ལོ་མ་གང་ལགས་དེ་ནི་ངོ་མཚར་ཆེ། །

ལ་ མཐའ་ཐལ་བ་མཐར་སྐྱམ་མཐར་འབྱུ་ ཞིང་། །
 ཐམར་མི་གཅོང་སྐྱིང་པོ་མ་མཚི་ པ། །
 བས་པར་འཛིག་དེངས་སྐྱུགས་པར་འབྱུར་བ་སྟེ། །
 སོ་སོར་འབྱེ་ ཚེས་ཅན་དུ་མ་ཁྱེན་པར་མཛོད། །

སང་དང་ལྷན་པོ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ཉི་མ་བདུ། །
 འབར་བས་བསྟེ་ པའི་ལུས་ཅན་འདི་དག་ཀྱང། །
 ཐལ་བ་ཅམ་ཡང་ལུས་པར་མི་འབྱུར་ན། །
 ལེ་ ཏུ་ཉམས་ཚུང་མི་ལྟ་སྟོས་ཅི་འཚོལ། །

དེ་ལྟར་འདི་ཀུན་མི་རྟག་བདག་མེད་དེ། །
 སྐྱུ་ མེད་མགོན་མེད་གནས་མེད་དེ་སྐྱེད་དུ། །
 འཁོར་བ་ཚུ་ལེ་ སྐྱིང་པོ་མེད་པ་ལས། །
 མི་མཚོག་ཁྱོད་གྱིས་སྐྱུག་ བེ་དབུ་ དབྱུང་མཛོད། །

54

My lord, the Buddha taught close mindfulness
Of body as the single path to tread.
Hold fast and guard it well, for all the Dharma
Is destroyed by loss of mindfulness.

55

With all its many risks, this life endures
No more than windblown bubbles in a stream.
How marvellous to breathe in and out again,
To fall asleep and then awake refreshed.

56

This body ends as ash, dry dust, or slime,
And ultimately shit, no essence left.
Consumed, evaporated, rotted down—
Thus know its nature: to disintegrate.

57

The ground, Mount Meru, and the oceans too
Will be consumed by seven blazing suns;
Of things with form no ashes will be left,
No need to speak of puny, frail man.

58

It's all impermanent, devoid of self,
So if you're not to stay there refugeless
And helpless, drag your mind away, O King,
From plantainlike samsara, which has no core.

རྒྱལ་ཚོ་གཅིག་ནས་གཉེན་ ར་བྱ་ག་དང་། །
 ར་ སྐྱལ་ཕྱད་པ་བས་ཀྱང་དུད་འགྲོ་ལས། །
 མི་ཉིད་ཆེས་ཐོབ་དཀའ་བས་མི་དབང་གིས། །
 དམ་ཚེས་སྐྱོད་པས་དེ་འབྲས་ ཆ པར་མཛོད། །

གང་ཞིག་གསེར་སྒོད་རིན་ཆེན་སྤྲུམ་པ་ཡིས། །
 དན་སྐྱུག་ འཕྲུག་པར་བགྱི པ་དེ་བས་ཀྱང་། །
 གང་ཞ མི་རུ་སྐྱེས་ནས་སྤྲིག་པ་དག །
 བ པ་དེ་ཞི་ཆེས་རབ་སྐྱབ་པ་ལགས། །

མ པར་གྱུར་བའི་ཡུལ་དུ་གནས་པ་དང་། །
 སྐྱེ རུ་དམ་པ་ལ་ཞི་བསྟེན་པ་དང་། །
 བ ཉིད་ལེག སྐྱོན་སྐྱོན་ཡང་བསོད་ནམས་བགྱི ། །
 འཁོར་ལོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་ཞི་ཚོད་ལ་མངའ། །

ད བའི་བཞེ གཉེ སྟེ པ་ཚངས་པར་སྐྱོད། །
 ཡོངས་སུ་རྫོགས་པར་ཐུབ་པས་གསུངས་དེའ་ཕྱིར། །
 སྐྱེ རུ་དམ་པ་བསྟེན་བགྱི་རྒྱལ་བ་ལ། །
 བཏེ རས་རབ་ཏུ་མང་པོས་ཞི་བ་ཐོབ། །

ལོག་པར་ལྟ་བུ་འཛིན་དང་དུད་འགྲོ་དང་། །
 ཡི་དུགས་ཉིད་དང་དམུལ་བར་སྐྱེ་བ་དང་། །
 རྒྱལ་བའི་བཀའ་མེད་པ་དང་མཐའ་འཁོབ་ཏུ། །
 རྒྱུ་མོར་སྐྱེ་དང་སྐྱེ་ན་ཞིང་སྐྱུག པ་ཉིད། །

59

Harder, harder still than that a turtle chance upon
The opening in a yoke upon a great and single sea
Is rebirth as a human after rebirth as a beast;
So heed the sacred Dharma, King, and make your life bear fruit.

60

More stupid yet than one who throws some slops
Into a golden vessel all bejewelled
Is he who's gained a precious human birth
And wastes it in an evil, sinful life.

61

To dwell in places that befit the task,
To follow and rely on holy beings,
Aspiring high, with merit from the past—
These four great wheels are yours for you to use.

62

The virtuous friend in whom to place your trust
Has brought pure conduct to perfection, said the Lord.
So follow holy beings, many are they
Who relied upon the Buddhas and found peace.

63

To be reborn with false beliefs, or yet
As animals, or pretas, or in hell,
Deprived of Buddha's words, barbarians
In border lands, or reborn dull and dumb,

ཚོ་མིང་ལྷ་ཉིད་གང་ཡང་རུང་བཞི། །
སྐྱེ་བཞི་བསྐྱེ་མི་ཁོམ་སྐྱོན་བརྒྱད་པོ། །
དེད་ག་དང་བུལ་ཁོམ་བ་རྗེད་ནས་ཞི། །
སྐྱེ་བ་བརྗོགས་པ་སྐྱེད་དུ་འབད་པར་མཛོད། །

ད་ བ་འདོད་པས་ཐོངས་དང་འཆི་བ་དང། །
ནད་དང་སོག་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་དུ་མ་ཡི། །
འ གནས་འཁོར་བ་ལ་ནི་སྐྱོམ་འཛོད་ཅིང། །
འ ཡི་ཉེས་པའི་གས་ཀྱང་གསལ་ན་པར་མཛོད། །

པ་ནི་བྱ་ཉིད་མ་ནི་རྒྱུང་མ་ཉིད། །
སྐྱེ་བོ་དབྱར་གྱུར་པ་དག་བཞེས་ཉིད་དང། །
བརྗོགས་པ་ཉིད་དུ་མ་ཆི་བས་དེ་སྐྱེད་དུ། །
འཁོར་བ་དག་ན་དེས་པ་འགའ་མ་མ་ཆི ། །

རེ་རེས་རྒྱུ་མ་ཚོ་བཞི་བས་ལྷག་པ་ཡི། །
འོ་མ་འབྲུངས་ཉེད་དུང་སོ་སོ་ཡི། །
སྐྱེ་བོའི་རྗེས་སུ་འབྲངས་བའི་ཁོར་བ་པས། །
དེ་བས་ཆེས་མང་ཉིད་ཅིག་བརྟུང་འཚོལ་ལོ། །

རེ་རེའ་བདག་ཉིད་རུས་པའི་སྤང་བཞི། །
ལྷན་པོ་མཉམ་པ་སྐྱེད་ཅིག་འདས་གྱུར་ཉེ། །
མ་ཡི་ཐུག་མཐའ་ །ཤུ ཚོགས་གུ་ཚོམ། །
འི་ལ་བྱར་བགངས་ཀྱང་ས་ཡིས་ལང་མི་འགྱུར། །

64

Or born among the long-lived gods—
Of these eight defective states that give no opportunity
You must be free, and, finding opportunity,
Be diligent, to put a stop to birth.

65

O Gentle Sir, to make your disenchantment grow
With this samsara, source of many pains—
Desires frustrated, death, ill health, old age—
Please heed its defects, even just a few.

66

Men who've fathered sons in turn are sons,
And mothers likewise daughters. Bitter foes
Turn into friends, the converse too is true.
Because of this samsara's never sure.

67

Know that every being has drunk more milk
Than all the four great oceans could contain,
And still, by emulating common folk,
They'll circle, drinking ever more and more.

68

A heap of all the bones each being has left
Would reach to Meru's top or even higher.
To count one's mother's lineage with pills
The size of berries, the earth would not suffice.

བརྒྱུན་འཛིན་རྟེན་མཚོན་འོས་སྤྱད་ནས་ནི། །
 ལས་གྲིང་བད་གིས་ཕྱིར་ཡང་ས་སྤྲེང་ལྷུང་། །
 འཁོར་ལོས་སྤྱད་བཞིན་དུ་སྤྱད་ནས་ཀྱང་། །
 འཁོར་བ་དག་ཏུ་ཡང་བྲམ་ཉིད་དུ་འགྱུར། །

མཐོང་སྤྱི་སྤྱོད་ལུ་སྤྲེང་བ་ལ། །
 ར་ བའི་བདེ་བ་ཡུན་རིང་སྤྲོད་ནས་སྤྱད། །
 ད བར་འཐག་གཅོད་དབད་པའི་འཁྱུ འཁོར་གྱི། །
 ར བ་ཤིན་ཏུ་མི་བཟད་ སྟེ འཚལ་ལོ། །

ཀྱང་པའི་རེག་པས་ནེམ་ བར་བདེ་བཟོད་པ། །
 ལྷ བའི་སྤོ་ལ་ཡུན་རིང་གནས་ནས་ནི། །
 སྤྱད་ཡང་མེ་ལུར་རོ་སྤྲུགས་སྤྱུ་བ་ཡི། །
 སྤ བསྐྱུལ་མི་བཟད་པོག་སྤྲུམ་བཞིན་འཚལ་ལོ། །

མཐོང་སྤྱི་སྤྱོད་ལུ་སྤྲེང་ས་ཤིང་དག་འཚལ་དང་། །
 རྣམ་པར་མཛོས་ཚལ་སོན་པར་ཕྱེས་ནས་སྤྱད། །
 འདབ་མ་རལ་གྱི་འདྲ་ཚལ་ནགས་རྣམས་གྱིས། །
 ཀྱང་ལག་ན་བ་སྤྲུག་གཅོད་འཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར། །

དལ་གྱིས་འབབ་པ་ལྷ་ཡི་སྤྱོད་ནི། །
 གདོད་མཛོས་གསེར་གྱི་པམ་ལྷན་ལུག་ རས། །
 སྤྱད་ཡང་དཔྱལ་བའི་ཚུ་བོར་བམེད་པར། །
 ཚུ་སྤོ་བཟོད་བསྤྲུག་ཚུ་ཚན་འདུ འཚལ་ལོ། །

69

Indra, universally revered,
Will fall again to earth through action's force.
And he who ruled the universe as king
Will be a slave within samsara's wheel.

70

For ages it was rapture to caress
The lovely breasts and waists of heaven's maids,
Now one will bear the terrible caress—
The crush, the slash, and tear—of hell's machine.

71

For years you might have stayed on Meru's crest
Delighting as it yielded underfoot,
But think now of the torment that will strike:
To wade through glowing coals and rotten flesh.

72

Those who in the Joyous Garden played,
And in Beauty's Grove were served by heaven's maids,
Will come to woods of trees with swordlike leaves
And cut their hands and feet, their ears and nose.

73

Among the golden lotuses and lovely maids
They bathed in heaven's Gently Flowing Pool,
But into hell's own waters will they plunge,
The scalding, caustic River None Can Ford.

ལྷ་ཡུལ་འདོད་བདེ་ ཏུ་ཚེན་པོ་དང་། །
 ཚངས་ཉི་ ཚགས་བྲལ་བ་དེ་བཟོ་བཞུགས་སྐྱེས་། །
 མཉམ་མེད་མེ་ཡི་བྱུང་ ང་གྱུར་པ་ཡི། །
 ལྷ་ བསྐྱེད་སྐྱུ་མི་འཆད་པ་བརྟེ་ འཚོལ་ལོ། །

ཉི་མ་རྒྱ་བ་ཉིད་ཐོབ་རང་ལུས་ཀྱི། །
 འོད་ཀྱིས་འཇི་ རྟེན་མཐའ་དག་སྐྱུང་བྱས་ནས། །
 སྐྱུར་ཡང་ལུན་མཉམ་སྐྱེས་ཏུ་སྐྱུ་ གྱུར་ནས། །
 རང་གི་ལག་པ་བརྒྱུང་བའང་མི་མཐོང་འགྱུར། །

དེ་ལྟར་ཚོངས་པར་འགྱུར་འཚོལ་བ་སོད་ནམས་ནི། །
 རྣམ་གསུ་ མར་མེད་སྐྱུང་བ་རབ་བཞེ་ ག། །
 གཅིག་ཕུར་ཉི་མ་རྒྱ་བས་མི་བརྟེ་བའི། །
 མ་ རག་མཐའ་དག་ནད་དུ་འཇུ་ འཚོལ་ལོ། །

ས། ཅན་ཉེས་པར་སྐྱུང་བ་སྐྱུང་རྣམས་ལ། །
 ཡང་སོས་ཐ་ རག་རབ་ཏུ་ཚོ་བ་དང་། །
 བ་ རོ་མ་ ཏུ་འབོད་མཉམ་མེད་ལ་སོགས་པའི། །
 ད་ བ་རྣམས་སུ་ཏུ་ག་ཏུ་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེད་འགྱུར། །

ལཱི་ ༥ བཞི་ འཚོར་ཏེ་དེ་བཞི་ ཏུ། །
 ག། བེ་སྐྱེ་མཉམ་བཞི་ བྱེ་མར་རྒྱོག་ །
 ལཱི་ག་སོག་ལེས་འདྲ་སྐྱེ་དེ་བཞི་ གཞན། །
 ལྷ་རེ་མི་བཟད་སོ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གཤག། །

74

A Kamaloka god, one gains such bliss,
As Brahma, bliss that's free from all desire;
But know that after that comes constant pain:
As firewood one feeds Avici's flames.

75

One who was reborn as sun or moon,
Whose body's light lit whole worlds far below,
Will then arrive in states of darkest gloom,
His outstretched hands will be invisible.

76

So thus it is you'll ail, and knowing this
Please seize the lamp of merit's triple form,
For otherwise you'll plunge and go alone
In deepest dark unlit by sun or moon.

77

For beings who indulge in evil deeds
There's constant pain in these and other hells:
Reviving Hell, Black Line, and Intense Heat,
And Crushing, Screaming, Torment Unsurpassed.

78

Some are squeezed and pressed like sesame,
Others likewise ground like finest flour,
Some are cut and carved as if with saws,
Others hacked with axes, razor-honed.

དེ་བཞི་གཞན་དག་ཐོ་རྒྱུ་བཞུ་བ་ཡི། །
ལུ་བ་འབར་བ་འབྲི་པ་ལྟུང་པར་བགྱིད། །
ཁཅ་ལྷགས་གྱི་གསལ་རབ་འབར་བ། །
ཚེ་མ་ཅན་ལ་ཀུན་ཏུ་རྒྱུད་པར་བགྱིད། །

ཁཅ་ལྷགས་གྱི་མཆེ་བ་ལྷན་པའི་བྲི། །
ག་པོས་དབང་ཅིང་ལག་པ་གཞན་དུ་བསྐྱེདས། །
ད་མེད་གཞན་དག་ལྷགས་མཚུ་རྗོན་པོ་དང་། །
ས་མོ་མི་བཟང་ལྷན་པའི་ལྷ་རྣམས་འཕྲོག། །

ཁཅ་མིན་ལུ་སྐྱར་པ་སྐྱེ་ཚེ་དང་། །
ཤ་སྐྱར་སྐྱར་མ་ནག་པོ་བྲི་སྐྱག་དག། །
ར་ནམི་བཟང་ལྷ་སྲོལ་ཆེར་འབྲི་པས། །
ཟབར་བགྱིད་ཅིང་འགྲོ་ལྷོག་སྐྱེ་སྐྱགས་འདོན། །

ཁཅ་མདག་མེ་འབར་བའི་ཚེ་སུམྱི། །
རྒྱུ་མི་འཆད་པར་རབ་བསྐྱེག་ཁ་ཡང་བགྱིད། །
ཁཅིག་ལྷགས་ལས་བྱས་པའི་ཟངས་ཆེན་དུ། །
རྒྱུ་ལྷག་འབྲས་གྱི་ཅ་མེ་བཞི་དུ་འཆོ། །

སྐྱེ་ཅན་དུ་འབྱུ་འགག་པ་ཅོ་མཚན་གྱི། །
ད་གྱིས་བར་དུ་ཚོད་རྣམས་དམྱལ་བ་ཡི། །
སྐྱེ་བསྐྱེལ་གཞན་ལས་ཐོས་ནས་རྣམ་སྐྱོད་དུ། །
མི་འཕྲིག་གང་ལགས་རྗེ་རྗེའ་རང་བཞི་ནོ། །

79

Others still are forced to swallow draughts
Of burning molten bronze that flares and sparks,
Some impaled and threaded onto skewers—
Barbed and fiercely blazing stakes of steel.

80

Some, whom savage dogs with iron fangs
Will rip to shreds, in dread throw up their hands,
And others, powerless, are pecked by crows
With sharpened beaks of steel and razor claws.

81

Some there are who roll about and wail,
Devoured by worms and multicolored grubs,
Ten thousand buzzing flies and bees that leave
Great stings and bites unbearable to touch.

82

Some, in heaps of blazing red hot coals,
Are burned without a break, their mouths agape.
And some are boiled in cauldrons made of iron,
Cooked like dumplings, heads turned upside down.

83

The very instant that they cease to breathe
The wicked taste the boundless pains of hell.
And he who hearing this is not afraid
A thousandfold is truly diamond hard.

ད བའི་ས་པ་མཐོང་དང་ཐོས་པ་དང་། །
 དམན་དང་བསྐྱུག་ དང་ ཟུག་ སྤུ་བཞི རྒྱ ཡུང་། །
 འ བ་སྐྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་ན་མི་བཟང་པའི། །
 རྣམ་སྒྲིན་ཉ སུ་མྱོང་ན་སྒྲིས་ཅི་འཚེལ། །

བདེ་བ་ཀུན་གྱི་ནང་ན་སྲིད་ཟད་པ། །
 བདེ་བའི་བདག་པོར་བ པ་ཇི་ལྟ་བུར། །
 དེ་བཞི སྤྱག་བསྐྱུལ་ཀུན་གྱི་ནང་ན་ནི། །
 མཁར་མེད་དཔྱུལ་བའི་སྤྱག་བསྐྱུལ་རབ་མི་བཟང། །

འ ར་ཉི་ལ་གཅི མ་དུང་མུང་སྤུམ་བརྒྱུ་ཡིས། །
 རབ་ཏུ་དྲག་བཏབ་བསྐྱ ວསྐྱུལ་གང་ལགས་པ། །
 དེ་ས་ནི་དཔྱུལ་བའི་སྤྱག་བསྐྱུལ་རྒྱུང་ཏུ་ལའང། །
 འོལ་ཡང་མི་བཞི་ཚར་ཡང་མི་ཤོད་དོ། །

དེ་ལྟར་སྤྱག་ །ཉི ཏུ་མི་བཟང་ལོ། །
 གྲེ་བ་སྤྱག་བརྒྱར་ཉ་མས་སུ་མྱོང་ཡང་ནི། །
 ཇི་སྲིད་མི་དག་དེ་ཟང་མ་སྤྱུར་པ། །
 དེ་སྲིད་སྒོག་དང་གྲུལ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ། །

མི་ གཤེན་འབྲས་འདི་རྣམས་གྱིས་བོ་ན་ནི། །
 ལུས་ངག་ཡིད་གྱི་ཉེས་སྤྱད་ཁྱོད་གྱིས་ནི། །
 ཅི་ནས་དེ་དུལ་ཅོམ་ཡང་མ་མཆིས་པ། །
 དེ་ལྟར་ཉིད་གྱི་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་འབད་པར་མཛོད། །

84

If simply seeing pictures of the hells
And hearing, thinking, reading of them scares,
Or making sculpted figures, need we say
How hard to bear the ripened fruit will be?

85

Of all the forms of happiness there are,
The lord is bliss where craving's fully spent.
So too, of all the misery there is,
The pain in Torment Unsurpassed is worst.

86

For one whole day on earth three hundred darts
Might strike you hard and cause you grievous pain,
But that could never illustrate or match
A fraction of the smallest pain in hell.

87

The frightful pains and torments just described
Are lived and felt throughout a billion years.
Until those evil deeds are fully spent
One will not die and shed this life in hell.

88

The seeds of these the fruits of evil deeds
Are sinful acts of body, speech, and mind.
Work hard therefore and muster all your skill
To never stray a hair's breadth into sin.

དེ་ལོ་སྐྱེ་གནས་ན་ཡང་གསོ་དེ་བ་དང་། །
 བཅོང་དང་བརྟེན་གྱི་ག སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་སྐྱེའོ་ བ། །
 ཞི་འགྲུ དགོ་བ་སྐྱེའོ་བ་རྣམས་ལ་ནི། །
 གཅི ལ་གཅིག་ཟེལ ཏུ་མི་བཟད་པ། །

ཁཅི ལུ་ཏ བལ་དང་རུས་པ་དང་། །
 ལ་དང་སྐྱུག་ས་པའི་ཆེད་དུ་འཆི་བར་འགྱུར། །
 དབང་མེད་གཞན་དག་རྟོག་པ་ལག་པ་དང་། །
 ལྷག དང་ལྷག་ས་ཀྱུ་ག་དབ་པས་བཏབ་སྟེ་བཞོལ། །

ཡི་དུག་ས་ན་ཡང་འདོད་པས་ཤོངས་པ་ཡིས། །
 བསྐྱེ བའི་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་རྒྱན་ཆགས་མི་འཆོས་པ། །
 བཞུ སྐྱོམ་གྲང་རྩོད་པ་དང་འདིག བ་ཡིས། །
 བསྐྱེད་པ་ལ ཏུ་མི་བཟད་བསྟེན་འཆོལ་ལོ། །

ཁཅི ཁའི་ཁབ་གྱིམ ཅོམ་ལ། །
 ལྟོ་བའི་ཡི་གཏོས་ཅོམ་བཞུས་པས་ཉེན། །
 མི་གཅོད་གྱིན་པོར་བརྟུང་བཟད་གྲུང་། །
 འ བའི་མཐུ་དང་ལྷན་པ་མ་ལགས་སོ། །

ཁཅི ལྷག་ས་རུས་ལུས དགཅེར་བུ་སྟེ། །
 ཏལ་འི་ཡང་ཤོག་བསྐྱེལ བ་སྐྱུ་བུ་ལགས། །
 ཁཅིག་མཚན་ཞིང་ཁན་ས་འབར་བ་སྟེ། །
 ཟས་སུ་འབར་བའི་ཁར་བབས་བྱེམ་འཆོལ། །

89

For animals there's multifold distress—
They're slaughtered, tied up, beaten, and the rest.
For those denied the virtue that brings peace
There's agony as one devours another.

90

Some of them are killed just for their pearls,
Their wool, or bones, their meat or skins and fur,
And other helpless beasts are forced to work,
They're kicked or struck with hands, with whips and goads.

91

For pretas too there's not the slightest break
In suffering from their unfulfilled desires.
What dire misery they must endure
From hunger, thirst, cold, heat, fatigue, and fear.

92

Some, their mouths like needles' eyes, their bellies
Huge as mountains, ache from want of food.
They do not even have the strength to eat
Discarded scraps, the smallest bits of filth.

93

Some, their naked bodies skin and bone,
Are like the dried-out tops of tala trees.
And some have mouths that belch forth fire by night:
Into their burning mouths sand falls as food.

ལྷན་འགྲུབ་ལག་ལེན་ལྷན་པོ་སྤྲོད་པར། །
 ལྷན་པོ་གསལ་མི་གཙང་བ་ཡང་མི་རྟེན་དེ། །
 བཞུགས་གདོང་དུ་འཛོལ་ཅིང་མགོ་བཙུགས། །
 ལྷན་པོ་བྱུང་བ་སྤྲོད་པའི་ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་ལོ། །

ཡི་དུགས་རྣམས་ལ་སོས་ཀའི་དུས་སུ་ནི། །
 ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་དགུ་ནི་ཉི་མའང་གྲང་། །
 ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་དུ་མེད་འཛུང་འདི་དག་གིས། །
 བ་པོ་མེད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་ཡང་བསྐྱེད་པར་འཛུང། །

བར་ཆད་མེད་པར་སྤྲོད་པས་ལྷན་པོ་ལྷན་པོ། །
 ཉེ་བར་སྤྲོད་པའི་ལས་ཀྱི་ལྷན་པོ་ལོ། །
 ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་པའི་ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་ལོ། །
 ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་དག་དང་བྱིས་ཡང་འཛོལ་མི་འཛུང། །

དེ་ལྷན་པོ་དུགས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྤྲོད་པའི། །
 ལྷན་པོ་ལྷན་པོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། །
 དེ་ལྷན་པོ་སྤྲོད་པོ་འཛུང་སྤྲོད་པའི། །
 ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་པའི་ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་ལོ། །

མཚོ་ལོ་སྤྲོད་པར་བདེ་ཆེན་དེ་དག་གི། །
 ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་ལྷན་པོ་ལྷན་པོ་ལོ། །
 དེ་ལྷན་པོ་ལྷན་པོ་ལྷན་པོ་ལྷན་པོ་ལོ། །
 ལྷན་པོ་འཛོལ་ལྷན་པོ་སྤྲོད་པོ་ལོ། །

94

A few unlucky ones don't even find
Some dirt to eat—pus, excrement, or blood.
They hit each other in the face and eat
The pus that festers from their swollen necks.

95

For hungry ghosts the summer moon's too hot,
In wintertime the sun is far too cold,
Fine trees in orchards wilt and lose their fruit,
And simply from their gaze great streams run dry.

96

And some have bodies bound by that tight noose,
Their karmic store of previous evil deeds,
Now borne as constant misery and pain;
For five, ten thousand years they will not die.

97

The cause of these the pretas' varied woes
And all such kindred torments one might get
Is being greedy, this the Buddha said:
Stinginess is not for the sublime.

98

Even in the higher realms the pains of death
Are more intense than is their greatest bliss.
And so good people who reflect on this
Don't crave the higher realms, which soon must end.

ལ གྱིལ་དོག་མི་སྤྲུག་འགྲུར་བ་དང་། །
སྤྲུག་ལ་མི་དག་འམ་ཉོག་ཕྱིང་རྫིང་དང་། །
གོས་ལ་དྲིམ་ཆགས་དང་ལུས་ལ་ནི། །
སྤྲོན་ཆད་མེད་པའི་རྩལ་འབྱུང་ཞེས་བགྲི་བ། །

མཐོང་མི་འཆི་འཕོ་སྤྲོན་བགྲི འཆི་ལྟས་ལྟ། །
ལྟ་ལུལ་གནས་པའི་ལྟ་རྣམས་ལ་འབྱུང་སྟེ། །
ས་སྟེང་མི་རྣམས་འཆི་བར་འགྲུར་བ་དག །
སྤྲོན་པར་བྱེད་པའི་འཆི་ལྟས་རྣམས་དང་འདྲ། །

ལྟ་ཡི་འཇིག་རྟེན་དག་ནས་འཕོས་པ་ལ། །
གལ་ཉེ་དགོ་བའི་ལྟ་གམ་འག་འམ་མེད་ན། །
དེ་ནས་དབང་མེད་དུ་དཔྱོད་འགྲོ་ཡི་དུགས་དང་། །
ད བར་གནས་པ་གང་ཡང་རུང་བར་འགྲུར། །

ལྟ་མ དག་ནའང་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ལྟ་ཡི། །
ད ལ་སྤང་སྤྱིར་ཡིད་གྱི་སྤྲུག་བསྟུལ་ཆེ། །
དེ་དག་སྤོ་དང་ལྷན་ཡང་འགྲོ་བ་ཡི། །
སྤྱི པས་བདེ པ་མཐོང་བ་མ་མཆི མོ། །

འཁོར་བ་དེ་འདྲ་ལགས་པས་ལྟ་མི་དང་། །
ད བ་ཡི་དུགས་འདུ འགྲོ་རྣམས་དག་ཏུ། །
སྤྱེ་བ་བཟང་པོ་མ་ལགས་སྤྱེ་བ་ནི། །
གཞོན་པ་དུ་མའི་སྤོད་གྲུར་ལགས་མ་ཁྱེན་མཛོད། །

99

Their bodies' colors cease to charm and please,
Their seats grow hard, their flowered wreaths do wilt,
Their clothes are stained, and on their bodies now appear
Rank drops of sweat they never had before.

100

These five are signs that herald death in heaven,
Appearing to the gods in their abodes.
They're not unlike the signs of death that warn
Of coming death in humans on the earth.

101

Those gods who transmigrate from heavenly worlds
And do not have some little virtue left
Will tumble, helpless, to their just abodes
As beasts or hungry spirits or in hell.

102

The asuras begrudge the gods their splendor,
Their inbred loathing thus torments their minds.
Though clever, they're obscured as all their kind,
And so it is they cannot see the truth.

103

Samsara is like this, and thus we are reborn
As gods, as humans, denizens in hell,
As ghosts or animals; but you should know
That birth's not good, a pot of many ills.

རྩོམ་གྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུ་ལྟར་མེད་ཅེས་ །
 དེ་དག་བརྒྱུ་ལྱིར་བཞིན་བཏང་ནས་གྲུང་ །
 ཡང་སྲིད་མེད་པར་བཞིན་སྤྲད་འབད་འཚལ་ཉེ། །
 དེ་བས་ཆེས་མཚོགས་པ་གཞན་མ་མཚེས། །

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་དག་དང་བསམ་གཏན་ རབ་གྱིས། །
 ལྷུང་ན་འདས་ཞི་དུལ་བ་བྲི་མེད་པའི། །
 ལོ་འཕང་མི་རྒྱུ་མི་འཚི་བཟུང་མི་འཚལ། །
 ས་ཚུ་མེ་རླུང་ཉི་ཟླ་བྲལ་ཐོབ་མཛེད། །

དུན་དང་ཚོས་རབ་འབྱེད་ དང་བརྩོན་འགྲུ་ དང་། །
 ད དང་ཉིན་ཏུ་སྤྲུངས་དང་ཉིང་འཛིན་དང་། །
 བཏང་སློམ་སའ་འདི་བདུ བྱང་ཚུབ་ཡན་ལག་སྟེ། །
 ལྷུང་ན་འདས་ཐོབ་བཞིན་པའི་དགོང་ ལགས། །

ལྟ རབ་མེད་པར་བསམ་གཏན་ཡོད་མིན་ཉེ། །
 བ གཏན་མེད་པར་ཡང་ རབ་མེད། །
 གང་ལ་དེ་གཉིས་ཡོད་པ་སྲིད་པ་ཡི། །
 རྒྱུ་མཚོ་གནག་རྗེས་ལྷུ་བྱུར་འཚལ་བར་བཞི། །

ལུང་མ་བསྟན་པ་བཅུ་བཞི་འཛིན་ཉེན་ལ། །
 ཉི་མའི་གཉེ ཞིས་རབ་གསུངས་གང་དག་ལགས། །
 དེ་དག་རྣམས་ལ་བསམ་པར་མི་བཞི་སྟེ། །
 དེ་ཡིས་རྒྱོ་ཞི་བར་བཞིན་མ་ལགས། །

104

Give up your efforts trying to stop all this
As if your hair or clothes had just caught fire;
Just do your best to not be born again:
No greater goal or need is there than this.

105

With discipline and concentration, wisdom too,
Attain nirvana, peaceful, disciplined, immaculate,
Unageing, deathless, inexhaustible, and quite distinct
From earth and water, fire, wind, sun, and moon.

106

Mindfulness, discernment, diligence, a joyful mind,
And flexibility, concentration, evenness—
These seven limbs are elements that lead to Buddhahood,
They gather virtue and attain the state beyond all pain.

107

Lacking wisdom, concentration fails,
And without concentration, wisdom too.
For someone who has both, samsara's sea
Fills no more than the print left by a hoof.

108

The Kinsman of the Sun did well pronounce
With silence on the fourteen worldly points.
On these you must not ponder or reflect,
With them your mind will never be at peace.

མ་རིག་པ་ལས་ལས་ཏེ་དེ་ལས་ནི། །
 མ་དེ་ལས་མིང་དང་གཟུ་རབ་འབྱུང་། །
 དེ་ལས་སྐྱེ་མཚེད་དུག་སྟེ་དེ་ལས་ནི། །
 ར་པ་ཀུན་ཏུ་འབྱུང་བར་ཐུབ་པས་གསུངས། །

ར་པ་ལས་ནི་ཚོར་བ་ཀུན་འབྱུང་སྟེ། །
 ཚོར་བའི་གཞི་ལས་སྟེད་པ་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར། །
 སྟེ་ལས་ལེན་པ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་བ་སྟེ། །
 དེ་ལས་སྲིད་པ་སྲིད་ལས་སྐྱེ་བ་ལགས། །

སྐྱེ་བ་ཡོད་ན་སྐྱེ་བ་ན་ཀླ་དང་། །
 འདོད་པས་ཤོངས་དང་འཚི་དང་འཇིག་སོགས་གྱིས། །
 ལྷ་བསྐྱེལ་ཕུང་པོ་ན་ཏུ་ཚེ་འབྱུང་སྟེ། །
 སྐྱེ་བ་འགག་པས་འདི་ཀུན་འགག་པར་འགྱུར། །

ཏེ་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་འདི་རྒྱལ་བ་ཡི། །
 ག་ངག་མཛོད་གྱི་གཅེས་པ་ཟབ་མོ་སྟེ། །
 གང་གིས་འདི་ཞི་ཡང་དག་མཐོང་བ་དེས། །
 སངས་རྒྱལ་དེ་ཉིད་རིག་པ་རྣམ་མཚོག་མཐོང་། །

ཡང་དག་ལྟ་དང་འཚོ་དང་རྩོལ་བ་དང་། །
 དུན་དང་ཉིང་འཇིན་ངག་དང་ལས་མཐའ་དང་། །
 ཡང་དག་ཏེ་ག་ཉིད་ལམ་གྱི་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད། །
 འདི་ནི་ཞི་བར་བཞི་སྟེད་བསྐྱོམ་པར་བཞི། །

109

From ignorance comes action, and from that
Comes consciousness, thence name-and-form appears.
From that arise the six sense faculties,
Whence contact comes, thus did the Buddha teach.

110

And then from contact feeling comes to be,
And based on feeling, craving will appear.
Again from craving grasping will be born,
And then becoming, and from this there's birth.

111

Then once there's birth, comes misery untold,
And sickness, ageing, wants frustrated, death,
Decay, in short the whole great mass of pain.
If birth is stopped, all this will be no more.

112

Within the treasury of Buddha's words
There's none so precious, so profound as this.
And those who see that things dependently arise
Do see the Buddha, perfect knower of the truth.

113

Perfect view and livelihood, with effort,
Mindfulness and concentration, perfect speech,
And conduct, perfect thought—the path's eight limbs—
To find true peace, please meditate on these.

114

To take birth is to suffer, and to crave
Is its immense and universal source.
Make craving cease and freedom will be yours,
To achieve that take the Eightfold Noble Path.

115

For you to see these same Four Noble Truths
You must strive hard to practice constantly.
Even worldly men with fortune in their laps,
Through knowledge, crossed that river, troubled states;

116

And even those who realized the truth
Did not fall from the heavens, nor emerge
Like crops of corn from earth's dark depths, but once
Were ruled by kleshas and were ordinary men.

117

O Fearless One, what need to tell you more?
For here's the counsel that will truly help:
The vital point is tame your mind, for mind's
The root of Dharma, so the Buddha said.

118

It's hard enough for monks to follow perfectly
All these instructions that I've given you.
Yet practice excellence, the very pith
Of one of these, and give your life its sense.

༧ གྲིདགོབ་ཀུན་ལ་ཡི་རང་ནིང་། །
 ༩ གྲིས་ཀྱི་ག པར་སྤྱད་པ་ནམ་གསུམ་ཡང་། །
 སངས་རྒྱལ་ཉིད་ཐོབ་བ སྤྱད་ཡོངས་བསྐྱོས་ནས། །
 དེ་ནས་དགོབ བུང་པོ་འདི་ཡིས་ནི། །

སྐྱེ་བ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པར་ལྷ་མི་ཡི། །
 ༨ རྟེན་ཀུན་གྱི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་དབང་མ བས། །
 ༨ བ་སྤྱན་རས་གཟི དབང་སྤྱོད་པ་ཡིས། །
 ༨ འགོ་བ་ཉ ཐག་མང་པོ་རྗེས་བབྱང་སྟེ། །

༨ རས་ནས་ནམ་འདོད་ཆགས་ཞེས་ལྟ་རྒྱུ་རྣམས། །
 ༨ བ ཏེ་སངས་རྒྱལ་ཞིང་དུ་བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས། །
 ༨ འོད་དཔག་མེད་དང་འབྲ་བར་འཛི རྟེན་གྱི། །
 ༨ མགོ་ཞེས་སྐྱེ་ཆོད་པག་ཏུ་མེད་པར་མཛོད། །

འཤེས་རབ་རྩལ་ཁྲིམ གཏོང་འབྱུང་གྲགས་ཆེན་ཅི་མ་མེད། །
 ལྷ་ཡུལ་ནམ་མཁའ་དང་ནི་ས་སྟེང་རྒྱལ་བཛོད་ནས། །
 ས་ལ་མི་དང་མཐོ་རིས་ལྷ་ཞིན་རྒྱུང་མཚོག །
 བདེ་དགས་དག་འབ་ལེས་པར་རབ་ཏུ་ཞི་མཛོད་དོ། །

ཉོན་མོངས་ཉམ་ཐག་སེམ ཅན་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་འཛི སྐྱེདང་། །
 ༨ བ་ཞི་མཛོད་རྒྱལ་བའི་དབང་པོ་ཉིད་བརྟེན་ནས། །
 ༨ རྟེན་ལས་འདས་མིང་ཅོམ་ནི་ལ་མི་བསྐྱེངས་པ། །
 ༨ མི་འགྲོས་ཞོངས་པ་མི་མངའི་གོ་འཕང་བརྟེན་པར་མཛོད།

119

Rejoicing in the virtuous deeds of all,
Now dedicate your three good kinds of acts
To all that they may come to Buddhahood.
Then by this mass of virtuous deeds may you,

120

In boundless lives in worlds of gods and men,
Be master of the yoga of all excellence,
And like Sublime Chenrezig, may you work
To guide the many feeble, stricken souls.

121

And thus may you take many rebirths and dispel all ills,
Old age, desire, and hatred in a perfect Buddhafield.
May you have infinite life, as a Protector of the World
Like Buddha Amitabha, Sublime Lord of Boundless Light.

122

And springing from your wisdom, discipline, and bounty, may your fame
And stainless virtues spread throughout the gods' realms, in the sky
And on the earth, and may you firmly quell the carefree ways
Of gods and men whose sole delight and joy is pretty girls.

123

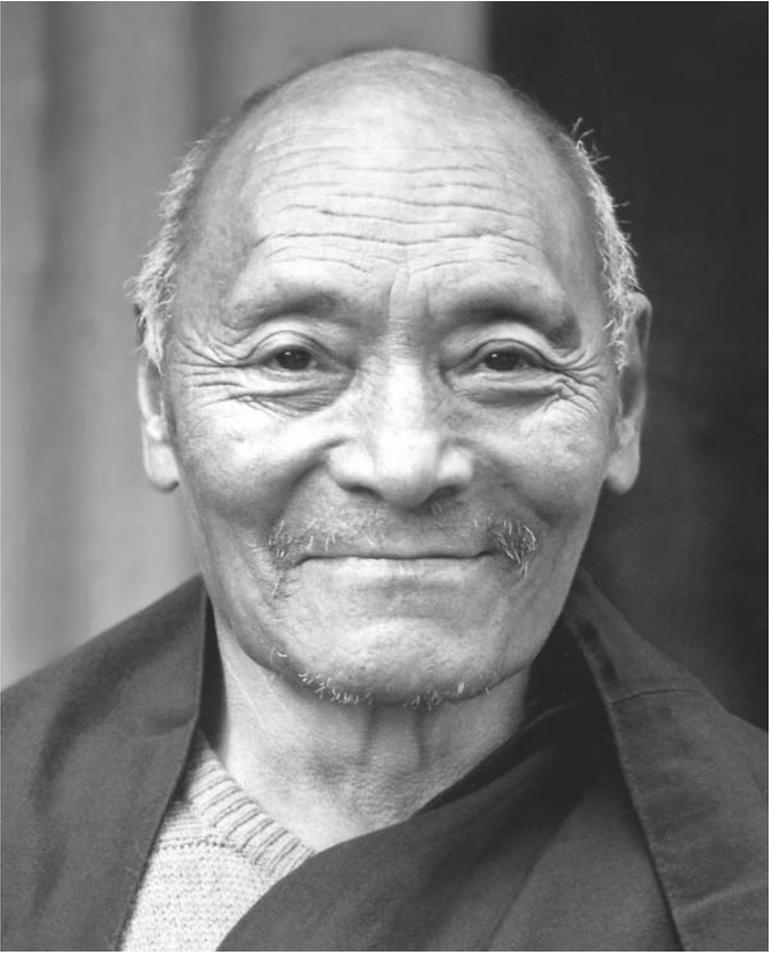
And once you've reached the Mighty Buddha state, removing fear
And birth and death for hosts of stricken and afflicted souls,
Then let mere name be stilled, beyond the world, and reach
The never-changing level, free from fear, that knows no wrong.

བ བའི་སྤྱིང་ཡིག་སློབ་དཔོན་འཕགས་ བ་ལྷུ་སྐྱབ་ཀྱིས་མཛའ་བོ་རྒྱལ་པོ་བདེ་
སྤྱོད་ལ་བསྐྱར་བརྗོད་གསུངསོ། །

རྒྱ་གར་གྱི་མ་འགའ་པོ་སྐྱོན་དེ་ལྟ་བུར། ལུ་ཆེན་གྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུ་བ་བཅད་དཔལ་
ཅེ ཀྱིས་བསྐྱར་ཅིང་ལུས་ཏེ་གཏན་ལ་ལབ་བའོ།།

This completes the *Letter to a Friend* written by the Sublime Master Nagarjuna to a friend, King Surabhibhadra. It was translated, corrected, and authenticated by the learned Indian abbot Sarvajñanadeva and the great reviser and translator Venerable Paltsek.

Kangyur Rinpoche's Commentary
on the *Letter to a Friend*



Kangyur Rinpoche (1897–1975)

Here is an explanation of the *Letter to a Friend* by the glorious protector Arya Nagarjuna. It has three parts: a virtuous beginning, the introduction; a virtuous middle, the actual text; and a virtuous end, the conclusion.

Part One

INTRODUCTION

I. The Title

A. The Indian title

In Sanskrit: Suhrillekha

Of the many different regions of India there were six great regions in which the Buddha's doctrine spread, as we can read in *The Flower Garland of the Vinaya*:

*Six great cities are there and well known:
Shravasti and Shakata,
Champaka and Varanasi,
Vaishali and Rajagriha.*

In these regions there were three hundred and sixty different languages spoken, of which the most important were the four major languages: Ababramsha, the descriptive language of the common people; Prakrit, the evolved language of the lowest classes;¹ Pishacha, the language of ogres and spirits; and Sanskrit, the language of the gods. Foremost among these is the divine language of Sanskrit, for it was the language in which all the enlightened beings who came in the past taught, it will be used by all those who teach in the future, and it is therefore the basic language used by all those who teach at present. It is this language that is referred to by **In the language of India: Suhrillekha**, indicating the Indian title.

B. The Tibetan title

In Tibetan: bshes pa'i spring yig

This title translated into the pure language of Tibet is **bshes pa'i spring yig** (meaning *Letter to a Friend*).²

C. The correspondence between the two languages

Suhrid means "friend" (*bshes pa*), *lekha* means "letter" (*spring yig*).

D. A commentary on the meaning of the title

The *Letter to a Friend* consists of advice in the form of an epistle from Nagarjuna to a king with whom he was friendly. When Arya Nagarjuna was on his way to the northern continent of Uttarakuru he saw several children playing. Reading the palm of one of them, he predicted that he would become a king. By the time he arrived back in India from Uttarakuru, the child had become a ruler, with the name Surabhibhadra. It is to him that this letter was addressed.³

II. The Translator's Homage

Homage to the Gentle and Glorious Youth (Mañjugosha).

The translator's homage is the "homage made at the Dharma King's command," since it is made in accordance with the edicts established by the Dharma King Tri Relpachen. And it is the "homage that identifies the pitaka" since it serves to identify the corresponding pitaka. In the Vinaya and related texts it is "I pay homage to the Omniscient One"; in the Sutras and related texts it is "I pay homage to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas"; and in the Abhidharma and related texts it is "I pay homage to Arya Mañjugosha."

This particular text is related to the Abhidharma and so here homage is paid to Arya Mañjugosha, "Gentle and Glorious Youth." He is **Gentle and Glorious** because he leads beings very gently along the path of the Great Vehicle, in stages, using the wisdom of the two kinds of knowledge concerning the aspects of elimination and realization on the path, benefiting everyone in whichever way is appropriate, and whatever their philosophical leanings, Buddhist or non-Buddhist. And he is **Youth** because though he is the father who has begotten countless Buddhas, he remains youthful.

The translator's **homage** was made by the great translator Kawa Paltsek, as he began translating this shastra into Tibetan, with great respect—physically, verbally, and mentally. Its purpose was to ensure that the translation would be completed and that there would be no obstacles to the work of translation.⁴

Part Two

THE ACTUAL TEXT

The actual text also has a beginning, middle, and end—prologue, explanation of the main text, and epilogue.

I. Prologue

A. Using the commitment to compose the text as an exhortation to listen

Listen now to these few lines of noble song
 That I've composed for those with many virtues, fit for good,
 To help them yearn for merit springing from
 The sacred words of He Who's Gone to Bliss. (1)

For those who **naturally have good qualities**, that is, who have formerly accumulated positive deeds, which are the causes of temporary and ultimate excellence, and who are worthy vessels for practicing positive actions and are therefore **fit for virtue**, I, Nagarjuna, **have composed a few** verses put together using **the style of composition known as sublime melody**.⁵ Their subject is the Dharma **whose source is the Excellent Words**⁶ or **declarations of the Sugata**. My purpose in composing them is that I myself or others might **aspire to merit**, for it is said,

*All things are conditions,
 They depend on what one wishes.*

They are worth your listening to, O King.

B. A lesson in humility and why one should listen

1. Humility with regard to the words

The wise will always honor and bow down
To Buddha statues, though they're made of wood;
So too, although these lines of mine be poor,
Do not feel scorn, they teach the Holy Way. (2)

One might think that since the Mighty One taught everything for attaining the higher realms and the lasting happiness of liberation and omniscience there is no need for this teaching. But **just as the wise venerate a statue of the Sugata, whatever** the quality of the material, **whether it is made of** some base material such as stone or **wood** or of a superior substance such as gold, **in the same way, however** excellent or **poor** these lines—**my poetry**—may be, their subject is how to reach the higher realms and the lasting happiness of liberation and omniscience, and **they follow the teaching of the holy Dharma**, which shows that. **For that reason**, to the wise, who rely not on words but on the meaning, they are worth praising; **they are not to be despised** but are worth listening to and putting into practice.

2. Humility with regard to the meaning

While you have surely learned and understood
The Mighty Buddha's many lovely words,
Is it not so that something made of chalk
By moonlight lit shines gleaming whiter still? (3)

Although you, O King, may well have absorbed the Mahamuni's many pleasant, beautiful, and excellent words by listening to them and reflecting on them, nevertheless, as it will help make their meaning even clearer, this letter is still worthy of your attention. Take the example of a fine house that has been whitewashed with **chalk**: although it is naturally white, **the light of the moon at midnight striking it makes it even more intensely white, does it not?**

II. The Main Text

A. Faith as a support on the path to the higher realms and lasting happiness

1. Brief account of six things one should keep in mind, the Buddha and so forth, which are the basis of faith

Six things there are the Buddhas have explained,
 And all their virtues you must keep in mind:
 The Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, bounteous acts,
 And moral laws and gods—each one recall. (4)

The **Victorious Ones** have perfectly explained **six things** to be kept in mind. Keep in mind the **Buddha**, the Buddha Bhagavan who is Thus Gone and so forth. Keep in mind the **Dharma**, the Bhagavan's teaching that is excellently spoken and so forth. Keep in mind the **Sangha**, the Bhagavan's Sangha of Shravakas who abide excellently and so forth.⁷ Keep in mind **bounteousness**, untainted by miserliness and so forth. Keep in mind **discipline**, unspoiled, free of faults, unadulterated, unobscured, the discipline that accomplishes the concentration praised by the wise. And keep in mind **celestial beings**, the gods of the realm of the Four Great Kings, and those from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three up to "Mastery over Others' Creations," and so on, who constitute the particular result of practicing the teachings for attaining the higher realms. **Keep in mind the many virtues of each of these**, as they have been described in the sutras.

2. Detailed explanation of the last three things to be kept in mind

a. Keeping celestial beings in mind

With body, speech, and mind always rely
 On wholesome deeds, the tenfold virtuous path.
 Avoiding liquor at all costs, thus find
 True joy to lead a life of virtuous deeds. (5)

Because it is the nature of the **positive** act of concentration to lead to a pleasant result, such **actions** constitute the path that leads to happy rebirth.⁸ **You should** therefore **constantly** rely on the **tenfold path**, per-

forming the ten positive actions while avoiding the ten negative actions—the three **physical** acts of taking life, taking what is not given, and sexual misconduct; the four **verbal** acts of lying, sowing discord, harsh speech, and worthless chatter; and the three **mental** acts of covetousness, wishing harm on others, and wrong views. And because they cause carelessness, **abstain from intoxicants** in all circumstances. **In this way, take joy in a life of virtue**, without being careless and harming others.

b. Keeping bounteousness in mind

Possessions are ephemeral and essenceless—
 Know this and give them generously to monks,
 To brahmins, to the poor, and to your friends:
 Beyond there is no greater friend than gift. (6)

Having realized that possessions such as food are inconstant and **fluctuate**, that in changing and transforming they are **devoid of essence**, in order to make them meaningful⁹ **try to use them properly, giving** to those with good qualities (**monks and brahmins**), to those who suffer (**the poor**, the sick, and so forth), to those who help you (**friends**) and to those you venerate (spiritual teachers and parents).¹⁰ Even **beyond the world there is no friend more sublime**, more beneficial, **than giving**, because it gives rise directly and indirectly to ripened effects that are inexhaustible.

c. Keeping discipline in mind

Keep your vows unbroken, undegraded,
 Uncorrupted, and quite free of stain.
 Just as the earth's the base for all that's still or moves,
 On discipline, it's said, is founded all that's good. (7)

Your discipline should have four particular features. In not transgressing the basic precepts it should be **unbroken**. In not transgressing the most minor branches it should be **without degradation**—this is the old sense of the term in Tibetan and means “unstained by faults and therefore vast and elevated.” It should be **unadulterated** by anything incompatible, and it should be **untainted** by selfish thoughts or wishing to better one's lot. **Observe all these. Just as the earth supports things moving and unmoving**—beings and trees, for instance—**discipline is the foundation of all**

good qualities, concentration, wisdom, and so forth, as our Teacher, the Buddha, has **declared**: reliance on discipline gives rise to concentration and therefore naturally gives rise to meditation.

B. The essence of the path

1. Brief introduction

Generosity and discipline, patience, diligence,
 Concentration, and the wisdom that knows thusness—
 Those measureless perfections, make them grow,
 And be a Mighty Conqueror who's crossed samsara's sea. (8)

Develop within you **the six transcendent perfections, which cannot be fathomed** by the Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas: unstinting **generosity** reinforced by bodhichitta and wisdom; **discipline**—the avoidance of negative actions and their basis, attachment and so forth; the **patience** to put up with difficulties; **diligence**—delight in positive actions; one-pointed **concentration** on virtue and on the absolute; **and wisdom**, the knowledge of **thusness**, the ultimate meaning, just as it is. **And be the Mighty Victor who**, as the result of doing so, **has reached the other side of the ocean of existence**. Here Nagarjuna is saying that since one will become a Mighty Buddha through these six transcendent perfections, one should make them part of one's being.

2. Detailed explanation: the six transcendent perfections

a. Generosity

Those who show their parents great respect
 With Brahma or a Master will be linked;
 By venerating them they'll win repute,
 In future they'll attain the higher realms. (9)

The kind of person who respectfully **makes offerings** to his **parents** is unharmed by nonhumans and blessed by the gods, and is therefore **to be associated with Brahma**, worthy of the world's offerings. And because he has the teacher's blessings **he is also to be associated with a master** who teaches the essential point of what to do and what to give up. Besides these

advantages, it is good to **make offerings to them**, one's parents, for **one will have a good reputation** even in this life, **and in the hereafter**, that is, in the next life **too, one will attain the higher realms**. So apply yourself to venerating your parents and others.

b. Discipline

i. Precepts that have to be kept

Eschew all harm, don't steal, make love, or lie,
 Abstain from drink, untimely greed for food,
 Indulging in high beds, and singing too,
 Refrain from dancing, all adornments shun. (10)

For men and women who keep this eight-branched vow
 And emulate the vows the Arhats took,
 Their wish to nurture and to cleanse will grant
 Them handsome bodies as celestial gods. (11)

These concern laypeople. **Abstain** for twenty-four hours **from the following various acts**: killing, or here, **harming**, other living beings; **theft**—that is, taking what is not given; **sexual intercourse** (“impure conduct”);¹¹ telling **lies** (in particular, claiming to have sublime qualities one does not have);¹² **drinking alcohol**, which produces a careless state of intoxication; **greedily eating at inappropriate times**; **indulging in a bed higher than eighteen inches**; the three activities of **singing, dancing** (along with dressing up), and playing music; and these three: wearing **necklaces** of jewels and other ornaments that are a source of vanity, wearing multicolored ornaments, and using sweet smelling perfumes and so forth.

As a result of their **desire to nurture** the seed of positive actions and **purify** negative actions, **men and women**—that is, those on the three continents where they can observe such discipline¹³—who **keep these eight branches** with renewal and confession,¹⁴ **following the example of the discipline of Arhats** in the past, are **granted** (and obtain) a **pleasing body** in the six realms of the gods of enjoyment.¹⁵

ii. Getting rid of incompatible traits

Stinginess and cunning, greed and sloth
 And arrogance, attachment, hate, and pride
 (“I’ve breeding, good looks, learning, youth, and power”)—
 Such traits are seen as enemies of good. (12)

Consider the following traits as **enemies**, since they destroy **positive actions**: **niggardliness** with regard to one’s own possessions; **craftiness** in skillfully playing down one’s own defects, and deceitfulness in pretending to have certain qualities so as to beguile others; **attachment** to body and wealth; **laziness**, that is, not delighting in virtue; **arrogance**, thinking one has qualities that one does not have; **desire**—craving for existence; **hatred**—the hatred of the inhabitants of the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed; and **pride**—being proud of one’s **breeding** (“I am superior,” one thinks), proud of one’s **physique**, proud of one’s **learning**, proud of one’s youthfulness (“I’ve lost none of my **youthfulness**, I’m still in top form.”), and proud of one’s power (“How **immensely powerful** I am!”).

iii. Exercising carefulness regarding what is compatible with discipline

Carefulness is the way to deathlessness,
 While carelessness is death, the Buddha taught.
 And thus, so that your virtuous deeds may grow,
 Be careful, constantly and with respect. (13)

Carefulness is characterized by practicing virtuous activities and guarding the mind from tainted activities. As **the Capable One has taught** in such passages as this one from the sutras, it is the **way** beyond suffering, like **the nectar of immortality**:

*Carefulness is the way of immortality,
 Carelessness is the way of death.
 With carefulness one will not perish,
 With carelessness one always dies.*

Carelessness becomes the **way** to experiencing the suffering of birth and **death** in samsara. This is widely demonstrated in sutras such as the *Sutra of Sublime Dharma of Clear Recollection*:

*Humans who have fortune won,
Who do not act with carelessness,
Are called "the wise," for thus they are,
Their opposites are otherwise.
The gods, seduced by carelessness,
Will swiftly be reborn in hell.
And so, O you who are truly wise,
Treat carelessness like poisoned food.*

Further on we read:

*From evil deeds quite free, rely
On a mind that's free from carelessness:
'Tis there a grove of utter peace,
The realm in which the yogis dwell.*

And again:

*Use every method to eliminate
The poison that is carelessness.
Those who are free from carelessness
Will cross the oceanlike three worlds.*

Accordingly, so that you might give birth to virtuous ways where you have not done so, and where you have conceived them **develop** them more and more, **respectfully practice carefulness**, habituating yourself **all the time** to virtuous activities.

iv. Benefits and examples of being careful

Those who formerly were careless
But then took heed are beautiful and fair,
As is the moon emerging from the clouds,
Like Nanda, Angulimala, Darshaka, Udayana. (14)

One might wonder whether there is any point in instructing those who have been careless in the past. Some people, however, **having previously been careless** (indulging without thinking in negative actions as a result of their being dominated by afflictive emotions or influenced by evil companions), **subsequently**, on meeting a spiritual friend and wholeheartedly

adopting what is right and abandoning wrong, **become careful**. Such people, as we can see from the following examples, **are like the moon unobscured by the clouds—utterly beautiful**.

Nanda was a randy young Shakya, a younger brother of the Buddha. He could not part from his wife for a single instant. He took ordination in the Buddha's doctrine but still thought longingly about his wife, day and night, and thus failed to practice virtue. The Buddha, seeing that he would be reborn in the hells, instructed him personally. As a result Nanda became afraid, started practicing the path, and attained the level of Arhat. He was commended by the Buddha as the Shravaka who had most successfully controlled his senses.

Angulimala¹⁶ was the gullible son of a brahmin. His teacher deceitfully instructed him, "If you kill a thousand people and make a garland of their fingers, you will go to the celestial abodes." He had slain all but one of the thousand when the Buddha ordained him and taught him the Dharma. He became an Arhat.

Then there is the example of **Darshaka**, another name for Ajatashatru. Having met his companion in evil, Devadatta, he committed a large number of negative actions, among them murdering his father, the king, who was a follower of the Dharma. Later he gained faith in the Buddha, was freed from the results of his negative actions, and became an Arhat.

Udayana¹⁷ killed his mother when she prevented him sleeping with someone else's wife. He took ordination, but when it was realized that he had committed a "crime with immediate retribution,"¹⁸ he was expelled by the Sangha and went to a remote region. He built a temple and stayed there. In due course a large number of monks in the area gathered there, he became their Elder and properly cared for the Sangha. As a result, when he died he had but a "yo-yo"¹⁹ rebirth in hell as the fully ripened effect of his crime with immediate retribution and was then reborn as a god, attaining the result of a Stream Enterer on the Buddha's path.

c. Patience

i. Giving up anger (as a cause)²⁰

Hard to practice, patience knows no peer,
 So never allow yourself a moment's rage.
 Avoid all anger and you will become
 A Non-Returner, so the Buddha said. (15)

There is no other difficult practice equal to patience—not getting angry with someone who harms you, and even if you do get angry, not remaining so. It is the ultimate austerity. **Therefore do not allow yourself even the slightest occasion for anger**, which is incompatible with such a sublime austerity as patience. Should you wonder why, **the Buddha himself declared that by being patient and avoiding getting angry one will attain the ultimate result of Non-Returner**, as we find in one of the sutras:

Monks, rid yourselves of anger, and thus attest to Non-Return.

ii. Giving up resentment (as a result)²¹

"He's abused me, struck, defeated me,
 And all my money too he has purloined!"
 To harbor such resentment leads to strife;
 Give up your grudge and sleep will easily come. (16)

By harboring resentment—"He insulted me with abusive language, he hit me with things like stones and sticks, he **got the better of me** by ridiculing me and using his power, **he ran off with my money**"—one builds up the motives for negative actions, physical and verbal, thereby **sparking off disputes**. **By abandoning grudges** one will gain the temporary result²² of a mind free of anguish and so **fall asleep happily**. *The Way of the Bodhisattva* sums this up as follows:

*Men of anger have no joy
 Forsaken by all happiness and peace.*

and,

*But those who seize and crush their anger down
Will find their joy in this and future lives.*²³

iii. In connection with this, a particular feature of the mind that is the basis for patience

Understand your thoughts to be like figures drawn
On water, sandy soil, or carved in stone.
Of these, for tainted thoughts the first's the best,
While when you long for Dharma, it's the last. (17)

Of all the various constant and inconstant mental activities that different kinds of sentient beings can have, you should **know that thoughts are like figures drawn on water**, which instantly dissolve, **or like drawings on sand**, which are erased by different conditions, **or like figures drawn on stone**, which are indelible. Where thoughts, either positive or negative, are like drawings on sand, this is of medium value. **Of these three cases, the first**, where the thoughts are inconstant like figures traced on water, is the **best** as regards **emotionally tainted thoughts**. **As regards aspirations** to undertake **Dharma practice, the last**, where the thoughts are stable like figures drawn on stone, is the best. So practice accordingly.

iv. Avoiding harsh words, the main condition that sparks off anger

Three kinds of speech are used by humankind,
And these the Victor variously described:
Like honey, sweet; like flowers, true; like filth,
Improper speech—the last of these eschew. (18)

The Victorious One who has overcome evil ways spoke of three kinds of speech in human beings, namely, sweet, **pleasing words, truth, and improper speech**. **Of these three kinds of speech that people use**, the first, **he said**, delights, **like honey**; the second is beautiful and worthy of praise, like a **flower**; the last, because it is to be despised, is like **filth**. Accordingly, **avoid the last of these**, and make good use of the first two.

d. Diligence

i. What one should be diligent in

Some there are who go from light to light,
 And some whose end from dark is darkness still,
 While some from light to dark, or dark to light
 End up, thus four, of these be as the first. (19)

There are four kinds of individual. Those who go **from the light** of the higher realms and again **end up in the light** of the higher realms of gods and humans. Those who go **from the darkness** of the lower realms and **end up in darkness**, being again reborn in the lower realms. Those who go **from the light** of birth in the higher realms to **end up in darkness** as the most wretched of humans or as beings in the three lower realms. And those who go **from the darkness** of the three lower realms and wretched states to **end up in the light** of the higher realms. **Of these four kinds of individual, you should be the first**, the one who goes from light to light.

ii. An instruction on diligence in matching intention and application

Men, like mangoes, can be sour and yet look ripe,
 Some though ripe look green, and others green
 Are sour indeed, while others still look ripe
 And ripe they are: from this know how to act. (20)

Human beings are like the fruit of the mango tree. Some **seem ripe**—their actual deeds are wholesome—but **are unripe**—their intention is base. Some **seem unripe**—their deeds are base—but in fact **are ripe**—the intention is wholesome. Others **look unripe and are unripe**—both intention and deed are unwholesome. **Yet others look ripe and are ripe**—both intention and deed are wholesome. Knowing the meaning of each of these four characteristics, **whatever you do** you should **gain** a proper **understanding** of the essential point of avoiding and adopting.²⁴ The last of these four cases is the greatest ally in performing positive actions.

e. Concentration

i. Preparation

(1) Avoiding distraction, which counters concentration

(a) Distraction by the object

(i) Controlling the senses by transforming one's inner thoughts

I. Guarding the senses from others' wives

Do not gaze on others' wives, but if you do,
 Regard them as your mother, child, or sib,
 Depending on their age. Should lust arise,
 Think well: they are by nature unclean filth. (21)

Do not gaze at other people's wives with designs, and even if you do look at them, try and think of them, depending on their age, as your mother if they are older, as a daughter if they are younger, and as a sister if they are the same age as you. And if that does not work and you still feel lustful, reflect well on their unclean nature, on their unpleasant smell and so on.

II. Guarding the senses from other desires

Guard this fickle mind as you would do
 Your learning, children, treasure, or your life.
 Renounce all sensual pleasure as if it were
 A viper, poison, weapon, foe, or fire. (22)

If thinking in this way still does not stop you, you must guard your mind as follows. **Guard the mind, which moves** onto objects without staying still for a single second, from objects that tend to give rise constantly to afflictive emotions. How can one do this? Guard the mind **in the same way** as you protect **what you have learnt** from being forgotten;²⁵ guard the mind **like** a beloved **child**; guard it as you would some valuable **treasure**; guard the mind as if it were your cherished **life**. And that is not all. Concerning the pleasures of the senses, Nagarjuna instructs us to **shy away from all sensual pleasure as if it were a venomous snake, a noxious poison, a lethal weapon, an enemy** obstructing one's temporal life and happiness, or a **fire** burning one. As we find in a sutra:

*Throughout, from very first to very last,
Virtue's like a mother, ever fair.
So why do childish beings abandon it
And lust for all the things that they desire?*

III. The fault in not controlling the senses

The pleasures we desire will bring us ruin,
They're like the kimba fruit, the Buddha said.
Eschew them, it's their chains that tightly bind
The worldly in samsara's prison-house. (23)

You might say, "Don't pleasurable experiences give rise to happiness?" Although for ordinary people pleasures may appear to be related to happiness at the time they are enjoyed, in the end **they are their undoing**. **They are, the Sovereign of the Conquerors said, like the fruit of the kimba tree**, which grows in the western continent of Aparogodaniya: its skin is attractive but it is unpleasant inside; or it tastes delicious when one first eats it, but later it makes one ill. So, advises Nagarjuna, **give up these pleasures**, for it is **the chains**—the afflictive emotions—of attachment to pleasure that tightly **bind the worldly in the prison of samsara**.

IV. In praise of those who are able to control their senses

Of he whose fickle senses are controlled—
These six that never cease to dart at things—
And he who's fought and conquered many foes,
The first is truly brave, the wise have said. (24)

The six sense organs, the eyes and so forth, change **constantly** as they encounter **their objects**, form and the others: they are **unstable**, making the mind **flit** towards their objects. **Of the individual** who is able to use antidotes to control these six sense organs and **someone who is courageous in battle and victorious over all the hordes of enemies** one could possibly defeat, the bravest, **the real hero, the wise have said, is the first**, the winner in the battle with the senses. For while we see plenty of people who win wars, there are no ordinary beings who manage to conquer their senses.

(ii) Getting rid of attachment by recognizing the characteristics of the object

I. Getting rid of attachment by fully recognizing that the chief source of desire in the world of desire is the female body

Regard a young girl's body on its own,
 Its smell so foul, its openings nine—a pot
 Of filth, insatiable, and clothed with skin.
 Regard too her adornments on their own. (25)

Earlier Nagarjuna referred to the unclean nature of women's bodies.²⁶ In what way are they to be regarded as impure? If you consider a **young woman's body on its own**, unadorned, it **smells unpleasant, has nine orifices** leaking foul matter, and is full of dirty things like excrement and urine. It is **like a jar containing all sorts of filth, difficult to fill**—for it is never satisfied, however much it has to eat and drink—and **covered with skin**, which is devoid of essence.²⁷ That is all there is to it.

You might argue that it is the things she adorns herself with that make one want her. But if you **look at her adornments too, on their own**, away from the body, you will no longer feel desire. As *The Way of the Bodhisattva* puts it:

*The scent that now perfumes the skin
 Is sandalwood and nothing else.
 Yet how is it that one thing's fragrance
 Causes you to long for something else?*²⁸

II. Getting rid of attachment by understanding the way desire generally functions

A man with leprosy, consumed by germs,
 Will stand before the fire for comfort's sake
 But still find no relief, so know the same is true
 For those attached to the pleasures they desire. (26)

This verse shows the defect of attachment in the subject. In their longing to be **comfortable, lepers afflicted by the microbes** consuming them **stand close to a fire, but there still is no relief** for afterwards their distress again

increases. **Know that the same is also true for childish beings who are attached to pleasures.** As *The Jewel Garland* says:

*If bliss it is to scratch an itch,
What greater bliss no itch at all?
So too, the worldly, desirous, find some bliss,
But greatest is the bliss with no desire.*

(b) Distraction by the eight ordinary concerns

(i) The antidote

I. The antidote itself

In order that you see the absolute,
Get used to truly understanding things.
No other practice is there such as this
Possessed of special virtues such as these. (27)

Because it is the domain of the highest wisdom, **the absolute truth**—the unmistakable thatness—has **to be seen** with the eye of primal wisdom, and **in order to** do this you must examine outer and inner **things**, such as form, with superior intelligence and thereby **reach a correct understanding** that they are devoid of true existence. **Get used to this** again and again. **There is no other method** in the world that has the special qualities of this sort of perfect intelligence that can overcome afflictive emotions and arouse primal wisdom, their antidote.

II. The advantages of having the antidote and disadvantages of not having it

To those possessed of breeding, learning, handsome looks,
Who have no wisdom, neither discipline, you need not bow.
But those who do have these two qualities,
Though lacking other virtues, you should revere. (28)

People who come from a good family, who are good-looking, and learned in all the sutras and shastras, **and yet do not have** the twin virtues of **wisdom** (the realization of the natural state) and **discipline** (whereby they avoid breaking their vows) possess none of the good qualities of the holy

beings and are therefore **not** worthy of reverence. **On the other hand, those who possess these two virtues** of wisdom and discipline are to be respectfully venerated even if they lack other qualities, such as breeding and good looks, because anyone who has the wisdom to know what to do and what not to do, and the discipline to not indulge in negative actions, is to be counted as a holy being.

(ii) What to give up

I. The eight ordinary concerns that have to be given up

You who know the world, take gain and loss,
 Or bliss and pain, or kind words and abuse,
 Or praise and blame—these eight mundane concerns—
 Make them the same, and don't disturb your mind. (29)

People meditating on emptiness in formal meditation sessions must not be carried away in the postmeditation period by the eight ordinary concerns. For this reason Nagarjuna addresses the king, “**You who are thoroughly knowledgeable on the right worldly ways,**” and instructs him thus: “**Acquiring wealth and losing it; being happy** (having pleasurable experiences) **and unhappy** (experiencing suffering); hearing **pleasant** words and **unpleasant** ones; being **praised** openly and **criticized** behind one's back—these are **known** as the eight preoccupations common to ordinary worldly folk, with their different happy and unhappy moods. If you are to attain the state beyond the world, **equalize these eight worldly concerns without dwelling on them** as being things to be happy or sad about.”

II. Advice on giving up the negative actions that result from these

A. The advice itself

Perform no evil, even for the sake
 Of brahmins, bhikshus, gods, or honored guests,
 Your father, mother, queen, or for your court.
 The ripened fruit in hell's for you alone. (30)

One might wonder whether it is wrong to commit negative actions for the sake of one's teacher, or brahmins, and so on. O King, **you must not**

commit negative actions even for the sake of brahmins, monks, gods, guests, your parents, queen, or court. The ripened result of negative deeds, hell, is allotted to you alone, the person who has done them, and to no one else as accomplice: no one but you will receive your allotted fate.

B. Why it is necessary to avoid negative actions

Although performing wrong and evil deeds
 Does not at once, like swords, create a gash,
 When death arrives, those evil acts will show,
 Their karmic fruit will clearly be revealed. (31)

Someone with nihilist views might say that the fully ripened effect of negative actions done in this life cannot be seen now, so it will not occur in the next life. But **even though the performance of evil deeds does not immediately cut one as when one touches a sharp weapon**—in other words, it does not make one suffer straightaway—**when the time comes to die, the result of the negative actions, whatever it may be**—being tortured by Yama's brutal henchmen and so on—**will become clearly evident**, as described in *The Way of the Bodhisattva*:

*Your tear-stained cheeks, your red and swollen eyes,
 Such will be the depths of your distress.
 You'll gaze into the faces of your hopeless friends,
 And see the coming servants of the Deadly Lord.*

*The memory of former sins will torture you,
 The screams and din of hell break on your ears.
 With very terror you will foul yourself,
 What will you do then, in such extremity of fear?²⁹*

(c) Distraction by wealth

- (i) A general explanation of the kinds of wealth to be adopted and abandoned

Faith and ethics, learning, bounteousness,
 A flawless sense of shame and decency,
 And wisdom are the seven riches Buddha taught.
 Know, other common riches have no worth. (32)

The Capable One spoke of the following attributes as the **seven noble riches**, for they are the causes of untainted happiness and are not in any way ordinary. **Faith**—that is, the three kinds of faith³⁰ in the Three Jewels and confidence in the law of actions and their effects. **Discipline**, the avoidance of harmful actions. **Learning** that comes from listening to the holy Dharma that leads to liberation, with the intention of gaining complete knowledge. **Being generous**—with a desire to make offerings and to help beings, to give away all one’s possessions without expecting anything in return or any karmic reward. **A sense of shame** with respect to oneself that prevents one from indulging in negative actions, and that is **unstained** by such things as jealousy or seeking veneration. **A sense of decency** with regard to others that stops one from engaging in unvirtuous practices. And **wisdom**, that is, knowledge of the particular and general characteristics of phenomena.³¹

You should realize that other common things that the world calls riches—gold, for instance—are of no value in obtaining untainted qualities; they are worthless, hollow, and without essence.

- (ii) Specific trivial pursuits to be given up

Gambling, public spectacles and shows,
 And indolence, bad company, strong drink,
 And nightly prowls—these six will lead to lower realms
 And damage your good name, so give them up. (33)

Playing dice and other **gambling games**, attending **public spectacles**, **idling around** with no inclination to do positive actions, **keeping the company of evil friends**, **drinking**, **prowling around at night** in order to steal—these six lead to rebirth in the **lower realms** in your next life, and in this life are

causes for **your reputation being spoilt**. Therefore, Nagarjuna advises, **give up these six**.

(iii) The antidote to use for giving these up

I. The advantages of using the antidote

Of all great wealth, contentment is supreme,
Said he who taught and guided gods and men.
So always be content; if you know this
Yet have no wealth, true riches you'll have found. (34)

Of all the valuable things there are, like gold and silver, the very greatest of riches is **to be content** and have little desire for such things, as the **Teacher of gods and men**, the Buddha Bhagavan, has declared in the *Sutra Requested by Surata*:

*For those who stay forever generous
Although they've not a single bite to eat,
The greatest wealth on earth is truly theirs,
'Tis thus explained by those with perfect sight.*

Therefore, **in all circumstances be content**. When you know **contentment**, even if you do not possess a little gold or other **valuable things**, you will be **truly rich**, because once content, you have achieved the very reason for acquiring things.³²

II. The disadvantages of not having that antidote

Kind Sir, to own a lot brings so much misery,
There's no such grief for those with few desires.
The more the naga lords possess of heads,
The more their headaches, the more they have of cares. (35)

"**Kind Sir**," says Nagarjuna, addressing the king (for he is someone who is easy to get along with), **inasmuch as those who have a lot of things** like gold and other possessions **must suffer**, first in acquiring them, then in guarding them, and finally in seeing them dispersed, **those with few desires have no such suffering**. To take an example, the **more snake heads the supreme nagas** (the naga kings) have, **the more headaches** they are

liable to get. Some commentaries explain this metaphor as follows: the more heads the naga kings have, each head bearing a crown jewel, the greater the misery the naga kings experience guarding those jewels.

(d) Distraction by pleasurable indulgence

(i) Giving up attachment to one's spouse

I. Spouses to be avoided

A murderess who sides with enemies,
 A queen who holds her husband in contempt,
 A thieving wife who steals the smallest thing—
 It's these three kinds of wife you must avoid. (36)

There are three kinds of wife you should avoid. One who naturally sides with one's enemies and goes around with other men, and who out of jealousy wants to kill her husband, like a murderer. One who does not honor her husband, but treats him contemptuously, like a queen. And one who steals the smallest thing, not to speak of valuables, like a thief.

II. Those to be taken as a wife

A wife who like a sister follows you,
 Affectionate like a true and loving friend,
 Supportive like a mother, obedient like a maid—
 She must be honored like a family god. (37)

You might wonder, then, what kind of person you should marry. A wife who is like a sister emulating her brother: she follows her husband without scorning what he says. A wife who is like a close friend with whom one gets on very well and who takes care of one: she is a true friend. A wife who is like a mother wanting to help her child: her desire is to help her husband. And a wife who is like a maid obeying when one makes her happy: she submits to one's authority. Such wives will not dishonor one's family and so are to be relied upon or honored like a family god.

(ii) Giving up attachment to food

Take food as medicine, in the right amount,
Without attachment, without hatefulness:
Don't eat for vanity, for pride or ego's sake,
Eat only for your body's sustenance. (38)

When you eat **food**, it should be in the right amount, **like medicine** that does the body good. In doing so, **use food without** an attitude of **attachment** or **hatred**, reflected in the way you eat: **do not eat because of vanity**, wanting to be tough, **nor because of hatred**, **arrogantly** thinking, "I will build up my physical strength and beat up my enemies," **nor** in order to strengthen your various limbs or **in order to take care of** your body, to take care of "me." Eat **simply to sustain your body** as a means for accomplishing positive actions.

(iii) Giving up attachment to sleep

O Knowledgeable One, recite all day
And in the first and last watch of the night.
Then in between these two sleep mindfully
So that your slumbers are not spent in vain. (39)

Great being, you who know what to do and what not to do, **having spent the whole of the day and the first and last of the three watches of the night reciting**, meditating, and so on, in the middle of the night **too**, **while you are asleep**, **do not let your slumber be fruitless** or pointless but **keep mindful**, thinking that you will rise quickly and put your efforts into practicing virtue. In this manner, **sleep in between these first and last watches**: as a result of your attitude, your sleep will become positive.

(2) Practicing the four boundless qualities as an aid to concentration

Constantly and perfectly reflect
On love, compassion, joy, impartiality.
And should you not attain the higher state,
At least you will find bliss in Brahma's world. (40)

Focusing on all sentient beings, practice the four boundless qualities: **love**, which is the wish that they be happy; **compassion**, the wish that they be free from suffering; **sympathetic joy**, which is to feel happy when they are happy; and **impartiality**, which is to treat them impartially as equals, without attachment or aversion.

Of these four, the meaning of the term “boundless love” is that one focuses on boundless sentient beings (as the object of concentration) and that boundless merit comes to the meditator.

For compassion and the others there are three categories: compassion focusing on sentient beings; focusing on phenomena; and without concepts. The first is that of ordinary beings and takes the form of wishing that all may be free from suffering. The second, focusing on phenomena, is that of sublime beings of the Shravaka and Pratyekabuddha vehicles who, since they have realized the no-self of the individual, designate merely the phenomena of the aggregates as sentient beings;³³ it takes the form of the wish that they may themselves be free from suffering. The third, being without concepts, takes the form of viewing sentient beings as illusion-like through realizing the no-self of phenomena, and wishing they be free from suffering. This is the compassion that the sublime beings of the Great Vehicle have.

According to *The Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras*, the Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas do have realization of the no-self of phenomena, in which case the last two categories belong to all the sublime beings of the three vehicles. They have one essence but different aspects.

How should one meditate on these four boundless qualities? Divide beings into three categories: friends, enemies, and those that are neither. Begin by concentrating on your parents, relatives, and friends, and meditate by wishing that they may meet with happiness and so forth. After that do the same focusing on beings who are neither your friends nor your enemies. Finally, meditate focusing on all those for whom you feel enmity. The meditation is said to be perfect and complete when one’s enemies and one’s relatives and friends become the same.

As for the scope of the meditation, concentrate first on the beings in Jambudvīpa, then on those in the universe of a billion worlds, and then on all the beings filling the whole of space.

Meditate constantly and well on these four boundless qualities and through the wisdom of these boundless qualities you will attain nirvana.

Even if you do not attain the **higher** state of nirvana immediately, you will gain the happiness of the first Brahma world.³⁴

ii. The actual practice, meditating on the four concentrations³⁵

The four samadhis, which in turn discard
Pursuit of pleasure, joy and bliss and pain,
Will lead to fortune equal to the gods'
In Brahma, Light, Great Virtue, or Great Fruit. (41)

The first concentration comprises the antidote branch—discursive thinking and subtle analysis—used to abandon **the pursuit of pleasure**, that is to say, yearning for pleasure and wanting to get rid of anything that irritates one; the joy and bliss that arise from solitude; and the one-pointed concentration characterized by the latter.

The second concentration comprises the antidote branch—a very clear mind—used to abandon analysis; the **joy and bliss** that come from concentration;³⁶ and the one-pointed concentration characterized by the latter.

The third concentration comprises the antidote branch—mindfulness, vigilance, and evenness—used to abandon joy; **bliss; and** the one-pointed concentration characterized by the latter.

The fourth concentration comprises the antidote branch—perfect mindfulness and evenness—used to **completely eliminate** bliss and sufferings; neutrality of feeling; and the one-pointed concentration characterized by the latter.

By meditating on these **four causal concentrations**, Nagarjuna says, **one attains the same fortunate rebirths as the gods** of the four resultant concentrations, which are subdivided into lesser, middling, and greater categories as follows. The realm of the first concentration consists of **The Pure**, Priests of Brahma and Great Pure Ones;³⁷ the realm of the second concentration likewise comprises Dim Light, Measureless Light, and **Clear Light**; that of the third concentration is divided into Lesser Virtue, Limitless Virtue, **and Flourishing Virtue; and** the realm of the fourth concentration consists of Cloudless, Merit-Born, and **Great Result**.

iii. The postmeditation

(1) Positive and negative actions that have to be adopted or given up generally

(a) The relative gravity of positive and negative actions

Great good and evil deeds are of five kinds,
 Determined by their constancy, their zeal,
 Their lack of counteragent, their perfect fields.
 So strive in this respect to practice good. (42)

There are **five great kinds of positive or negative actions**. (1) Actions that are performed **constantly** (with a constant underlying attitude) and that are special in terms of their application. (2) Those that are done with **great determination** (as the attitude of the moment) and that are special in terms of their intention. (3) Those that have **nothing to counter them**, that is, an opposing action that can destroy them, and are special in terms of counteragent. And beneficial or harmful acts that are special in terms of their field, this being of two kinds: (4) “beneficial fields” such as parents and teachers and in particular bears, monkeys, and so forth that have helped one as in the stories of the Buddha’s previous lives; and (5) “**fields who have the most essential qualities**,” that is, the Three Jewels and those who have risen out of the samadhi of cessation.

Make an effort, therefore, to avoid great negative actions and to practice great positive actions.

(b) Cultivating powerful positive actions as antidotes to negative acts

A pinch of salt can give its salty taste
 To a little water, but not to the Ganges stream.
 So know that, likewise, minor evil deeds
 Can never change a mighty source of good. (43)

Just as a little salt—a few fractions of a measure—can make a small amount of water taste salty but cannot change a huge river like the Ganges, know that in the same way even a small negative action can harm someone whose positive deeds are weak but cannot harm anyone who has frequently performed an immensely positive action, vast in scope. Here,

Nagarjuna is instructing us to apply ourselves to powerful positive actions repeatedly on a vast scale.

(2) How to avoid the things that hinder concentration in particular

Wildness and remorse, and hateful thoughts,
 And dullness-somnolence, and yearning lust,
 And doubt are hindrances—please know these five
 Are thieves that steal the gem of virtuous deeds. (44)

There now follows an explanation of how the five “hindrances” are the enemies of the samadhis, perfect freedoms, and so forth,³⁸ and must therefore be assiduously avoided.

Wildness, where the mind proceeds out towards objects that attract it, **and remorse**, where one thinks of evil acts one has done. These come under the same sphere as movement and so their antidote is sustained calm. They are nourished by four things: thinking about one's relatives, thinking about one's country, thinking that one will not die, and remembering the games, laughs, and good times one enjoyed in the past. Since wildness and remorse are both nourished by the same things, they are counted as a single hindrance.

Malice, which is the agitation in the mind caused by things that arouse hatred. In the explanation that follows on how discipline is hindered, it is grouped with craving (see below), but in the context of the five hindrances such hatred is counted as a single hindrance. Its antidote is patience.

Dullness, in which body and mind are disinclined to meditate and one feels in low spirits, and **somnolence**, where the mind, powerless, withdraws and folds in on itself. These come under the same sphere as dull-wittedness and lack of clarity and are therefore counted as one. Their antidote is clarity. They are nourished by five things: feeling thick—unclear, heavy, and disconnected; unhappiness; stretching; indigestion; and feeling low-spirited.

An inclination—through craving—for the five pleasures of the senses such as food and sex. This is counted as one in the context of the five hindrances, though as a hindrance to discipline it is taught as being classed with malice (see above). Its antidote is to meditate on ugliness and give up attachment.

Indecision, where one is of two minds concerning liberation and the path to liberation.

Know that these five hindrances are thieves that rob you of the jewel of virtue, and avoid them, advises Nagarjuna.

Craving and hatred both adversely affect the superior training in discipline. The reasons for this are, respectively, that when one is influenced by craving for pleasure one will not take up discipline properly in the first place; and that once one has taken it up, when other people admonish one to follow the precepts correctly, one gets angry and cannot accomplish anything properly in accord with the Dharma.

Dullness and somnolence both impair superior concentration because when one meditates on the causes of sustained calm—the four boundless qualities and so forth—they make the mind low-spirited.

Wildness and remorse adversely affect superior wisdom because when one meditates on the reasons for concentrating they cause the mind to be distracted.

Indecision adversely affects both one-pointedness and wisdom because when one meditates on the causes of the equanimity that is the union of sustained calm and profound insight, as a result of doubt one cannot reach a decision and one is unable to settle in equanimity.

Since they obscure the samadhis and perfect freedoms and so forth, or the three precious trainings, it has been said, “Be diligent in avoiding the five hindrances.”

f. Wisdom

i. A brief account of the essence of the path with the five elements beginning with confidence³⁹

(1) What one has to adopt: confidence and the other elements

With faith and diligence and mindfulness,
And concentration, wisdom, five in all,
You must strive hard to reach the "highest state":
As "powers" these "forces" take you to the "peak." (45)

Five elements are described in this verse. **Confidence**, namely confidence in the Four Noble Truths; **diligence**, that is to say, genuine joy in adoption and rejection related to the Four Noble Truths; **mindfulness**—never letting the objects to be meditated on slip one's mind; **concentration**, that is to say, one-pointed focus supported by mindfulness of the four truths; and **wisdom**, which perfectly discerns them when one settles evenly in concentration. At the time these five become the direct cause leading to the sublime path we speak of the **supreme mundane level**.⁴⁰ At the stage of "acceptance" they are referred to as the **five irresistible forces**, for they cannot be overcome by adverse factors. **Apply yourself assiduously to these** and get used to them. **They** are first referred to here as **irresistible forces** for the stage of "acceptance," but at the stage of "warmth" they are known as "**powers**" because they make one more powerful for clearly seeing the truth. As these powers increase **one reaches the "peak,"** because one's sources of good become unwavering. This verse, therefore, is an instruction on being diligent.⁴¹

(2) What one has to abandon: how to get rid of arrogance by means of an antidote

"I'm not beyond my karma, the deeds I've done;
I'll still fall ill, age, die, and leave my friends."
Think like this again and yet again
And with this remedy avoid all arrogance. (46)

"I will be sick, I will **grow old**, I will **die**, I will be **separated from those I love**, my relations and so forth. **In such manner**, the fully ripened effect of my **actions** will come to me and to no one else, and I am therefore **not**

above depending on what I did in former lives." To think like this again and again is the antidote to such things as arrogance: make every effort not to become arrogant by meditating on this antidote.

ii. Detailed explanation of wisdom: close mindfulness and the other elements⁴²

(1) Showing that wisdom is the root of all happiness in samsara and nirvana

(a) The right view of worldly people, which is the root of both higher rebirth and lasting happiness

If higher birth and freedom is your quest,
 You must become accustomed to right views.
 Those who practice good with inverse views
 Will yet experience terrible results. (47)

Nagarjuna begins with the following exhortation: If you truly seek the higher realms (the abodes of gods and men) and liberation (that is to say, the levels and paths leading to omniscience), you must constantly get used to the right view; for confidence in the law of karma, with the relative view concerning subject and object, is the cause of higher rebirth, while the wisdom that realizes the true nature of subject and object is the cause of liberation.

What fault, you might ask, would there be in not having the right view? People who have wrong views with regard to actions, cause and effect, completely destroy their sources of good. At the same time, however many positive deeds they may perform, such as acts of generosity, those who are very attached to material things, and who do not have the view or realization that they are empty, possess the terrible cause of rebirth in samsara as the fully ripened effect of all their actions.

(b) The right supramundane view that leads to lasting happiness

Know this truth: that men are ever sad,
 Impermanent, devoid of self, impure.
 Those who do not have close mindfulness,
 Their view four times inverted, head for ruin. (48)

Looking at things with the three kinds of wisdom,⁴³ **know that human beings are in truth unhappy** on account of the three types of suffering,⁴⁴ they are **impermanent** with each instant that passes; **devoid of self**, since there is no doer; and, as regards their flesh, bones, blood, and so forth, **impure**. **Those who are not closely mindful** of these four and who do not examine them with wisdom **view things in four mistaken ways**: they see their impure bodies as pure, the suffering they experience as happiness, the impermanent mind as permanent, and selfless phenomena as a self. Such people **are destroyed** by the suffering of samsara and the lower realms, so for this reason you must be diligent in closely applying mindfulness.

(2) The main explanation: the path endowed with such wisdom

(a) Specific explanations

(i) Ascertaining the no-self of the individual

Form is not the self, the Buddha taught,
And self does not have form, nor dwell in form,
While form dwells not in self. Thus you must see
The four remaining aggregates are empty too. (49)

If there is a single self, is its nature that of the aggregates—form and the rest? Or does it exist as something else? The answer to the first question is “No.” The scriptural authority for this is a sutra, which states, “Form is not the self ...,” and continues until, “... consciousness is not the self.”⁴⁵ Reasoning also applies, as follows. **Form is not the self**; if the self were the same as form and the other aggregates, it would have to be impermanent and multiple. And if you assert that form and the other aggregates exist substantially, then the self must exist substantially and the clinging to an “I” would be the subject of a substantial thing, in which case you would be viewing things correctly and it would therefore be impossible to use an antidote to get rid of the seed.⁴⁶

This is affirmed in *Introduction to the Middle Way*:

*But if the self were equal to the aggregates,
It must, since these are many, be a multiplicity.
The self would be substantial, and seeing it as such
Would not at all be incorrect.*⁴⁷

One might ask, are form and the rest something else? Does the self use form and the other aggregates as a support in the same way that Devadatta—that is, any person—makes use of his wealth, cattle, bed, trees, and so forth? In the first place, this is not the case, for the scriptures say, “**The self does not possess form ...**” and so on to, “... it does not possess consciousness.” And reasoning shows that, unlike Devadatta who has control over his cattle, the self does not possess form and so on as things to be controlled, because we can see that form and the other aggregates, without the self wanting it, change into something else and perish.

Aggregates that are different from the self are also not possible from a second point of view. Form and the rest are not multiple locations for the self to dwell in, as the scriptures show: “**The self does not dwell in form ...**” and so on to, “... the self does not dwell in consciousness.” And reason tells us that, unlike Devadatta sitting on a woven mat, the self cannot dwell in form and the other aggregates as though using them as a support; for if that were the case, the aggregates being impermanent, it would follow that the self, too, would be impermanent.

There is yet a third point of view, stated in the scriptures as follows: “**Form does not dwell in the self ...**” and so on to, “... consciousness does not dwell in the self.” The reasoning is that the aggregates do not dwell in the self, supported by it in the same way that a tree is supported by the earth, because aggregates taking the support of a permanent self could never perish. Furthermore, their birth and destruction would depend on the self and this does not happen because one conceives of the creation and destruction of outer forms as occurring without a self.

This is how we investigate form. **In the same way, you should also realize profound emptiness**, as it is, in **the four remaining aggregates** (feeling and so forth), using scriptural authority and reason, as explained above, to show that there is no self that is of the same nature as the aggregates or different from them.

Explaining things the other way round, it is said in the sutras that for each of the five aggregates there are four views—the view of form as the self, and so on—making twenty extreme views in all. The Buddha taught that the antidote to these is “Form is not the self.”

(ii) Investigating the aggregates that are the support of the self

The aggregates are not a simple whim,
 From neither time nor nature do they come,
 Nor by themselves, from God, or without cause;
 Their source, you ought to know, is ignorance,
 From karmic deeds and craving have they come. (50)

Form and the other aggregates do not happen adventitiously, merely out of wishful thinking, with no dependence on other conditions: **the aggregates are not a result of one's own fanciful thinking**, because they arise from individual causes and conditions. **Neither** do they arise **from** something eternal in **time**, as the Eternalists would claim, since there is no time that is independent of causes and conditions. Since a result cannot be produced from a permanent entity, they do **not** happen **from** transformation by a single permanent **nature**, the *prakriti* ("primal substance"), in which *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva* are in equilibrium, as the Samkhya claim. And since a fruit cannot be produced from a seed without the seed being altered and without depending on conditions, they do **not** happen **by themselves**, as the Mimamsakas hold. They do **not** come **from** the Naiyayika School's **Ishvara**,⁴⁸ because a result comes from a cause that has to precede it. **Neither** do they come into being **without a cause**: if they arose without a cause, they would either have had to have been there all the time or never ever be!⁴⁹

Then what cause do they come from? To take an example, just as a shoot is produced by watering a healthy seed covered with manure, **know that** the aggregates **come from** powerful karmic **actions** covered by **unknowing**—that is to say, ignorance—**and**, as it were, moistened by **craving**.

(b) The actual path

(i) The three fetters, which are incompatible with the path

To feel that one is ethically superior,
 To view one's body wrongly, and to doubt—
 With these three fetters, you should understand,
 The way through freedom's city gates is blocked. (51)

Ethical **superiority**, which is to consider that **discipline** and **ascetic practices** based on wrong views purify or lead to liberation; **the view** of the transitory composite, whereby one **mistakenly** regards **one's body**, the five causal aggregates, as "I" and "mine"; and **doubt**, where one is of two minds about liberation and the path of liberation, are **fetters that bind one**.⁵⁰ Because of the view of the transitory composite, one has no wish to proceed to liberation. Because of superiority one mistakes the path. And because of doubt one meets with hindrances. **Know that these three close the gates of the city of liberation**, and rid yourself of them. As we read in a sutra:

*No wish to leave, losing the way,
And torn by doubts as to the path—
The way to freedom is thus blocked.*

(ii) Diligence, which is a favorable condition

Freedom will depend on you alone
And there is no one else, no friend can help.
So bring endeavor to the Four Noble Truths
With study, discipline, and concentration. (52)

What we call **liberation** is nothing other than the mind being free from the bonds of afflictive emotions. It **depends on** training by **oneself** on the path of liberation. **For that, there is no question of being assisted by someone else**; you have to endeavor on your own.

How can one attain liberation? It is said:

*By observing discipline, hearing, and reflecting
Apply yourself to meditation.*

This means **listening** many times to the Buddha's teachings relating to the Four Noble Truths **and**, with determination to be free, observing whichever **discipline** you can of the seven kinds of pratimoksha vows—those of the bhikshu or bhikshuni, male or female shramanera, male or female upasaka, and woman novice. **By means of** the one-pointed concentration of the four **concentrations**⁵¹—The Pure, Great Pure Ones, and so forth—direct your attention to the **Four Noble Truths**—the truth of suffering and the rest—and meditate on their true nature: in relative truth,

their sixteen subdivisions beginning with impermanence; and in absolute truth, emptiness free from all conceptual extremes. **Be diligent** in knowing these crucial points of what to adopt and what to reject.

(iii) The three trainings, the essence of the path

I. A general exposition of the three trainings

Train always in superior discipline,
 Superior wisdom, and superior mind.
 Monks' vows exceed a hundred and five tens,
 Yet they are all included in these three. (53)

The three trainings are: **superior discipline**, which is essentially the avoidance—dedicated entirely to going beyond suffering—of the seven negative actions;⁵² **superior wisdom**, which is the realization of the two kinds of no-self; **and superior concentration**,⁵³ which essentially comprises the four concentrations consistent with and leading to the sublime path. Because they constitute a complete and unerring method for attaining liberation, you should **constantly train in them**. They are called “superior” because their purpose is to take one beyond suffering. Since the **more than two hundred and fifty precepts**, that is, the two hundred and fifty-three vows of a bhikshu taught in the pratimoksha—the four radical defeats, the thirteen residual faults, the thirty downfalls requiring rejection, the ninety “mere downfalls,” the four faults to be specifically confessed, and the one hundred and twelve wrong actions—come under discipline, they are **fully included in the three** trainings. So make an effort to train in these.

II. *A specific explanation of the training in wisdom*

A. *How to extract oneself from affliction*⁵⁴

1. *How to turn the mind away from the things of this life*

a. *Brief introduction*

My lord, the Buddha taught close mindfulness
Of body as the single path to tread.
Hold fast and guard it well, for all the Dharma
Is destroyed by loss of mindfulness. (54)

Mighty Lord, says Nagarjuna addressing the king, in all circumstances, whatever you are doing—standing up, sitting down, and so on—strictly maintain perfect **mindfulness** of phenomena **including the body** and so forth.⁵⁵ This, **the Sugata has shown**, is **the one way to proceed**, the certain **path** for easily attaining liberation, for it is written in a sutra:

O Monks, the path that purifies sentient beings, that takes them completely beyond suffering and happiness, that makes them understand the correct way, and makes nirvana manifest is this view—close attention to the body.

Therefore, because this mindfulness of the body and so on is extremely important, **hold fast and guard it well**. Otherwise, if you fail to do so and **mindfulness is diminished**, all **virtuous practice will also be destroyed**, not to mention any chance of attaining nirvana.

b. *Detailed explanation*

i. *Reflecting on the impermanence of life*

(1) *Meditating on impermanence by reflecting on the unpredictability of the time of death*

With all its many risks, this life endures
No more than windblown bubbles in a stream.
How marvellous to breathe in and out again,
To fall asleep and then awake refreshed. (55)

An individual's life is subject to **many** kinds of **harm**, from humans and nonhumans externally and from illness and other disorders of the elements internally. It is **less enduring than a bubble in a stream blown about by the wind**. What a wonder it is that one can **breathe in** and then **breathe out** again, **fall asleep and wake up** again refreshed and still alive. As it is said:

*Impermanent are the three worlds, like autumn clouds;
Watch how beings live and die, it's but a dance;
A person's life is as a flash of lightning in the sky,
Like a mountain torrent it rushes swiftly on.*

(2) *Meditating on impermanence by reflecting on the inevitability of death*

This body ends as ash, dry dust, or slime,
And ultimately shit, no essence left.
Consumed, evaporated, rotted down—
Thus know its nature: to disintegrate. (56)

When its time is over, **the body ends up** being reduced to **ashes** by fire, being **dried up** by the sun and wind, or **decomposing** after being thrown into the river; eaten by animals it **finally** becomes **excrement**. So **know that this body has no essence**. It will be **consumed** by fire, it will be **reduced to nothing** by the sun and wind, broken down and **rotted away** by water; chopped into pieces as mouthfuls for animals, its very **nature** is to be **divided up**.

(3) *Meditating on impermanence by reflecting on other aspects*

The ground, Mount Meru, and the oceans too
Will be consumed by seven blazing suns;
Of things with form no ashes will be left,
No need to speak of puny, frail man. (57)

It is said that the mandala of the solid, firm material **ground, and Mount Meru** together with the seven golden mountain ranges, and even the outer and inner **oceans** will be destroyed by a universal fire. When this happens the first **sun** will burn up the trees and forests; the second sun will dry up

the brooks; the third will dry up Lake Manasarowar and the four great rivers; the fourth and fifth will reduce the oceans to dew drops. The sixth will dry up everything, leaving not a drop of water. The great earth and Mount Meru will all go up in smoke. As the **seventh** sun rises everything will become a single tongue of fire, and not even ashes will be left. So if, after the seven suns have appeared, everything is **consumed by the blaze** in a single flame, so that **even these physical things**—these solid forms—are destroyed and **nothing, not even ash, is left, what need is there to mention the utterly frail human body?** It could not possibly last forever.

(4) A summary of the above

It's all impermanent, devoid of self,
 So if you're not to stay there refugeless
 And helpless, drag your mind away, O King,
 From plantainlike samsara, which has no core. (58)

Thus, not only are all things that have form impermanent but so also, as explained above, are **all these** five causal aggregates **impermanent, devoid of self**. **There is no refuge** to protect you from suffering, **no helper** to support you, so if you are not to remain in this situation, **O Greatest of men** (meaning “King”), **you must**, with a sense of disenchantment, **drag your mind away from this circle of existence**, which is **without essence**, like a **plantain tree**.

ii. Reflecting on the difficulty of finding the freedoms and advantages

(1) How rare it is in general simply to be born as a human

(a) The rarity of a human birth

Harder, harder still than that a turtle chance upon
 The opening in a yoke upon a great and single sea
 Is rebirth as a human after rebirth as a beast;
 So heed the sacred Dharma, King, and make your life bear fruit. (59)

If the world's great **oceans** were to become **one**, and in that ocean there lived a turtle that rose to the surface once in every hundred years; and if, on the surface, there were a **yoke** with a single opening, blown in all direc-

tions by the wind, **the turtle** might just, by **coincidence**, put its neck through **the opening** in the yoke. But it is **even harder** for a dumb animal, unable to give rise to any powerful positive actions, to migrate from the support of an animal body and **obtain** rebirth in **the human state**. For this reason, **Lord of men**, now that you have obtained the precious freedoms and advantages, **make** your human body **fruitful** by making the best use of it and **practicing the sacred Dharma**.

(b) Showing how despicable it is to practice negative actions with such a body

More stupid yet than one who throws some slops
 Into a golden vessel all bejewelled
 Is he who's gained a precious human birth
 And wastes it in an evil, sinful life. (60)

Someone who were to sweep sewage—excrement, urine, and the like—into a vessel made of gold and ornamented with all kinds of jewels would be regarded with universal contempt, but **how much more dim-witted it is to do negative actions after being born as a human**. Not only is the human state harder to come by than golden vessels, but negative actions are much worse than sewage because they give rise to inexhaustible fully ripened effects. For this reason, once you have obtained this support for practicing positive actions, this human body, which is so difficult to come by, you must be diligent.

(2) Showing in particular the support endowed with the four wheels

(a) A general account of the four wheels as favorable conditions

To dwell in places that befit the task,
 To follow and rely on holy beings,
 Aspiring high, with merit from the past—
 These four great wheels are yours for you to use. (61)

Regarding where you should live, **stay in a place that is compatible** with giving rise to the sublime path that increases virtue. As for whom to befriend and rely on, **follow a supreme being** who will make your faults diminish and good qualities grow. **Wish the best for yourself** in accom-

plishing enlightenment, so that by acting in accordance with your wishes you accomplish things properly. From having **created merit in previous lives** your mind will be completely mature.

These conditions are called “wheels” because they are like the wheels of a chariot. Just as a chariot with balanced wheels can swiftly reach its destination, so too with these conditions on the path, one can swiftly reach liberation. **You have the four great wheels**, and all the various causes for accomplishing the path are therefore complete, so be diligent in accomplishing the path.⁵⁶

(b) A specific explanation of the spiritual friend

The virtuous friend in whom to place your trust
 Has brought pure conduct to perfection, said the Lord.
 So follow holy beings, many are they
 Who relied upon the Buddhas and found peace. (62)

Someone who is accomplishing the path has first to **rely on a spiritual friend**. The latter has **perfected pure conduct** and is the cause that takes one beyond suffering, as **the Capable One declared**: “Ananda, thus it is: spiritual friends and virtuous companions are those who have brought pure conduct to perfection. As a result of this, Ananda, all those whose nature is to be born will be liberated from birth by relying on a spiritual friend” **For this reason, constantly follow holy beings. By relying on the Victorious Ones a very great many sentient beings have attained peace.** What then are the characteristics of a holy being? *The Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras* lists them as follows:

*Take as a teacher someone peaceful, disciplined, perfectly peaceful,
 Possessed of superior qualities, endeavor, and knowledge of
 the texts,⁵⁷
 Who understands them fully, and is skilled at explaining them,
 Is full of love, and never tires of teaching.*

In other words, he observes the three precious trainings,⁵⁸ he is richly endowed with the transmissions of the Three Pitakas, he has realized the absolute nature as it is, he is skilled in teaching others and explaining the words, he is loving towards disciples and others, and he never tires of teaching by giving instructions and advice.

(3) *Reflecting on how to be free of the eight unfavorable conditions of lack of opportunity*

To be reborn with false beliefs, or yet
 As animals, or pretas, or in hell,
 Deprived of Buddha's words, barbarians
 In border lands, or reborn dull and dumb, (63)

Or born among the long-lived gods—
 Of these eight defective states that give no opportunity
 You must be free, and, finding opportunity,
 Be diligent, to put a stop to birth. (64)

The following kinds of rebirth are known as the **eight defective states of lack of opportunity**. To be born **holding wrong views** and scorning the law of cause and effect. To be **born as an animal, as a preta, or in the hells** (thus making three unfavorable states in the lower realms). To be born **bereft of the Conqueror's teachings**, that is, born in a world where no Buddhas have appeared, or even if they have appeared, to be **born as a barbarian in a border country** where one does not even hear the word "Buddha"; or even if born in a central land,⁵⁹ to be born **dull and dumb**, in the sense of being mentally defective and unable to speak (making four in the human realm).⁶⁰ Or to be **born as a long-lived god** lacking the perception of being sentient (making one in the gods' realm).⁶¹ **Once one has found the extraordinary human body that is free of these eight defects and provides the opportunity** to accomplish the path of liberation, one must make it meaningful; so, advises Nagarjuna, **work hard** to accomplish the path properly **in order to stop rebirth** in samsara.

2. *How to turn the mind away from the whole of samsara: reflecting on the defects of samsara*a. *Brief introduction*

O Gentle Sir, to make your disenchantment grow
 With this samsara, source of many pains—
 Desires frustrated, death, ill health, old age—
 Please heed its defects, even just a few. (65)

Gentle Sir, says Nagarjuna, addressing the king, since samsara is **the source of many kinds of suffering—frustrated desires** for food, clothes, and so forth, **and finally death**, with, in the meantime, **illness** as the elements change, **ageing** as one's youth transforms, and misery, lamentation, **and so on—it is samsara that you must weary of**. If you do not drag your mind away from samsara, you will never think of striving for liberation. And since just talking about **a few of its—samsara's—defects** helps to do that, I will mention them briefly in order to inspire weariness in you, so **please listen**.

b. Detailed explanation

i. How nothing can be relied on even if it looks like happiness

(1) How nothing can be relied on

(a) How, since one cannot be certain who is a friend and who an enemy, it is inappropriate to rely on anyone

Men who've fathered sons in turn are sons,
 And mothers likewise daughters. Bitter foes
 Turn into friends, the converse too is true.
 Because of this samsara's never sure. (66)

In taking birth again and again, **fathers** sometimes become **sons**, **mothers** become **daughters**, and even **people who have been enemies** become **close friends** in other lives. And **vice versa**: sons become fathers and so on. **Because of this there is no certainty at all that in samsara** one ends up as one thing, either friend or enemy. So get rid of attachment and aversion, taking sides with friends and against enemies.

(b) How one can never be satisfied

Know that every being has drunk more milk
 Than all the four great oceans could contain,
 And still, by emulating common folk,
 They'll circle, drinking ever more and more. (67)

Know that every sentient being has drunk more milk in the past **than** could be contained in **the four great oceans** in the four directions, there

being no number to their births on the earth. And **even now**, as **samsaric beings who** have not set out on the sublime path and **are following the path of ordinary, samsaric individuals, they will drink milk in even greater quantities** than before, because for childish beings who have not cultivated positive actions consistent with liberation there is no end to their circling in samsara.

(c) How it is impossible to predict when it will all end

A heap of all the bones each being has left
 Would reach to Meru's top or even higher.
 To count one's mother's lineage with pills
 The size of berries, the earth would not suffice. (68)

The **pile of the bones each being** has had in previous lives is as **big as Mount Meru** or **even surpasses it in height**, and still more bones, many more than that, will have to be left behind if one does not make efforts on the path.

Even if one tried to count all one's maternal ancestors by fashioning **pills the size of juniper berries** from the earth of this planet and counting them, one would run out of **earth without ever reaching** the end. A single being could never finish counting the number of mothers he has had, so how many myriads more will there be to come if one does not endeavor properly on the path? This has been explained in a sutra, where the Buddha says:

O monks, let us take an example. If someone were to make pilules the size of juniper berries from the Earth, putting each one aside and saying, "This one is my mother, that one is my mother's mother ...," and so on, I tell you, monks, before very long the mud from the Earth would run out, but not so the ancestral line of people's mothers.

(d) *How one's position is uncertain and cannot be relied on*

(i) *How great dominion cannot be relied on*

Indra, universally revered,
 Will fall again to earth through action's force.
 And he who ruled the universe as king
 Will be a slave within samsara's wheel. (69)

Having become Indra, worthy of the offerings of the world, for he is venerated by worldly gods not to mention everyone else, one will, **because of the residual effect of one's actions, again fall back onto the earth** among ordinary men or into the lower realms.

Even if one has become a universal monarch, possessing the seven precious attributes of royalty and having dominion over the four continents, when there is nothing left of one's past good deeds **one will**, on account of one's actions in samsara, **again be reborn into slavery** among men or fall into the lower realms.

(ii) *How delightful company cannot be relied on*

For ages it was rapture to caress
 The lovely breasts and waists of heaven's maids,
 Now one will bear the terrible caress—
 The crush, the slash, and tear—of hell's machine. (70)

After being born as a god and **spending ages enjoying the pleasures of caressing the breasts and waists of maidens in the higher realms**, one has no good deeds left and as a result of one's negative actions one is **again reborn in the hells**. There, in the Crushing Hell, **one is crushed** between massive mountains of iron; in the Black Line Hell one is **carved up** with swords and other weapons; and in the Hells of Heat and Intense Heat **one is pierced and cut** with blazing pikes and with saws and so forth, and **pecked and clawed** by savage beasts. **Know** that for a very long time one will **endure the agonizing pain that comes from contact with the machinery of hell**.

(iii) How there is no essence to pleasant places

For years you might have stayed on Meru's crest
 Delighting as it yielded underfoot,
 But think now of the torment that will strike:
 To wade through glowing coals and rotten flesh. (71)

After staying for a long time—thousands of god-years—on the summit of Mount Meru, which is made from the four kinds of precious substances and where the ground procures the delightful sensation⁶² of giving slightly when trodden underfoot and leaving an imprint when one lifts one's foot, because of one's deeds one is again stricken by the terrible suffering of wandering in agony in hell, knee deep in burning embers, and through swamps of rotting corpses and excrement. I beg you to bear this in mind and think, "I will have to experience that."

(iv) How there is no essence to happy activities

Those who in the Joyous Garden played,
 And in Beauty's Grove were served by heaven's maids,
 Will come to woods of trees with swordlike leaves
 And cut their hands and feet, their ears and nose. (72)

Among the golden lotuses and lovely maids
 They bathed in heaven's Gently Flowing Pool,
 But into hell's own waters will they plunge,
 The scalding, caustic River None Can Ford. (73)

Having delighted at length in the pleasures of the desire realm, arriving in the Garden of Joy and the Grove of Utter Beauty surrounded by many attentive daughters of the gods in the higher realms, again, in hell, one will arrive in the forest of swordlike leaves, with pointed stakes and a variety of sharp weapons for leaves, stirred by the wind. As, driven by karma, one climbs up and falls down, one will cut one's hands and feet, ears and nose, and undergo all sorts of sufferings having one's whole body and limbs slashed and pierced.

One might have spent a long time experiencing the pleasures of entering the celestial pool, the Gently Flowing, surrounded by the beautiful faces of the daughters of the gods, and bathing in its golden lotus-filled

waters, which have the eight perfect qualities. **But know that afterwards** there is no doubt **one will again** have to **plunge into the intolerable, scalding hot alkaline waters of hell's unfordable river** of hot ashes, the Vaitarani.⁶³

(v) How there is no essence to great wealth

A Kamaloka god, one gains such bliss,
 As Brahma, bliss that's free from all desire;
 But know that after that comes constant pain:
 As firewood one feeds Avici's flames. (74)

One might have obtained the immense happiness of the world of desire, living in the gods' realms above the Heaven Free of Conflict—a sublime happiness much greater than that in the gods' realms below; **or obtained the bliss free from the attachment** of the world of desire in **Brahma's world, the world of form**. **But know that afterwards**, because of one's "negative deeds due to be experienced in other lives,"⁶⁴ **one will have to endure the ceaseless suffering of being** horribly burnt as if one were **fuel for the fires of the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed**.

(vi) How great splendor cannot be relied on

One who was reborn as sun or moon,
 Whose body's light lit whole worlds far below,
 Will then arrive in states of darkest gloom,
 His outstretched hands will be invisible. (75)

One might have obtained rebirth as a child of the gods, as **the sun or the moon itself**, which the Tirthikas believe to be gods; **with the light of one's own body** (or, as commonly recounted **on earth**, with the celestial measureless palace)⁶⁵ **one illuminated the whole world below**. But even having been so bright and luminous, **again one will reach**, or take birth in, the **pitch darkness** between worlds, where there is no light from the sun or moon, **and one will experience the misery of being in a place where one cannot even see one's own hands stretched out in front**.

(2) *Advice on recognizing all this and practicing virtue*

So thus it is you'll ail, and knowing this
 Please seize the lamp of merit's triple form,
 For otherwise you'll plunge and go alone
 In deepest dark unlit by sun or moon. (76)

Knowing that you will ail thus (meaning "die"), experiencing in a variety of ways such things as the impermanence of life and falling into lower states after staying in the higher realms, **firmly seize the light of the lamp** that dispels the darkness of the lower realms, **the three kinds of merit**—those that come from generosity, discipline, and meditation or those related to the body, speech, and mind. **Know that** without merit to light the way, **you will plunge alone**, with no one to accompany you, **into the darkness** of the three lower realms **on which** the light of the sun and moon **makes no impression**—they are powerless to overcome it. As it is said in the *Lalitavistara Sutra*:

*Excepting all our virtuous deeds,
 Which will follow and accompany us,
 In compounded existences there's no companion,
 No other refuge, friend, or retinue.*

ii. *Showing the huge extent of suffering*

(1) *Recognizing that samsara is by nature suffering*

(a) *The sufferings in the hells*

(i) *Brief introduction*

For beings who indulge in evil deeds
 There's constant pain in these and other hells:
 Reviving Hell, Black Line, and Intense Heat,
 And Crushing, Screaming, Torment Unsurpassed. (77)

Sentient beings who perform negative actions with their body, speech, and mind **will experience** the sufferings of the hells. What are these sufferings? They are the **constant torments** that will be experienced **in the Reviving Hell, Black Line Hell, Hell of Heat, Hell of Intense Heat, Crush-**

ing Hell, Screaming Hell, Great Screaming Hell, and the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed,⁶⁶ and others, that is, the neighboring hells, the ephemeral hells, and the eight cold hells.

(ii) *Detailed explanation*

[1] *The sufferings one needs to know*

[a] *The actual sufferings*

Some are squeezed and pressed like sesame,
Others likewise ground like finest flour,
Some are cut and carved as if with saws,
Others hacked with axes, razor-honed. (78)

Others still are forced to swallow draughts
Of burning molten bronze that flares and sparks,
Some impaled and threaded onto skewers—
Barbed and fiercely blazing stakes of steel. (79)

Some, whom savage dogs with iron fangs
Will rip to shreds, in dread throw up their hands,
And others, powerless, are pecked by crows
With sharpened beaks of steel and razor claws. (80)

Some there are who roll about and wail,
Devoured by worms and multicolored grubs,
Ten thousand buzzing flies and bees that leave
Great stings and bites unbearable to touch. (81)

Some, in heaps of blazing red hot coals,
Are burned without a break, their mouths agape.
And some are boiled in cauldrons made of iron,
Cooked like dumplings, heads turned upside down. (82)

First, the Crushing Hell, a hot hell. **Some** beings are **squeezed as if** in an iron press used for extracting **sesame** oil, causing putrid blood to flow out. **Similarly, other** beings in this hell are **ground** by blazing iron mills and mortars and reduced to **fine flour**, like that of rice or other grains. **Some** beings, in the Black Line Hell, are **carved up as if by** blazing saws, **others**,

likewise, chopped up with fiery axes with excruciatingly sharp blades. Similarly, others in the Hell of Heat or on the banks of the Unfordable River, their mouths forced open with iron tongs, are given liquid of burning molten bronze wreathed with fiery sparks to drink. In the Hell of Heat, some are skewered on barbed, fiercely blazing stakes of steel.

In the Forest of Swordlike Leaves, some have their bodies torn to pieces and devoured by fierce steel-fanged hounds barking loudly, and throw their hands up in the air, crying out for help. Other helpless beings at the top of the hill of shalmali trees have their eyes pecked out and flesh torn away by flocks of crows and other birds with sharp steel beaks and mercilessly sharp iron claws.

Some are eaten by the worms in their own bodies, by insects of various species, colors and shapes, and by many tens of thousands of bluebottles and black bees inflicting great bites, which are exquisitely painful to touch. Because of this, they roll their bodies on the ground, their voices wailing in distress. This is a suffering in the neighboring hells.

Some beings in the Hell of Heat are burned uninterruptedly in piles of glowing iron embers by the guardians of hell and have no strength but to lie with their mouths stretched open. And some in that hell are cooked upside down in huge cauldrons made of iron, filled with brine and blazing with fire—cooked like rice dumplings, which, when thrown into a pot of boiling water, are alternately sucked down and thrown up to the surface again.

[b] How and to whom these sufferings happen

[i] Reflecting on when these sufferings befall one

The very instant that they cease to breathe
 The wicked taste the boundless pains of hell.
 And he who hearing this is not afraid
 A thousandfold is truly diamond hard. (83)

Evil beings who have committed acts whose result will definitely be experienced as the suffering of the hells go to hell in just the time it takes to breathe in and out, because there is only the merest interval in which they proceed to hell: they are reborn there the moment breathing stops. Anyone whose mind is not terrified a thousand times over, and whose body

does not crack into a thousand pieces **on hearing of their immeasurable or infinite suffering in hell**, definitely has a body and mind as **hard as a diamond**, because otherwise he would be much more afraid.

[ii] Reflecting on how unbearable these sufferings are when they occur

– *In general*

If simply seeing pictures of the hells
 And hearing, thinking, reading of them scares,
 Or making sculpted figures, need we say
 How hard to bear the ripened fruit will be? (84)

If even seeing drawings of the hells, or hearing about them from others and in that way **thinking about them**, or **reading** books containing passages from the sutras and so on, or **representing them** with materials such as clay **will make one afraid**, one need hardly mention the actual experience, the utterly terrible fully ripened effect.

– *Showing in particular how the suffering in the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed is greater than all sufferings*

Of all the forms of happiness there are,
 The lord is bliss where craving's fully spent.
 So too, of all the misery there is,
 The pain in Torment Unsurpassed is worst. (85)

Just as of all kinds of happiness it is complete liberation, or the lord of bliss, the complete exhaustion of the craving of the three worlds, that is considered supreme, of all sufferings the suffering in the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed is by far the greatest and the most terrible.

– *An example showing how the torment of hell is much greater even than the especially great pain of being struck by common weapons*

For one whole day on earth three hundred darts
Might strike you hard and cause you grievous pain,
But that could never illustrate or match
A fraction of the smallest pain in hell. (86)

The pain for a whole day, here among humans, of being struck with very great force by three hundred short spears at once does not even begin to hint at the sufferings of just the ephemeral hells, the smallest of hell's sufferings: an example such as this does not compare with so much as a fraction, a hundred-thousandth of those torments.

[iii] *Reflecting on how long one experiences them*

The frightful pains and torments just described
Are lived and felt throughout a billion years.
Until those evil deeds are fully spent
One will not die and shed this life in hell. (87)

The utterly terrible sufferings just described are experienced for billions of years, and as long as those negative actions have not been exhausted one will not die. The extent of each of these is described in the *Treasury of the Abhidharma*:

*In the six hells, Reviving and the others, respectively,
One day equals a lifetime as a Kamaloka god.
Their respective life spans resemble
Those in the Kamaloka god realms.⁶⁷*

and

*Intense Heat is half and Torment Unsurpassed a whole
Intermediate kalpa.*

As long as one stays there one will experience hell, because the power of the action that becomes that experience has not been exhausted.

[2] *Advice on avoiding the causes of these sufferings*

The seeds of these the fruits of evil deeds
 Are sinful acts of body, speech, and mind.
 Work hard therefore and muster all your skill
 To never stray a hair's breadth into sin. (88)

The seeds of these torments in hell, which are the **results of negative actions**, are the three kinds of **wrong conduct with the body** (taking life and so forth), the four with **speech** (telling lies and so on) **and** the three with the **mind** (covetousness and the others), on a large, medium, or small scale. **O King, you must, by all means, never do even an atom's worth of these three kinds of negative action. Endeavor in this very thing with all your mental skill.**

(b) *The sufferings of the animals*

(i) *General sufferings*

For animals there's multifold distress—
 They're slaughtered, tied up, beaten, and the rest.
 For those denied the virtue that brings peace
 There's agony as one devours another. (89)

Throughout the animal realm too there is an infinite variety of suffering. Animals are **killed** by other beings, human and otherwise, **trussed up** with lassos and the like, **beaten** and whipped, and they suffer all sorts of other injury from humans and nonhumans. Being reborn as unsuitable vessels, animals **are unable to practice**⁶⁸ **the sublime virtue**⁶⁹ and so on **by which one will** obtain the peace of nirvana, and they are certain to **have the truly horrendous ripened effect of being eaten by one another.**

(ii) *The specific sufferings of animals that live scattered in different places*

Some of them are killed just for their pearls,
 Their wool, or bones, their meat or skins and fur,
 And other helpless beasts are forced to work,
 They're kicked or struck with hands, with whips and goads. (90)

Some animals living in the sea are killed for pearls, some, such as sheep, for wool; elephants and so forth for their bones; deer and other wild ungulates for their meat; and some, such as tigers and leopards, on account of their skins. Other animals—horses, buffaloes, donkeys, oxen, elephants, and the like—owned by gods and men have no freedom of their own and suffer from being forced into service and struck with weapons, being respectively kicked, hit, whipped, and goaded.

(c) *The sufferings of the pretas*

(i) *Brief introduction*

For pretas too there's not the slightest break
 In suffering from their unfulfilled desires.
 What dire misery they must endure
 From hunger, thirst, cold, heat, fatigue, and fear. (91)

For beings born as pretas there are the sufferings produced by frustrated desires. And because these are constant and unchanging, and there is no way to stop them, you should know that the pretas will undoubtedly have to endure the most terrible misery arising from hunger and thirst, from cold in winter and heat in summer, exhaustion from searching for food and drink, and terror when they see people brandishing sharp weapons and so forth. The point here is that you have to be diligent now in practicing positive actions assiduously.

(ii) *Detailed explanation*

[1] *The suffering*

[a] *The actual suffering*

Some, their mouths like needles' eyes, their bellies
 Huge as mountains, ache from want of food.
 They do not even have the strength to eat
 Discarded scraps, the smallest bits of filth. (92)

Some, their naked bodies skin and bone,
 Are like the dried-out tops of tala trees.
 And some have mouths that belch forth fire by night:
 Into their burning mouths sand falls as food. (93)

A few unlucky ones don't even find
 Some dirt to eat—pus, excrement, or blood.
 They hit each other in the face and eat
 The pus that festers from their swollen necks. (94)

For hungry ghosts the summer moon's too hot,
 In wintertime the sun is far too cold,
 Fine trees in orchards wilt and lose their fruit,
 And simply from their gaze great streams run dry. (95)

Some pretas have mouths as small as the eye of a needle, while their stomachs are as big as a mountain in size and difficult to fill so that they are tormented by hunger. Even if they find a little bit of discarded filth—excrement, urine, and the like—their mouths are so small they do not have the strength to eat it.

Some have bodies that are simply skin and bone, without any flesh, and are naked because they have no clothes. They are like the dried top of a palmyra tree, without any bark.⁷⁰ Some blaze fire from their mouths every night—though not during the day—and eat hot sand as food that falls into their burning mouths.

Some of the most wretched kinds of pretas, with extremely little merit, suffer when they fail to find even filth such as pus, excrement, or blood, so one need hardly mention what it is like for them not finding anything good to eat. And yet, when they see each other they become enraged, hit each other on the face and throw clubs, bruising their necks and causing carbuncles to appear. The ripened pus dripping from these is what they have to endure as food.

These inferior classes of pretas suffer greatly from heat and cold: in summertime even the moon is too hot for them, while in winter they are cold even in the sun. Orchard trees, merely on being looked at by these pretas, appear to lose their ripe, abundant fruit and wither. And on account of their actions, their mere gaze makes rivers endowed with the eight perfect qualities seem to dry up and become filled with burning embers and

quantities of excrement crawling with worms, "because," as we read in the sutras, "there is one reality but a variety of minds." *Introduction to the Middle Way* has this to say:

*A preta will perceive a river as a stream of pus.
Briefly, just as knowledge objects, so the mind—
It should be understood that both are inexistent.*⁷¹

And in *The Way of the Bodhisattva* we read:

*Who has forged this burning iron ground?
Whence have all these demon women sprung?
All are but the offspring of the sinful mind,
Thus the Mighty One has said.*⁷²

[b] *The length of time their suffering is experienced*

And some have bodies bound by that tight noose,
Their karmic store of previous evil deeds,
Now borne as constant misery and pain;
For five, ten thousand years they will not die. (96)

Some beings bound by the tight karmic noose of negative actions, which are endured in subsequent lives as continuous suffering without the slightest break or opportunity for happiness, will not die for five thousand or even ten thousand years, even though they have no food or drink in all that time. Thus will they suffer on account of their actions.

[2] *The cause for experiencing these sufferings*

The cause of these the pretas' varied woes
And all such kindred torments one might get
Is being greedy, this the Buddha said:
Stinginess is not for the sublime. (97)

The cause of anything one obtains that is similar to the misery that the pretas experience in this way—the various sufferings of hunger and thirst—is someone who indulges in avarice and is habitually stingy. The Buddha said that to be miserly is not the way of the sublime beings, as we read in the *Condensed Prajñāparamita Sutra*:

*The miserly will be born among the pretas,
And even if born as humans, they will lead a life of poverty.*

(d) *The sufferings of the gods*

(i) *Brief introduction*

Even in the higher realms the pains of death
Are more intense than is their greatest bliss.
And so good people who reflect on this
Don't crave the higher realms, which soon must end. (98)

One might obtain rebirth **in the higher realms** as a god in the world of desire. **But** though the gods are indeed **very happy** and enjoy abundance and perfection in a desirable place, **their anguish** when they go through the experience of **death and transmigration is much greater** even than the happiness they had before. As it is said:

*"Alas, the Grove of Many-Colored Chariots,
Alas, the Gently Flowing Pool,
Alas, the gods we hold so dear!"
Thus they wail and fall to the ground.*

Having reflected on this, good people who have knowledge, realization, and wisdom do not crave happiness, for even happiness **will be exhausted**: it has no true essence, and for this reason they **do not crave the happiness of the higher realms**.

(ii) *Detailed explanation*

Their bodies' colors cease to charm and please,
Their seats grow hard, their flowered wreaths do wilt,
Their clothes are stained, and on their bodies now appear
Rank drops of sweat they never had before. (99)

These five are signs that herald death in heaven,
Appearing to the gods in their abodes.
They're not unlike the signs of death that warn
Of coming death in humans on the earth. (100)

Those gods who transmigrate from heavenly worlds
 And do not have some little virtue left
 Will tumble, helpless, to their just abodes
 As beasts or hungry spirits or in hell. (101)

If the gods, being miraculously born, do not suffer from dying, how then do they suffer? Their anguish is mental: when the time comes for gods to die, (1) **their beautiful complexions** fade and they **grow ugly**; (2) their **seats** become **uncomfortable** to sit on; (3) the **garlands of flowers** with which they are adorned **grow old**; (4) **stains** appear on their garments; and (5) **sweat, hitherto absent, now breaks out on their bodies** and they smell foul. These **five signs of death that herald death and transmigration in the higher realms** (meaning the god realms) occur for the gods living in the god realms of the world of desire, and are similar to the signs of death—the stench of death and so on—that announce approaching death in humans on earth.

For those who have died and transmigrated from the worlds of the gods, if they have no remaining positive actions that will lead to their taking birth in the higher realms, then, **powerless, they will** experience the sufferings, **whichever they may be**, of the animal, preta, or hell realms.

(e) The sufferings of the asuras

The asuras begrudge the gods their splendor,
 Their inbred loathing thus torments their minds.
 Though clever, they're obscured as all their kind,
 And so it is they cannot see the truth. (102)

Even in the abodes of the asuras, on account of their extreme pride and their **natural hatred for the gods** and their **splendor**, they **suffer greatly mentally**, for their jealousy makes them unhappy. Moreover, when they engage in battle with the gods they suffer further from their physical injuries. **Although they have the intelligence** to distinguish positive and negative actions, **they have the obscurations** (the fully ripened effect of past actions) of beings who have not seen the truth. **For this reason, they are unable to see the truth** in their current body,⁷³ because this kind of support is incompatible with seeing the truth. In the commentaries it is

explained that rebirth as an asura is propelled by a negative action and completed by a positive action, but Arya Asanga says that because asuras are celestial beings they are propelled by a positive propelling action.⁷⁴

(2) The need, once one recognizes that samsara is suffering, for effort in order to stop rebirth

(a) The reason one has to stop rebirth

Samsara is like this, and thus we are reborn
 As gods, as humans, denizens in hell,
 As ghosts or animals; but you should know
 That birth's not good, a pot of many ills. (103)

Because samsara has defects like these, as has been explained, one takes birth, as a result of actions and afflictive emotions, in the bodies of gods, humans, hell beings, pretas, and animals. Know, says Nagarjuna, that rebirth in those states is not good: they are vessels for much harm.

(b) Advice on making every effort to stop birth for this very reason

Give up your efforts trying to stop all this
 As if your hair or clothes had just caught fire;
 Just do your best to not be born again:
 No greater goal or need is there than this. (104)

Unlike someone whose hair or clothes have suddenly caught fire desperately trying to put out the flames quickly, be wise: in recognizing the defects of samsara, give up making any effort to put an end to the latter and rather, without regard for life or limb, diligently put your efforts into not being reborn again, because there is no greater purpose for a person than to put an end to rebirth.⁷⁵

*B. How to truly set out towards perfect enlightenment*⁷⁶

1. Having confidence in liberation, the result

With discipline and concentration, wisdom too,
Attain nirvana, peaceful, disciplined, immaculate,
Unageing, deathless, inexhaustible, and quite distinct
From earth and water, fire, wind, sun, and moon. (105)

By means of the three trainings explained earlier, namely the trainings in **discipline, concentration, and wisdom**, you should attain the **stainless** state unsullied by afflictive emotions—both the **nirvana** without residue that is **peaceful** because the tainted aggregates have been brought to cessation, and the nirvana with residue, in which the senses are **controlled**. Since its youthfulness does not change, it is **unageing**; since its life force does not alter, it is **deathless**; and since it never runs out, it is **inexhaustible**. Some non-Buddhists assert that liberation has material form:

*Like snow, like conch, like incense smoke,
Like curd or cows or pearls its hue,
And like a white umbrella is its shape—
Such is liberation, the Jaina has explained.*⁷⁷

But Nagarjuna shows that liberation is not as they claim. In order to refute liberation with a shape, and to help those who believe in **earth, water, fire, wind**, the sun, and moon as sources of refuge to give up such beliefs, he says, “**attain freedom from the belief in the sun and moon as a refuge.**”

2. *Practicing the truth of the path, the cause*

a. *The path of seeing*

i. *The essence of the path, seven elements leading to enlightenment*

Mindfulness, discernment, diligence, a joyful mind,
 And flexibility, concentration, evenness—
 These seven limbs are elements that lead to Buddhahood,
 They gather virtue and attain the state beyond all pain. (106)

On the path of seeing there is (1) **mindfulness** whereby one does not forget the object, the truth; (2) the wisdom of **perfect discernment** with regard to the object; (3) **diligence**, delight in virtue, being assiduous in undertaking what is right and avoiding what is wrong in accordance with the path; (4) **joy** or mental happiness regarding the latter; (5) **flexibility**, in which mind and body function appropriately; (6) **concentration**; and (7) **evenness**, in which the mind enters the natural state, free from the conditions of lack of clarity and wildness. **These seven are elements of the path of seeing, the essence of enlightenment. They will make one accumulate or accomplish the positive actions that help one attain nirvana.**

ii. *A specific explanation of the profound yoga of wisdom related to sustained calm*

(1) *Brief introduction*

Lacking wisdom, concentration fails,
 And without concentration, wisdom too.
 For someone who has both, samsara's sea
 Fills no more than the print left by a hoof. (107)

Without the wisdom that understands correctly the particular and general characteristics of phenomena **there is no developing concentration**, because it is necessary to concentrate in meditation on a subject that has been understood through wisdom.⁷⁸ **Again, without concentration there is not the wisdom** that knows the nature of things, because it has been said by the Buddha that it is from settling the mind in meditation that one has the perfect knowledge of things as they are. **Know that for a yogi who has both** one-pointed concentration and the wisdom that knows how things

truly are, **the ocean of existence is like the water in a hoofprint**, and as easily crossed. By wisdom is meant the correct realization of the no-self of the individual and the no-self of phenomena, because nothing else can completely destroy existence. Thus without wisdom concentration will go astray, but without concentration there is no benefit from having wisdom alone. So by completing the path of sustained calm and profound insight combined, one attains nirvana. Of these, profound insight is more important than sustained calm, which is why it is said by those who praised the Buddha's teachings:

*Because they do not follow your teaching,
Ignorant, blind individuals,
Even having reached the peak of existence,
Suffer again and accomplish existence.*

and,

*Those who follow your teaching,
Though they might not attain the main concentration,
Will put an end to existence
Even under the demons' watchful eyes.*

(2) Detailed explanation

(a) *What one has to abandon: views on which the Buddha did not give an opinion, and which are incorrect approaches to the way things are*

The Kinsman of the Sun did well pronounce
With silence on the fourteen worldly points.
On these you must not ponder or reflect,
With them your mind will never be at peace. (108)

The Buddha Bhagavan, the **Friend of the Sun**,⁷⁹ in his teachings perfectly pronounced on fourteen points about the world on which he did not give an opinion.⁸⁰ These are as follows:

- ◆ Four that relate to parinirvana: that a Buddha, beyond death, exists; that he does not exist; that he both exists and does not exist; or that he neither exists nor does not exist.

- ♦ Four that relate to the past: that the self and the world are eternal, impermanent, both, or neither.
- ♦ Four that relate to the future: that the self and the world have an end, do not have an end, have both, or have neither.
- ♦ And two that relate to body and life: is a given body a life, or is the body different from the life?

There is no need to answer such questions because the subject,⁸¹ permanence, does not exist, and therefore its properties⁸² cannot exist either, so there is no point in answering.⁸³ Here “life” is a synonym of “self.”

Why are these referred to as “points on which the Buddha did not give an opinion?” When certain non-Buddhists asked the Tathagata about these points, he, knowing that their question had as its premise a permanent self, did not pronounce on its being permanent, impermanent, or otherwise because he thought that it would be inappropriate to examine the properties of a nonexistent subject.⁸⁴ At the same time he thought it would not be helpful to refute the subject saying, “the basis of predication does not exist.” So he said nothing. This is why we speak of “points on which the Buddha did not give an opinion.”

There is another explanation, as follows. The self is the individual labelled in dependence on the aggregates. The world is the five causal aggregates. Because these arise interdependently they have no intrinsic nature, and for this reason they do not exist as permanent or impermanent or otherwise. As it is said:

*Anything that arises interdependently
Is devoid of any essential nature.*

Therefore they are not to be taught as being permanent, impermanent, or anything else. Since the Tathagata considered the questioners to be unsuitable vessels for the profound teachings he did not teach interdependence as being devoid of intrinsic nature either. So this is why these topics are referred to as “points on which the Buddha did not give an opinion.” *The Jewel Garland* states:

*If asked whether the world has an end,
The Victorious One will remain silent.
Why? Subjects as profound as that
He does not teach to unsuitable vessels.*

*This is because, the wise know well,
The All-Knowing One is omniscient.*

Do not reflect on these views, believing that there is some truth in them, because if one is impregnated with the poison of wrong views, the poison of afflictive emotions will proliferate. **This thinking about them is not the way to liberate the mind in peace**: the intellect will become confused and the mind infertile.

(b) The antidote: the true mode of being that is interdependence

*(i) Interdependence*⁸⁵

From ignorance comes action, and from that
Comes consciousness, thence name-and-form appears.
From that arise the six sense faculties,
Whence contact comes, thus did the Buddha teach. (109)

And then from contact feeling comes to be,
And based on feeling, craving will appear.
Again from craving grasping will be born,
And then becoming, and from this there's birth. (110)

Then once there's birth, comes misery untold,
And sickness, ageing, wants frustrated, death,
Decay, in short the whole great mass of pain.
If birth is stopped, all this will be no more. (111)

In the *Sutra of Interdependence* the Bhagavan states:

*O Monks, if there is this, this will come about.
Because this has taken birth, this will be born.
Thus, because of the condition of ignorance, there are
conditioning factors ... (and so on),
Because of the condition of birth there is ageing-and-death,
And misery, lamenting, unhappiness, and conflict.
Thus there will arise this great mass that is only suffering.*

and,

*Likewise by stopping ignorance one stops conditioning factors,
And so by stopping birth ageing-and-death, misery,
Lamenting, unhappiness and conflict are all stopped.
Thus this great mass of suffering will be stopped.*

What does this mean? **From ignorance**, the view that the aggregates are or belong to the self, what we call “action”—meritorious, nonmeritorious, and unwavering⁸⁶—arises, and **from action** the **consciousness** that seizes a birth with habitual karmic tendencies is born. According to the *Verses on Interdependence*, the consciousness first enters the mother’s womb. **From that** consciousness, the five aggregates of the embryo and other stages **are fully produced as name and form**, the latter being a combination of the elements and their compounds.⁸⁷ Then, as that “name-and-form” grows, **the six inner sense powers**, such as that of the eye, are produced; **and from these six sense powers, contact** (which is the coming together of object, organ, and consciousness) **occurs, as the Capable One has declared.**

From contact, a **feeling** of happiness or suffering arises, **and based on that feeling there comes craving**—accepting some things because one wants to be happy and rejecting others because one wants to avoid being unhappy. When **craving**, which initiates the acceptance of happiness and the rejection of suffering, increases greatly, **grasping is born. Then from that grasping**, the capacity of revived habitual karmic tendencies to take rebirth becomes very powerful and **becoming will occur. From becoming comes birth** in the next life.

Once there is birth, misery occurs, tormenting the body and mind; there is **illness** as changes in one’s constitution occur; **ageing** as one’s youthfulness alters; **frustrated desire** for things like food and clothes; **death** when one’s life force changes; **and physical decay** beyond one’s own control, and **other difficulties as a result** of which one laments vocally and feels unhappy mentally, and so forth. Thus there comes about **the whole enormous mass of suffering.** Now by putting an end to the root (i.e., ignorance), conditioning factors are stopped, and by halting them, consciousness and the others are halted; and **by halting birth, all this—ageing and the rest—will be brought to an end.**

How long does it take to complete a cycle of these twelve interdepend-

ent links? No more nor less than three lifetimes. Thus, ignorance, conditioning factors, and consciousness are completed in a previous life, because they are the propellers for taking birth. The links from name-and-form through to feeling are completed in the middle life, because they are by their nature the fully ripened effect. Craving, grasping, and becoming are also completed in the middle life, because they are fully ripened effects that arise from conditions. Birth and ageing-and-death are completed in the next life, because the last link in this life is becoming and birth is to be accomplished as a result of the latter. Further, as a result of birth, ageing-and-death occur.

In this scheme of things, the first two lives do not necessarily occur contiguously, because it is possible for one's present name-and-form to have been propelled by ignorance and so on dating from more than a hundred kalpas in the past. In the case of the fully ripened effect of an "action whose effect is definitely to be experienced in the next life,"⁸⁸ it is possible for the first two lives to occur one after the other without intervening lives. The last two lives are necessarily contiguous, because birth and ageing-and-death in the next life arise as a result of becoming in this life. For this reason, birth and ageing-and-death in this life do not belong to the same cycle of interdependent links as this life's name-and-form and so on, for they do not arise as a result of this life's craving and grasping. What, then, does happen? They belong to the same cycle as the previous life's name-and-form, because this life's birth and ageing-and-death arise as a result of the craving, grasping, and becoming in that previous life.

Thus childish beings have all twelve interdependent links even in this present life, but these are a combination of interdependent links belonging to three lives, past, middle, and future. In this case, ageing-and-death belongs to a previous cycle. Ignorance, conditioning factors, and consciousness are the interdependent links belonging to the next cycle, because they are the propellers for birth in a future life. Name-and-form through to becoming are the interdependent links of this life.

Thus the twelve links present in this life are also what dispel confusion concerning past and future lives. Name-and-form through to feeling are the propelled results of a previous life; birth and ageing-and-death are the accomplished results: from these one can infer the existence of former lives. Ignorance, conditioning factors, and consciousness are the links that propel birth in a future life; craving, grasping, and becoming are the accomplishing causes: from these one can infer the existence of future

lives. As one establishes how the twelve links present in this life are the original cause and end result of past and future lives, and one uses the same principles to work out the twelve interdependent links of past and future lives, one will fully appreciate how the twelve links of existence go round and round, with neither beginning nor end, like a whirling fire brand. As the Acharya⁸⁹ said:

*From the three come two,
From the two come seven, and the seven too
Give rise to three; thus the wheel of existence
Goes round and round, again and again.*

(ii) *The importance of interdependence*

Within the treasury of Buddha's words
There's none so precious, so profound as this.
And those who see that things dependently arise
Do see the Buddha, perfect knower of the truth. (112)

This principle of **dependent arising** that we have explained is **the most precious thing in the treasury of the Buddha's speech** because the essence of what all his teachings express can be condensed into adopting and avoiding, and dependent arising is what explains that. And it is on the basis of dependent arising that the Buddha taught the Middle Way, which is free from self and other, from both, and from eternalism and nihilism. It is **profound** and difficult for others to understand. **Those who correctly see this dependent arising see the Buddha, the sublime form of he who knows the true nature** of all things, for the Buddha is described in terms of the dharmakaya, which is no different from the natural state of interdependence. As it is said in the *Rice Seedling Sutra*:

*They who know dependent arising know the Dharma,
They who know the Dharma know the Tathagata.*

In other words, if one understands interdependence, one understands the Dharma of the Middle Way, which is free from eternalism and nihilism, and by putting that into practice one will attain Buddhahood.

b. The path of meditation

i. The essence of the path, the eightfold noble path

Perfect view and livelihood, with effort,
Mindfulness and concentration, perfect speech,
And conduct, perfect thought—the path's eight limbs—
To find true peace, please meditate on these. (113)

Right view, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, speech, conduct, and right thought are aspects of, and contributors to, **the noble path**.

- ◆ The noble path of right view is what was realized on the path of seeing, the wisdom that results from thorough, intelligent investigation.
- ◆ The noble path of right thought is the motivation to use one's speech to teach others according to one's own realization.
- ◆ The noble path of right speech is the verbal expression that issues from that realization in revealing the true nature of how things are.
- ◆ The noble path of right conduct is the physical and verbal expression related to avoiding anything that contravenes discipline, avoiding actions that do not respect the five basic vows.⁹⁰
- ◆ The noble path of right livelihood is to clothe and feed oneself in accord with the Dharma.
- ◆ The noble path of right effort is to be diligent in meditation as the path.
- ◆ The noble path of right mindfulness is not to forget the object of meditation as the path.
- ◆ Right concentration is to remain one-pointed on that object of meditation.

At the stage of the path of meditation, **these eight elements** are parts of the noble path and contributors to it, and for this reason we speak of the eightfold noble path. So **in order to attain peace** (i.e., nirvana), **you must meditate** on them.

ii. *How that constitutes the path*

To take birth is to suffer, and to crave
Is its immense and universal source.
Make craving cease and freedom will be yours,
To achieve that take the Eightfold Noble Path. (114)

This birth, which is by nature the five causal aggregates, is **suffering**, as we find in the sutras:

In short, the five causal aggregates are suffering.

What we call craving, which is attachment to the five tainted aggregates, is **the origin of that suffering**. As the Buddha said in a sutra:

What is the noble truth of the origin of suffering? Craving is the origin of suffering, together with attachment to delight, which seems to make one happy.

This is the principal cause of birth in existence, and it is therefore **immense**. **Cessation**, whereby all these sufferings are brought to a halt, is **liberation**, and the path for attaining that is **this eightfold noble path** that has just been described.

iii. *The most important thing on the path, the wisdom that sees the four truths*

For you to see these same Four Noble Truths
You must strive hard to practice constantly. (115ab)

In order to see the ultimate nature of these Four Noble Truths that have just been described, be **diligent** in **constantly practicing the path**.

3. Encouragement for putting the above points into practice

a. Encouragement in terms of someone of modest potential accomplishing the practice

Even worldly men with fortune in their laps,
 Through knowledge, crossed that river, troubled states;
 And even those who realized the truth
 Did not fall from the heavens, nor emerge
 Like crops of corn from earth's dark depths, but once
 Were ruled by kleshas and were ordinary men. (115cd, 116)

Even laymen such as King Bimbisara,⁹¹ in whose laps the splendor—the wealth and fortune—of a kingdom reside, have seen the truth through perfect knowledge and crossed the river of afflictive emotions. So you too, O King, must do likewise, says Nagarjuna.

Not one of all the sublime beings who have appeared—individuals who had direct realization of the Dharma of the four truths—was already a sublime being right from the beginning: they did not fall from the sky, nor did they emerge from the darkness of the earth like a crop. In the past they were subject to afflictive emotions—they were ordinary people dominated by the afflictive emotions. They are therefore worth following as an example for accomplishing the path.

b. Encouragement in terms of essentializing the training

O Fearless One, what need to tell you more?
 For here's the counsel that will truly help:
 The vital point is tame your mind, for mind's
 The root of Dharma, so the Buddha said. (117)

Intrepid One, says Nagarjuna addressing the king, for he has no fear of opponents, **why tell you too much?** There is no need. **The most essential**—the principal or most important—**instruction that benefits** both temporarily and ultimately **is this: tame your mind** by stopping negative actions and undertaking virtue. If you were to ask why, **the Bhagavan has declared the mind to be the root of the Dharma.** As it is said:

*Mind it is that influences the world,
The mind that leads and guides it.
Because of this sole phenomenon—mind—
Come, following, all phenomena.*⁹²

and,

*To tame the mind is excellent,
By taming mind one is led to peace.*

c. Encouragement in terms of its being acceptable to practice according to one's ability

It's hard enough for monks to follow perfectly
All these instructions that I've given you.
Yet practice excellence, the very pith
Of one of these, and give your life its sense. (118)

O King, it is difficult enough for fully ordained monks, who apply themselves exclusively to positive actions, to perfectly and completely carry out all the instructions that I have given you above, so how could one expect laymen distracted by numerous activities to do so? Nevertheless, the essence, as it were, of practicing or accomplishing whatever you can of the main points of these instructions is to rely on and familiarize yourself with good qualities, so by doing this make your life meaningful. That way you will be following the Buddha's teaching and also gradually obtain other good qualities.

III. Epilogue

A. How to rejoice and dedicate

1. Dedication

Rejoicing in the virtuous deeds of all,
 Now dedicate your three good kinds of acts
 To all that they may come to Buddhahood. (119abc)

Rejoicing in all the positive actions, tainted and untainted, of all beings, whether ordinary or sublime, may you **entirely dedicate the three kinds of positive deeds**—those performed with the body, speech, and mind—utterly purified of the three concepts⁹³ **in order that you may attain** perfect, infinite **Buddhahood** for the sake of others, so that through this mass of virtue, as long as the world lasts you will be its protector.

2. The result of that dedication

a. The temporary result

Then by this mass of virtuous deeds may you,
 In boundless lives in worlds of gods and men,
 Be master of the yoga of all excellence,
 And like Sublime Chenrezig, may you work
 To guide the many feeble, stricken souls. (119d, 120)

And thus may you take many rebirths and dispel all ills,
 Old age, desire, and hatred in a perfect Buddhafield. (121ab)

Subsequently, by this mass of virtue that has been dedicated, while you are practicing on the path, **in infinite lives**, being born **in the world of gods and men**, may you **master the yoga of all** the infinite qualities such as memory and concentration. **Then**, for the sake of others, **by acting like Arya Avalokiteshvara** and following his example in protecting destitute beings from all temporary and ultimate fears such as those of the eight and sixteen dangers—lions, elephants, and so forth, **may you guide** (by means of the Dharma) **many destitute beings stricken** by suffering, and complete the accumulations. And **having taken birth** again and again for the benefit of others until the end of existence, may you **dispel illness and ageing**

(which are included in the truth of suffering) and **attachment** and **aversion** (which are included in the origin of suffering), everything having been purified through your own sources of virtue into a **Buddhahfield**.

b. The ultimate result: Buddhahood

May you have infinite life, as a Protector of the World
Like Buddha Amitabha, Sublime Lord of Boundless Light. (121cd)

Were one to ask whom one will be like, Nagarjuna answers: **May you be the Protector of the three worlds, like the Buddha Amitabha**, remaining as long as samsara endures, **in infinite** realms, with infinite disciples, infinite **life span**, and so forth.

B. Summarizing everything as the result of the above path

And springing from your wisdom, discipline, and bounty, may
your fame
And stainless virtues spread throughout the gods' realms,
in the sky
And on the earth, and may you firmly quell the carefree ways
Of gods and men whose sole delight and joy is pretty girls. (122)

And once you've reached the Mighty Buddha state, removing fear
And birth and death for hosts of stricken and afflicted souls,
Then let mere name be stilled, beyond the world, and reach
The never-changing level, free from fear, that knows no wrong.
(123)

Nagarjuna now sums up as follows. As a result of your **wisdom**, which is the realization of the natural state, your faultless **discipline** and **generosity**—from that perfect **source** may the **great fame** of your consummate splendor and the **immaculate** virtues of your body, speech, and mind (for they are devoid of negative action) **spread throughout the realms of the gods and in space and on the earth**, the human world. **Then** may you quell the **light-heartedness** and carefree ways of **men living on earth** and the six classes of **gods** of the world of desire **in the celestial realms**, who carelessly **indulge in pleasure** with lovely young maidens; may you establish them **firmly** on the path and lead them to nirvana, in which suffering has

been perfectly pacified.

May you reach the state of the **Mighty Buddha**, one who, for the host of sentient beings tormented by suffering due to afflictive emotions, removes fear (due mainly to concrete views), **birth** (due principally to ignorance, actions, and craving) and **death** (when one's karma and life span run out and one is like a lost child abandoned by its parents). **Then** may you **pacify** all sufferings in the state **beyond the world**, which is the cessation of the five tainted aggregates and the unmistakable meaning of the true nature in which there has never been even the **mere name** of the relative. **Reach the level of fearlessness**, where all fear of existence has been eliminated, the state of **unchanging** youth, ever-untainted, the state **not subject to wrong** (i.e., death), for it is devoid of karmic obscurations, free of faults and unchanging, the state of the extraordinary and sublime nirvana.

Part Three

THE CONCLUSION

I. The author's name

This completes the *Letter to a Friend* written by the Sublime Master Nagarjuna to a friend, King Surabhibhadra.

This completes the *Letter to a Friend* by the great master and protector of beings Arya Nagarjuna, one of the Six Ornaments who graced this world of Jambudvīpa, who was resplendent with the major and minor marks of a Buddha and who spoke with the sixty branches of melodious speech. He wrote it to his friend King Surabhibhadra.

II. The translators' names

It was translated, corrected, and authenticated by the learned Indian abbot Sarvajñānadeva and the great reviser and translator Venerable Paltsek.

The learned Indian abbot Sarvajñānadeva ("omniscient god") and the great reviser and translator, the venerable Kawa Paltsek translated and corrected this and produced a definitive version.

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Part Three THE CONCLUSION and completion of the text

I. The author's name

II. The translators' names

Notes

NOTE TO THE TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

- 1 Beings of modest capacity, who avoid negative actions and undertake positive actions in order to attain the higher realms; beings of middling capacity, who practice the path in order to attain liberation for themselves; and beings of greater capacity, who practice the path in order that they and all beings may attain perfect Buddhahood.

NOTE TO THE ROOT TEXT

- 1 As explained in the commentary, the fields are twofold and are therefore related to the fourth and fifth kind of deed.

NOTES TO THE COMMENTARY

- 1 Prakrit evolved from Sanskrit.
- 2 The words enclosed in parentheses here and in the following section are the only instances of additions made by the translator. As a rule, parentheses elsewhere in the translation have been used simply as punctuation devices and not to indicate an addition or comment by the translator.
- 3 According to some authorities, Nagarjuna also wrote the *Ratnavali* (*The Jewel Garland*) for him. Surabhibhadra is just one of several possible translations into Sanskrit of the king's name in Tibetan (*bde spyod bzang po*). See Translator's Introduction.
- 4 This paragraph specifies four general criteria characteristic of the translator's homage in such texts: by whom homage is paid, when, how, and why.
- 5 Skt. *arya giti*.
- 6 Tib. *gsung rab*, Skt. *pravacana*, the teachings of the Buddha.
- 7 "And so forth" refers in each case to the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha respectively as listed in the *Sutra Remembering the Three Jewels* (*Tri-ratna-anusmrti-sutra, dkon mchog rjes dran*).

- 8 Tib. *bde 'gro*, i.e., as celestial beings or humans.
- 9 Lit. "in order to take their essence." There is a play on words here: "to take the essence of things that have no essence," in other words, to give meaning to things while bearing in mind that they are essentially void and meaningless.
- 10 These are the four "fields" (Tib. *zhing*): the field of good qualities, the field of suffering, the field of benefit, and the field of veneration (or offering).
- 11 "Pure conduct" (Tib. *tshang spyod*) is often used as a synonym for celibacy.
- 12 To make untrue claims that one has attained high realization or that one possesses supernatural powers is the most serious of lies and constitutes a root downfall of the pratimoksha vows.
- 13 In his commentary on Ngari Panchen's *Ascertaining the Three Vows* (*sdom gsum 'grel pa*), Dudjom Rinpoche points out that beings on the northern continent of Uttarakuru are not suitable supports for taking vows, unlike those on the other three continents of our world system (considered from the Buddhist cosmological point of view).
- 14 "Renewal and confession" (Tib. *gso sbyong*), also explained here as "nurturing and purifying," refers to the ritual of renewing one's vows and confessing downfalls. For laypeople observing this twenty-four-hour upavasa vow, the last two groups of three vows are considered together as a single vow, thus making eight vows in all.
- 15 I.e., the gods of the world of desire.
- 16 Angulimala (Tib. *sor phreng*) means "Finger Garland."
- 17 In *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (p. 264) he is referred to as Shankara.
- 18 In this case, killing his mother, which is one of the five crimes with immediate retribution (see Glossary).
- 19 Lit. "like a ball of yarn," going down and bouncing straight up again like a ball of yarn used as a child's toy.
- 20 I.e., as a cause of patience.
- 21 I.e., the consequence of others' anger.
- 22 "Temporary" result as opposed to the ultimate result mentioned in the previous verse.
- 23 Shantideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, translated by the Padmakara Translation Group (Boston: Shambhala, 1997), VI, 5 (end) and 6 (beginning).

- 24 Avoiding or giving up negative actions and adopting or undertaking positive actions.
- 25 For example, by recording it in notes, etc.
- 26 See the commentary on verse 21 above.
- 27 Tib. *snying po med pa*; i.e., there is nothing about the skin that could really be a cause for attachment, since like anything else that is subjected to proper analysis and broken down into its constituent elements, it is empty by nature.
- 28 *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, VIII, 65.
- 29 *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, VII, 9-10.
- 30 Vivid faith, eager or yearning faith, and confident faith. See *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, pp. 171-172; *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, p. 124.
- 31 In the commentary these seven have been annotated with numbers to indicate the order in which they are more usually known: (1) faith, (2) discipline, (3) generosity, (4) learning, (5) a sense of shame, (6) a sense of decency, and (7) wisdom.
- 32 Tib. *'byor pa'i dgos pa ni chog shes pa yin pa'i phyir*, lit. "the reason one acquires things is to be content." If one is content with what one has, one will no longer feel any need to acquire more.
- 33 For them, the aggregates, which ordinary beings associate with the individual self, are simply phenomena like any other.
- 34 The realms of the first concentration in the world of form; see chart on pp. 184-185.
- 35 Tib. *bsam gtan*, Skt. *samadhi*. In this section Kangyur Rinpoche speaks of the "antidote branch" (Tib. *gnyen po'i yan lag*), which is one of the three branches of the four concentrations, each concentration being described here in terms of antidote, benefit, and condition, this last being in each case "concentration" in the sense of a mind focused one-pointedly (Tib. *sems rtse gcig pa*). The different aspects of the four samadhis described here are also dealt with in *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, pp. 240-241.
- 36 "Concentration" in this case translates the Tibetan term *ting nge 'dzin*.
- 37 "Pure" (Tib. *tshangs*) in this context can equally be translated by the Sanskrit *brahma*.
- 38 The four samadhis, the eight perfect freedoms, and other factors that lead to enlightenment. See *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, Appendix 9, pp. 341 et seq.

- 39 These are “elements” from among the thirty-seven elements of enlightenment, in this case the elements associated with the path of joining.
- 40 The sublime path comprises the path of seeing and the path of meditation. The supreme mundane level, as the final stage on the path of joining, is the point at which a Bodhisattva attains the path of seeing.
- 41 See chart on pp. 182-183 for a schematic presentation of the path of joining, of which this verse is an overview. The order in which the four stages of warmth, peak, acceptance, and supreme mundane level, and the two groups of five elements associated with them, are dealt with is not the usual one. Further clarification can be found in *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, pp. 302-303.
- 42 I.e., the thirty-seven elements leading to enlightenment (see chart on pp. 182-183). The four close mindfulnesses (related to the lesser path of accumulation) are referred to specifically in verse 54, while verse 48 describes the four aspects of the meditation associated with these. The elements of the path of joining were mentioned in verse 45, and those related to the path of seeing and the path of meditation will be described in verses 106 and 113 respectively. See also Appendix 6 in *Treasury of Precious Qualities*.
- 43 The three kinds of wisdom that come from listening, reflecting, and meditating.
- 44 The three types of suffering: the suffering of change, suffering upon suffering, and the all-pervading suffering of everything composite. See *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, pp. 78-79 and *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, pp. 78-79.
- 45 In other words, the same statement made for each of the five aggregates (see Glossary, “Five aggregates”).
- 46 I.e., the belief in a self.
- 47 Chandrakirti, *Introduction to the Middle Way*, translated by the Padmakara Translation Group (Boston: Shambhala, 2002), VI, 127. Kangyur Rinpoche has interpreted the last two lines of this verse somewhat differently from Mipham Rinpoche (in his commentary on the *Madhyamakavatara*). These lines have therefore been modified accordingly.
- 48 Tib. *dbang phyug*, the creator of the universe according to some ancient Indian philosophical systems.
- 49 The above is a highly condensed summary of Mahayana Buddhist arguments against the philosophical tenets of the principal non-Buddhist schools in ancient India. These arguments are developed in numerous Madhyamika texts. See, for example, Khenchen Kunzang Pelden and Minyak Kunzang Pelden,

Wisdom: Two Buddhist Commentaries, translated by the Padmakara Translation Group (St. Léon-sur-Vézère: Editions Padmakara), 1993, 1999.

- 50 Tib. *kun sbyor*. Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche explains these as afflictive emotions that make one “stick.” *The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary (bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo)* describes them as being afflictive emotions because they “join or link one to suffering.”
- 51 Tib. *bsam gtan bzhi'i ting nge 'dzin*.
- 52 Tib. *spong ba bdun*, the avoidance of the three negative actions of the body (killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct) and four negative actions of speech (lying, sowing discord, harsh speech, and worthless chatter).
- 53 Tib. *lhag pa'i sems*, lit. “superior mind” or “superior thoughts,” defined as “superior to non-Buddhist concentration.”
- 54 Tib. *kun nas nyon mongs phyogs*, refers to the first two truths, suffering and the cause of suffering.
- 55 This refers to the four close mindfulnesses, the first of the thirty-seven elements leading to enlightenment: mindfulness of the body, of feelings, of consciousness, and of mental objects.
- 56 A detailed account of the four great wheels is given in Chapter 5 of *Treasury of Precious Qualities*.
- 57 Khenpo Pema Sherab explains that “superior” (Tib. *lhag*) means here that the lama should have more knowledge than the disciple.
- 58 The results of the trainings in discipline, concentration, and wisdom are that one becomes respectively disciplined (Tib. *dul*), peaceful (Tib. *zhi ba*), and perfectly peaceful (Tib. *nye bar zhi ba*).
- 59 Central land, a place where one has access to the Buddha’s teachings.
- 60 The four human rebirths with no opportunity to practice the Dharma are rebirth with wrong views, where there is no Buddha, as a barbarian, and dumb (mentally and physically).
- 61 The gods in the formless realm exist in a state of mental blankness, so although they are classed as sentient beings, they do not actually have the perception of being such.
- 62 Lit. the “bearable” pleasure (Tib. *bde ba bzod du rung ba*), in contrast with the “unbearable” (Tib. *mi bzad*) suffering in the last line of this verse.
- 63 Tib. *chu bo rab med pa*, the Unfordable River, Skt. *Vaitarani*.

- 64 I.e., the third category of actions classified according to whether their result is (1) experienced in the same life as that in which they are committed, (2) in the life immediately following it, or (3) in other subsequent lives. The second case refers to the five crimes with immediate retribution that result in rebirth in the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed as soon as one dies (see the story of Udayana on p. 91), but in the third case, as referred to in this verse, one has first reaped the fruit of some immensely powerful positive deed that has taken chronological precedence in its effect over that of a negative deed meriting rebirth in the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed.
- 65 According to Indian mythology the sun and moon are celestial beings whose bodies shine with light, but it was popularly held that the light that shines on the earth is the light from the base of the celestial palaces in which the sun and moon dwell.
- 66 Nagarjuna lists these hells in a different order than the usual one. Kangyur Rinpoche has therefore written numbers against their names in the text to correspond with their usual order: Reviving, Black Line, Crushing, Screaming, Great Screaming, Heat, Intense Heat, and Torment Unsurpassed.
- 67 This verse serves as a basis for calculating the life span in each of the first six hot hells, where one day in each hell is equal to a lifetime in the corresponding god realm in the world of desire (the Kamaloka), and the life span in each hell is equal in hell years to the number of god years of a god's lifetime in the corresponding god realm. (To get an idea of how long this is in human terms, one also needs to introduce into this equation the number of human years that correspond to a day in the respective god realm.) Thus one day in the Reviving Hell is equivalent to a lifetime in the realm of the Four Great Kings (in which one of their days is equivalent to fifty human years), and since the gods in that realm live five hundred years (in their own terms, that is), the beings in the Reviving Hell also live five hundred years, but Reviving Hell years in their case. In the Black Line Hell, one day is equivalent to a lifetime (one thousand years) in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three (in which one of their days is equivalent to one hundred human years), and Black Line beings there live one thousand Black Line years. And so on, the lifetimes in the Crushing, Screaming, Great Screaming, and Heat Hells being calculated in terms of the lifetimes in the Heaven Free of Conflict, the Joyous Realm, Enjoying Magical Creations, and Mastery over Others' Creations respectively. See also *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, pp. 64 and 65.
- 68 Tib. *spangs pa*, more usually translated as "reject," but the verb is used here in a poetic sense to mean that the animals' being unsuitable vessels has prevented them from practicing virtue.

- 69 Tib. *dge ba nge 'byed cha mthun*: positive actions which accord with the wisdom of the path of seeing and are therefore distinct from those of ordinary beings.
- 70 An Asian palm tree, the tala tree.
- 71 *Introduction to the Middle Way*, VI, 71.
- 72 *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, V, 7 (last two lines) and 8 (first two lines).
- 73 Tib. *rten de la*, lit. "in that support," i.e., rebirth as an asura.
- 74 The "propelling action" is that which determines the particular kind of rebirth (in this case, as an asura). The "completing action" determines the conditions and circumstances experienced within that rebirth. The argument here is whether rebirth as an asura is determined by a negative propelling action (which would normally result in lower rebirth) but redeemed, as it were, by a positive completing action (which results in asuras having conditions similar to those of the gods); or whether a positive propelling action gives asuras a celestial rebirth which is spoiled by jealousy stemming from a negative completing action. See also *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, p. 50.
- 75 Other Buddhist authors have used the image of a beautiful woman's efforts as she panics at the prospect of being disfigured as a yardstick for endeavor in the practice, but here Nagarjuna advises us not to use such endeavor to stop *samsara* but rather to put our efforts into stopping being reborn.
- 76 Tib. *rnam byang phyogs*, refers to the last two truths, cessation and the path.
- 77 Jaina, Tib. *rgyal ba pa*, the founder of the Jain religion.
- 78 The wisdom referred to here is rather the wisdom gained through hearing and through reflection. Without these one does not have a subject on which to concentrate or meditate.
- 79 Friend of the Sun (Tib. *nyi ma'i gnyen*) is an epithet of the Buddha Shakya-muni.
- 80 In this case the Buddha's "perfect pronouncement" (Tib. *rab gsungs*) was to remain silent when asked about these fourteen points (Tib. *lung ma bstan pa bcu bzhi*).
- 81 Tib. *khyad gzhi*, the basis of predication.
- 82 Tib. *khyad chos*, the predicated properties.
- 83 It is important to bear in mind that, in this context, the word "exist" implies existence as a single, permanent, independent entity. Any reference to "nonex-

- istence" is, therefore, used to invalidate such a notion, rather than imply a nihilistic void.
- 84 I.e., the predicated properties of a nonexistent basis of predication.
- 85 Also called "dependent arising." Kangyur Rinpoche gives a more detailed account of this in *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, pp. 85-93.
- 86 Unwavering action, Tib. *mi g.yo ba'i las*. An action, in the form of a profound state of meditative concentration (but devoid of bodhichitta), that invariably results in rebirth in the world of form or the formless world. The results of meritorious or positive actions (Tib. *bsod nams*) and nonmeritorious or negative actions (Tib. *bsod nam ma yin pa*), on the other hand, are dependent on conditions and therefore it is not possible to say with certainty exactly how they will ripen.
- 87 "Name" comprises the embryo's four aggregates of feeling, perception, conditioning factors, and consciousness; "form" is its fifth aggregate, and refers to the physical matter of the embryo.
- 88 One of the five crimes with immediate retribution, for example. See note 64.
- 89 Acharya Nagarjuna.
- 90 The upasaka's vows not to kill, steal, indulge in sexual misconduct, lie, and consume alcohol.
- 91 Bimbisara was the ruler of the Indian kingdom of Magadha during the Buddha's lifetime and an important patron of the Buddha and his Sangha. He was murdered by his son, Ajatashatru, who nevertheless later became an Arhat (see p. 91).
- 92 Lit. "all dharmas." Although this has been translated in its widest sense, the specific intent of this verse within the context that it was spoken is that all virtue or merit (one of the ten meanings of the word "dharma") originates in the mind.
- 93 Tib. *'khor gsum*, the concepts of subject, object, and action as truly existent.

Glossary

Abhidharma (Skt.), *chos mngon pa*. One of the Three Pitakas; the branch of the Buddha's teachings that deals mainly with psychology and logic.

Afflictive emotions, *nyon mongs pa*, Skt. *klesha*. Mental factors that influence thoughts and actions and produce suffering. The five principal afflictive emotions are attachment, aversion or hatred, bewilderment or ignorance, jealousy, and pride.

Aggregates. *See* Five aggregates.

Amitabha (Skt.), *'od dpag med*. The Buddha of Infinite Light.

Arhat (Skt.), *dgra bcom pa*. Lit. "one who has vanquished the enemy" (the enemy being afflictive emotions): a practitioner of the Basic or Fundamental Vehicle who has attained the cessation of suffering, i.e., nirvana, but not the Perfect Buddhahood of the Great Vehicle.

Arya (Skt.), *'phags pa*. A sublime being; in the Great Vehicle, a Bodhisattva on one of the ten Bodhisattva levels.

Asura (Skt.), *lha min*. Also called a demi-god or jealous god: a class of beings whose jealous nature spoils their enjoyment of their fortunate rebirth in the higher realms and involves them in constant conflict with the gods in the god realms.

Avalokiteshvara (Skt.), *spyang ras gzigs*. Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

Avici (Skt.). The Sanskrit name of the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed. *See* Torment Unsurpassed.

Bhagavan (Skt.), *bcom ldan 'das*. An epithet of the Buddha, defined as he who has overcome (*bcom*) the four demons, who possesses (*ldan*) the six excellent qualities, and who does not dwell in either of the two extremes of samsara and nirvana but has gone beyond them (*'das*).

Bhikshu (Skt.), *dge slong*. A fully ordained monk.

Bhikshuni (Skt.), *dge slong ma*. A fully ordained nun.

Bodhisattva (Skt.), *byang chub sems dpa'*. A follower of the Great Vehicle whose aim is enlightenment for all beings.

Brahma (Skt.), *tshangs pa*. Lit. "pure": the name given to the principal god in the world of form.

Brahmin (Skt.). A member of the priestly caste in Indian society.

Capable One, *thub pa*, Skt. *Muni*. An epithet of the Buddha Shakyamuni, often translated as "Mighty One." He was called capable because, when he was a Bodhisattva and there was no one who had the courage to tame the most unfortunate beings with extremely gross views, afflictive emotions, and actions, he, our kind Teacher, was the only one, of all the 1,002 Buddhas of this Excellent Kalpa, who had the strength or capacity to vow to benefit them.

Childish beings, *byis pa*. Ordinary, ignorant beings who lack wisdom and are thus trapped in samsara.

Conqueror, *rgyal ba*, Skt. *Jina*. Also "Victorious One": a general epithet for a Buddha.

Dharma (Skt.), *chos*. The Buddha's doctrine, the teachings transmitted in the scriptures, and the qualities of realization attained through their practice. Note that the Sanskrit word *dharma* has ten principal meanings, including "anything that can be known." Vasubandhu defines the Dharma, in its Buddhist sense, as the "protective dharma" (*chos skyobs*): "It corrects (*'chos*) every one of the enemies, the afflictive emotions; and it protects (*skyobs*) us from the lower realms: these two characteristics are absent from other spiritual traditions."

Demon, *bdud*, Skt. *mara*. In the context of Buddhist meditation and practice, a demon is any factor that obstructs enlightenment. Four principal demons are described in the teachings: the demon of the aggregates, the demon of afflictive emotions, the demon of the Lord of Death, and the demon of the sons of the gods (or demon of distraction).

- Eight great dangers (or fears), *'jigs pa chen po brgyad*. Those related to lions, elephants, fire, snakes, water, chains, robbers, and flesh eaters (harmful spirits and rakshasas).
- Eight perfect qualities (of water), *yan lag brgyad*. Sweet, cool, soft, light (on the digestion), clear, without odor, not irritating to the throat, soothing on the stomach.
- Elimination and realization, *spangs rtogs*. Eliminating (or getting rid of) all obscurations, and realizing the two kinds of knowledge of a Buddha (q.v.).
- Five aggregates, *phung po lnga*, Skt. *pañchaskandha*. The five psycho-physical components into which a person can be analyzed and which together produce the illusion of a self. They are form, feeling, perception, conditioning factors, and consciousness.
- Five causal aggregates, *nye bar len pa'i phung po lnga*. The five "tainted" aggregates produced by afflictive emotions and actions in a previous life and which will again produce further afflictive emotions and actions.
- Five crimes with immediate retribution, *mtshams med lnga*, Skt. *pañchanantariya*. Also called five sins with immediate effect: (1) killing one's father, (2) killing one's mother, (3) killing an Arhat, (4) creating a split in the Sangha, and (5) malevolently causing a Buddha to bleed. Someone who has committed one of these five actions takes rebirth in the Hell of Torment Unsurpassed immediately after death, without going through the intermediate state.
- Four concentrations, *bsam gtan bzhi*, Skt. *chaturdhyana*. The karmic result of practicing these four concentrations without integrating them with the path of enlightenment is that the meditator is reborn in one of the twelve ordinary realms of the four concentrations, in the world of form (see chart on pp. 184-185).
- Four Noble Truths, *'phags pa'i bden pa bzhi*, Skt. *chaturaryasatya*. The truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of cessation, and the truth of the path. These constitute the foundation of

Buddha Shakyamuni's doctrine, the first teaching that he gave (at Sar-nath near Varanasi) after attaining enlightenment.

Four samadhis. *See* Four concentrations.

Gods, *lha*, Skt. *deva*. A class of beings who, as a result of accumulating positive actions in previous lives, experience immense happiness and comfort, and are therefore considered by non-Buddhists as the ideal state to which they should aspire. Those in the worlds of form and formlessness experience an extended form of the meditation they practiced (without the aim of achieving liberation from samsara) in their previous life. Gods like Indra in the world of desire, as a result of their merit, have a certain power to affect the lives of other beings and are therefore worshipped, for example, by Hindus.

Great Vehicle, *theg pa chen po*, Skt. *Mahayana*. The vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, referred to as great because it aims at full Buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

Higher realms, *mtho ris*. The gods' realms, the asuras' realm, and the human realm.

Indra (Skt.), *brgya byin*. The ruler of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

Jambudvipa (Skt.), *'dzam bu gling*. The southern continent according to Buddhist cosmology, the world in which we live.

Kamaloka (Skt.), *'dod khams*. The world of desire.

Klesha (Skt.). The Sanskrit term for afflictive emotions.

Lasting happiness, *'nges legs*. Lit. "certain good" or "ultimate excellence": the lasting happiness of liberation and omniscience (i.e., Buddhahood).

Lower realms, *ngan song*. The hells, the preta realm, and the animal realm.

Madhyamika (Skt.), *dbu ma*. The philosophical doctrine propounded by Nagarjuna and his followers, the Middle Way that avoids the extremes of existence and nonexistence.

Mahamuni (Skt.), *thub pa chen po*. The Great Capable One, an epithet of Buddha Shakyamuni.

Mahayana (Skt.). *See* Great Vehicle.

- Mighty Victor, *rgyal dbang*. A Buddha who is victorious over the four demons.
- Mount Meru, *ri rab*. Lit. “the supreme mountain”: the four-sided mountain in the form of an inverted pyramid which is the center of our universe according to Buddhist cosmology.
- Muni (Skt.), *thub pa*. See Capable One.
- Naga (Skt.), *klu*. A serpentlike being (classed in the animal realm) living in the water or under the earth and endowed with magical powers and wealth. The most powerful ones have several heads.
- Nirvana (Skt.), *mya ngan las 'das pa*. Lit. “beyond suffering”: while this can be loosely understood as the goal of Buddhist practice, the opposite of *samsara*, it is important to realize that the term is understood differently by the different vehicles; the nirvana of the Basic Vehicle, the peace of cessation that an Arhat attains, is very different from a Buddha’s nirvana, the state of perfect enlightenment that transcends both *samsara* and nirvana.
- Non-Returner, *phyir mi 'ong ba*. In the context of the Basic Vehicle, a state of realization where one will no longer be reborn in the desire realm. It is the stage before the attainment of the level of Arhat. In the context of the Great Vehicle, a Bodhisattva Non-Returner is one who cannot return to a *samsaric* state of mind, though he may still manifest in *samsara* to benefit beings.
- Parinirvana (Skt.), *mya ngan 'das*. The point at which an enlightened being leaves his or her earthly body.
- Pitaka (Skt.), *sde snod*. Lit. “basket”: a collection of scriptures, originally in the form of palm leaf folios stored in baskets. The Buddha’s teachings are generally divided into three pitakas: Vinaya, Sutra, and Abhidharma.
- Pratimoksha (Skt.), *so sor thar pa*. Lit. “individual liberation”: the collective term for the different kinds of Buddhist ordination and their respective vows, as laid down in the Vinaya.

Pratyekabuddha (Skt.), *rang sangs rgyas*. A follower of the Basic Vehicle who attains liberation (the cessation of suffering) without the help of a spiritual teacher.

Preta (Skt.), *yi dvags*. Also known as hungry ghost or spirit: a class of beings whose attachment and miserliness in previous lives result in constant hunger and the frustration of their desires.

Profound insight, *lhag mthong*, Skt. *vipashyana*. The perception, through wisdom, of the true nature of things.

Samadhi (Skt.), *bsam gtan*. Meditative absorption of different degrees. Generally translated as "concentration."

Sangha (Skt.), *dge 'dun*. The community of Buddhist practitioners.

Samsara (Skt.), *'khor ba*. Lit. "wheel," and therefore also translated as "cyclic existence": the endless round of birth, death, and rebirth in which beings suffer as a result of their actions and afflictive emotions.

Sense of decency, *khrel yod*. Also "modesty," "consideration of others": to be ashamed because of what others might think if one commits negative actions. This is one of the seven noble riches (*'phags pa'i nor bdun*) listed in verse 32 of *Letter to a Friend*.

Sense of shame, *ngo tsha shes*. Also "conscientiousness," "honesty": to be ashamed of oneself if one commits negative actions. This is one of the seven noble riches (*'phags pa'i nor bdun*) listed in verse 32 of *Letter to a Friend*.

Seven precious attributes of royalty, *rin po che sna bdun*, Skt. *saptaratna*. Also called the "seven attributes of royalty" (*rgyal srid sna bdun*): the precious golden wheel, precious wish-fulfilling jewel, precious queen, precious minister, precious elephant, precious horse, and precious general.

Shastra (Skt.), *bstan bcos*. A commentary on the Buddha's teachings. The term shastra does not only apply to a commentary on one particular teaching (a named sutra, for example) but also includes works by both Indian and Tibetan masters that provide condensed or more accessible expositions of particular subjects.

Shramanera (Skt.), *dge tshul*. The first stage in monastic ordination. Shramaneras do not observe all the precepts of fully ordained bhikshus or bhikshunis, but it is incorrect to refer to them as “novices” in that many of them remain shramaneras throughout their lives without necessarily progressing to full ordination.

Shravaka (Skt.), *nyan thos*. Lit. “one who listens”: one who follows the Basic Vehicle of the Buddha’s teachings and aims to attain liberation for himself as an Arhat.

Six Ornaments, *rgyan drug*. The six great commentators on the Buddha’s teachings: Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, and Dharmakirti.

Six sense organs, *dbang po drug*, Skt. *sadindriya*. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Six transcendent perfections, *pha rol tu phyin pa drug*, Skt. *sadparamita*. Transcendent generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and wisdom.

Sixteen great dangers (or fears), *’jigs pa chen po bcu drug*. Those related to (1) earth (earthquakes, landslides), (2) water (oceans, floods, drowning), (3) fire, (4) wind (cyclones), (5) lightning, (6) weapons, (7) imprisonment and the law, (8) robbers, (9) ghosts, (10) wild elephants, (11) lions, (12) poisonous snakes and food poisoning, (13) epidemics and disease, (14) untimely death, (15) poverty, and (16) not accomplishing one’s wishes. Also listed as dangers and fears related to (1) obstacles created by *gyalpo* spirits, (2) celestial beings, (3) sicknesses caught from *sadag* spirits, (4) diseases such as leprosy, (5) famine, (6) war, (7) harm caused by *sadhus*, (8) harm caused by elemental spirits, (9) lightning, (10) frost and hail, (11) earthquakes, (12) fire, (13) water, (14) falling stars, (15) outer space, and (16) nightmares.

Sixteen subdivisions of the Four Noble Truths, *bden bzhi rnam pa bcu drug*. The four aspects of the truth of suffering—impermanent, unsatisfactory, empty, and not the self; those of the truth of origination—source, cause, intensely producing, and condition; those of the truth of cessation—cessation, pacification, goodness, and definitive; and those of

the truth of the path—path, pertinent, effective, and conducive to release. (See *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, Appendix 3.)

Skandha (Skt.). See Five aggregates.

Source of good, *dge rtsa*. A positive or virtuous act that serves as a cause propelling one towards happy states.

Sovereign of the Conquerors, *gyal ba'i dbang po*. An epithet of the Buddha, one who is victorious over the four demons.

Sugata (Skt.), *bde bar gshegs pa*. Lit. "one who has gone to bliss": an epithet of a Buddha.

Sustained calm, *zhi gnas*, Skt. *shamatha*. The basis of all concentrations: a calm, undistracted state of unwavering concentration.

Sutra (Skt.), *mdo*. (1) A scripture containing the teachings of the Buddha; (2) the Sutra-pitaka (*mdo sde*), the one of the Three Pitakas that deals with meditation.

Tainted, *zag bcas*. Lit. "possessing the cause of downfall (*zag pa*)": tainted by afflictive emotions, or by concepts of subject, object, and action.

Tala (Skt.). An Asian palm tree, the palmyra.

Three Jewels, *dkon mchog gsum*, Skt. *Triratna*. The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Three Pitakas, *sde snod gsum*, Skt. *tripitaka*. See Pitaka.

Three Trainings, *bslabs pa gsum*, Skt. *trishiksa*. The threefold training in discipline, concentration, and wisdom.

Three vehicles, *theg pa gsum*, Skt. *triyana*. The vehicles of the Shravakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas.

Three worlds, *kham sde gsum*. The world of desire, the world of form, and the formless world (see chart on pp. 184-185). Alternatively (*'jig rten gsum, sa gsum, srid gsum*), the world of gods above the earth, that of humans on the earth, and that of the nagas under the earth.

Thus Gone, *de bzhin gshegs pa*, Skt. *Tathagata*. An epithet of a Buddha.

Thusness, *de bzhin nyid*, Skt. *tathata*. The absolute nature of things, emptiness, the absolute space free from elaboration.

Tirthika (Skt.), *mu stegs pa*. A proponent of extreme philosophical views such as nihilism and eternalism. This term is often used to imply non-Buddhist religious traditions in India.

Torment Unsurpassed, *mnar med*, Skt. *Avici*. The most terrible of the hells, also called the Hell of Ultimate Torment.

Two kinds of knowledge, *mkhyen gnyis*. Knowledge of the nature of things (*ji lta ba'i mkhyen pa*) and knowledge of all things in their multiplicity (*ji snyed pa'i mkhyen pa*).

Two kinds of no-self, *bdag med gnyis*. The no-self of the individual (*gang zag gi bdag med*) and the no-self of phenomena (*chos kyi bdag med*).

Universal monarch, *'khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal po*, Skt. *chakravartin*. An emperor who, with his golden, silver, copper, or iron wheel, has dominion over the beings of the four continents. Universal monarchs only appear in certain eras when the human life span is greater than eighty thousand years.

Upasaka (Skt.), *dge bsnyen*. A layman who has taken refuge in the Three Jewels and keeps one or more of the basic precepts.

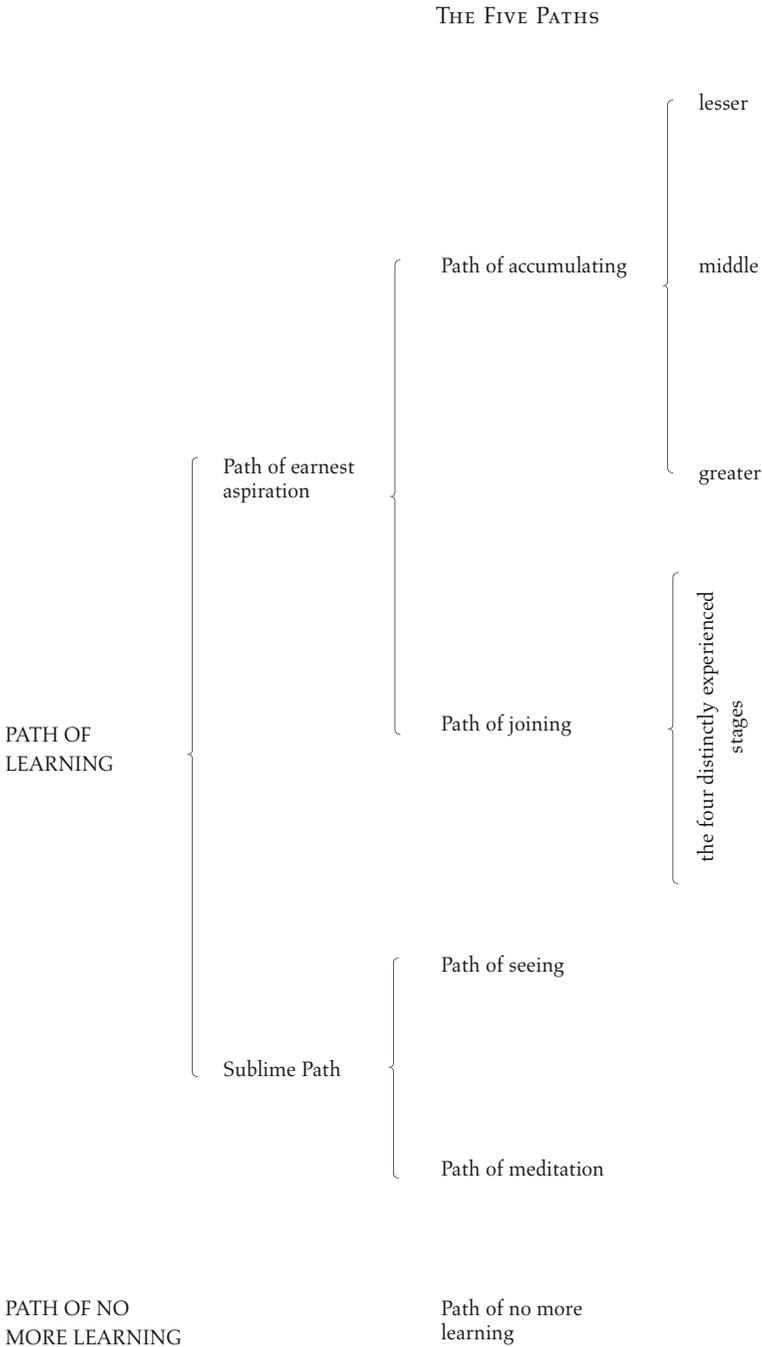
Victorious One, *rgyal ba*, Skt. *Jina*. A general epithet for a Buddha.

Vinaya (Skt.), *'dul ba*. One of the Three Pitakas; the section of the Buddha's teaching that deals with discipline, and in particular with the vows of monastic ordination.

Yoga (Skt.), *rnal 'byor*. Lit. "union with the natural state": a term for spiritual practice.

Yogi (Skt.), *rnal 'byor pa*. A person practicing a spiritual path.

THE FIVE BODHISATTVA PATHS AND THE THIRTY-SEVEN ELEMENTS



LEADING TO ENLIGHTENMENT

THE 37 ELEMENTS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| | Four close mindfulnesses | { | 1 mindfulness of the body
2 mindfulness of feelings
3 mindfulness of consciousness
4 mindfulness of mental objects |
| | Four genuine restraints | { | 5 halting of negative thoughts not yet arisen
6 rejection of negative thoughts already arisen
7 solicitation of positive thoughts not yet arisen
8 preservation of positive thoughts already arisen |
| | Four bases of miraculous powers | { | 9 concentration based on the power of the will
10 concentration based on endeavor
11 concentration based on one-pointed mindfulness
12 concentration based on analysis |
| {
warmth
peak
acceptance
supreme mundane level
} | Five powers | { | 13 confidence
14 diligence
15 mindfulness
16 concentration
17 wisdom |
| | Five irresistible forces | { | 18 confidence
19 diligence
20 mindfulness
21 concentration
22 wisdom |
| 1st Bodhisattva level | Seven elements leading to enlightenment | { | 23 mindfulness
24 perfect discernment
25 diligence
26 joy
27 flexibility
28 concentration
29 evenness |
| 2nd - 10th Bodhisattva levels | Eightfold Noble Path | { | 30 right view
31 right thought
32 right speech
33 right conduct
34 right livelihood
35 right effort
36 right mindfulness
37 right concentration |

THE THREE WORLDS AND THE SIX REALMS

World of formlessness

Gods of the world of formlessness

World of form

Gods

The seventeen classes of gods of the world of form

World of desire

Asuras

Humans

Animals

Pretas

Hells

The six classes of gods of the world of desire

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>The four formless realms
at the peak of existence</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> { Sphere of neither existence nor nonexistence { Sphere of Utter Nothingness { Sphere of Infinite Consciousness { Sphere of Infinite Space |
| <p>The five pure abodes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> { Unsurpassed (Akanishtha) { Good Vision { Manifest Richness { Without Distress { Not Greater |
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">The twelve ordinary realms
of the four concentrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> { Fourth concentration { Third concentration { Second concentration { First concentration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> { Great Result { Merit-Born { Cloudless { Flourishing Virtue { Limitless Virtue { Lesser Virtue { Clear Light { Measureless Light { Dim Light { Great Pure Ones { Priests of Brahma { The Pure |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> { Gods of the four sky abodes { Gods on top of Mount Meru { Gods on the steps of Mt. Meru | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> { Mastery over Others' Creations { Enjoying Magical Creations { The Joyous Realm (Tushita) { Heaven Free of Conflict (Yama) { Heaven of the Thirty-Three { Four Great Kings |
| <p>Asuras</p> | |
| <p>Humans of the four continents</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> { Animals living in the depths { Animals that live scattered in different places { Pretas who live collectively { Pretas who move through space | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> { The eight hot hells { The neighboring hells { The eight cold hells { The ephemeral hells | |

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by the growth of rice.

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rten 'brel gyi mdo.

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Tibetan Line Index

This line index has been prepared in Wylie transliteration to enable students of Tibetan to identify passages from the *Letter to a Friend* cited in other Tibetan texts. It should be borne in mind that minor differences (principally in the spelling of verbs and the use of connective particles) may be found between the root text as it appears in Kangyur Rinpoche's commentary and quotations used in other texts.

ka

kun gyi dge ba kun la yi rang zhing (119a)
kun tu chog shes mdzod cig chog mkhyen na (34c)
kun tu sbyor ba 'di gsum thar pa yi (51c)
kla klor skye dang glen zhing lkugs pa nyid (63d)
klu mchog rnams la mgo bo ji snyed pa (35c)
bkres skom grang dro ngal dang 'jigs pa yis (91c)
rkang pa'i reg pas nems par bde bzod pa (71a)
rkang lag rna ba sna gcod 'thob par 'gyur (72d)
skyabs med mgon med gnas med de slad du (58b)
skye 'di sdug bsngal sred pa zhes bgyi ba (114a)
skyes pa bud med dag la stsol bar bgyid (11d)
skye ba 'gags pas 'di kun 'gag par 'gyur (111d)
skye ba dpag tu med par lha mi yi (120a)
skye ba zhes bgyi mi khom skyon brgyad po (64b)
skye ba bzang po ma lags skye ba ni (103c)
skye ba bzlog pa'i slad du 'bad par mdzod (64d)
skye ba yod na mya ngan na rga dang (111a)
skye bo dgrar gyur pa dag bshes nyid dang (66b)
skye bo'i rjes su 'brangs ba'i khor ba pas (67c)
skyes bu dam pa bsten bgyi rgyal ba la (62c)
skyes bu dam pa la ni bsten pa dang (61b)
skyes bu rigs gzugs thos dang ldan rnams kyang (28a)
bskyed pa shin tu mi bzad bsten 'tshal lo (91d)
bskyed pa'i sdug bsngal rgyun chags mi 'chos pa (91b)

kha

kha cig kha ni khab kyi mig tsam la (92a)
 kha cig lcags kyi mche ba ldan pa'i khyi (80a)
 kha cig lcags kyi gsal shing rab 'bar ba (79c)
 kha cig lcags las byas pa'i zangs chen du (82c)
 kha cig til bzhin 'tshir te de bzhin du (78a)
 kha cig mdag me 'bar ba'i tshogs su ni (82a)
 kha cig lpags rus lus shing gcer bu ste (93a)
 kha cig mu tig bal dang rus pa dang (90a)
 kha cig mtshan zhing kha nas 'bar ba ste (93c)
 kha cig sog les 'dra ste de bzhin gzhan (78c)
 kha cig srin bu sbur pa sna tshogs dang (81a)
 kha zas sman dang 'dra bar rigs pa yis (38a)
 khu ba 'bar ba 'khrigs pa ldud par bgyid (79b)
 khon du 'dzin pas 'khrug long rnam skyed de (16c)
 khon 'dzin rnam spangs bde bar gnyid log 'gyur (16d)
 khyim thabs brnyas bgyi jo mo lta bu dang (36b)
 khyod kyi thugs su lta yang chud mod kyi (3b)
 khyod kyis khro ba'i go skabs dbye mi bgyi (15b)
 khyod kyis thugs dul mdzod cig bcom ldan gyis (117c)
 khyod kyis bram ze dge slong lha dang ni (30a)
 khyod kyis tshul khrims ma nyams mod mi dma' (7a)
 khyod la de skad gdams pa gang lags de (118a)
 khrag sogs mi gtsang ba yang mi rnyed de (94b)
 khrims ni rgyu dang mi rgyu'i sa bzhin du (7c)
 khro ba spangs pas phyir mi ldog pa nyid (15c)
 mkhas rnam dang po dpa' rab lags par 'tshal (24d)
 'khor gyi slad du'ang sdig pa mi bgyi ste (30c)
 'khor ba chu shing snying po med pa las (58c)
 'khor ba dag tu yang bran nyid du 'gyur (69d)
 'khor ba dag na nges pa 'ga' ma mchis (66d)
 'khor ba de 'dra lags pas lha mi dang (103a)
 'khor ba'i btson rar 'jig rten 'di dag bcings (23d)
 'khor lo chen po bzhi ni khyod la mnga' (61d)
 'khor los sgyur ba nyid du gyur nas kyang (69c)
 'khrungs nas na rga 'dod chags zhe sdang rnam (121a)

ga

gang gis 'di ni yang dag mthong ba des (112c)
 gang dag chos mngon bgyis pa de dag kyang (116a)
 gang dag dbang po drug yul rnam la ni (24a)
 gang zhig sngon chad bag med gyur pa la (14a)

gang zhig mi ru skyes nas sdig pa dag (60c)
 gang zag log par lta bas legs spyad kyang (47c)
 gang zhig gser snod rin chen spras pa yis (60a)
 gang la de gnyis yod pa srid pa yi (107c)
 gang la pha dang ma dag mchod byed pa'i (9a)
 gar dang phreng ba'i khyad par rnamspang zhing (10d)
 gal te dge ba'i lhag ma 'ga' med na (101b)
 gal te mtho ris thar pa mngon bzhed na (47a)
 gus pas rtag tu bag dang bcas par mdzod (13d)
 go 'phang mi rga mi 'chi zad mi 'tshal (105c)
 gong ma brnyes par ma gyur de lta na'ang (40c)
 gos la dri ma chags dang lus la ni (99c)
 grags pa nyams par 'gyur ba'i de drug spangs (33d)
 grong khyer sgo 'gegs lags par mkhyen par gyis (51d)
 dga' dang shin tu spyangs dang ting 'dzin dang (106b)
 dga' bo sor phreng mthong ldan bde byed bzhin (14d)
 dge dang mi dge rnam lnga chen po ste (42c)
 dge ba'i rtsa ba yangs la mkhyen par bgyi (43d)
 dge ba'i bshes gnyen bsten pa tshangs par spyod (62a)
 dge ba'i las lam bcu po lus dang ni (5a)
 dge slong bram ze bkren dang bshes rnam la (6b)
 dgra bcom tshul khrims rjes su byed pa yi (11a)
 bgyid pa de ni ches rab blun pa lags (60d)
 bgyis pa ci 'dra'ang rung ste mkhas pas mchod (2b)
 bgrod pa gcig pa'i lam du nye bar bstan (54b)
 mgon po sku tshe dpag tu med par mdzod (121d)
 mgo'am gos la glo bur me shor na (104a)
 mgron dang yab yum dag dang btsun mo dang (30b)
 'gro ba nyams thag mang po rjes bzung ste (120d)
 rgod dang 'gyod dang mnod sems rmugs pa dang (44a)
 rgya mtsho gcig nas gnya' shing bu ga dang (59a)
 rgya mtsho gnag rjes lta bur 'tshal bar bgyi (107d)
 rgyags phyir ma lags bsnyem pa'i phyir ma lags (38c)
 rgyan po 'gyed dang 'dus la lta ba dang (33a)
 rgyal ba'i bka' med pa dang mtha' 'khob tu (63c)
 rgyal ba'i dbang pos kim pa'i 'bras 'drar gsungs (23b)
 rgyal bas snying la 'bab dang bden pa dang (18a)
 rgyal bas sangs rgyas chos dang dge 'dun dang (4a)
 rgyun mi 'chad par rab bsregs kha yang bgrad (82b)
 sgrib pa lnga po 'di dag dge ba'i nor (44c)
 sgrib pas bden pa mthong ba ma mchis so (102d)
 brgya byin 'jig rten mchod 'os gyur nas ni (69a)

nga

ngag dang yid kyis rtag tu bsten bgyid cing (5b)
 ngan skyugs 'phyag par bgyid pa de bas kyang (60b)
 mngon pa'i nga rgyal 'dod chags zhe sdang dang (12b)
 lnga stong dag dang khrir yang 'chir mi 'gyur (96d)
 sngon chad med pa'i rngul 'byung zhes bgyi ba (99d)

ca

ci nas de rdul tsam yang ma mchis pa (88c)
 cung zad cig bsdebs khyod kyis gsan par rigs (1d)
 gcig pur nyi ma zla bas mi brdzi ba'i (76c)
 gcig la gcig za shin tu mi bzad pa (89d)
 bcing dang brdeg sogs sdug bsngal sna tshogs pa (89b)
 lcags dang lcags kyu gdab pas btab ste bkol (90d)

cha

chang dang dus min zas la chags pa dang (10b)
 chang dang mtshan mo rgyu ba ngan song du (33c)
 chang rnams las ldog de bzhin dge ba yi (5c)
 chu yi chu bur bas kyang mi rtag na (55b)
 chung ngu'ang rku ba chom rkun lta bu yi (36c)
 chung ma gsum po de yang rnam par spang (36d)
 ches dkar nyid du ci ste mi bgyid lags (3d)
 chos gzhan 'ga' yang mchis pa ma lags so (27d)
 mchog ste chos 'dod rnams la tha ma lags (17d)
 'chi 'pho'i sdug bsngal nyid ni de bas che (98b)
 'chi ba zhi mdzad rgyal ba'i dbang po nyid brnyes nas (123b)
 'chi ba'i dus la bab na sdig pa yi (31c)
 'chi ba'i gnas su thub pas bka' stsal te (13b)

ja

ji ltar bde gshegs sku gzugs shing las kyang (2a)
 ji ltar mdze can srin bus nyen pa ni (26a)
 ji srid mi dge de zad ma gyur pa (87c)
 'jig rten kun gyi rnal 'byor dbang mdzad nas (120b)
 'jig rten mkhyen pa rnyed dang ma rnyed dang (29a)
 'jig rten las 'das ming tsam zhi la mi bsnyengs pa (123c)
 'jigs pa skyed par 'gyur na mi bzad pa'i (84c)
 ljon shing 'bras bu med 'gyur 'di dag gis (95c)

nya

nyi ma zla ba nyid thob rang lus kyi (75a)
 nyi ma'i gnyen gyis rab gsungs gang dag lags (108b)
 nyid kyis legs par spyad pa rnam gsum yang (119b)
 nyes par spyad pa'i las kyi zhags pa ni (96b)
 nyon mongs nyam thag sems can tshogs kyi 'jigs skye dang (123a)
 nyon mongs rag las so so'i skye bor bas (116d)
 gnyid dang 'dod la 'dun dang the tshom ste (44b)
 bsnyengs dang bral la ha cang mang ci 'tshal (117a)

ta

ta la'i yang thog bskams pa lta bu lags (93b)
 ting 'dzin shes rab chos mchog lnga nyid de (45b)
 gtum pos dbad cing lag pa gnam du bsgrengs (80b)
 gter bzhin srog dang 'dra bar bsrung bgyi ste (22b)
 gtong dang tshul khirms lha rjes dran pa drug (4b)
 btang snyoms rtag tu yang dag sgom mdzod cig (40b)
 btang snyoms 'di bdun byang chub yan lag ste (106c)
 rtag tu mi brtan g.yo dang gang dag gcig (24b)
 rtag dang mngon par zhen dang gnyen po med (42a)
 rten cing 'brel bar 'byung 'di rgyal ba yi (112a)
 lto ba ri yi gtos tsam bkres pas nyen (92b)
 sta re mi bzad so rnon rnam kyis gshags (78d)
 stan la mi dga' me tog phreng rnying dang (99b)
 stobs dbang zhes bgyi rtse mor gyur pa'ang lags (45d)
 brten nas rab tu mang pos zhi ba thob (62d)
 bltas pa tsam gyis klung yang bskam par 'gyur (95d)
 bstod smad ces bgyi 'jig rten chos brgyad po (29c)

tha

tha mar mi gtsang snying po ma mchis pa (56b)
 thams cad rnam par smin pa mi bzad ldan (47d)
 thar pa bdag la rag las 'di la ni (52a)
 thal ba tsam yang lus par mi 'gyur na (57c)
 thub pa chen po'i bka' ni snyan dgu zhig (3a)
 thos dang tshul khirms bsam gtan ldan pa yis (52c)
 mthun par gyur pa'i yul du gnas pa dang (61a)
 mtho ris 'chi 'pho sbron bgyid 'chi ltas lnga (100a)
 mtho ris na yang bde chen de dag gi (98a)
 mtho ris bu mo'i nu ma sked pa la (70a)
 mtho ris bu mos 'brongs shing dga' tshal dang (72a)

mthong bar bgyi slad rtag tu brtson par bgyi (115b)
 'thob bgyid 'phags lam yan lag de brgyad lags (114d)
 'thob par 'gyur ba sangs rgyas zhal gyis bzhes (15d)

da

dad dang brtson 'grus dag dang dran pa dang (45a)
 dad dang tshul khirms thos dang gtong ba dang (32a)
 dam chos brjod la bsten slad smad mi bgyid (2d)
 dam chos spyod pas de 'bras mchis par mdzod (59d)
 dal gyis 'bab pa lha yi bu mo ni (73a)
 dud 'gro'i skye gnas na yang gsod pa dang (89a)
 dus kyis bar du chod rnam dmyal ba yi (83b)
 de ltar nyid kyi rtsal gyis 'bad par mdzod (88d)
 de ltar 'di kun mi rtag bdag med de (58a)
 de ltar sdug bsngal shin tu mi bzad lo (87a)
 de ltar nongs par 'gyur 'tshal bsod nams ni (76a)
 de ltar 'phags pa'i bden pa bzhi po dag (115a)
 de ltar yang dang yang du sems pa ni (46c)
 de ltar yi dvags rnam kyi sna tshogs pa'i (97a)
 de ltar bsams nas ya rabs rnam kyis ni (98c)
 de ltas gang la yon tan 'di gnyis ldan (28c)
 de dag dang bral khom pa rnyed nas ni (64c)
 de dag rnam la bsam par mi bgyi ste (108c)
 de dag spang bgyi de yi lcags sgrog gis (23c)
 de dag blo dang ldan yang 'gro ba yi (102c)
 de dag bzlog phyir bgyi ba btang nas kyang (104b)
 de dag la mchod grags par 'gyur ba dang (9c)
 de dang 'dra ba'i yon tan ldan pa yi (27c)
 de nas dge ba'i phung po 'di yis ni (119d)
 de nas dbang med dud 'gro yi dvags dang (101c)
 de ni bsgrims nas mngon par bsrung bgyi ste (54c)
 de ni de yi kun 'byung rgya chen te (114b)
 de ni yon tan gzhan dang bral yang mchod (28d)
 de bas khyod kyi dge chos spel slad du (13c)
 de bas dge ba spyod la brtson par bgyi (42d)
 de bas ches mchog dgos pa gzhan ma mchis (104d)
 de bas ches mang nyid cig btung 'tshal lo (67d)
 de bzhin bdag gi snyan ngag 'di ngan yang (2c)
 de bzhin sdig pa'i las ni chung ngu yang (43c)
 de bzhin sdug bsngal kun gyi nang na ni (85c)
 de bzhin gzhan dag khro chu bzhus ba yi (79a)

de bzhin shes rab gzhal med pha rol phyin (8b)
 de yi rgyu ni skye bo 'jungs dga' ba (97c)
 de yi gnyen po'i sgo nas rgyags mi 'gyur (46d)
 de yi mod la mtshon bzhin mi gcod kyang (31b)
 de yis blo ni zhi bar bgyid ma lags (108d)
 de'i nang nyon mongs can la dang po ni (17c)
 de las skye mched drug ste de las ni (109c)
 de las byung ba'i sdug bsngal de snyed do (35d)
 de las srid pa srid las skye ba lags (110d)
 de srid srog dang bral bar mi 'gyur ro (87d)
 des ni dmyal ba'i sdug bsngal chung ngu la'ang (86c)
 des pa bdog mang ji ltar sdug bsngal ba (35a)
 des pa 'dod pas phongs dang 'chi ba dang (65a)
 don dam gzigs par bgyi slad dngos rnam la (27a)
 dran dang bklags dang gzugs su bgyis rnam kyang (84b)
 dran dang chos rab 'byed dang brtson 'grus dang (106a)
 dran dang ting 'dzin ngag dang las mtha' dang (113b)
 dran dang ldan par de dag bar du mnol (39d)
 dran pa nyams pas chos kun 'jig par 'gyur (54d)
 dran pa nye bar ma gzhag rnam kyis ni (48c)
 dri nga ba dang sgo dgu dod pa dang (25b)
 dri med ngo tsha shes dang khrel yod dang (32b)
 gdug pa dug dang mtshon dang dgra bo dang (22c)
 gdong mdzes gser gyi padma ldan zhugs nas (73b)
 bdag gi yid yul min par mgo snyom mdzod (29d)
 bdag nyid legs smon sngon yang bsod nam bgyis (61c)
 bdag ni 'dis spyos 'dis btag pham par byas (16a)
 bdag la gzugs mi gnas te de bzhin du (49c)
 bde dags dga' ba nges par rab tu zhi mdzad do (122d)
 bde dang mi bde snyan dang mi snyan dang (29b)
 bde ba kun gyi nang na sred zad pa (85a)
 bde ba don du me la kun bsten kyang (26b)
 bde ba'i bdag por bgyid pa ji lta bar (85b)
 bde bar gshegs pa'i gsung bsnyad las byung ba'i (1b)
 bden pa rnam pa bzhi la 'bad pa mdzod (52d)
 'dab ma ral gri 'dra tshal nags rnam kyis (72c)
 'di 'gog pa ni thar pa lags te de (114c)
 'di ltar bzod mtshungs dka' thub ma mchis pas (15a)
 'di dag rgyas mdzod srid pa'i rgya mtsho yi (8c)
 'di na nyin gcig mdung thung sum brgya yis (86a)
 'di ni zhi bar bgyi slad bsgom par bgyi (113d)

'di yi nyes pa'i shas kyang gsan par mdzod (65d)
 'di yis bdag gi nor 'phrog gyur to zhes (16b)
 'di la mngon brtson mdzod cig 'di dag ni (45c)
 'di las gang zhig spyod pa'i ngo bo de'i (118c)
 'dod chags zhe sdang med par bsten bgyi ste (38b)
 'dod pa chung rnams de lta ma lags te (35b)
 'dod pa rnams ni phung khrol skyed pa ste (23a)
 'dod pa rnams la chags pa'ang mkhyen par mdzod (26d)
 'dod pas phongs dang 'chi dang 'jig sogs kyis (111b)
 'dod spyod dga' dang bde dang sdug bsngal dag (41a)
 rdo thal las bgyis dgung zla'i 'od kyis ni (3c)
 sdig can dbugs 'byung 'gags pa tsam zhig gi (83a)
 sdig pa'i las rnams spyad pa 'ga' yang ni (31a)
 sdug bsngal rgyun mi 'chad pa brten 'tshal lo (74d)
 sdug bsngal phung po shin tu che 'byung ste (111c)
 sdug bsngal mi bzad phog snyam bgyid 'chal lo (71d)
 sdug bsngal gzhal yas thos nas rnam stong du (83c)
 sdug bsngal ro gcig thob pa gang lags pa (97b)
 bsdus 'joms ngu 'bod mnar med la sogs pa'i (77c)

na

na rga 'chi sdug bral dang de bzhin du (46a)
 na dang rga sogs sdug bsngal du ma yi (65b)
 na tshod mthun par ma dang bu mo dang (21b)
 nor rnams kun gyi nang na chog shes pa (34a)
 nor mi bdog kyang yang dag 'byor ba lags (34d)
 nor gzhan phal pa don ma mchis rtogs mdzod (32d)
 gnam las babs pa ma lags lo tog bzhin (116b)
 gnod pa du ma'i snod gyur lags mkhyen mdzod (103d)
 mnar med me yi bud shing gyur pa yi (74c)
 mnar med dmyal ba'i sdug bsngal rab mi bzad (85d)
 mnal tshe'ang 'bras bu med par mi 'gyur bar (39c)
 rnam par 'jig dengs myags par 'gyur ba ste (56c)
 rnam par spangs pa'i bsam gtan bzhi po yis (41b)
 rnam par mdzes tshal son par rtzes nas slar (72b)
 rnam smin nyams su myong na smos ci 'tshal (84d)
 rnam shes de las ming dang gzugs rab 'byung (109b)
 rnam gsum bka' stsal de las tha ma spang (18d)
 rnam gsum mar me'i snang ba rab bzhes shig (76b)
 snang nas snang ba'i mthar thug mun pa nas (19a)

pa

pags pas g.yogs dang rgyan yang logs shig gzigs (25d)
 pang na dpal gnas khyim pa rnam kyis kyang (115c)
 dpal la sdang phyir yid kyi sdug bsngal che (102b)
 spyi'u tshugs 'bras kyi cung 'pheng bzhin du 'tshed (82d)

pha

pha ni bu nyid ma ni chung ma nyid (66a)
 pha rol phyin pa rgyal ba'i dbang por mdzod (8d)
 phan pa'i gdams ngag don po 'di lags te (117b)
 phan tshun gdong du 'tshog cing mgren pa nas (94c)
 phung po 'dod rgyal las min dus las min (50a)
 phung po lhag ma bzhi yang stong rtogs bgyi (49d)
 phyi nas bag dang ldan par gyur de yang (14b)
 phyin ci log par lta dang the tshom ste (51b)
 phyin ci log bzhir lta ba phung khrol ba (48d)
 'phags pa spyen ras gzigs dbang spyod pa yis (120c)
 'phrog pa'i chom rkun lags par mkhyen par mdzod (44d)

ba

bag yod bdud rtsi'i gnas te bag med pa (13a)
 bar chad med par sdug bsngal bsten gyur pa (96a)
 bas par dge slong gis kyang bgyi bar dka' (118b)
 bud med gzhon nu'i lus ni logs shig tu (25a)
 byams dang snying rje dag dang dga' ba dang (40a)
 bye ba phrag brgyar nyams su myong yang ni (87b)
 dbang gyur gang yin rigs kyi lha bzhin bkur (37d)
 dbang thang che ba'i rgyags dge dgra bzhin gzigs (12d)
 dbang phyug las min rgyu med can min te (50c)
 dbang phyug lus gtogs dran pa bde gshegs kyis (54a)
 dbang med gzhan dag lcags mchu rnon po dang (80c)
 dbang med gzhan dag rdog pa lag pa dang (90c)
 dbugs rngub dbugs 'byung gnyid kyi log pa las (55c)
 'bar bas bsregs pa'i lus can 'di dag kyang (57b)
 'byung gnas 'khor ba la ni skyo mdzad cing (65c)
 'bras bu che lha rnam dang skal mnyam 'thob (41d)
 lba ba byung ba smin pa'i rnag 'tshal lo (94d)
 sbyin dang tshul khrims bzod brtson bsam gtan dang (8a)
 sbyin pa tshul bzhin stsal bgyi pha rol tu (6c)
 sbyin las gzhan pa'i gnyen mchog ma mchis so (6d)

sbrang rtsi me tog mi gtsang lta bu'i tshig (18c)
sbron par byed pa'i 'chi ltas rnams dang 'dra (100d)

ma

ma 'des ma sbags pa dag bsten par mdzod (7b)
ma smin ma smin par yang smin pa la (20c)
ma bzhin phan par 'dod dang bran mo bzhin (37c)
ma yi thug mtha' rgya shug tshig gu tsam (68c)
ma rig pa las las te de las ni (109a)
mal stan mtho la dga' dang glu dag dang (10c)
mi dge'i 'bras 'di rnams kyi sa bon ni (88a)
mi 'gres nongs pa mi mnga'i go 'phang brnyes par mdzod (123d)
mi mchog khyod kyis thugs ni dbugs dbyung mdzod (58d)
mi 'jigs gang lags rdo rje'i rang bzhin no (83d)
mi nyid ches thob dka' bas mi dbang gis (59c)
mi rtag bdag med mi gtsang rig par bgyi (48b)
mi ni yang dag nyid du mi bde zhing (48a)
mi ni a mra'i 'bras bzhin ma smin la (20a)
mi gtsang kun snod 'dra ba dgang dka' dang (25c)
mi gtsang gyi nar bor ba chung zad kyang (92c)
mi gtsang nyid du yang dag bsam par bgyi (21d)
mi shes las dang sred las byung rig mdzod (50d)
mun nag mtha' dag nang du 'jug 'tshal lo (76d)
mun nas snang ba'i mthar thug gang zag ni (19c)
mun pa'i mthar thug snang nas mun mthar thug (19b)
me bzhin 'dod pa'i bde la yid 'byung mdzod (22d)
mya ngan 'das thob bgyid pa'i dge tshogs lags (106d)
mya ngan 'das zhi dul ba dri med pa'i (105b)
dmyal ba rnams su rtag tu sdug bsngal 'gyur (77d)
dmyal ba bris pa mthong dang thos pa dang (84a)
dmyal ba yi dvags 'dud 'gro rnams dag tu (103b)
dmyal ba'i rnam smin skal nod 'ga' ma mchis (30d)
dmyal bar 'thag gcod dbad pa'i 'khrul 'khor gyi (70c)
dmyal bar gnas pa gang yang rung bar 'gyur (101d)
smad rigs 'ga' ni rnag dang phyi sa dang (94a)
smin pa dang 'dra smin la ma smin 'dra (20b)
smin par snang zhes bgyi ba 'drar rtogs mdzod (20d)

tsha

tshangs nyid chags bral bde ba thob nas slar (74b)
tshangs pa'i 'jig rten bde ba thob par 'gyur (40d)

tshangs ris 'od gsal dag dang dge rgyas dang (41c)
 tshul khrim s brtul zhugs mchog 'dzin rang lus la (51a)
 tshul khrim s dag dang bsam gtan shes rab gyis (105a)
 tshul bzhin yid la bgyid pa de goms mdzod (27b)
 tshe ni gnod mang rlung gis btab pa yi (55a)
 tsher ma can la kun tu rgyud par bgyid (79d)
 tshor ba'i gzhi las sred pa 'byung bar 'gyur (110b)
 tshva sgo bzod brlag chu tshan 'jug 'tshal lo (73d)
 mtshag phyir ma lags lus gnas 'ba' zhig phyir (38d)
 mtshan mo thun gyi stod smad bzlas nas ni (39b)
 'tshal ba'i mthu dang ldan pa ma lags so (92d)
 'tsho dang chom rkun 'khrig pa brdzun dang ni (10a)
 tshe ring lha nyid gang yang rung ba ni (64a)
 'tsho ba la yang mngon par dgyes par mdzod (5d)

dza

mdza' mo bzhin du snying la 'bab pa dang (37b)

zha

zhi 'gyur dge ba spangs pa rnam la ni (89c)
 zhi bar mi 'gyur de dang 'dra bar ni (26c)
 gzhan gyi chung ma mi blta mthong na yang (21a)
 gzhan gyis grogs bgyir ci yang ma mchis pas (52b)
 gzhan ni phye ma zhib bzhin phye mar rlog (78b)
 bzhi ste de dag rnam kyid dang por mdzod (19d)

za

za bar bgyid cing 'gre ldog smre sngags 'don (81d)
 zad 'gyur mtho ris slad du sred mi bgyi (98d)
 zas su 'bar ba'i khar babs bye ma 'tshal (93d)
 zla ba sprin bral bzhin du rnam mdzes te (14c)
 zla ba'ang tsha la dgun ni nyi ma'ang grang (95b)
 gzugs dang ldan min gzugs la bdag gnas min (49b)
 gzugs ni bdag ma yin zhes gsungs te bdag (49a)
 bzlog pa nyid du mchi bas de slad du (66c)

,

'o ma 'thungs te da dung so so yi (67b)
 'od kyis 'jig rten mtha' dag snang byas nas (75b)
 'od dpag med dang 'dra bar 'jig rten gyi (121c)
 'ol yang mi bgyi char yang mi phod do (86d)

ya

yan lag brgyad po 'di dag dang ldan na (11b)
 yang dag rtog nyid lam gyi yan lag brgyad (113c)
 yang dag lta dang 'tsho dang rtsol ba dang (113a)
 yang dag lta la goms pa nyid du mdzod (47b)
 yang sos thig nag rab tu tsha ba dang (77b)
 yang srid med par bgyi slad 'bad 'tshal te (104c)
 yi dvags nyid dang dmyal bar skye ba dang (63b)
 yi dvags na yang 'dod pas phongs pa yis (91a)
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ra

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la

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The Padmakara Translation Group

The Padmakara Translation Group is devoted to the accurate and literary translation of Tibetan texts and spoken material into Western languages by trained Western translators, under the guidance of authoritative Tibetan scholars, principally Taklung Tsetrul Pema Wangyal Rinpoche and Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, in a context of sustained study and discussion.

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