

# Part-1

*Longchenpa · Longchenpa*

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A Commentary by Lama Ugyen Shenpen of  
THE GREAT PERFECTION:  
THE NATURE OF MIND, THE EASER OF WEARINESS  
called the Great Chariot  
by Longchenpa

PART 1 of 6

Introduction + Chapters 1, 2, 3

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Sub-section titles are in the form: L#: [...], where # varies from 1 to ... 12 or more.  
These can be used to regenerate the structure using a Word Processor.

Paragraph starting with '¢(i.e. ...' are usually added comments by me.

Paragraph starting with '\ ### ...' are, as far as I can tell, original verse from  
Longchenpa's Great Chariot.

Paragraph starting with '~ ...' are usually quotes from other texts pointed out by Lama  
Ugyen Shenpen.

The rest of the text is usually from Lama Ugyen Shenpen's Commentary.

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L1: [INTRODUCTION - Three main sections of the Great Chariot's Commentary] :L1

The Introduction to the commentary on THE GREAT PERFECTION: THE NATURE OF MIND, THE EASER OF

WEARINESS<sup>1</sup> called the Great Chariot

¢(i.e. "This commentary to The Great perfection, the Nature of Mind, the Easer of Weariness presents the stages of the Buddhist path from the viewpoint of the Tibetan Nyingma school."

¢-- "Here are the details of how the ocean of the sutra and mantra vehicles may be practiced by a single individual now that the freedoms and good favors, so difficult to attain, have been attained. ... This goes from how the beginner enters and begins, up to how the fruition of Buddhahood manifests as the completed and perfect meaning of all the vehicles."

¢-- "Dzogchen or ati is the tradition that this teaching is part of, and also its fruition."

¢-- "The essence, the single true meaning, the sense, of sutra, tantra, and oral instructions is here, in this auspicious presentation of words and meaning.")

[CONTENTS OF THIS COMMENTARY:]

FIRST, the manner of entering on the composition of the treatise and the meaning of the introductory section [Co]

-- The meaning of the homage

-- The vow to compose the text

SECOND, the extensive explanation of the actual subject [C1-13]

-- [C1] The free and well-favored human body, so difficult to obtain

-- [C2] The Impermanence of Life

-- [C3] The Sufferings of Samsara

-- [C4] Karma, Cause, and Effect

-- [C5] Relying on the Spiritual Friend

-- [C6] Going for Refuge

- [C7] The Four Immeasurables
- [C8] Bodhicitta, the mind focused on supreme enlightenment.
- [C9] Unifying the developing stage and the perfecting stage
- [C10] The view of Prajna that realizes the Ground without dwelling in dualistic extremes
- [C11] Meditation, the chapter of spotless samadhi
- [C12] Actions of benefit
- [C13. The Fruition]

THIRD, the conclusion [C14]

¢[Note 1: This work is part of a trilogy. The other titles are like this one except for substituting bsam gtan, dhyana/ meditation and sgyu ma/ illusion for sems nyid. Dzogchen or ati is the tradition that this teaching is part of, and also its fruition. A basic understanding of the titles is that samsara involves suffering and weariness. The view that sees the nature of mind, practicing meditation, and regarding activity from the viewpoint of all things being illusory are means of easing or weariness or relaxing tension. The result of doing so is resting in the great perfection.

¢ The three means regarded from the viewpoint of the great perfection produce the fruition. If they are samsarically regarded they are part of the problem. The Sanskrit offered for sems nyid is citta, whose primary meaning is mind in the conceptual sense, the very thing that needs to be eased. In the same way meditation as the notion that our being is intrinsically bad and needs to be made into something else is a problem. Illusion in the sense of clinging to confused views and goals is a problem.

¢ This points out a central point of ati, that this very world of samsara is the world of nirvana, when we relax our confused fixations about it and stop struggling with the projects that confusion suggests of saving ourselves and the world from spiritual degradation.]

\ ###  
 \ In Sanskrit the title is Mahasandhi citta visranta vritti maharatha nama,  
 \ In Tibetan Rdzogs pa chen po/ sems nyid ngal gso'i/ shing rta chen po/ shes bya  
 ba

I prostrate to glorious Samantabhadra

~ From the ocean of the glorious two accumulations come clouds that bear the abundant rain of peace and happiness.

~ These are the hundreds of qualities of the Nature that constitute the beauties of trikaya.

~ The thunder of wisdom and kindness pervading the limits of space, the great drum of Bhrama, sounds.

¢(i.e. About the two accumulation: We have to use both method and wisdom, to accumulate both merit and wisdom; this is in accord with the goal, with the real nature of everything: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither; inseparability of upaya and prajna; inseparability of compassion and emptiness; luminous space; empty and still functional ...)

To the all-knowing Chief of Beings, to the Dharma, and Sangha, the leaders of beings, I bow.

- ~ On an island in the lake of Uddiyana,
- ~ Born within the blossom on a lotus stalk,
- ~ Spontaneous emanation of the victorious ones,
- ~ Blazing with qualities of the major and minor marks,

~ Padmasambhava protects the lotus of my mind.

¢(i.e. Taking refuge in the Buddha-Nature)

\ ###  
\ O primordial, spotless, full ocean;  
\ you who emanate samsara and nirvana  
\ O non-dual, unborn, full nature;  
\ perfect essence of Buddha,  
\ you the natural state,  
\ O fullness with no existence or lack of it,  
\ views that things are eternal or nothing,  
\ coming or going,  
\ nor object of complex variety.  
\ O fullness with no conception of good or evil,  
\ you who neither accept or reject.  
  
\ ###  
\ I bow to the uncompounded nature of the mind.

This is the unsurpassable city of joyous liberation. Here the Victorious Ones of the three times attained supreme peace. So that all beings may go there directly, it embodies the heart of the sutras and tantras. Here, day and night, with unremitting effort, with single-minded devotion, my mind is absorbed in peace.

MAY THIS GREAT CHARIOT OF THE PROFOUND PATH THAT LIBERATES FROM SAMSA RA BE  
CLEARLY  
ELUCIDATED.

Of this explanation of the Great Perfection, The Nature Of Mind, The Easer Of Weariness, The single path of all Dharmas and traditions,  
THERE ARE THREE MAIN SECTIONS:

FIRST, the manner of entering on the composition of the treatise and the meaning of the introductory section [Co]

- The meaning of the homage
- The vow to compose the text

SECOND, the extensive explanation of the actual subject [C1-13]

- [C1] The free and well-favored human body, so difficult to obtain
- [C2] The Impermanence of Life
- [C3] The Sufferings of Samsara
- [C4] Karma, Cause, and Effect
- [C5] Relying on the Spiritual Friend
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- [C9] Unifying the developing stage and the perfecting stage
- [C10] The view of Prajna that realizes the Ground without dwelling in dualistic extremes
- [C11] Meditation, the chapter of spotless samadhi
- [C12] Actions of benefit
- [C13. The Fruition]

THIRD, the conclusion [C14]

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L1: [First, the manner of entering on the composition of the treatise and the meaning of the introductory section,] :L1

The divisions are (i.e. Taking full benefits of this precious human life)

-- First, the meaning of the homage (i.e. In order to make us feel inspired.)

-- Second, The vow to compose the text. (i.e. out of great compassion for all the sentient beings stuck in samsara.)

L2: [First, the meaning of the homage] :L2

¢(i.e. In order to make us feel inspired.)

The Buddha has come into this world. The excellent speech of his teachings, holy Dharma, by the kindness of genuine beings remains in existence.

-- HERE ARE THE DETAILS OF HOW THE OCEAN OF THE SUTRA AND MANTRA VEHICLES MAY BE PRACTICED

BY A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL NOW THAT THE FREEDOMS AND GOOD FAVORS, SO DIFFICULT TO ATTAIN, HAVE

BEEN ATTAINED. In that way oneself and others may completely cross the ocean of sufferings of samsara. How mind<sup>2</sup>, wearied in samsara, eases its weariness in the land of peace is taught fully and without error.

-- THIS GOES FROM HOW THE BEGINNER ENTERS AND BEGINS, UP TO HOW THE FRUITION OF BUDDHAHOOD

MANIFESTS AS THE COMPLETED AND PERFECT MEANING OF ALL THE VEHICLES.

Wishing to compose the thirteen chapters of this treatise, the Great Perfection, the Nature of Mind, the Easer of Weariness, first I offer a short homage:

\     ###  
\     The primordial lord; the great, full ocean<sup>3</sup> of Buddha qualities;  
\     Whose natural wisdom and kindness is limitless in its depth,  
\     Birthplace of the Victorious Ones and all their sons,  
\     Who emanates heaped up clouds of goodness and benefit,  
\     I prostrate to the one who is all that is desired.

Thus I call on him. This lord is the manifestation of enlightenment, whose place is in the primordial ground. This is the teacher, the Buddha Bhagavat. Having the nature of the great full ocean of qualities of renunciation and realization, he rules the sphere of inexhaustible adornments of body, speech, and mind. All the depth and expanse of supreme understanding and wondrously arisen compassion are just this. This saying is incomprehensible to the mind that sees only the manifestations of the I of "this side."

BY EARNESTLY PRACTICING THE DHARMA TAUGHT HERE, MIND BECOMES THE SOURCE OF THE JEWEL OF THE

BUDDHAS OF THE THREE TIMES AND THEIR SONS. Then for all the realms of sentient beings, as limitless as the sky, there are temporary benefits in accord with the happiness of each.

Gods and human beings alike are brought to happiness.

The ultimate happiness is being brought to whichever of the three enlightenments of the shravakas, pratyekaBuddhas, and bodhisattvas is in accord with the good fortune of one's powers. The holy masters join us to supremely ultimate great enlightenment, omniscient Buddhahood. Therefore, I prostrate to glorious Samantabhadra and so forth, all the victorious ones and their sons throughout the ten directions and the three times.

As for the ocean of Buddha qualities of this primordial lord.

The glorious Net of Illusion says:

- ~ The lord is timeless perfection, known as Buddhahood.
- ~ This is the precious ocean of Buddha qualities.

These precious jewels also arise within the connections of cause and effect.

The Uttarat Tantra says:

- ~ From the Buddha comes the Dharma;
- ~ From the Dharma comes the assembly of the Noble Ones.

Regarding emanation of heaped up clouds of goodness and benefit for sentient beings,

the Mahayanasutralankara says:

- ~ They have compassionate kindness for every sentient being.
- ~ They have the kind of vision we do not need to seek.
- ~ They have the kind of vision that is inseparable.
- ~ I prostrate to you with the vision of goodness and happiness.

We should prostrate, because there are such great benefits for both ourselves and others. Since our bodies are of this excellent kind, if we briefly praise the good fortune of words and meaning, we realize that all this is holy. If we undertake this holy activity who stay with it, we cannot but reach the goal.

The Great Commentary on the Prajnaparamita in 8000 Lines says:

- ~ Those who have the kindness of benefit for others
- ~ For the sake of living beings, do not relax their powers.
- ~ Though these holy beings bear a heavy burden,
- ~ They never put it down and dwell in discouragement.

This needs to be attained by others as well. When the teacher and shastra are understood in the highest way, there is devotion. Nagarjuna says:

- ~ It is never fruitless, when the authors of the treatises
- ~ Express their homage to the teacher and the teaching;<sup>4</sup>
- ~ Because of doing so they make us feel inspired.<sup>5</sup>

¶[Note 5: This increases merit so that enlightenment is gained. If reasoning is rightly used it inspires people to appreciate directly the experiential meaning of the teachings and teacher. But often the result is just the opposite, to make it all seem very conceptualized, abstract, and proud of its orthodoxy. It becomes uselessly circular. The teachings are true because the Buddha taught them, and the Buddha is an authentic, true person because the teachings say so. We have to be inspired to see for ourselves what is meant. For example, the Gelugpas often begin more with reasoning and then practice. The nyingmas and Kagyus tend to start in the middle with some of both. But in the end, if they practice well, they all go to the same place. KPSR.]

As for saying that both kinds of benefit must be attained, by perfecting the accumulations the goal of ripening will be accomplished.

The Sutra of Vast Play says:

~ The wishes of those with merit will surely be accomplished.

The Sutra Producing many Buddhas:

- ~ Whoever for the Conqueror as a leader,
- ~ Does even a little bit of activity,
- ~ Having gone to various celestial realms,
- ~ Will attain the level of Buddhahood.

L2: [Second, the vow to compose the text] :L2

¢(i.e. Taking full benefits of this precious human life; and out of great compassion for all the sentient beings stuck in samsara.)]

Here why homage is made:

\     ###  
\     Luminous dharmakaya, immaculate realm of the conquerors!  
\     For us who wander here in samsara, by ignorant grasping,  
\     Amidst this realm of grief of karma and the kleshas,  
\     Today may our weariness COME TO REST IN THE NATURE OF MIND.

¢(i.e. May all sentient beings come to realize the real nature of their own mind, and thus the real nature of everything. That will be enough to Liberate them from any attachments to those illusion-like dharmas. May they come to realize the inseparability of the Two Truths, the inseparability of their trikaya, the inseparability of dependent origination and emptiness.)

THE NATURE OF MIND is primordial luminosity, the essence of the Buddha realm. It is beyond the four extremes of existence, non-existence, eternalism, and nihilism. It primordially pervades all sentient beings.

The Uttaratantra says:

- ~ When by the luminous nature of the mind
- ~ It has been seen that kleshas are essenceless,
- ~ After it has been realized that
- ~ all beings Are completely pure of the four extremes,

¢(i.e. All empty of inherent existence; merely imputed by the mind; not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither; no absolute objective characteristics to really discriminate objects; not really arising, not really existing, not really ceasing.)

- ~ All will dwell within perfect Buddhahood,
- ~ Possessing the mind that has no obscuration.
- ~ Beings completely purified will possess
- ~ the limitless vision of the perceiver, wisdom.
- ~ Therefore, to that nature I pay homage.

¢(i.e. Like space and sun; inseparability of space/emptiness and luminosity/wisdom. -- Once the real non-dual nature of appearances / defilements is directly seen then one is liberated from its grasp. There is nothing to accept or get, nothing to reject or drop. It is just a

matter of directly seeing the real nature of our own mind, and thus the real nature of everything.)

THOUGH PRIMORDIALLY PURE WISDOM EXISTS WITHIN US,  
-- BY NOT RECOGNIZING IT, WE WANDER HERE IN SAMSAARA.

-- This karma of ignorance produces ego-grasping.  
-- By that in turn are produced passion, aggression, ignorance, pride, and envy.  
-- It is because of these five poisons or kleshas that we are whirling around here in samsara.

¢(i.e. We all have the Buddha-potential, but still are not realized Buddha because of our ignorance... We have all the potential to realize the real nature of everything, and act in perfect accord with this real non-dual nature, instead of reacting in accord from past errors and conditioning. We naturally have this potential because we are part of it ... this ocean, or luminous space beyond conceptualization, causality space & time, beyond existence, non-existence, both, neither. It is just a matter of directly seeing this real nature, and acting while always being aware of it. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.)

Why so?

-- As various habitual patterns are superimposed on alaya, we enter into unhappiness.  
-- The least result is that by the karma of ignorance we are born as animals.  
-- The intermediate is that by the karma of seduction and desire we are born as pretas.  
-- The worst is that by the karma of aggression we are born in Hell.  
-- Those who have pure merit, but also an equal amount of pride, are born as gods or human beings.  
-- Those who have equal parts of goodness and jealousy are born as asuras.

Each of these has their own realm of existence, with its happiness, sorrow, and the states between them. They have their own sorts of good and evil behavior.

So it is that we wander helplessly in this plain of the beginningless and endless sufferings of samsara, so difficult to cross. In vanity we grasp at an I or real self, which is like the seeming appearances of a dream. Though if we examine these well, they are non-existent, at this time of our confusion they appear to be really and truly existent.

The Samadhiraja Sutra says:

~ The life of samsaric beings is like that in a dream.  
~ Since this is so, no one is ever born or dies. (i.e. no real origination, duration, or cessation)

The Request of Bhrama says:

~ The beings of appearance are like those in a dream.  
~ By their personal karma, they are bound as individuals.  
~ They wander among samsara's many joys and sorrows.  
~ Though their nature is suchness that is egoless  
~ Still these unknowing children fixate I and ego,  
~ And so samsara's torments are ever on the rise.

The sentient beings of samsara are held in various kinds of bondage. Though all dharmas are egoless, fixators of ego excluded themselves off from the eye of liberation, and have to be taught their own true essence.

How? When they know that this is their path, it is improper for them to concern themselves

with the goal of peace alone. As all beings wander here in beginningless samsara, there is not even one has not been our father and our mother. So to reject them and liberate ourselves alone is not the proper way.

The Teacher's Letter says:

- ~ Our kinsmen who are carried in the ocean of samsara
- ~ Seem to have tumbled down into a great abyss
- ~ If we have rejected these, who do not know what they are,
- ~ Because of the process of birth and death and transmigration,
- ~ If we produce liberation for ourselves alone,
- ~ They will never be liberated from their karma.

Thinking about that, and seeing the weariness of sentient beings, exhausted by the burden of their long wandering here in samsara, I wanted to compose a treatise giving the instructions of how we can ease this weariness by coming to the resting place ornamented by the wondrous wealth of the Victorious Ones, the level of great nirvana. I wanted to illuminate how by immeasurably abundant compassion, we can guide those wandering in samsara.

The Avatamsaka Sutra says:

~ Kye! O son of noble family, WHEN WE SEE THE REALM OF SENTIENT BEINGS, ALL UNDERTAKINGS OF BODY, SPEECH, AND MIND BECOME THE IMMEASURABLE GREAT COMPASSION. We work with the worldly sciences and those beyond the world that have come from the heads of the noble ones. Having been inspired to the good, we perform once more the Buddha activity of the former Victorious Ones. Let us offer to the Tathagata. Let us raise the victory banner of Dharma. Let us introduce the great path of liberation. O Holy beings! O precious crest-ornament!

¢(i.e. Understanding the causes of samsara, and seeing how all sentient beings are stuck in it without knowing how to stop creating more suffering, I feel great compassion and vow to take full benefit of this precious human life in order to attain full Buddhahood and be able to help them all. This text will explain the full path that helps in attaining the unborn, uncaused fruit.)

That was the vow to compose the text.

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\*\*\*\*\*  
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L1: [Second, there is the extensive explanation of the actual subject] :L1

In general, the extensive explanation of the subject, how the two benefits arise, is in THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

L2: [CHAPTER I. The free and well-favored human body, so difficult to obtain.] :L2

The First Chapter of the commentary on THE GREAT PERFECTION: THE NATURE OF MIND, THE EASER OF WEARINESS called the Great Chariot

¢(i.e. THE METHOD based on dependent origination, causality: Karma formation, the Wheel of life, the six realms, the two paths, the poisons, THE MEDITATION ON THE PRECIOUS HUMAN

## LIFE

as a rare, hard to get effect, and as a precious cause / tool, a free and favored vessel, the best support, when combined with the rain of the Dharma. Their result could be full enlightenment, or the three lower realms if we do not practice. There is also the unborn cause, the Buddha-nature, and the gradual causal purification process. The need for renunciation based on bodhicitta, for the practice to be pure, not mixing it with worldly concerns, in order to progress quickly.

¢-- ANTIDOTE: Using this meditation as an antidote against discouragement, depression, and nihilism. To gain joy and enthusiasm for practice.

¢-- THE WISDOM REALIZING THE REAL NATURE of the mind and of everything: It is not a matter of method only, not a matter of doing something, or not doing something. It is not a matter of accepting or rejecting, it is a matter of seeing the real nature of everything.

Everything is merely imputed by the mind, but still not from the mind-only; not existent, but not non-existent either. Enlightenment is not really caused, produced. The resulting non-duality. The Union of The Two Truths.

¢-- PERFECTING - combining both method and wisdom together, gathering the two accumulations: Developing wisdom alone is not enough, no more than using methods alone. We need both. Ignoring the methods, the accumulation of merit, we will end up in the three lower realms. We need to practice the Dharma, to tame the mind, to arise bodhicitta, to purify the body speech and mind, and also to meditate on the emptiness of the three (subject, object, action); to meditate on the interdependence of mind and world, the inseparability of dependent origination and emptiness, of the relative and absolute.)

There are four sections:

- A. The general explanation of being free and well favored, and how it is so difficult to obtain
- B. Recognition of being free and well favored
- C. True analysis of the environment and inhabitants of the phenomenal world
- D. The dedication of the merit of the situation

¢(i.e. The success or not of your spiritual journey depends on THESE [FOUR] FOUNDATIONS.

¢-- Appreciation of the value of the precious human rebirth; -- chapter 1 --

¢-- understanding impermanence and death; -- chapter 2 --

¢-- understanding the causes, conditions and results of positive and negative actions (karma); -- chapter 4 --

¢-- and understanding how all of cyclic existence is problematic and not free from suffering, -- chapter 3 --

¢regardless of your station in life, these are the key important factors which form the basis of the spiritual journey.

¢-- Lama Karma Samten Gyatso)

¢(i.e. "THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS ARE meditation on the precious human rebirth, on impermanence,

on karma and on the faults of samsara. They are common to all levels of practice and all schools" -- Thrangu Rinpoche

¢-- four foundations of meditation (Tib. tun mong gi ngon dro shi) These are the four thoughts that turn the mind. They are reflection on precious human birth, impermanence and the inevitability of death, karma and its effects, and the pervasiveness of suffering in samsara.

¢-- four ordinary foundations (Tib. tün mong gi ngon dro shi) This is meditation on the four

thoughts that turn the mind towards dharma which are the precious human birth, impermanence, samsara, and karma.

☞-- four thoughts that turn the mind (Tib. blo do nam shi) These are realizing the preciousness of human birth, the impermanence of life, the faults of samsara, and realizing that pleasure and suffering result from good and bad actions.)

L3: [A. The general explanation of being free and well favored, so difficult to obtain.] :L3

☞(i.e. The precious, hard to get, human life with its freedoms, endowments and opportunity to learn the Dharma and to put it into practice. Everything else is a waste of time. If we waste this great opportunity we will end up in the three lower realms for very long. - - It is not a matter of getting something, or rejecting something. It is a matter of gradually purifying the body speech and mind by following the Dharma, gathering the two accumulations of merit and wisdom, and directly realizing the non-dual nature of our own mind and of everything. - - It may be hard at first, but the more we practice, the more we accumulate merit and virtues, and the more it become easy to do it. It is like developing a habit, a skill, but it is accumulation of karma in order to transcend all habits, all conditioning, all karma formation. That is why we need both method and wisdom all the time.)

Within the general topic there are

- 1. The summary of the essence
- 2. The extensive explanation of the nature

L4: [1. The summary of the essence] :L4

☞(i.e. The support of establishing enlightenment is being "well-favored". This teaching is for those with the precious human life and with the bodhicitta motivation. Urging us to take full benefit of this precious and rare opportunity for Enlightenment.) .

Now from the explanation of the real body of the text, first, briefly, the support of establishing enlightenment is being "well-favored."

As for the details, here is the praise:

\     ###  
\     My friends, this body, the PRECIOUS essence of freedom and favor, °  
\     Is VERY HARD TO GAIN within the six realms of beings,  
\     Thus, like a blind man who has found a precious treasure,  
\     With excellent joy, may good and benefit be accomplished.

Who has crossed over to enlightenment? This is the spiritual friend who has established enlightenment. The instruction is given to those with the good fortune of bodhicitta, the wish for enlightenment.

In regard to attaining the holy freedoms and favors, it is wonderful even for those who are not poor to attain what is supremely precious, let alone the poor. If those who are blind and helpless attain it, it is even more astonishingly wonderful than that.

As for praise of beings, who attain the free and well favored human body, while they are whirled about in the six lokas of samsara,

The Sutra Teaching the Freedoms and Favors says:

~ It is like this: Like a blind person who finds a precious jewel among earth and stones, sentient beings wandering in samsara, blinded by cataracts of ignorance who find their real humanity are supremely joyful. And so we ought to practice the Dharma, which is always

excellent.

L4: [2. The extensive explanation of the nature,] :L4

There are eight topics

- a. The extensive explanation of the eighteen freedoms and favors
- b. Not being steadfast, even if we have the freedoms and favors
- c. The instruction to strive for the Dharma
- d. How we must work hard at this
- e. The suitability of this
- f. The samsaric torments if we do not make an effort now
- g. The teaching of the freedoms and favors, which support the Dharma
- h. Why the freedoms and favors are difficult to obtain

L5: [a] The extensive explanation of the eighteen freedoms and favors:] :L5

¢(i.e. 8 freedoms, 10 endowments of the precious human life. Without them we couldn't have access to and practice the dharma, no opportunity for Enlightenment.)

\     ###  
\     If you ask what are THESE FREEDOMS AND EXCELLENT FAVORS [ENDOWMENTS], °  
  
\     ###  
\     We were not born in Hell 1, nor yet among hungry ghosts 2.  
\     We are not beasts 3, nor long lived gods 4, nor vicious barbarians 5,  
\     We were not reared in wrong views 8, nor in a time without Buddhas 6,  
\     Nor have we been born as idiots without speech 7,  
\     We are completely free from all these eight non-freedoms.  
  
\     ###  
\     We were born in the human realm 1, and in a central country 26.  
\     Also we sound in all our faculties 3,  
\     Not having done inexpressibly wrong in deeds and actions 47,  
\     We are properly faithful to the objects of faith 5.  
\     Thus the five holy favors regarding oneself are complete.  
  
\     ###  
\     The Buddha has appeared 1 and he has taught the Dharma 2.  
\     Moreover, at this time the teachings still remain 3.  
\     So that they may continue, people still follow them 4,  
\     And others are treating us with kindness and concern 5.  
\     These five favors are those that exist in regard to others.  
  
\     ###  
\     Those were the eighteen kinds of being free and well-favored.  
\     On this auspicious occasion they are complete within us.  
\     So strive from the heart, that liberation may be accomplished.

¢(i.e. PRECIOUS - Basic conditions necessary to practice the Dharma

¢-- 8 FREEDOMS

¢---- Freedom from rebirth as a hell being (from having killed with hatred; suffering heat and cold)

¢---- Freedom from rebirth as a hungry ghost (from greed; suffering from thirst and hunger,

also heat, cold, fear, tiredness)

¢---- Freedom from rebirth as an animal (from stupidity and ignorance; suffering from stupidity and confusion, heat, cold, hunger, thirst, exploitation by men, the law of the jungle)

¢---- Freedom from rebirth as a long life god (from jealousy of the virtues of others, or pride; suffering from constant fighting, and long death ending in the 3 LR)

¢---- Freedom from rebirth in a place with no dharma (think you are smart enough to find it alone)

¢---- Freedom from rebirth in a time before a Buddha (same; thanks for His great kindness)

¢---- Freedom from rebirth with impaired senses of body or mind (have compassion for other)

¢---- Freedom from rebirth with wrong views (like rejection of the Law of Karma, the continuity of consciousness, ...) -- see the 16 wrong views below

¢-- 10 ENDOWMENTS -- ten blessings which enable us to practice the Dharma

¢-- 5 personal

¢---- Rebirth as a human being

¢---- Rebirth in a place with dharma

¢---- Rebirth with all sense powers and able to understand and practice dharma

¢---- Not having done one of the 5 bad deeds with immediate retribution (like killing mother, father, arhat, harming a Buddha, causing a schism in the Sangha) / we have a karmic link with the dharma

¢---- Having faith in the three baskets (or three gems) and the buddhist teachings as a whole

¢-- 5 circumstantial

¢---- Being born in a time where a Buddha has appeared

¢---- Being born in a time where a Buddha has taught (great kindness and compassion for us)

¢---- Being born in a time where the dharma is stable and flourishing (living tradition)

¢---- Being born in a time where there are dharma practitioners (available to anyone)

¢---- Being born in a time where there are kind benefactors (and Teachers)

¢-- Conclusion

¢---- So we have all the conditions amenable and necessary to practice the dharma.

¢---- We rejoice to have this precious human life and this potential (even though this body and mind is in the nature of suffering).

¢---- Still, these opportunities and these blessings are not permanently established. In fact, they could easily be destroyed and disappear.

¢---- Note : It is not a luck that I have this precious human life; it is due to our accumulated karma. So this precious human life has causes and conditions, and is functional, although everything is empty of inherent existence. It is both empty and dependently originated (functional: being both an effect and a cause).)

¢(i.e. In addition, we need THE THREE CONFIDENCES and they are:

¢-- 1. Faith in the clear mind arises when we see the supreme qualities of the Three Jewels. We develop devotion for and interest in the Buddha as the teacher who shows the path, the Dharma which becomes the path, and the Sangha which guides one in order to accomplish the path.

¢-- 2. Faith of desire, the wish to be enlightened, to study and practice the Dharma. Seeing what samsara is, we sincerely wish to escape, to reach enlightenment. Recognizing the assets of virtue, we wish to make them our own. Seeing the defects of non-virtue, we wish to avoid them. These wishes inspire the faith of desire.

¢-- 3. Faith in the truth of karma (causes and effects), trusting that happiness is the

fruit of virtuous causes and suffering is the fruit of non-virtuous causes.

¢--- One must have all the above qualities together to be freed from samsara.

¢--- -- Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche)

¢(i.e. FEW DEFINITIONS:

¢-- Eight freedoms (Skt. ashtakshana, Tib. tel wa gye). These are not living in hell realm, not living in the hungry ghost realm, not living in animal realm, not a long-living god, not having wrong views, not being born in a country without dharma, being mute, or being born in an age without Buddhas.

¢-- assets, ten or ten endowments (Skt. dashasashpada, Tib. jor wa chu) These are the factors conducive to practice the dharma. They are being human, being born in a Buddhist place, having sound senses, being free from extreme evil, having faith in the dharma, a Buddha having appeared, a Buddha having taught, the flourishing of his teachings, people following the teachings, and having compassion towards others.

¢-- four unfavorable obstacles The four obstacles that hinder one from complete enlightenment. These are hostility or dislike of dharma, strong belief in self, fear of suffering so one doesn't enter the Mahayana, and lack of helping others.)

We should take this to heart. Why?

The life of the king of Brahmins Drvki Kyeche says:

- ~ It is hard to find the opposites of the eight non-freedoms.
- ~ It is hard to find attainment of humanity.
- ~ It is hard to find the freedoms in purity and completeness.
- ~ It is hard to find the arising of a Buddha.
- ~ It is hard to find true powers that are without defect.
- ~ It is hard to listen to the teachings of a Buddha.
- ~ It is hard to find the friendship of any holy beings.
- ~ It is hard to meet with genuine spiritual friends.

If we are born as Hell beings, pretas, or animals; distracted by suffering, we have no freedom of body. The blind, who cannot associate verbal symbols with their meanings, have no freedom of speech. Those who are long-lived may never see the practice of Dharma. Buddhas may be absent, so that they arise in a dark kalpa without the appearance of the teachings. Even if Buddhas appear, people may be coarse barbarians with no idea of entering. Even those who want to enter, falling into extremes of exaggeration or denigration, may fall into the four wrong views. Such people have no freedom of mind. NONE OF THESE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE DHARMA. They have been deprived of it by their own bad karma of the eight non-freedoms. By abandoning those eight, one always has the corresponding freedoms.

The Commentary on the Prajnaparamita in Eight Thousand Lines says:

- ~ Beings in Hell, the pretas, and the animals;
- ~ The long-lived gods and those who are barbarians,
- ~ Those in an age without Buddhas and those who have wrong views,
- ~ These and the blind comprise the eight states of non-freedom.

The Spiritual Letter, says:

- ~ Those who grasp wrong views and animals,
- ~ The hungry ghosts and beings born in Hell,
- ~ Those without the word of Victory,

- ~ And those who are born as savage barbarians,
- ~ The blind, the feeble-minded, and the gods;
- ~ These possess the faults of the eight non-freedoms.
- ~ Those who have the freedoms from these eight
- ~ Should strive in eliminating further births.

As for being well-favored, the Moon in your Heart Sutra says:

- ~ Those for whom the ten qualities are complete
- ~ Are said to be the ones who are well-favored.

What are these ten qualities. The following have been listed:

- 1. We have left behind the lower realms of life.
- 2. We are not feeble-minded.
- 3. Our senses are not impaired.
- 4. We are born as vessels.
- 5. Our health is good.
- 6. We are not impoverished.
- 7. We are not enslaved.
- 8. We have the power to use words.
- 9. We have come within view of many noble beings.

That is many people's view of what they are.

But here they are as in the Sutra of the Twelve Perfections:

These are the five perfections pertaining to oneself

- 1. We have attained the human condition.
- 2. We are born in a country where there are noble ones.
- 3. Our powers are sound.
- 4. We have not performed extremely evil deeds.
- 5. We have faith in the proper topics of faith.

These are the five perfections pertaining to others.

- 6. A Buddha has come.
- 7. The Dharma has been taught.
- 8. The holy Dharma still remains.
- 9. Others also practice it.
- 10. Others show kindness to those who practice the Dharma.

As for kindness to others, the spiritual friend apprehends us with compassion, and leads us to the Dharma.

As for there being twelve perfections, the two bases of distinction are also counted.<sup>8</sup>

A tantra commentary says:

- ~ A central human being with faculties that are sound,
- ~ Without extreme bad actions, but with faith in the objects of faith.
- ~ These are the five kinds of favor pertaining to oneself.
- ~ A Buddha has come and taught, and the teaching still remains.
- ~ The teaching still is followed and beings are kind to others.
- ~ These are the five kinds of favor pertaining to other beings.<sup>9</sup>

Here the freedoms are the essence and the favors are its particular dharmas. This is like

the blue utpala lotus and its stalk and so forth.

The Middle Length Prajnaparamita says:

- ~ If even becoming human is difficult to attain,
- ~ Why even speak of completing the view of the precious freedoms?

L5: [b) Not being steadfast, even if we have the freedoms and favors] :L5

¢(i.e. If we waste this great opportunity, we will end up in the three lower realms for a long time without even any knowledge of karma and its consequences. We will thus have no opportunity to get out of them except for one chance out of a billion billion.)

Even though we may have attained all of these freedoms, by craving samsaric happiness even a little:

```
\    ###
\    If we accomplish no benefit within this life, °
\    We may not hear later even the words "the higher realms".
\    Cycling again and again on the wheel of samsara
\    For a long time we will have to stay in the lower realms.
\    Having no knowledge of what we should accept and reject,
\    We will certainly go upon a mistaken path
\    Wandering in samsara, without beginning or end.
```

¢(i.e. EVALUATION FOR OUR NEXT REBIRTH

¢-- Have we accumulated enough merit : love, compassion, wisdom, bodhicitta, 6 paramitas

¢-- Have we purified all our bad karma and evil

¢-- To be reborn in the 3 upper realms.

¢-- Now that we have the knowledge of karma and its consequences we should take this into account and act accordingly, because once we are in the three lower realms we lose the ability to distinguish between right and wrong actions, and thus keep accumulating the causes for more suffering, keep cycling in the three lower realms.)

If within this life, so good to obtain, we do not practice the beneficial holy Dharma, by the power of karma we will be born in the lower realms. There we shall not so much as hear the words "higher realms," to say nothing of going there.

The Bodhicharyavatara<sup>10</sup> says:

- ~ As for our behavior which is of such a kind,
- ~ If we shall not even gain a human body,
- ~ It goes without saying we cannot go to higher realms.
- ~ For if we shall not even gain a human body,
- ~ We shall do only evil, and there can be no good.
  
- ~ Now when there is a chance for excellent behavior,
- ~ If, even so, good actions are not what we perform,
- ~ What are you going to do when they have come for you
- ~ With the stupefying sufferings of the lower realms?

If we go to the lower realms, we shall not be liberated for a very long time.

The same text says:

- ~ Even in the course of a thousand million kalpas
- ~ I will not even hear the words, "the higher realms."

L5: [c) The instruction to strive for the Dharma] :L5

¢(i.e. Now that we have come out of the three lower realms and have this very hard to find opportunity, we should rely on the dharma, gather the two accumulations of merit and wisdom, and completely go beyond samsara, so we will never go back to the lower realms. Death is inevitably approaching, and we don't know when. Nothing else makes sense.)

An opportunity of liberation from the limitless depth of samsara is hard to find. So let us strive for the Dharma with all our hearts. That is the instruction.

\     ###  
\     Therefore, now when we still have the power to do so, °  
\     By auspicious conditions that accord with the proper path,  
\     Relying on the inexhaustible wholesome dharmas  
\     Gained by having gathered the two accumulations,  
\     Let us pass beyond the city of samsara.

¢(i.e. Conclusion:

¢-- We should feel afraid of losing this great opportunity (and for the suffering of the 3LR) and do whatever it takes to recreate it or bring it to its fulfillment.

¢-- We should also have compassion for all other human beings who, without knowing it, are wasting their time and creating more of their suffering.

¢-- It is as if, in an eternity of suffering, we have a very brief moment of chance to escape. This kind of opportunity will not present itself for another eternity after that. All we have to do is to realize, using the gift of intelligence and heart we have, the true nature of reality. Anything else is a waste of time and opportunity. Any pleasure is negligible compared to an eternity of suffering. That is the only thing that gives life a meaning. And it is gone so fast.

¢-- So we should drop other attachments to temporary pleasures, that create more suffering here now and in latter lives. Drop this illusion of a body and of a self. Cultivate renunciation and desire for Liberation for all -- Enlightenment. Study and practice Dharma.)

Keep in mind aging, becoming old and decrepit, and dying. Now while we still can, let us be guided by the path of liberation. If we do whatever goodness we can, we shall surely come forth from samsara.

The Sutra of the Vast Display says:

~ O monks, because death, aging and enfeeblement are non-existent, because by nourishing goodness, one's powers will be transformed, and because enlightenment will proliferate, strive to accumulate merit and wisdom. For you the three cities of samsara will be emptied. The gates to the lower realms will be cut off. The stairway to the higher realms will be established. The realm of liberation will be attained.

L5: [d) How we must work hard at this] :L5

¢(i.e. Now that we have come out of the three lower realms and have this very hard to find opportunity, there is no better time to try to escape the whole cycle of samsara. After losing this precious human life we will not be able to do it for a very long hard time.)

When the freedoms and favors of knowing about and establishing such benefit and goodness are accomplished by a guide who is our spiritual friend, extreme situations do not manifest. When this precious ship has been attained in the middle of the fearful, limitless ocean of samsara:

\ ###  
 \ If we do not cross the limitless ocean of samsara °  
 \ Now at the time of having attained this precious ship,  
 \ Then how can we do it at another time  
 \ When painful waves of the kleshas are always utterly raging?

If we have a great ship which will serve our purpose, we should use it to cross the ocean. Similarly, having attained this ship of humanity, we should cross the great ocean of samsara, so fearful and unbearable, whose beginning and end are not apparent. Because of wandering in constant birth, old age, sickness, and death, samsaric situations are never bearable.

Shantideva says in the Bodhicharyavatara:

- ~ Whoever with the support of this ship of human birth,
- ~ Can cross the great waters of the river of suffering,
- ~ Since later such a ship may be difficult to find,
- ~ Would be wrong to sleep at this time, because of stupidity.

L5: [e] The suitability of this,] :L5

¢(i.e. This is what we have to understand, to do / to directly see while we can, and the final unborn / uncaused result: All suffering and happiness are from our own mind with ignorance or without ignorance; but not from the mind-only. There is no absolute good and bad; nothing to accept or produce, nothing to reject or drop. But still nothing is un-caused, or without an effect. The problem is the belief in inherent existence, the fixation and grasping based on that. When the mind is purified, and the real non-dual nature of samsaric objects is directly seen, they naturally turn into inseparable kayas, wisdoms beyond conceptualization, and pure Buddha-fields. Objects still appear (~1), but they are seen as illusions (~2). Then the Two Truths of dependent origination and emptiness are united. That is why the path is using both method / skillful means / upaya and wisdom / prajna / knowing the emptiness of all objects and means. This is in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything beyond the extremes of existence, non-existence, both, neither.)

Because the freedoms and favors are so difficult to attain:

\ ###  
 \ Therefore, quickly donning the armor of exertion °  
 \ Clear the murk of mind and the events of mind,  
 \ And thus complete the path of spotless, LUMINOUS WISDOM.  
 \ May the path of enlightenment be without obstacles.

When the turbulence of samsaric mind and mental events is pacified, the luminous wisdom of the nature of mind naturally rises. Becoming familiar with this is called the path of enlightenment. Try to practice it uninterruptedly day and night, abandoning sleep and tiredness. Just remain THERE.

(i.e. MORE ON THE UNION OF THE TWO ASPECTS OF THE REAL NATURE OF THE MIND:

¢-- The goal is to quickly realize the real nature of our own mind:

¢-- 1. emptiness

¢-- 2. and clarity / luminosity / cognitive lucidity.

¢-- Like not existing (~2), and not non-existing (~1) ...; the union of the two.

¢-- Like empty but still functional.

¢-- Like inseparability of appearances and emptiness, of wisdom and space.

¢-- Like inseparability of method / upaya / skillful means and wisdom / prajna / emptiness.

¢-- Like the inseparability of the relative and the absolute, of samsara and Nirvana.

¢-- Like the Union of the Two Truths: appearances dependently originated and emptiness.

¢-- Union means non-duality: not one, not two. Not separate or different, not the same.

Interdependent.

¢-- Not realism / eternalism, not idealism / nihilism, not dualism, not monism.

¢-- This real nature is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization, but we use those concepts to say what it is not, thus eliminating the wrong views, and to point toward it.

¢-- Once the real nature of our body, speech and mind are seen for what they are, they are seen as the Buddha's trikaya. Once the five poisons are seen for what they really are, they are transmuted into the five wisdoms. Once the real nature of all appearances are seen for what they are, they are self-liberating, and seen as pure Buddha-fields.)

¢-- (i.e. Few definitions:

¢-- CLARITY (Tib. selwa) Also translated as luminosity. The nature of mind is that it is empty of inherent existence (~2), but the mind is not just voidness (~2), completely empty because it has this clarity (~1) which is awareness or the knowing of mind. So clarity (~1) is a characteristic of emptiness (~1) (shunyata) of mind.

¢-- LUMINOSITY (Tib. selwa) In the third turning everything is void (~2), but this voidness is not completely empty because it has luminosity (~1). Luminosity or clarity allows all phenomena to appear (~1) and is a characteristic of emptiness (~1) (Skt. shunyata).

¢-- COEMERGENT WISDOM (Skt. sahajajnana, Tib. lhen chik kye pay yeshe) The advanced realization of the inseparability of samsara (~1) and nirvana (~2) and how these arise simultaneously and together.

¢-- EIGHT MENTAL FABRICATIONS OR COMPLICATIONS Not having the eight mental fabrications is

to be without a beginning, without a cessation, without nihilism, without eternalism, without going, without coming, not being separate, and not being non-separate.

¢-- FIVE POISONS (Tib. dug) These are passion aggression, delusion, pride, and jealousy.

¢-- FIVE WISDOMS (Tib. yeshe nga) Upon reaching enlightenment, the eight consciousnesses are transformed into the five wisdoms: the mirror-like wisdom, discriminating wisdom, the wisdom of equality, the all-accomplishing wisdom, and the dharmadhatu wisdom.

¢-- FOUR EXTREMES (Skt. catushkoti, Tib. mu shi) These are a belief in the existence of everything (also called "eternalism"), a belief that nothing exists (also called "nihilism"), a belief that things exist and don't exist, and the brief reality is something other than existence and non-existence.)

¢(i.e. Vast unoriginated self-luminous wisdom space is the ground of being - the beginning and the end of confusion. The presence of awareness in the primordial state has no bias toward enlightenment or non-enlightenment. This ground of being which is known as pure or original mind is the source from which all phenomena arise. It is known as the great mother, as the womb of potentiality in which all things arise and dissolve in natural self-perfectedness and absolute spontaneity. -- Dzogchen Practice in Everyday Life, HH Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche)

¢(i.e. Now, one can present Mahamudra in different ways. For example, it can be presented as ground Mahamudra, path Mahamudra, and fruition Mahamudra. When it is explained in even more

detail, it can be explained as the Four Yogas of Mahamudra, each of which has this threefold classification, thus yielding a twelve-fold Mahamudra. Explanation of this twelve-fold classification seems quite elaborate, but, generally speaking, the idea of ground Mahamudra is quite similar to the Madhyamaka explanation of relative and absolute truth. What ground Mahamudra refers to is the luminous energy aspect of the mind that is within every sentient being. Having understood the ground this way, one listens to and contemplates the teachings and then applies them in meditation. This is the path aspect of Mahamudra. Doing so, one becomes clearer about the whole idea of luminosity and the experience of meditation progresses. Having listened and contemplated, one gradually develops consistency in practice until one eventually reaches the point of understanding the vipasyana experience, which is learning to rest the mind in its natural state. In other words, through long, consistent effort, one is actually maturing and ripening the basic emptiness (~2) and luminosity (~1) of the mind.

¢-- Thus, the purpose of explaining the Mahamudra teachings is to help everyone understand and realize their own innate nature not something new or extra. In order to understand this innate nature, which has always been within, one listens to and contemplates the teachings and applies them through meditation, which brings about the realization that this quality has always been there; one is not acquiring something new.

¢-- What one needs to do in order to realize this luminous wisdom energy of the mind is to eliminate the obscurations, or kleshas, which one has been accumulating from beginningless time. Through eliminating these obscurations, one comes to the fruition of realizing the luminous wisdom mind. To eliminate or transform these kleshas is very difficult. Why? First of all, we have become familiar with these conflicting emotions since beginningless time. In a sense, these kleshas have been friends of ours for a very long time. Since they have been friends of ours for such a long time, it is very hard to abandon or give them up immediately. Therefore, tremendous training is required to transmute these kleshas.

¢-- Generally speaking, it is very difficult to separate the nature of the mind from the mind's own obscurations, because of how they bond together; it seems that there is really no separation between the two. In order to understand the difference, one needs to listen to many teachings. Getting the appropriate information is required. One needs to listen and contemplate, to get enough intellectual feedback, so to speak, to meditate upon that and, having really understood it, to eliminate the confusion once one has grasped the actual realization of wisdom itself. That is the ultimate perfection of realization, free from obscuration, which is known as fruition.

¢-- The degree to which one individual can understand a teaching depends on his or her depth of comprehension of this wisdom. Whether it is a Mahayana teaching or a Madhyamaka teaching, the aim is to express the ultimate nature of Mahamudra. If an individual lacks this depth of wisdom, then even if given the highest teaching the individual will not grasp the meaning. Therefore, it is said that there are no meaningless or senseless teachings of the Buddha. They all have meaning and all make sense, if we can only comprehend them.

¢-- -- From: The Mahamudra prayer, Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche - KTD -- See also)

¢(i.e. When the time comes that you can perceive simultaneously the appearance of things without this causing their voidness to be obscured to your mind, and their voidness without your mind ceasing to make their appearance dawn, you have directly manifested the excellent pathway mind that perceives everything from the single, integrated point of voidness and dependent arising being synonymous. The attainment of the resultant two unified Buddha bodies comes from the unified practice of wisdom and method, This follows from the fact that

all objects have both voidness and appearance [levels of truth].

☿-- The Main Road of the Triumphant Ones, The First Panchen Lama)

The Five Stages says:

- ~ All the complexities of mind and mental events
- ~ At the time when these are completely pacified
- ~ Arise as luminosity, the state of wisdom, (i.e. Transmutation of the five poisons into the five wisdoms)
- ~ This is without conceptions and has no center or limit. (i.e. Wisdoms beyond conceptualization, beyond mental fabrications.)

Here, "Mind," means exaggerated conceptions<sup>11</sup> which support the three realms. By the expressions of subsequent analysis<sup>12</sup> in terms of these there arise murky disturbances that obscure suchness. But when these conceptions are completely pacified, we enter into wisdom that is completely non-conceptualized.(i.e. Transmutation of the five poisons into the five wisdoms beyond conceptualization)

The Two Truths says:

- ~ Mind and mental contents<sup>13</sup> are merely conceptualization<sup>14</sup>,
- ~ Exaggerated phenomena, the three realms of samsara

☿(i.e. All merely imputed by the mind, mental fabrications -- dependent on the mind / not existent, but not from the mind-only / completely non-existent.)

Samsaric mind correlates with the generalized conception<sup>15</sup> of "this," when an object is first seen<sup>16</sup>. "That's an utpala lotus" is the mind's consciousness<sup>17</sup> of such a first moment. Then, as we discriminate<sup>18</sup> various distinctions of that object, we make analytic demarcations of the contents of mind. Here there are such conceptions as, "this utpala lotus is blue in color, and round in shape. It has a blossom, stamens, and pistil."

☿(i.e. All based on the belief of inherent existence of something, or based on the belief of some absolute, some impartially observed characteristics. We think we are objectively perceiving the characteristics and objects, and thus simply impartially being conscious of their presence. We are not aware that all perceptions and consciousnesses are based on accumulated karma, dependent on the actual five aggregates. So we believe in real impartial discrimination, real classification, real recognition, ...)

The Center and Extremes says:

- ~ To see the object as "that" is consciousness.
- ~ Distinctions of that are objects of the mind.

The Abhidharmakosha<sup>19</sup> says:

- ~ There are conception and analytic discernment and these may be fine and coarse.

All who are bound in such conception and analytical discernment, bound by such habitual patterns of mind and mental events, are blocked from the level of Buddhahood.

☿(i.e. It is because of this ignorance, the belief in inherent existence, the belief in real characteristics, real objects, real perception, real consciousnesses, that we develop attachment, fears, and all other defilements. Because of this there is cyclic karma formation and suffering.)

The Madhyamakavatara<sup>20</sup> says:

- ~ When all the dry firewood of knowable objects has been burned,

- ~ There is peace, the dharmakaya of the victorious ones.
- ~ Then there is no arising, and also no cessation.
- ~ Cessation of mind brings manifestation of the kayas.

When, within self-awareness wisdom, we become enmeshed in the net of the kleshas, because of the confusion of grasping and fixation, that is called "samsaric mind," the dim and dismal cellar of examination and analysis. Liberation from that is Buddhahood. The enlightened object and perceiver are free from the attachment to the examination and analysis of grasping and fixation.

¢(i.e. When those illusion-like appearances are directly seen for what they really are, when there is realization that there is no absolute / objectively perceived characteristics of any kind, then they are naturally "transmuted" into kayas, wisdoms, and Buddha-fields. If fact, they have always been pure, it was just a matter of perception with ignorance of their real nature. There has never been any real arising, duration and cessation of anything inherently existing.

¢-- There is apparent dependent origination / causality / perception / consciousness, but nothing is inherently existing in this ocean of interdependence. No absolute causes, effects or causality, but no complete absence of causality either. No real production, no complete absence of production either. The real nature of everything is beyond description, beyond any conceptualization, but, still, we can say that everything is not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither.

¢-- Samsara and Nirvana are not different or separate, not the same.)

The Praise of the Vajra of Mind, says:

- ~ If we are enmeshed within the net of kleshas,
- ~ "Mind" is that which is expressible by speech.
- ~ If we should be separated from the kleshas,
- ~ This is the very thing that is known as Buddhahood.

The Abhisamayalankara says:

- ~ Having "big mind" is the jewel itself
- ~ Buddhahood is having "big mind," or the great wisdom.

¢(i.e. The samsaric mind transmuted into Buddha mind by directly realizing its real nature: being aware of characteristics and objects, using skillful means, but at the same time, being fully aware of their real nature. That is the Union of The Two Truths as realized by the Buddhas. Inseparability of appearances and emptiness. ¢-- So Nirvana is not different than samsara; it is not going somewhere else, not producing something new; not dropping something bad. It is knowing the real nature of the mind and of everything while using them. No absolute, only relative dependently arisen truths, only adapted skillful means. -- Samsara and Nirvana are not separate or different, not the same.)

The Sutra on the Array of Qualities, says:

- ~ The mind of sentient beings is that of false conception.
- ~ However, the great wisdom is the mind of Buddhahood.
- ~ Just like gold in mountains or in the banks of rivers,
- ~ Sometimes it is pure and sometimes it is not.

¢(i.e. Nothing new created, it is more like "purifying" something already there: the Buddha-potential, the Buddha-nature.)

In mantrayana big21 mind and its big kleshas are said to be wisdom itself. It is like that:

~ The dimness that does not know that is purified of its blindness.

¢(i.e. The process of purification, or removing the ignorance of the real nature of the mind, and of everything. The gradual process of letting go of the defilements, the egoistic obsessions and passions. this letting go of attachments is not done actively by dropping them but the automatic consequential result of directly seeing their real nature.)

The unceasing desire of mind is stupidity. When we meditate, objects still appear within awareness (~1), but awareness of concept and analysis ceases (~2). (i.e. The problem is not pure or impure dharmas, nor their appearance, but the ignorance of their real nature. The problem is thinking that concepts represent real things, absolute characteristics and relations. The problem is the fixation and grasping based on the belief in inherent existence. Appearances will not disappear, only the belief in the inherent existence of dharmas and the consequential attachments and fears will be pacified.)

¢(i.e. When the time comes that you can perceive simultaneously the appearance of things without this causing their voidness to be obscured to your mind, and their voidness without your mind ceasing to make their appearance dawn, you have directly manifested the excellent pathway mind that perceives everything from the single, integrated point of voidness and dependent arising being synonymous. The attainment of the resultant two unified Buddha bodies comes from the unified practice of wisdom and method, This follows from the fact that all objects have both voidness and appearance [levels of truth]. -- The First Panchen Lama, The Main Road of the Triumphant Ones)

The Sutra on the Bases of Discipline says:

~ Within dhyana O monks, though the motion of mind has ceased, objects still appear within the sense-consciousnesses (~1). Objects whirl with the motions of samsara. But now they are like fleeting reflections in a still pond (~2).

¢(i.e. Objects are still dependently arisen because not from the mind-only, not completely non-existent (~1), but they are know to be empty of inherent existent, not really existing independently of the mind (~2). That is the inseparability of appearances and mind, their non-duality: not one, not two. They are not separate or different (~2), not the same (~1). ¢-- And from the point of view of the discrimination between objects, since there is no real impartial absolute characteristics (they are all relative to the mind), then there is no real impartial absolute basis for discrimination, for identification of objects. That is why all dharmas are said to be "of one taste". That is their non-duality: they are not separate or different (~2), but still not the same (~1).

¢-- But it should be clear that the Middle Way is staying away from the four extremes of : realism/eternalism, nihilism/idealism, dualism, and monism/oneness. These four extreme views are not the real nature of everything, even if they might be used as skillful means in particular situations in order to be used as antidotes to their apparent opposite until there is transcendence. The Middle Way is not accepting anything as absolute (all views are flawed, empty of inherent existence), but still not rejecting any views, not rejecting dependent origination, causality, as if they were completely non-existent, of from the mind-only, or un-caused, or non-functional.

¢-- THAT IS THE MAIN MESSAGE OF THIS WHOLE GREAT CHARIOT : the real nature of reality: non-duality: not one (~1), not two (~2); not the same, not different or separate. That is the inseparability of appearances and emptiness; inseparability of dharmas and dharmata; inseparability of dependent origination and emptiness; inseparability of The Two Truths;

inseparability of method/upaya and wisdom/prajna; luminous space; inseparability of the two kayas or of the trikaya; "From the time they appear (~1), their birth and such are natureless (~2)"; "Within the appearance of mind (~1) there is no nature at all (~2)"; "the perfection of the paramitas is practicing them while knowing the emptiness of the three"; "Even though various images rise (~1) within a mirror, The surface of that mirror is really only one (~2)"; "Objects are uncertain, appearing in various ways. In the great impartiality, mind has no reference points."; "Inseparable and primordial appearance and emptiness Simplicity without perception of either one or many. With neither bias or partiality, all is equal, Equal appearance and emptiness; equal in truth or falsehood. Existence is equal and non-existence is also equal. This is equality transcending all extremes, The single state of the space of primordial purity."; "Insight without fixation is the completeness of being, The nature of the great perfection, the natural state."; "Inseparable absolute and relative Is the great mandala of truth."; "inseparability of space and luminosity/wisdom"

¢-- All of these mean the same thing: we have to unite the two truths, to know the real nature of anything as it arise in dependence, as we use it. We have to combine method and wisdom all the time.

¢-- Note: Non-duality, as Nagarjuna's tetralemma, are negation without affirmation. There is no view proposed here, no system, no absolute. This is equivalent to saying: "There is no absolute, only adapted skillful means. Even this is not an absolute, but jut another skillful means. And this ...")

The Ascertainment of Proper Reasoning says:

- ~ Even when the inner self rests motionless,
- ~ Visual forms arise in the mind of the visual sense.

Within the senses, apparent objects are not conceptualized.

The same text says:

- ~ This is taught because sense-awareness is not samsaric.

¢(i.e. The problem is not the objects of the senses, or the perception itself. The problem is 'not knowing the real nature of everything' as we perceive everything. There is nothing to accept, nothing to reject. Everything is already pure when seen for what they are; everything is then self-liberating.

¢-- This precious human life is not the problem; we should not try to reject it, to drop everything. Instead we should try to use it the best we can. A stupid animal, a brainless chicken, or a rock, cannot get enlightened. Even though nothing is absolute, even though everything is empty of inherent existence, we should not think that everything is meaningless, causeless or non-functional. Emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination.)

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In brief, conceptualization and analysis of objects produced due to grasping and fixation are called samsaric mind and its mental objects.

Object and insight 22 when grasping and fixation are completely pacified are kaya and wisdom.

\*\*\*\*\*

¢(i.e. The problem is thinking that everything is inherently existing, not merely imputed by the mind. It is because of this ignorance that we are grasping at thing, that there is becoming and the consequent suffering. We then discriminate on this basis, thinking things

and attributes are inherently existing, absolute.

¢-- When everything is seen as empty of inherent existence at the same time as they appear, then there is no more attachment and 'problems'. Once the body, speech and minds are seen for what they are, they are the inseparable non-dual unborn trikaya. When defilements are seen for what they are, they are transmuted into wisdoms beyond the faults of conceptualization. When the environment objects are seen for what they are they are transmuted into Buddha fields. Everything is then pure; that is Nirvana.

¢-- Note: There is nothing wrong per se with conceptualization, or using models, or using skillful means. The problem is when we think that they represent real things, or that they are absolute theories. The problem is to base those on a belief in inherent existence of some things, some invariants, so objective perception, some absolute truths, some real characteristics. When we fully realize that there is no absolute characteristics, no real basis for discrimination, classification, identification, then we can still perceive the luminosity, but we know their real nature at the same time, and thus we are free from any attachments, ... Thus everything become peace and purity. Still appearing and functional, but empty of inherent existence.)

The Sutra of the Glorious Garland says:

- ~ Whenever there are distinctions of grasping and fixation, that is reprovable.
- ~ Such conceptualization of objects is the mind of samsara.
- ~ Whenever grasping and fixation do not exist, object and insight are the wisdom of liberation.

By that it is established.

¢(i.e. Therefore, I think it's so worthwhile and so important that while we occupy these precious human bodies, with all our intelligence and where everything has come together, we use our ability to seek our inner nature and release ourselves from all the problems of mental defilement, which come from our ego. Everything we've done since the time we were born until now has come from our ego, but it's all been so transitory and our pleasure has been so small. -- Lama Thubten Yeshe, Give Your Ego the Wisdom Eye)

¢(i.e. "We have the opportunities afforded by the holy Dharma, the opportunity to understand the nature of reality and to help all sentient beings. We have the opportunity to reach enlightenment and liberate them from suffering." -- Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, In Search of a Meaningful Life)

L5: [f] The samsaric torments if we do not make an effort now.] :L5

¢(i.e. So we need both together, this precious human life as the support, and the Dharma to practice. One without the other is totally useless.)

A person who has the Dharma by the power of former goodness:

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\      ###
\      Whoever has the happy good fortune of the Dharma, °
\      Becoming a vessel of that precious spotlessness,
\      Yet has no use for its cooling rain of Dharma-amrita,
\      Will be annihilated by the torments of samsara.

\      ###
\      The holy rain of the cooling waters of wisdom
\      From the banks of clouds of benefit and great bliss
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\ Falls to cleanse the free and favored minds of beings.

Being a good vessel is like having the precious human body. When the rain of Dharma falls on us, if we are not vessels who can hold it, we will only exhaust oneself in suffering in the torments of samsara.

The Generation Born in an Iron House says:

- ~ Even though the free and favored vessel is gained,
- ~ Since no drops of Dharma are received within it,
- ~ We shall roast in Hellfire, so difficult to bear.
- ~ Long and excruciating pain will be our karma.

L5: [g] The teaching of the freedoms and favors, which support the Dharma.] :L5

¢(i.e. Once we have this precious human life as the support, the rain of Dharma naturally falls. And vice versa. To increase its benefits we need to practice it. This is like a self-amplifying virtuous process; each of these two elements support each other. Realizing this we practice with joy. That is the way good karma and favorable five aggregates are related: not separate or different, not the same.)

Supported by the freedoms that we have, the natural arising of Dharma is like this:

\ ###  
\ THEREFORE JOYFULLY PRACTICE THE DHARMA FROM YOUR HEART. °

That is the instruction.

- The supreme teachings of the Buddha are the rain of Dharma.
- The freedoms and favors are its support.
- This rain naturally falls.

The Arrangement of the Vessel says:

- ~ Kye! O child of a noble family, for those with the freedoms and favors, the great rain of perfect Dharma will fall.
- ~ They will possess immeasurable benefits.

L5: [h] Why the freedoms and favors are difficult to obtain:] :L5

¢(i.e. Once we have fallen into the three lower realms, this human life is extremely hard to get because, there, we are continually tormented, we have no leisure to learn the dharma, and even don't have any understanding of karma and its consequences. So, the probability to produce enough good karma to have a rebirth as a human is extremely infinitesimal. It is even harder to have both a human life and the actual ability and opportunity to practice the Dharma. So let's not waste it and fall back to the three lower realms.)

\ ###  
\ It is harder for us to gain a human birth °  
\ Than for a tortoise to thrust its head into a yoke  
\ That is tossed about in the middle of the ocean.  
\ That is what the teacher of Gods and men has said.  
\ Then why even speak of a free and well favored body.  
\ Let us be diligent in days that are to come.

¢(i.e. RARE AND VERY HARD TO OBTAIN

¢-- a) Causes producing this very rare effect

¢---- Strict moral discipline

¢---- Complementary practices : Generosity, Patience, ...

¢---- Prayers with strong aspiration to be reborn with a precious human life

¢-- b) The turtle analogy

¢---- The probability of having a rebirth with a precious human life from one of the three lower realms is almost negligible (see: turtle analogy)

¢-- c) By the numbers

¢---- Nb. of hell beings >> nb. of hungry ghosts >> nb. of animals >> nb. of humans >> nb. of humans practicing dharma purely

¢-- Conclusion

¢---- From one of the 3 lower realms it is almost impossible to get a precious human life.

¢---- So we should have this urge not to waste any moment of it and take the full potential of it.)

Let us say that a turtle lives in an ocean for a hundred times a hundred years. Floating upon that ocean is a single yoke with a hole in it, blown by the wind so that it did not stay in one place for even a moment. It is very unlikely that the turtle's throat will be thrust into it. But obtaining a human body from within the lower realms of samsara is taught to be far more difficult.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ It is harder to gain a human birth and the Dharma,
- ~ From the state of having been an animal,
- ~ Than for a turtle to put its head into a yoke
- ~ While both of them are lost in the vastness of the ocean.
- ~ Therefore with these faculties of human beings
- ~ By practicing holy Dharma let us reach its fruition.

The Bodhicharyavatara says: 4.20

- ~ This is the reason why the Bhagavan has taught
- ~ That attaining human birth is much more difficult
- ~ Than for a turtle to put its head into a yoke,
- ~ Tossed within the vastness of a limitless ocean.

As for the scripture they are speaking about, the Bunch of Flowers says:

- ~ It is difficult for the Buddha Bhagavats to enter into the world. But very much more difficult than that is attaining human birth. Let the reason for this be taught in an example. O Shariputra, let the great difficulty of the first be like an ocean. Within it let there be a yoke, having a single hole. Let there also be a decrepit turtle. In that great ocean the wind blows from above and blows from below, and as it blows these things about, that decrepit turtle rises out of the ocean once in a hundred times a hundred years. The difficulty of becoming human again after having fallen back is not equal to that of the throat of that decrepit turtle that rises once in a hundred times a hundred years quickly entering into the hole of that quickly moving yoke. For those who fall away like that, becoming human again is very much more difficult.

If even attaining the human body is so very difficult, why even speak of a body with the freedoms and favors, and the view that realizes the Dharma.

The Bodhicharyavatara says: 4.15

- ~ That a tathagata has actually arisen,

- ~ That we have faith, and have attained a human body,
- ~ And that, in addition, we can practice goodness;
- ~ When will what is so rare ever be gained again?

The Request of The One with the Jewel in the Crown says:

- ~ To see a guide is something very hard to find.
- ~ To hear the teachings, the Dharma of peace, is very hard.
- ~ It is very hard to be born as a free and favored person.
- ~ Discipline and faith are always hard to find.

L3: [B. Now there is the second division of the general meaning: delineating the nature of the freedoms and favors / Recognition of being free and well favored] :L3

¢(i.e. The need to put the instructions of the Dharma into pure practice motivate by bodhicitta and not mixed with worldly concerns / dharmas. Only then will we progress quickly. After a while the merit and virtues gained will help to make the practice more and more easy and natural.)

There are six sections:

- 1. The explanation of merely attaining a human body
- 2. The special human body
- 3. The Precious Human Body
- 4. Why we should think about the Dharma
- 5. The benefit of contemplating the reason
- 6. If the inhabitants of this earth practice, there will be great benefit

L4: [1. The explanation of merely attaining a human body (i)] :L4

¢(i.e. Having a human body is not enough to be called precious. One has to encounter the dharma, to practice it, to live in it exclusively, and to encourage others to do so.)

- a. Here is the explanation of the three divisions of those with a human body
- b. What is said about the divisions

WHAT IS A "PRECIOUS HUMAN BODY?"

L5: [a. Here is the explanation of the three divisions of those with a human body:] :L5

¢(i.e. 3 TYPES OF HUMANS:)

- \ ###
- \ There are some who merely gain a human birth (i), °
- \ Some whose body is special (ii),
- \ and some whose birth is precious (iii).

L5: [b. What is said about the divisions:] :L5

¢(i.e. i- Those who have no knowledge of right and wrong, none about karma and its consequences; the barbarians. They will fall into the three lower realms.)

- \ ###
- \ Respectively these are persons who act improperly, °
- \ Because they have no knowledge of what is right and wrong.
- \ Even if their powers are sound, their birth is common.
- \ They are barbarians (i) even in the central realm.

The Sutra of Precious Space says:

~ These are born in the human world because of former goodness, have senses that are completely sound, and always are born in a country where the Dharma is practiced. However, they still do not know about karma and its ripening.

~ Many of them will depend on the path of what is not good. It may be said that these have become human beings, but they will only be the worse for it. That is the last time they will be human, because they will fall without limit into the lower realms of death.

¢(i.e. BE CAREFUL : DANGERS IN THIS LIFE

¢-- THE 16 UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS

¢-- ( 8 lack of freedom + 16 unfavorable conditions = 24 situations which become hindrances to the practice of the Dharma) -- While we may have been able to avoid the eight gross negativities, there still remain the sixteen unfavorable conditions that we can be ensnared by, if indeed, this has not already occurred. Therefore, it is important to know what they are, so that we can maintain a vigilant mindfulness to remain free of them.

¢-- the upheaval of negative emotions

¢-- coming under the influence of bad friends

¢-- coming under the influence of false views and practices

¢-- habit of laziness

¢-- effects from previous bad actions

¢-- falling under the control of another person

¢-- to practice the Dharma in the hopes of gaining more material comforts for yourself

¢-- to seek understanding of the Dharma merely to gain fame and reputation for yourself

¢-- great attachment to wealth and to oneself

¢-- having an overly aggressive and rude personality

¢-- having no fear of the different sufferings

¢-- insensitivity to the teachings

¢-- having no appreciation of Dharma practice

¢-- having the propensity for indulging in negativities

¢-- having negative views about a solemn vow or aspiration one has made and then violating it

¢-- breaking the samayas, the sacred commitments, one has with the teacher from whom one has received the sacred teachings and empowerments.

¢-- THE 16 WRONG VIEWS & 16 POSITIVE ATTITUDES

¢-- Guru, precious life, death, attachment, 3 LR, refuge, karma,

¢-- living according to the law of cause & effect,

¢-- unsatisfactoriness, renunciation, liberation,

¢-- 3 higher trainings, loving our mothers, self-cherishing, emptiness, tantra

¢-- THE 8 WORLDLY DHARMAS - MOTIVATIONS

¢-- Being desirous of gain and averse to loss

¢-- Being desirous of receiving praise and averse to receiving blame

¢-- Being desirous of receiving benefit and averse to receiving harm

¢-- Being desirous of the pleasant feeling that arises from a good reputation and being averse to the unpleasant feeling that arises from a bad reputation)

¢(i.e. BEINGS POSSESSING A HUMAN BODY WHO HAVEN'T MET DHARMA, no matter how much wealth they

have, no matter how many friends they have, no matter how much they appear to be enjoying their lives, in reality are only living with hallucination; they are living with wrong

concepts, so many piles of wrong concepts. They are not aware of what is happening to them, they are not aware of their own life. They are not aware of the powers of their hallucination, the piles of wrong concepts that compel them to create the causes of samsara and the causes of the lower realms. They don't have the opportunity to plant the seed to be free from samsara, to cut the root of samsaric ignorance, because there is no understanding of emptiness, no opportunity to meditate on emptiness.

¢ If a person has a good heart, a sincere mind, and gives some help to others without expecting any results, then maybe they create some pure Dharma -- and that's very rare; otherwise not. Usually people live the life only with a worldly mind, particularly attachment, clinging to this life. They use the whole human life, the precious human body and all their education just to create additional causes to go to the lower realms.

¢ This is what is happening in every day life. For the entire life people act like a moth attracted to the flame, completely hallucinated, completely deceived, not knowing the flame will burn, that it is completely other than what it appears. Even though they get burned, while they still have the power to fly they will continue to go towards the flame.

¢ It is exactly the same with a fish and a baited hook. The fish does not know that there is a hook that cheats, leading to death and unbelievable suffering. Having no idea of the danger, it is constantly being drawn with strong desire toward the hook baited with a piece of meat. The result that the fish experiences is completely other than what it expected. Once caught, there is no way to get away alive.

¢ Following the dissatisfied mind, desire, the worldly mind, brings exactly the same result. Once sunk in the quagmire of the activities of this life, it is difficult to escape the hundreds of different problems, emotional pains of the mind and of the body that come from this one root, the dissatisfied mind, desire, attachment, clinging to this life. All we are doing is making samsara longer by creating karma; we are making a donation, a contribution to samsaric suffering, making it longer and longer. And then, of course, there are the sufferings of the lower realms, which are difficult to get out of.

¢ It's the same with the way in which an elephant can be caught. A female elephant is used as a lure, the male elephant becomes crazy with desire and as a result, becomes trapped inside a cage. What was expected in the beginning was happiness, but what was received in the end was something else, something completely frightening.

¢ All these examples show us the way in which samsara and the samsaric perfections cheat us, that they are not to be trusted.

¢-- Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Advice from the Spiritual Friend: Remembering Death)

L4: [2. The special human body (ii)] :L4

¢(i.e. ii- Those who, though may have heard the Dharma, do not apply the teachings. They never, or not enough, acted on what they heard. They do not have enough faith, and have too many distractions. Their discipline is not pure enough. Their understanding of karma and its consequences is not perfect; they mix good and bad. They are slightly above the lower realms. They will fall into the three lower realms because of their negligence.)

\ ###

\ Those who do not apply the teachings are confused °

\ They do not have proper faith about what is right and wrong.

\ Preoccupied with this life, distracted by its business,

\ Undisciplined and beguiled, neglecting what is to come,

\ With no interest in liberation, though they may hear the Dharma,

\ They do not have the best body, but only the middle kind.

\     ###  
 \     Occasionally their minds are drawn to something wholesome,  
 \     But mostly their mental vision is blocked by evil deeds.  
 \     They only go through the motions, what good are they to anyone?  
 \     Whether they take the form of a householder or a monk,  
 \     Only because they are slightly above lower realms (ii),  
 \     The Buddha has said that these have a special human body.

The Sutra of Precious Space says:

~ In the realm of sentient beings some do not dwell purely in the Dharma, even though they could, because their behavior mixes right and wrong, and they are preoccupied with worldly activities. Even if they are sincere, with undisciplined body, speech, and mind, they are easily seduced. Falling into the three lower realms, they have the karma of remaining there. However, since they have seen the sunlight of the Buddha's compassion, and have had seeds of liberation for a long time, they are said to have the special human body.

¶(i.e. eight worldly dharmas (Tib. jik ten chö gyé) These keep one from the path; they are attachment to gain, attachment to pleasure, attachment to praise, attachment to fame, aversion to loss, aversion to pain, aversion to blame, and aversion to a bad reputation.)

Because their behavior mixes vice and virtue and they give only lip service to devotion, they are not protected from the lower realms.

The Samadhiraja Sutra says:

~ Breaking their discipline, they go to the lower realms.  
 ~ They are unprotected, no matter how great their learning.

The Nirvana Sutra says:

~ Kashyapa, the monk Devadatta had heard only the ordinary sutra vehicle of the burden of an elephant. Even though he grasped it, because of his non-virtue, he fell into the lower realms.

The Pair Sutra says:

~ Collection of Medicines, those sentient beings who wail so at the time of death are not among the ones who possess ripened karma of good deeds. If these are protected from karma, who would not be?

Also it says there:

~ Though the Tathagata has arisen and been seen,  
 ~ And though the striking of the gandi has been heard,  
 ~ Though they have heard the teachings of the holy Dharma,  
 ~ Which take us to the peace which is called nirvana,  
 ~ Nevertheless they never acted on what they heard.  
 ~ People such as these are later going to say:  
  
 ~ I am a person with the mind of a perfect fool.  
 ~ Having fallen under the power of bad companions,  
 ~ By the desires which rose from confusion in my mind,  
 ~ I produced the karma of many evil deeds.  
 ~ By cultivating and going along with these desires  
 ~ I have been a murderer of living beings.  
 ~ By listening to the people who waste the goods of the Sangha

- ~ I had to know the unbearable fruit of doing that.
- ~ I am destroying stupas by my harmful thoughts
- ~ By malicious words I punish everyone, even my mother.
- ~ Regarding this human body that I formerly made
- ~ Soon all my transgressions will be common knowledge.
- ~ My mind will then be summoned to the lowest Hells.
- ~ The births I see ahead are more than I can bear.

L4: [3. The Precious Human Body (iii).] :L4

¢(i.e. iii- Those who are spotless vessels, the precious ones. They have heard and practiced the Dharma, tamed their mind, and are also exhorting others to goodness. They are not only conceptualizing it; they are living it 100% all the time, combining method and wisdom, producing union beyond conceptualization and dualities.)

As for the third part:

- \ ###
- \ Supremely excellent beings, spotless vessels of Dharma °
- \ Apply their powers to what they hear and contemplate.
- \ Having tamed themselves, they establish others in goodness.
- \ They are immovable in their practice, like Mount Meru.
- \ All these straightforward sages, like banners of saintliness,
- \ Whether they are householders or renunciates,
- \ Are taught by the Teacher to have the precious human body (iii).

¢(i.e. Rinpoche Literally, "very precious" and is used as a term of respect for a Tibetan guru.)

After having tamed oneself by hearing, contemplating, and the yogic resting of meditation, one also exhorts others to goodness. That is the good gate of auspicious Dharma. Putting on the great armor of liberation one flourishes the great banner of the sages. Calling this badge or clothing a victory banner is not just a figure of speech. WHEN WE URGE OTHERS TO WORK FOR THE GOOD, whether one lives in a house or is a renunciate, this is called having the precious human body.

The Sutra of Glorious Secret says:

- ~ Glorious Secret, though many have heard this, their hearing is obstructed. The meaning is made into conceptualized thoughts.
- ~ But by meditating without kleshas, union is produced.
- ~ If one ALSO URGES OTHERS TO DO THIS, this produces the essence of the freedoms and favors, the most sublimely beautiful thing in this world including its gods.

Also the Middle Length Prajnaparamita says:

- ~ Subhuti, bodhisattvas say, "I practice the good," to exhort others to do the same.
- ~ Producing the essence of the freedoms and favors, this is praised by all the Buddhas. I praise it. I honor it.

As to how others should be exhorted the Vast Play says:

- ~ All compounded things will quickly be destroyed.
- ~ Like lightening in the sky they cannot last for long.
- ~ As your time too is therefore drawing ever nearer,

~ The time has come for true repentance to manifest.

The master Chandrakirti says:

- ~ First for a little while all the listeners
- ~ Will certainly be joined to small talk and the like.
- ~ When they become good vessels, after that occurs,
- ~ That is the time to relate to them with deeper words.

That is how it should be done. What it is to be such a vessel, generally depends on which of the vehicles one is concerned with.

In particular, as for the freedoms and favors in the unsurpassable vessel, the Jewel of Space Sutra says:

- ~ The bodhisattva Akashagarbha asked, "Bhagavan, how should the freedoms and favors be viewed?"
- ~ This was the word of the Buddha: If it is divided by the discursive conceptions of mind, it is abused. This should be known as disturbing what one is engaged in. After discursive conceptions of mind have been pacified, resting within the nature is known as freedom. As for the favors, if the nature of mind, awareness, receives the wealth of what mind really is, that is being well-favored.

L4: [4. Why we should think [only] about the Dharma.] :L4

¶(i.e. Renunciation of the worldly concerns, motivated by bodhicitta, and thinking only about the Dharma, helps to make it less difficult to practice. The more you do it the more it becomes easy. Mixing it with worldly concerns makes it very difficult to understand and to practice. It is like starting from scratch all the time; like falling back to a bad habit while trying to go over it. Like trying to go over an addiction while living among people who are indulging in this addiction. - - Practicing only the Dharma is a self-amplifying good habit; it generates virtues that facilitate the practice. Wisdom and method are supporting each other. - - The reverse is like growing a bad habit that gets stronger and stronger and brings more and more suffering. - - That is the way the cycle of karma and the five aggregates are related: not separate or different, not the same.)

Here is the reason why the person who has attained freedom and favor should think only of the Dharma:

- \ ###
- \ Therefore, having heard the Dharma from holy beings, °
- \ To establish what is proper, abide within in the Dharma
- \ Cultivate what is Dharmic, weed out what is not.
- \ By practicing Dharma, we will abide within the Dharma.

That is the holy instruction. It is difficult to meet with a spiritual friend. To hear the Dharma and be able to practice it is difficult. Always to work hard is very difficult.

When the Buddha was expounding the scriptures of the Vinaya at Vaishali, this was among the beneficial instructions given:

- ~ O monks, look on the beings of the lower realms. After going there, a material human form is very difficult to obtain. (i.e. starting from scratch)
- ~ Look on bad teachers. Meeting a genuine spiritual friend is very difficult.
- ~ Look on those who have broken their discipline, and how they have damaged discipline

and liberation.

- ~ By dwelling in the goodness of RENUNCIATION, Dharma, which alone is good, will be practiced.
- ~ Therefore, joyfully dwell in forests or monasteries, and go beyond these others.

L4: [5. The benefit of contemplating the reason] :L4

¢(i.e. The benefit of renunciation, motivated by bodhicitta, and exerting ourselves in the Dharma alone, is going quickly beyond all conditioning, beyond all uncontrolled karma formation, beyond all suffering, to perfect peace; and more: Enlightenment.)

As for the benefit produced:

- \ ###
- \ Procrastinate no longer. Cross over samsara's ocean. °
- \ Quickly go to the island of peace and pass beyond suffering.

The Request of Devaputra Sutra says:

- ~ Devaputra, Exerting ourselves in this alone, let us exert ourselves on the side of the good.
- ~ We shall quickly hold the benefits of complete, perfect enlightenment.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Having well attended an excellent spiritual friend,
- ~ We ought to make the attempt to behave in a decent way.
- ~ This is what was taught by the utterly perfect Sage.
- ~ Attend on holy beings, for having attended them,
- ~ There are very many who will attain to peace.

L4: [6. If the inhabitants of this earth practice, there will be great benefit.] :L4

¢(i.e. So it is not enough to be humans; we have to live in goodness. Only fools would knowingly waste such great opportunity. We have to exert ourselves in the truth and goodness of Dharma alone, in order to gradually purify our mind and quickly attain the perfection of the Buddha qualities and be in a position to help all other sentient beings stuck with ignorance in this samsaric cycle of suffering. While we practice the virtuous actions, our virtues will increase and make it even more and more easier to live in virtues. There are also great short term benefits for all.)

Beings who have been born as inhabitants of this earth, Jambuling, have established a portion of goodness. But if, having become human beings, they do not train in goodness, here is what is said:

- \ ###
- \ There is no one who has a mind more foolish °
- \ Than those becoming human who do not live in goodness.
- \ Like coming back empty-handed from a land of jewels,
- \ They make no use of the freedom and favor of their lives.
- \ So let us act in the way of the Dharma, which leads to peace.

Though we may have attained these freedoms, if we do not practice the holy Dharma, then even though we have come to an island of precious jewels, we take none of them. Returning empty-handed, we are fools.

The Bodhicharyavatara says: 4.23

- ~ If even having attained the leisure of these freedoms
- ~ We do not train in what is wholesome and what is good,
- ~ There is no seduction that is greater than this.
- ~ There can be no fool who is greater than such a one.

After doing some insignificant bit of good, we shall not have complete attainment. But by exerting themselves in the truth and goodness of Dharma alone, many attain the perfection of the Buddha qualities.

The Precious Mala says:

- ~ Thus it is that if we always practice the Dharma,
- ~ We shall be the masters of all within the world.
- ~ Whoever transforms what is noxious into goodness,
- ~ In a little while will surely reach the peak.
  
- ~ Because the good of Dharma will wake us from our sleep,
- ~ When we awake to goodness, we shall be purified.
- ~ Because the master within us is one who has no faults, (i.e. Buddha-nature)
- ~ Even in dreams we shall see what is virtuous and wholesome.
  
- ~ If we have respectful devotion to our parents,
- ~ Attending on the principal persons of our family,
- ~ Committing ourselves with patience to virtuous behavior,
- ~ Speaking soft words of truth without any calumny,
  
- ~ By such discipline over a single lifetime,
- ~ The powers of a god have actually been attained.
- ~ Once again at this time, we shall produce those powers,
- ~ We gradually will establish the state of Buddhahood.

After that:

- ~ As for the benefits, the fruition of such karma,
- ~ We shall act in accordance with what we have come to know. (i.e. A self-amplifying virtuous process.)
- ~ If we are always performing benefits for beings,
- ~ This itself will be of benefit to us.

While we do so, for this reason, there will be the wholesome merits of the Dharma.

L3: [C. True examination of the nature of the environment and inhabitants of the phenomenal world / True analysis of the environment and inhabitants of the phenomenal world] :L3

φ(i.e. THE PERFECTION OF THIS MEDITATION: meditating on the precious hard to get human life with its freedoms, endowments and opportunity, while remembering the emptiness of the three, their non-duality, or interdependence. Using both method/upaya and wisdom/prajna, in accord with the goal, in accord with the non-dual nature of everything (not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither). The fruit of this meditation: great joy and enthusiasm to practice day and night. The best support of all the vehicles. Better than a rebirth as a god.)

There are six sections:

- 1. The teaching of mind, the root of Dharma

- 2. The Instruction that We Should Exert ourselves in Dharma Day and Night
- 3. When the benefits have been explained, we arouse joy
- 4. How we can attain superhuman goodness
- 5. Praise of the freedoms and favors, the [best] support of all the vehicles
- 6. Meditating on how difficult these are to obtain

L4: [1. The teaching of mind, the root of Dharma.] :L4

¢(i.e. EMPTINESS, ALL MERELY IMPUTED BY THE MIND: Perfecting the meditation on the precious

human life (and dependent origination) by joining wisdom to the method. Combining to this meditation (and dependent origination), a meditation on emptiness. Perfecting this meditation by seeing the real nature (emptiness, non-duality) of the elements of this meditation: the interdependence between the world and the mind, the inseparability of dependent origination and emptiness, the non-dual luminous space. - - First we understand this intellectually, then we try to see this directly observing our own mind in meditation, then to abide in this non-dual not-conceptual truth all the time. - - Since everything is dependent on the mind, since all problems and solutions come from the mind, we should turn inward, guard the mind and tame it, gradually purifying it. - - Since Liberation is gained by directly seeing the unborn non-dual nature of our own mind, and thus the real nature of everything, we have to first calm the body and mind with moral discipline, to tame the mind, to develop great peace and concentration, in order to be able to get insights and develop wisdom. Since the potential is already present, it is compared to a process of gradual purification of our body, speech and mind. When their real nature is directly seen, they are seen as the inseparable trikaya and wisdoms.)

When we undertake to find the natures of the environment and inhabitants of the phenomenal world, they are truly analyzed as being one:

¢(i.e. The world and the mind are not separate or different (~2). But, as we will also see in the next point, they are not the same either (~1). They are interdependent. They are inseparable. They are not two, not one. They are non-dual. Everything is dependent on the mind (~2) (not existent independently or inherently), but not from the mind only (~1) (not completely non-existent), etc. (not both existent and non-existent, not neither existent nor non-existent).)

¢(i.e. "Today's world requires us to accept the oneness of humanity." -- HHDL speech, 1997; also)

\     ###  
 \     Dharma depends on mind, and likewise mind in turn °  
 \     Depends on the freedoms and favors, so both depend on them.  
 \     Now these many conditions and causes have come together.  
 \     The thing we chiefly need to do is tame our minds.

¢(i.e. ALL PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS COME FROM THE MIND. SO TURN INWARD. To be free from the

suffering of everything we have to seek and directly see the real nature of everything. To do that we have to turn inward, seek and directly see the real nature of our own mind. To be able to directly see the real nature of the mind, we have first to calm the body and mind greatly, to purify it from all the mud swirls that are constantly obscuring its true essence. And to be able to do that, we have to renounce worldly goals after seeing their

impermanence and unsatisfactory nature.

¢-- Note: Total control of the mind is not the goal. The Middle Way is not letting the mind go wild, not trying to control it. The goal is to directly see its subtle non-dual unborn nature. So calming the body and mind, like renunciation, motivated by bodhicitta, are temporary adapted skillful means. Once we have directly seen the real nature of our own mind, and thus have directly seen the real nature of everything, then there is nothing to reject, and nothing to gain. Everything is already pure, inseparability of appearance and emptiness, self-liberating.)

¢(i.e. USING BOTH METHOD AND WISDOM: Here the method of meditating on the precious human life with its freedoms and opportunity is mixed with the wisdom of realizing the real nature of everything including the mind: their emptiness of inherent existence, being merely imputed by the mind, while still being dependently arisen and functional. So we are using both method and wisdom together, increasing the two accumulations together, even with this first basic meditation.

¢-- The mind is empty, but still dependently arisen depending on conditions, and still functional in influencing the way we see the world. So the mind and the world are interdependent: not separate or different, not the same; not two, not one; they are inseparable, non-dual.

¢-- Everything is dependently arisen, dependent on the mind, and thus empty of inherent existence; not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither.

¢-- Karma is dependent on the five aggregates, and the five aggregates are dependent on karma. They are not different or separate, not the same. The only control we can really have is on our own mind. The only direct experience we can have is with our own mind.)

All dharmas depend on mind. Mind depends on the free and well-favored human body. This is the interdependent arising of the environment and inhabitants of the phenomenal world. Mind is the realm of Dharma, the cause of all that is wholesome. As it is the companion necessary condition of the freedoms and favors, we must study exactly how to tame the mind.

¢(i.e. INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE WORLD AND THE MIND = inseparability of dependent origination

and emptiness, inseparability of appearances and emptiness; the inseparability of the two truths, ... This will be the recurring theme in this whole document. It is all based on the fact that the real nature of everything, even if beyond all description and beyond all conceptualization, is not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither. That is why we cannot accept anything as absolute, nor reject anything as if completely non-existent. That is why we need to use both method and wisdom together all the time. That is why there is the two accumulations of merit and wisdom. -- Here it means that we need to realize that this precious human life, although empty of inherent existence, is still dependent on causes and conditions, and still functional, still efficient in gaining wisdom and transcendence from all conditioning.

¢-- Also since everything is coming from the mind, we need to understand this aspect and thus understand how suffering and happiness are caused by our own mind.)

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ The Bhagavan says we must tame our minds.
- ~ Mind is the root of Dharma (~2), as is taught.

The All-creating King, says:

- ~ Without remainder all dharmas, however they appear (~1),

- ~ Are emanated by mind, produced by the nature of mind (~2).

The Lankavatara Sutra says:

- ~ Though reflections may appear within a mirror (~1)
- ~ They do not exist (~2); and if we do not know
- ~ The appearances of mind as mere appearances,
- ~ The duality of conceptual thinking will arise (~2).
- ~ With the seeds of habitual patterns, what is completely pure
- ~ Arises as the variety of the mental contents.
- ~ Though for human beings these seem to be external,
- ~ Nevertheless the phenomenal world is only mind. (i.e. All merely imputed by the mind, dependent on the mind (~2).)

Also it says there, in regard to mind that does not possess true reality:

- ~ For mind that is disturbed by seeds of habitual patterns
- ~ Within the completely real, appearances will arise.

The appearances of mind are like those of a dream (~2). Arising merely from the viewpoint of confused mind, the variety of inner and outer arises as nothing at all. Such appearances arise from the seeds of confused habitual patterns. In reality they do not truly exist (~2); but because they appear in the mind as if they did, mind is the root of all dharmas. Though mountains and so forth appear externally projected from the viewpoint of confused mind<sup>23</sup>, there are really no mountains. They exist only in the mind.

If students have not guarded the mind before, they will not be able to guard it later.

The Bodhicharyavatara says:

- ~ If this mind has not been guarded previously,
- ~ We will not be able to keep the disciplines.

Also it says there:

- ~ Aside from the kind of discipline that guards the mind,
- ~ What is the use of performing many disciplines?

Also it says there:

- ~ Thus it is that everything that frightens us,
- ~ And also all of our measureless pain and suffering,
- ~ Are only contents that have risen with the mind (~2).
- ~ So it has been taught by the Speaker of Truth himself.
- ~ Who was it that produced the multitude of weapons
- ~ For the use of sentient beings within the Hells?
- ~ Who was it that produced this ground of blazing iron?
- ~ From where do these multitudes of blazing flames arise?<sup>24</sup>
- ~ Every one of them, and all such things as these,
- ~ Are the mind of the evil-doer, so the Sage has said.
- ~ Thus it is that in the whole of this three-fold world,
- ~ There are no terrors that are other than the mind.

Also it says there: 5.5

- ~ If we ever succeed in taming the mind alone,
- ~ All these various things will likewise have been tamed.

Since all that is wholesome and unwholesome within samsara has arisen from mind, working to tame the mind is the root of all Dharmas.

¢(i.e. All paths turn around "taming the mind", "directly seeing the real nature of the mind and thus of everything".)

The Sutra of the Clouds of the Three Jewels says:

- ~ When we have been instructed by our worldly mind,
- ~ This mind of ours will never see the actual mind.
- ~ All our virtuous karma and that which has no goodness
- ~ Are nothing but collections in that worldly mind.

Also it says there in the chapter called, "Guarding the light:"

- ~ Mind produces various karmas like a painter.
- ~ In manifesting all harm, it is like an external danger.
- ~ In producing all suffering, it is like an enemy.

The Dro Namje Sutra<sup>25</sup> says:

- ~ The ground is made of iron, blazing hot,
- ~ And blazing tongues of flame are everywhere.
- ~ The justice of the sharpened iron saws
- ~ Divides a single body into eight.
- ~ Such things as these arise as mental contents,
- ~ From evil acts of body, speech, or mind.

\*\*\*\*\*

- ~ MIND IS THE ROOT OF ALL OUR JOYS AND SORROWS.
- ~ OUR ONLY EFFORT SHOULD BE TO TAME THE MIND.

\*\*\*\*\*

- ~ (i.e. All problems and solutions come from the mind.)

L4: [2. The Instruction that We Should Exert ourselves in Dharma Day and Night.] :L4

¢(i.e. Dependent origination, not from the mind-only, not useless / meaningless: Meditating on the precious human life (and dependent origination) with its freedoms, endowments and opportunity, and the consequence of not taking full benefits of it, helps us to be motivated to practice purely day and night. It is a positive antidote against discouragement, depression, and nihilism. - - The practice is not useless even if everything is impermanent, unsatisfactory, and empty of inherent existence. - - Saying that everything is dependent on the mind, empty of inherent existence, doesn't mean that everything is from the mind-only, or completely non-existent. Emptiness doesn't mean that there is no precious human life, no karma consequences, that we should reject everything, that everything is meaningless, useless, a-causal or non-functional. Emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination. They are interdependent; one implies the other. They are not separate or different (~2), not the same (~1). - - The application is that if we do not use this opportunity to escape samsara we will be stuck in it and suffering for a long time. But if we use it fully, we can transcend all conditioning, and suffering. There is nothing better to do than to practice the dharma, to aim from transcendence of all impermanent empty conditioning.)

When we are wandering in samsara, as successive distractions occurring time and time again,

here is what should be done:

\     ###  
\     Being terrified of death, within our endless births, °  
\     With deprivation and suffering falling on us like rain,  
\     Arises from making no use of being free and well-favored.  
\     The result is a state of becoming radically disturbed.  
  
\     ###  
\     The higher manifestations, the dharmas of truth and goodness  
\     Arise from thinking how hard it is to be free and favored,  
\     Enjoy such an effort unstintingly, working day and night.

¢(i.e. Meditating on the precious human birth as an antidote to discouragement and depression. The opposite is the meditation about death and impermanence. We have to know which antidote to use with the proper situation in order to stay away from all extremes.)

The Gandavyuha Sutra says:

~ Kye! O son of noble family, wherever beings wander within samsara, the body adorned with the freedoms and favors, so hard to obtain, is not produced, due to manifestation of thoughts. Because of the bad company of non-spiritual friends, there are samsaric phenomena, and we are tormented in flames of suffering. Nevertheless, by contemplating the freedoms and favors, we shall be completely liberated from samsara.

L4: [3. When the benefits have been explained, we arouse joy] :L4

¢(i.e. We are extremely fortunate to have this opportunity, this access to the dharma, and to be able to practice it purely. Repeating this meditation on our precious human life with its freedoms, endowments and opportunity brings great joy and helps us to be motivated to practice purely day and night. So this meditation is part of the virtuous actions that increase the virtues and make it less and less difficult to practice the Dharma. It is part of the self-amplifying virtuous cyclic process of wholesome actions and good conditions: good / white karma formation. And it reinforces the antidote against rejection, the extreme of nihilism / idealism. It reinforces the idea that "methods" are necessary in addition to wisdom.)

Now there is the instruction to be joyful because of these benefits:

\     ###  
\     Here since it is useful to have seen a guide, °  
\     And it is of use to hear the Dharma and practice it,  
\     Making use of this life and all its later fruits,  
\     Arises from having gained this free and favored body.  
\     Contemplate this again and again, with the highest joy.

¢(i.e. Meditating on our precious human birth brings joy. A great antidote to sadness and difficulties.)

Having seen how Buddhas of former times were completely liberated, having the benefit of being well- favored day and night on the present occasion, and collecting the seeds of a later liberation--this is what we have, if we are among the fortunate. All this arises from contemplating the freedoms and favors, which are so hard to obtain.

The Closely Placed Mindfulness says:

~ Ananda, how should the arising of what has been well seen and well heard by you from having contemplated the freedoms and favors be viewed? It is what establishes the happiness of beings, and whatever good dharmas there may be. That is how it should be viewed.

Therefore, let us meditate with heartfelt joy on having attained these freedoms.

L4: [4. How we can attain superhuman goodness] :L4

¢(i.e. This precious human life, because it is unsatisfactory but still permits to seek the truth and to escape the whole cycle of samsara, is more precious than a rebirth as a god. Gods usually do not have the motivation to seek liberation from their conditions, or to seek Enlightenment. If they do, gods have too much pride to succeed. Therefore, we should rejoice in having this precious human life with its imperfections, freedoms, endowments and opportunity to learn the Dharma and practice it purely.)

Now, moreover there is the explanation of how superhuman goodness is to be established:

\ ###  
\ Since having attained the deathless level of amrita °  
\ By the Lord of this world of beings, including the gods,  
\ And his sons among the shravakas and pratyekaBuddhas,  
\ Arose from having attained the precious human body,  
\ The freedoms and favors are praised as better than being a god.

\ ###  
\ Therefore, rejoice in having attained this human body.

¢(i.e. Only this precious human birth can be used to gain Enlightenment. The other realms are either too miserable or too happy to be a favorable environment for renunciation and turning inward in order to seek and directly see the real nature of our mind and thus of everything. In the other realms there is not enough opportunity or motivation to do it perfectly. So even the difficulties of this precious human birth condition should also be seen as favorable conditions for this. If everything was perfect as in heavens, we would not be inclined to question everything superficial and seek the truth.)

When the Sage, the Bhagavan, attained enlightenment, he became the chief of the human beings of Jambuling. Therefore, he was called better than the gods.

The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment says:

~ Enlightenment in the realm of the gods produces an exclusive pride, and truth is not completely realized.  
~ It is seen only as a human being, for whom the freedoms and favors are complete.  
~ Therefore, to the place of those who dress in yellow and white<sup>26</sup>.

The Bodhicharyavatara says:

~ This body, which is better than the body of a god...

L4: [5. Praise of the freedoms and favors, the [best] support of all the vehicles] :L4

¢(i.e. This precious human life is the best support of all the vehicles. It permits to reach the goals of any vehicle: either simply a good rebirth, the complete Liberation from samsara for us alone, or the full Enlightenment of the Mahayana. It even permits to practice the quick path of the Tantrayana.)

\     ###  
 \     The level of wisdom, that sees the truth without conception °  
 \     Is easy to gain among gods and men as a human being.  
 \     Even the vajra vehicle, profoundest heart of the path,  
 \     Is easily gained as the fruit of attaining a human body.  
 \     It is taught that among the foundations of the Dharma,  
 \     Within both the greater and the lesser vehicles,  
 \     The free and well favored human body is best of all.

¢(i.e. GREAT VALUE - THE 3 SUPERIOR AIMS

¢---- Rebirth in one of the 3 upper realms : temporary goal

¢---- Complete Liberation from Samsara

¢---- Full Enlightenment : ultimate goal

¢----- by practicing the 3 superior trainings

¢----- by practicing the 5 principal causes : renunciation, bodhicitta, emptiness,  
generation stage and completion stage of the secret mantra

¢-- CONCLUSION

¢---- So we will take full advantage of this great opportunity and study the dharma.

¢---- And feel sorry at the thought of having wasted any moment of this opportunity.

¢---- Note : We could use our accumulated merit for temporary happiness or permanent  
cessation. And if we generate Bodhicitta, we accumulate much more merit and have deeper  
wisdom.)

The Abhidharmakosha says:

- ~ Thirdly, nothing higher than this is seen:
- ~ Within the valley of sadness of human beings
- ~ So that they might see its end this was composed.

Also the suchness of the secret mantra is quickly established with the support of human  
birth.

The Tantra of Exhausting the Four Elements says:

- ~ This is the wondrously risen king of secret mantra.
- ~ If human beings exert themselves in gaining it,
- ~ Accomplishment occurs within this very life.
- ~ Why even speak of the siddhis of any other yogas?

Therefore, as the support of all the vehicles, the freedoms and favors have been praised.

L4: [6. Meditating on how difficult these are to obtain.] :L4

¢(i.e. The actual meditation on this difficulty of obtaining a human body: Take refuge,  
arouse bodhicitta, visualize that we have this complete precious human body with the  
freedoms and endowments. And we felt great joy (no fear or discouragement or depression)  
because we have it. Ending with dedication.)

To take this difficulty of obtaining a human body as an object of meditation, sit on a  
comfortable seat. Take refuge and arouse bodhicitta. Then we visualize our own bodies,  
adorned with the freedoms and favors:

\     ###  
 \     As a poor man who has found a gem of the highest value, °  
 \     Fearful and anxious that it was nothing but a dream,

\ Contemplate the freedoms and favors with joyful longing,  
\ Since this will establish the holy benefits of the Dharma.

Like a poor man who finds the finest of gems, let us rejoice in having obtained these freedoms and favors. This is a Dharma that should be practiced exclusively. Thinking, "If only this is not a dream!" we are afraid and terrified. Since we have attained it, meditating in heartfelt joy, let us dedicate it to the ultimate benefit of sentient beings.

The Discrimination of Scripture says:

~ Maudgala, these freedoms alone should be contemplated. Remember them with joy.

L3: [D. The fourth section of the general meaning: Dedicating the Merit.] :L3

¢(i.e. Dedication of the merit of having taught this meditation. May all beings reach enlightenment by reading, taking to heart, and putting into practice these explanations and instructions. -By following this dharma, the body speech and mind are pacified, the mind is tamed, dhyana concentration is developed, the body speech and mind are gradually purified; the real nature of the mind and of everything is directly seen; the poisons are transmuted into wisdoms, all fixation and grasping are automatically dropped, all obsessions and fears calmed, everything is seen as inseparable trikaya, wisdoms beyond conceptualization, and pure Buddha-fields. The Union of The Two Truths. Unborn non-dual luminous space.)

Now there is the dedication of the merit of having taught the freedoms and favors to sentient beings:

\ ###  
\ The futile agitation of beings is pacified, °  
\ By the precious amrita of this auspicious news.  
\ Going into sweet solitude of pleasant forest retreats,  
\ May Mind, worn out within this thicket of the kleshas,  
\ Be freed this very day from all its weariness.

By looking at this explanation of the holy amrita of peace, adorned with a continuous stream of the flowers of truth, may all beings, exhausted by the agitations of this life, eliminate them. In a single joyful life, in the peaceful solitude of meditation, may their minds, long wearied by samsara, be released from that weariness.

This is the instruction on the particular topic of easing weariness. May the meaning of the whole chapter showing samsara and its sadness be instantly taken to heart.

There is also a dedication written after completing the chapter. May the further chapters also be known in that way:

~ In peaceful forests, caves, and joyful valleys of herbs,  
~ Dancing with moving flowers, to the rush of waterfalls,  
~ May this mind, which has been so long in complete exhaustion.  
~ Producing the holy benefit of the freedoms and favors,  
~ Come to rest in unmoving equality/equanimity.  
  
~ May no beings be seen who are not tamed by that.  
~ With pacification of kleshas and the seven noble riches<sup>27</sup>  
~ After leaving behind this body and this life,  
~ May we reach the primordial level -- the King of Mind.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

## L2: [CHAPTER II. The Impermanence of Life] :L2

The Second Chapter of the commentary on THE GREAT PERFECTION: THE NATURE OF MIND,  
THE EASER

OF WEARINESS called the Great Chariot

¢ ("O bhikshus! Do not grieve! Even if I were to live in the world for as long as a kalpa,  
our coming together would have to end.

¢-- You should know that all things in the world are impermanent; coming together inevitably  
means parting.

¢-- Do not be troubled, for this is the nature of life. Diligently practicing right effort,  
you must seek liberation immediately.

¢-- Within the light of wisdom, destroy the darkness of ignorance. Nothing is secure.  
Everything in this life is precarious.

¢-- Always wholeheartedly seek the way of liberation.

¢-- All things in the world, whether moving or non-moving, are characterized by  
disappearance and instability.

¢-- Stop now! Do not speak! Time is passing. I am about to cross over. This is my final  
teaching. "

¢-- Parinirvana Sutra --)

¢(i.e. THE METHOD based on dependent origination, causality: "Whether going, staying,  
eating, sleeping, arising, walking, talking, or seeing a crowd of many people; and whether  
staying in villages, valleys, or monasteries, always meditate on impermanence. Whatever we  
see, hear, and remember has the nature of impermanence, and the marks of impermanence.  
Remember the exhortation of impermanence." -- as if things and beings were really existing  
and having a real mark like impermanence -- as if there were real birth and death for our  
set of five aggregates -- as if the elements of the Wheels of Life were all real -- as if  
there were real karma (by real you should read "inherently existing". All of this is just a  
skillful means, like any other dharma.

¢-- ANTIDOTE: The understanding of impermanence is an antidote to attachment and ill-will.

¢-- THE WISDOM REALIZING THE REAL NATURE of the mind and of everything: the wisdom here  
is

the realization of the emptiness of all of those elements. There is no real origination, no  
real duration, no real cessation. No real production, no real birth, no real death, no real  
impermanence nor permanence ... Things do not exist and change; that is an oxymoron.  
Impermanence is a skillful means used to reduce gross attachment, like permanence  
(Buddha-nature) is used as a skillful means to reduce nihilism. The real nature of  
everything is not the three marks of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and no-self; it is  
much more subtle than this.

¢-- PERFECTING - combining both method and wisdom together, gathering the two accumulations:  
There are two levels of application of this union here. The gross level consist of using all  
dharma, including this precious human life, and the Dharma, while remembering that they are  
also dependently arisen and impermanent. It is about the complementarity of acting in accord  
with the law of karma and impermanence. In this case "impermanence" is seen as the wisdom  
that complement the methods based on the observation of the law of karma.

¢-- The subtle level consist of meditating on impermanence of all dharma, including this

life, while remembering the emptiness of the three (subject, object, action), including the emptiness of all the elements in the Wheel of Life, in the theories of dependent origination, rebirth, bardo, etc., the whole path. In this other case "impermanence" is the method, the skillful means, and emptiness is the wisdom. It is like when we talk about the emptiness of emptiness.

¢-- So rejecting completely impermanence, death, rebirth, karma is like rejecting dependent origination in favor of emptiness alone, like thinking that the world is completely non-existent, a-causal, non-functional, or from the mind-only. Like thinking emptiness is the real nature of everything. It is like falling for the extreme of nihilism. On the other hand, thinking they are real is falling for the extreme of realism. The Middle Way is the Union of the two, using both together, gathering the two accumulations, while not getting attached to any. Only then is it in accord with the goal, with the real non-dual nature of everything: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither.)

There are five sections.

- A. The brief teaching
- B. The extended explanation
- C. The instruction that we should exert ourselves
- D. The concluding summary
- E. The dedication of merit

L3: [A. The brief teaching.] :L3

¢(i.e. Anything dependent on causes and conditions vanishes with any change in the causes and conditions. And since everything is dependently arisen, then everything is necessarily impermanent [and empty of inherent existence]. Everything is continually changing; nothing remains the same even for an infinitesimal moment, because their causes and conditions are also dependent on other causes and conditions .. ad infinitum. So, there is no reliance in anything; no possible absolute control on anything. Even this precious human life [body and mind] with its characteristics is impermanent. Death is certain, but we don't know when it will occur. So we might lose this precious human life with its freedom and opportunity any time. We will then leave behind everything; only the karma will continue. Remembering death and impermanence helps to generate renunciation for worldly concerns and motivation for practicing the Dharma.)

Even though the freedoms, so difficult to obtain, have been obtained, since our minds are not stable, we are instructed that our nature is such that we need to exert ourselves:

\     ###  
\     Even if this hard-won freedom has been gained, °  
\     These destructible dharmas will not last for even an instant.  
\     If they are examined, they are without an essence.  
\     They are no more to be trusted than bubbles floating on water;  
\     So contemplate day and night the certainty of death.

Even if the freedoms and favors are obtained, they cannot be permanent. They have no heart like a banana tree and, will not bear analysis. Like bubbles on water, they appear for only a moment. Then every one of their main and subsidiary characteristics is destroyed. On examination, they are necessarily found to be separable from reality.

The Shrine of Telling the Reason Why says:

- ~ Kye ma! How impermanent are all compounded things!
- ~ Anything that is born is going to be destroyed.
- ~ Since having once been born, all will be destroyed,
- ~ "Them as dies quickly will be the lucky ones!"
- ~ They are like starry lamps that are clouded-over with mist,
- ~ Ephemeral things like bubbles on water or drops of dew,
- ~ Dreamily insubstantial, like lightning in the clouds.
- ~ All compounded things are taught to be that way.

L3: [B. The extended explanation] :L3

¢(i.e. ALL DHARMAS, INCLUDING ALL BEINGS, ARE IMPERMANENT, THERE IS NO EXCEPTION. The whole

samsara, including the three world and the six realms, is totally unreliable, unsatisfactory (an empty of inherent existence). There is no reliance in any kind of investments, projects, views, rebirths, dhyanas, bodies, minds, ... they are all caused, fabricated, and thus impermanent. At the moment of death, leaving everything behind, ONLY THE DHARMA WILL HELP, because, even though there is no permanent dharma (all empty of inherent existence), there is karma and its consequences (dependent origination), and there is the possibility of transcendence. -- Like, even though everything is empty of inherent existence (or impermanent), nothing is without a cause (this precious human life is not without causes and conditions very rare and hard to find), and no cause is without an effect (there is no way to escape the consequences of our actions in death). Emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination, and vice versa. They are interdependent, inseparable. The same for impermanence and karma)

- 1. Grasping the importance of the impermanence of the human body
- 2. To attain even the realm of Bhrama and so forth is impermanent
- 3. There is impermanence because change is the nature of things
- 4. The impermanence of the Vessel and Essence
- 5. Impermanence of the teachings of how the victorious ones and their sons attain nirvana
- 6. We are impermanent because our lives never wax but always wane
- 7. How what seems external is inner impermanence
- 8. An example of impermanence
- 9. All is impermanent and must be left behind
- 10. The impermanence of the three times
- 11. The impermanence of the three levels
- 12. Instantaneous Impermanence
- 13. The impermanence of the conditions and time of our existence

L4: [1. Grasping the importance of the impermanence of the human body.] :L4

¢(i.e. IMPERMANENCE OF THE BODY: Antidote to desire [to please this body, or to be attracted to another body], to thinking that it is important, lasting, pure : contemplate the impermanence of the body, its impurity, how it will end. There is nothing we can do for this body that will last. At the moment of death we will lose all our investments; nothing, but the Dharma, will help us then. So, we should guard this body, use this precious opportunity, but also remember its real nature: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, no-self, emptiness. It is a tool, a raft; it should not be the master. We should use it to practice the Dharma while we can.)

This essenceless body is impure and changeable. Its individual qualities are separable and nothing about it continues.

Here is the instruction that those inclined to material desires should absorb the mind day and night in contemplating impermanence:

☿-- (i.e. The main remedy [antidote] to the thought of the worldly dharmas is meditation on impermanence and death. -- Lama Zopa Rinpoche)

☿-- (i.e. The best remedy to the eight worldly concerns is to reflect on impermanence: the changing nature of all things. -- Ven Sangye Khadro)

☿-- (i.e. One of the best ways to overcome possessive-attachment to loved ones is to meditate on impermanence. -- Ven Sangye Khadro)

☿-- (i.e. When we understand the impermanent nature of things, the non-stop change, we allow ourselves time and space to accept any situation that comes. -- Lama Thubten Yeshe)

☿-- (i.e. Then we meditate upon impermanence and death, which helps us transcend grasping at petty aspects of life and directs our minds to search for spiritual knowledge. ... We should try to meditate regularly on death and impermanence and thus become a spiritual practitioner of initial scope. -- His Holiness Kyabje Ling Rinpoche)

☿-- (i.e. Sometimes we can apply more specific antidotes -- for example, meditating on compassion when anger arises, on the impurity of the human body when lust arises, on impermanence when attachment to situations arises, and so on. These antidotes can counteract particular delusions, but they cannot remove the root of delusion. To remove the root of delusion one must realize shunyata. The wisdom of shunyata is like a sharp axe having the power to cut the root of all distortion. -- Geshe Lhundrub Sopa)

☿-- (i.e. The first obstacle [to meditation] is agitation. Why does agitation occur? It comes from ordinary attachment to this life. ... Therefore, the remedy is to contemplate impermanence. Understanding this calms agitation. -- Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche, Seven Points on Meditation)

\     ###  
\     This body, the principal source of the rising of the kleshas, °  
\     Is the source of all suffering and unhappiness of the mind.  
\     Though decked in garments and ornaments, flower garlands and such,  
\     And worshipped with many offerings of food and drink,  
\     In the end we must separate and part from it.  
\     Because it is impermanent and destructible,  
\     This body will be food for foxes, vultures, and jackals.  
\     Abandon all thoughts that it is important, lasting, or pure.  
\     Rather, from now on, let us practice the holy Dharma.

Grasping our alleged bodies as a permanent I and self, we offer them food and clothing, tending them with a level of ceremony befitting our ideas. Though we hardly want to talk about it, sorrowful time speaks instead by reversing our ministrations to harm.

Shantideva says:

~ THIS BODY OF OURS IS LIKE A MOMENTARY REFLECTION.

The time when we will be taken by the Lord of Death comes without warning. When the mind separates from the body, we cannot be with the body any more. It will be food for charnel birds, dogs, foxes, and vultures.

To count such a thing as paramount and even think that we should do evil deeds for its sake

should be regarded as vanity. Really we are something like a servant indentured to the body's happiness. Why is the body so worthy of being rewarded with food and clothing?

WHAT IS WORTH EXERTION DAY AND NIGHT IS THE DHARMA.

The Sutra of Instructions to the King says:

~ O great king, these have an essence like a great mountain, solid and firm in all the four directions. This mountain is indestructible, not to be split, very hard, undamageable. Its four sides, dense and massive, touch the sky and return again to the earth. Grass, trees with trunks, branches, and all their leaves, living things, and spirits accumulate there, like flour on a mill- stone.

~ To escape it by speed, remove it by force, buy it off, or get rid of it with substances, mantras, and medicinal herbs is no easy task.

~ O great king, that is what these four great terrors are like. One cannot escape them by speed, remove them by force, buy them off. To get rid of them with substances, mantras, and medicinal herbs is no easy task.

~ What are these four? They are old age, sickness, death, and deterioration.

~ O great king, old age comes to conquer youth. Illness comes to conquer health. Deterioration comes to conquer all our good qualities. Death comes to conquer life itself. One cannot escape them by speed, remove them by force, or buy them off. To get rid of them with substances, mantras, and medicinal herbs is no easy task.

~ O great king, it is like this. The king of beasts, the lion, dwells among the beasts. He preys on the beasts. He rules as he wishes. The beasts are powerless against his mighty jaws.

~ O great king, it is like this. There is no provision against the gleaming staff of the Lord of Death, there is no protector, no refuge, no friendly forces, no friends and relatives. Our joints will divide and come apart. Our flesh and blood will dry up. Our bodies will be racked by sickness. We shall rage with thirst. Our arms and legs will convulse. We will not be able to act. We will have no strength. Our bodies will be covered in saliva, mucus, urine, and vomit.

~ Our powers of vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, touch, and thought will fade away. We shall vomit. Our voices will crack and wheeze. Our medicines will be given up as useless. All our medicine, food, and drink will be thrown away. Our possessions will go to others. We shall lie in our beds for the last time. We shall subside into the beginningless round of birth, old age, and death. We shall have no body. We shall be terrified by the Lord of Death. Our powers of acting will be gone. Our breathing will stop. Our mouths and noses will gape. Our teeth will be exposed. They will demand, "Give us our inheritance." Our karma will take over, and we shall pass into the control of samsaric existence. Alone without a second, we shall be friendless. We shall leave this world. We shall be outside the world. We shall be borne up in the great change of abode which is death. We shall dwell in the great darkness. We shall fall over the great precipice. We shall be crowded off the edge of the world. We shall be cast into the great wilderness. The great ocean will carry us away. Our karmic energy will pass away. We shall go to ugly places. We shall enter the great battle. We shall be seized by the great harm. We shall die away into space. Our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters will gather round. Our breathing will stop. They will

say that our property and clothes should be handed out. Oh no! our fathers will say. Oh no! our mothers will say. Oh no! our children will say. Fear will overwhelm us. Generosity, penance, and Dharma will be our only friends. There will be no refuge but Dharma. There will be no other protector. There will be no other friendly forces.

~ O great king, at this time, at this moment, the Dharma will be an island, a dwelling, a protector, a teacher. O great king, though looking like we are asleep in our beds, we shall experience appearances of the life to come. If we are going to go to the lower realms, terrifying premonitions of those realms will arise. What refuge will there be then but Dharma?

~ O great king, You should fully guard such a body. But no matter how perfectly you look after it, its time of death will come. Intimates having all virtues, with whom we have been satisfied by much pure food and drink and so on, parents and children, will be there for the last time. The medicines will be thrown away. When everything is gone, we will be unhappy. Such will be the time of death.

~ O great king, your body will be repeatedly washed and fumigated with incense. It will be covered with fragrant flowers and, no doubt, pleasantly perfumed aromas will arise.

~ O great king, you will be dressed in fine clothes of Varanasi cotton and silk, and when this has been done for the last time, it will be like going to a defiled, stinking place, as a servant who has to go alone, and so the time of death will come.

~ O great king, though you have enjoyed your various desirable possessions, abandoning them all, as if they did not satisfy your desires, the time of death will come.

~ O great king, within your house incense, flowers, silk hangings, seats, and various cloths will be collected. With the pillows on the left and right, your bed will be taken away to the great charnel ground full of crows, foxes, and nauseating human corpses. Doubtless your motionless body will lie upon the ground.

~ O great king, as you are thus carried on the backs of your elephants, horses, and so on, different kinds of music will be heard and pleasantly enjoyed. Various parasols, victory banners, and so forth will be raised aloft. The new king, minister, and friends and relatives will make pleasant little speeches, praising you and going to look at you. The bed, formerly not raised very far, after you have died in it will be raised high by four pallbearers, lifted by your brothers and so forth. After servants, compelled by painful beatings bring it out by the south gate of the city, in a solitary wild place it will be put down on the earth. You will be eaten by crows, vultures, foxes, and so forth. Your bones will be burned by fire, thrown into water, or put on the ground, whichever it may be. They will be dispersed by wind, sun, and rain, and strewn in all directions. They will rot.

~ O great king, ALL COMPOSITE THINGS ARE IMPERMANENT. DO NOT RELY ON THEM.

This extensive teaching should be taken to heart and remembered. Persons knowing that the appearances of this life, no matter what they are, are empty, should try to exert themselves solely in practicing the holy Dharma, day and night.

¢(i.e. Vipallasa Sutta - (Anguttara Nikaya IV.49) - Perversions

¢-- "Monks, there are these four perversions of perception, perversions of mind, perversions of view. Which four?

¢---- 'Constant' (permanent) with regard to the inconstant (impermanent) is a perversion of

perception, a perversion of mind, a perversion of view.

¢---- 'Pleasant' with regard to the stressful ....

¢---- 'Self' with regard to not-self ....

¢---- 'Attractive' with regard to the unattractive is a perversion of perception, a perversion of mind, a perversion of view.

¢-- These are the four perversions of perception, perversions of mind, perversions of view.

¢-- "There are these four non-perversions of perception, non-perversions of mind, non-perversions of view. Which four?

¢---- 'Inconstant' with regard to the inconstant is a non-perversion of perception, a non-perversion of mind, a non-perversion of view.

¢---- 'Stressful' with regard to the stressful ....

¢---- 'Not-self' with regard to not-self ....

¢---- 'Unattractive' with regard to the unattractive is a non-perversion of perception, a non-perversion of mind, a non-perversion of view.

¢-- These are the four non-perversions of perception, non-perversions of mind, non-perversions of view.")

¢(i.e. Pariyesana Sutta (AN IV.252) -- Searches. What are you searching for? Are you looking for happiness in all the wrong places, or are you truly looking for a lasting, noble happiness?

¢-- "Monks, these four are ignoble searches. Which four? There is the case where a person,

¢---- being subject himself to aging, seeks [happiness in] what is subject to aging.

¢---- Being subject himself to illness, he seeks [happiness in] what is subject to illness.

¢---- Being subject himself to death, he seeks [happiness in] what is subject to death.

¢---- Being subject himself to defilement, he seeks [happiness in] what is subject to defilement.

¢-- These are four ignoble searches.

¢-- "Now, these four are noble searches. Which four? There is the case where a person,

¢---- being subject himself to aging, realizing the drawbacks of what is subject to aging, seeks the unaging, unsurpassed rest from the yoke: Unbinding.

¢---- Being subject himself to illness, realizing the drawbacks of what is subject to illness, he seeks the unailing, unsurpassed rest from the yoke: Unbinding.

¢---- Being subject himself to death, realizing the drawbacks of what is subject to death, he seeks the undying, unsurpassed rest from the yoke: Unbinding.

¢---- Being subject himself to defilement, realizing the drawbacks of what is subject to defilement, he seeks the undefiled, unsurpassed rest from the yoke: Unbinding.

¢-- "These are four noble searches.")

¢(i.e. Samyutta Nikaya LI.20 - Iddhipada-vibhanga Sutta - Analysis of the Bases of Power

¢-- And how does a monk dwell so that what is below is the same as what is above, and what is above is the same as what is below? There is the case where a monk reflects on this very body, from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin, & full of various kinds of unclean things: 'In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine.' This is how a monk dwells so that what is below is the same as what is above, and what is above is the same as what is below.)

¢(i.e. DN22 - (d) Foulness - The Bodily Parts - i.e. discern the body in terms of parts

¢-- [4] "Furthermore...just as if a sack with openings at both ends were full of various kinds of grain -- wheat, rice, mung beans, kidney beans, sesame seeds, husked rice -- and a man with good eyesight, pouring it out, were to reflect, 'This is wheat. This is rice. These are mung beans. These are kidney beans. These are sesame seeds. This is husked rice,' in the same way, monks, a monk reflects on this very body from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin and full of various kinds of unclean things: 'In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine.'

¢-- (Body parts consciousness development : A healthy negative image sees that all bodies, no matter how attractive, young, or healthy they may seem at the skin level, are composed of the very same parts, all equally unattractive. This perception of the equality of all bodies, if handled properly, is healthy in that it helps liberate one not only from feelings of inferiority but also from the disease of lust and desire, promoting a sense of dispassion toward lustful thoughts in general. This insight can form the basis for perceptual skills that can act as a very liberating antidote to the mind's tendency to self-delusion.)

¢(i.e. There appears to be a twofold purpose behind the development of mindfulness regarding the various parts and constituent elements of the body:

¢---- (1) the knowledge that no abiding ego exists in the body but only those parts that can be observed and inferred from this observation (searching for the "Ego" and separating the impermanent from the permanent) and

¢---- (2) the essentially "vile" and impermanent nature of the body. (to reduce craving for other bodies)

¢---- (also) the process of aging and death present in all parts of the body, the susceptibility to sickness, the non control, the unsatisfying nature of all of this.

¢-- This second purpose is carried to even greater extremes in the fourth aspect of bodily mindfulness, the cemetery contemplations. Here the bhikkhu is enjoined to contemplate his own body as though it were undergoing ever increasing degrees of decomposition after death. Initially he contemplates a body abandoned in a graveyard which is swollen and turning black and blue; then a body which has been partially eaten by wild animals; and finally a body which has been reduced to a mere heap of bones. All of these contemplations are symbols of the transient nature of the body. )

L4: [2. To attain even the realm of Bhrama and so forth is impermanent.] :L4

¢(i.e. Impermanence of all beings, including gods: There is no protection from death, not even as a great king, or as a god; not even in the profound Dhyanas. All beings are subject to death; no exception. Everything that is caused, is necessarily impermanent. By opposition Nirvana is "not caused", "not impermanent".)

\ ###  
\ Those who are the true foundation of wealth on the three levels1 °  
\ Gods like Bhrama Shiva, Surya, and Ishvara,  
\ Though they shine in the radiant gleam of fame and fortune,  
\ Have no chance to vanquish the realm of the Lord of Death  
\ Even if they stay in samadhi for a kalpa,  
\ When their karma has been exhausted, that is their time of death.  
\ Gods as well as asuras, siddhas, and sorcerers,  
\ However many villeins and vassals there may be

\ Throughout their endless births are terrified by death.

Bhrama, Maheshvara, Vishnu, Indra, the four great world-protecting kings, and so forth fill the world with great rays of light, brighter than a thousand suns. They are more splendid than a mountain of gold. The fame of their merits fills the world. They are the highest beings of the three worlds, below the earth, upon the earth, and above the earth. But, though they are adorned with all this real wealth, they still have to die.

The Dulwa Lung says:

~ O monks, look on this wealth as being essenceless and subject to deterioration. If the retinue mindful of my teachings were transferred into the inconceivable life and insatiable powers of Bhrama, Indra, the world protectors and so forth, they would be brought down to the lower realms.

Also it says there:

~ Bhrama the pure one, wrathful Indra, and thousand-eyed Surya,  
~ As well as desireless Vishnu, are impermanent, and passing.  
~ The display of the sun and moon is only for a moment.  
~ The continents of the world, are seen to have been emptied.

The gods of the four dhyanas, and the other gods, the asuras, siddhas who have accomplished austerities, and all holders of vidya mantra still die.

The same text says:

~ The gods who accomplish the dhyanas, as well as the kinnaras  
~ And ascetic sages who are not gods but blaze with splendor,  
~ Are impermanent, though they may live for a long time or a kalpa.  
~ As for conditioned humans, whose bodies are like foam,  
~ No need to discuss their freedom from individual destruction?

The lords of the four continents, the universal monarchs, kings, ministers, and all kinds of ordinary people, monastic renunciates, brahmins, householders and so on, none of them escape death.

The Shrine-room of Telling the Reason Why says:

~ Kings possessing the seven precious treasures,  
~ Great noble lords and royal ministers  
~ Monks and brahmins, householders and such,  
~ All of these beings are impermanent.  
~ They are like beings experienced in a dream.

¢(i.e. "The last of the six realms is the gods' realm. It is considered to be the highest realm because it is the most pleasurable and the most blissful. The beings there are extremely beautiful with gorgeous fragrances, brilliant colors, and music that is so pleasurable that if we were to hear it would be instantly healing. Bodies of the gods are pure and perfectly sweet. There is not a bit of decay, sweat, bacteria, aging or any processes that produce the foul smells we have. It is beauty beyond what we can understand, completely free of ugliness or decay. Pride is the main cause for being reborn here, and even though the gods live for thousands of years, life is not permanent there. It actually takes a tremendous amount of good karma and pure virtue to be reborn in the gods' realm, but while there you use up all your accumulated good karma very fast, like a big V-8 engine burning gas going up hill. Suddenly after a very long life span, decay sets in. One's

accumulated virtue becomes exhausted and death approaches. It is horrible to them because they who have experienced nothing but beauty, sweetness, bliss, gorgeous music, and celestial food are about to experience terrible suffering. This impermanence is the predominant suffering of the gods' realm." -- Jetsunma Ahkön Lhamo, Life in the Six Realms )

L4: [3. There is impermanence because change is the nature of things [the subtle mark of impermanence].] :L4

¢(i.e. Everything that is dependent on causes and conditions is necessarily impermanent. "Being itself is really a process of becoming". And that includes everything in the three worlds. Nothing, no being, stays the same even for an infinitesimal moment. It is a continuous flow of interdependence, a dance, with no real lasting entities in it. Like a multitude of swirls at the surface of the water.)

Because there is transference and change, there is impermanence:

\     ###  
\     Within the impermanent play of the rain-clouds of this life, °  
\     In garlands of flashing lightning, dances the Lord of Death.  
\     Day and night, the falling rain of the changing seasons  
\     Drowns whatever sprouts may grow within the three levels.

Ornamented by the essence of the freedom and favors, the dark summer cloud-banks of this life gather, while, naturally wreathed in quivering lightning, the Lord of Death performs his dance. Day and night, not pausing for an instant, the rain of immanent death falls constantly, flooding out and drowning all the sprouts of sentient beings dwelling within the three worlds.

The Vast Play says:

- ~ The three worlds' impermanence is like the clouds of autumn.
- ~ The birth and death of beings has the aspect of a dance.
- ~ The lives of beings vanish like lightning into space.
- ~ Like waterfalls cascading down a precipitous mountain,
- ~ As quickly as the water comes it falls away.

L4: [4. The impermanence of the Vessel and Essence] :L4

¢(i.e. Impermanence of all the levels of worlds and beings: A universe based on many interdependent levels from gross to very subtle: This flow of interdependence, and of impermanent objects and beings, is operating on an infinite number of levels, like a fractal that operates in the three worlds simultaneously (their distinction is only another artificial discrimination from the mind). But usually it is resumed with four levels: outer, inner, secret and suchness mandalas -- related to body, speech, mind, and inseparability of the three, also related to the four kayas, the four empowerments, the four offerings ... The message in this section is that everything is impermanent in any of those levels. And also that these levels arise and ceased in a particular order, from gross to subtle and then very subtle; that will be explained later with the bardo.)

[On each level:]

- The vessel is the world, which has long been stable and motionless.
- The accompanying essence or contents supported by it is taught to be moving beings.

\     ###

\ When the vessel and contents of this impermanent world, °  
\ With all its various cycles of creation and destruction,  
\ Is destroyed seven times by fire and once by water,  
\ And blown away like dust by the force of the raging wind,  
\ Even Mount Meru, with its four slopes of precious substance,  
\ Surrounded by the four oceans and the four continents,  
\ Encircled by mountain ranges and the ramparts of the world,  
\ Will not endure when all is turned to a single space.  
\ Thinking that this time must certainly come to pass,  
\ Therefore, let us practice the Dharma from our hearts.

-- The external vessel and contents are destructible.

-- The inner vessel and contents too are taught to be impermanent.

[THE EXTERNAL VESSEL: the world] In the beginning of the first kalpa, in the accommodating sky, the empty space of nothing whatever, pranavajra was born from a crossed vajra, indestructible. Above it was born the mandala of water, hard like vajra. There also on the little island which is this world, was the supreme mountain of precious substances, Mount Meru. The east was made of crystal, the south of yellow beryl, the west of ruby, the north of gold. Reaching to the edges of the surrounding water, with seven lakes between them are Nyashing Dzin, and so forth, the seven mountain ranges, surrounded by the expanse of the outer ocean.<sup>2</sup> In the outer ocean, in the east is the continent Purvavideha. In the south is Jambudvipa, in the west Aparagodaniya, in the north Uttarakuru. On Mount Meru, are four groves, and to the north-east, completely enclosed in trees, is the all-victorious good house, ornamented by caverns like a city, with agreeable mountains at the edge. From this to the ocean's horizon, as far as the other surrounding iron mountains<sup>3</sup>, is the vessel, the world, ornamented by the sun and moon.

[Its content: beings] Supported within it is the essence, sentient beings. The luminous gods are separated from people of the four main continents and eight sub-continents beside them. These sub-continents are Deha and Videha, Chamara and Upachamara, Satha and Uttaramantrina, Kurava and Kaurava. Also there are the appearances produced by lower karma, the individual realms of lower beings, the animal, hungry ghost, and Hell realms. In the dhatu of the animals the great ocean is the root place. Below, the hungry ghosts' royal capital city is their chief place. Hell beings have the hot Hells and snow mountain cold Hells. Under them all, like a yellow rose with eight joined petals, are the neighboring Hells, oriented in the four directions of the Avici or Unremitting Hell, which is the place at the root. The widely scattered animals, the hungry ghosts wandering in space, and the ephemeral human realm are also there. The six kinds of kama divinities of the desire realm, kama deva shatkula, are halfway up mount Meru in the rising place of the sun, moon, stars, and planets. First there are the four, great, noble kings. Above them is the heaven of the thirty-three. Above them with their sky palaces dwelling like the stars and planets, in order there are the desire realm deity heavens of the strifeless, Yama; joyful, Tushita; Delighting in Emanation, Nirmanarata; and Mastery over Transformation, Paranirmita. In holes in the rocks of Mount Meru dwell the asuras. In the edges of the water Rahu, and in Skartreng, Garland of Stars, a city at foot of Mount Meru, is the asura king Kanto Mali. In the edges of earth are nicely textured slopes where desire gods contend in wealth and enjoyments. Of the four realms of the desire gods, in the Bhrama realms of the first dhyana are the stratum of Bhrama, Abhasvara; Priests who chant before Bhrama Bhramapurohita; and Great Bhrama, Mahabhrama. In the space above is the heaven of Mastery over the Emanations of Others,

Para-nimitta-vashvartin (the sixth of the twenty-eight desire heavens) whose thrones reach upward four pagtse. The second dhyana has the heavens of Lesser Radiance, Parittabha; Immeasurable Radiance, Apramaanaabha; and radiance, Praabhasvara. The third has Lesser Virtue, Parittashubha; Immeasurable Virtue, Apramanashubha; and Vast Virtue, Shubhakritsna. The fourth has Cloudless; Increasing Merit, Punyaprasava; and the great fruition born of merit Brihatphala. Then there are the five Pure Abodes, Paqcashuddhanivaasa. Here the three places of individual beings are the Slightest, Avriha; Painless, Atapa; and Attractive Sudrisha. The other heavens of the pure realm gods are extreme Insight, Sudarshana, and the Highest, Akanishta. These five heavens are one above the other. The four formless realms are limitless space, Akashanabtyayatana, limitless consciousness, vijqanabtyayatana nothing whatsoever, Akimchanabtyayatana and neither perception nor non-perception, naivasamjqasamjqayatana. These peaks of samsara, depend on former attainment of the formless samadhis. They are in the place where one dies.

[A Buddha appearing in each of those worlds] Thus, uniting the aspects of vessel and essence, as explained, this is called one world realm of four continents. A thousand of these, likewise surrounded by iron mountains as high as the place of the thirty-three gods, is called a first thousand-fold world realm. A thousand such realms, with surrounding mountains as high as the Para-nimitta-vashvartin realm is called a middle-thousand world realm<sup>4</sup>. A thousand of those, with surrounding mountains as high as the special first dhyana realm, is called a great three thousand fold world realm<sup>5</sup>. In each of these worlds is shown a body like that of the supreme nirmanakaya, performing the twelve deeds of a Buddha that are not performed before or after. By its appearance, these are called worlds of those to be tamed. Other than that in the ten directions, are measureless other words, round, semi-circular, square, and of other shapes, pervading to the limits of space. They also have immeasurable kinds of sentient beings above, below, and on the same level.

[The dynamic of these worlds, and the appearances of Buddhas] Generally, in this universe of suffering, the times of arising, enduring, destruction, and vacuity are equal. The first is the time of well-arising. Then there is the present time of well-remaining, from the time of the coming of the tathagata Nampar Zikpa<sup>6</sup> when all beings attain immeasurable lives to when Shakyamuni comes, to the time when beings have lives of ten years. From the long ago time of the beginning lives each decrease by 200 years each. Then when they reach 100, they increase by one from 11 to 80,000 after Maitreya has come. After 100, they diminish by 1, until reaching 10 years of life. There are 80 such cycles of increase and decrease, 18 in the present kalpa; Among these, 995 Buddhas arise. Then from 200 years lives increase by one to measureless. When they go a little lower, after the Buddha called "Devoted" comes," all the deeds, lives and assembled retinues of former Buddhas are brought into one, and the same deeds and lives and assemblies arise. Beings not tamed by the former Buddhas are tamed. The sound of the three jewels is heard. This continues until even beings who had sundered the basis of discipline and completely slandered virtue are liberated from samsara, and by the power vows to do so, these deeds are fully accomplished. Until their nirvana the holy Dharma also remains that long. The completely perfect third-thousand-fold universe's sentient beings, however many they were are established in liberation. After their tenth year of life, that kalpa is entirely burned seven times by destroying fire, to ashes. The fire lasts a day. Some sutras say seven days. Some say that one sun having the heat of seven arises. In reality 700 times ten million suns will occur and, the universe will be annihilated and burned. The ashes will be washed away by water, scattered by wind, and finally, having become a single space, it will be like the former situation where nothing had yet been born. Know all dharmas to be like that.

[THE SAME FOR THE INNER VESSEL / the inner mandala] Like this story of how the outer vessel and essence will be destroyed, the inner body too should be viewed. Mind becomes the single first nature of mind. From within that the wind of ignorance and discursive conceptualization are born. Because of that, by the karma of dwelling in samsara, by the condition of the karma establishing the nature of water, from the semen and blood of the father and mother, the body is Mount Meru, the eyes are the sun and moon, whose inner essential natures are white and red. The twelve ayatanas and dhatus (i.e. irreducible elements) are the four continents and eight sub-continents. The eight consciousnesses are the seven mountains and the great horizon, making eight altogether.

[The accompanying essence or contents / the beings of the inner mandala] Supported by body, speech, and mind are the three main nadis, roma and kyangma to the left and right and the central channel. With the support of the three gates, the three poisons, and the three kayas there are the three realms. The nadis petals which are the five or six chakras are the five or six Buddha families.

[Like a fractal of infinite number of levels and swirls] There are many distinct but similar realms, and within all these thousand-fold world systems appear many joys and sorrows and so forth. Gathered together, they separate. Born, they die. Compounded, they are destroyed.

[Dynamic of the whole mandala: outer, inner, secret, suchness] When the time of death comes, the four external elements within which dwell the four inner elements, are destroyed seven times by fire and once by water, eight altogether. Then the inner elements dissolve into the secret elements, primordial luminosity, and everything becomes a single space. When the four elements of the body have been gathered together, the emptying of prana nadi and bindu are the seven destructions by fire. Transmigration of life is the one destruction by water. Cessation of the breath is the final scattering by wind. The individual body disperses, finally becoming nothing at all like space, like before the body was born.

¢(i.e. About not getting obsessed in levels and mandalas  
¢-- / the perfection of mandala practice = knowing their emptiness at the same time:

¢-- For students who rejoice in counting characteristics,  
¢-- Counting mantras is taught and developing mandalas,  
¢-- For whoever has placed their hopes upon the path of trikaya.  
¢-- Those who produce understanding by means of heaping up concepts,  
¢-- For the length of time of a hundred million kalpas  
¢-- Will never realize the sense of the undeveloped mandala.  
¢-- Kye! for me the teacher, the King, the doer of all,  
¢-- By accumulations and mandala being self-perfected,  
¢-- The nature of Dharmata does not need to be created.  
¢-- As the nature with neither wish nor development,  
¢-- Know The mandala of the King, the doer of all. -- C10 - The All-Creating King

¢ Also:

¢-- From the nature without conception and perception,  
¢-- Come the varied phenomena of the mandalas of light.  
¢-- These several luminosities that shine in the center of space,  
¢-- By expressing variety (~1), have never risen at all (~2). - C12 - The Avatamsaka Sutra)

The Later Tantra of Vast Wisdom: says:

~ Ripened by the elements of air and water and fire,

- ~ The world of the body is engendered as the vessel.
- ~ Nadi and prana and the essence of the elements,
- ~ Existing as the pure nature of the four great elements,
- ~ Then abide in the form of changeless, radiant light.
  
- ~ Dwelling in space, if we transfer into purity,
- ~ All the different elements, nadi, prana, and essences,
- ~ That is like the world-destruction by seven fires.
- ~ The dissolving of the elements is the one destruction by water.
- ~ Cessation of coarse and subtle is the scattering by wind.
- ~ Entering into the light is the realm of spaciousness.
  
- ~ Then there is the primordial lord, enlightenment,
- ~ This is reaching the final goal of non-confusion.

We should examine further the subsiding of the worlds of individual sentient beings.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ For seven days the mass of the earth, as well as the oceans,
- ~ Will blaze, and all these beings will be burned away.
- ~ If visible bodies all will be reduced to ashes,
- ~ Why even speak of those which are invisible.

That is how we should think about it.

¢(i.e. Samyutta Nikaya XXXV.82 - Loka Sutta - The World :

¢-- Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: " `The world, the world (loka),' it is said. In what respect does the word `world' apply?

¢-- "Insofar as it disintegrates (lujjati), monk, it is called the `world.' Now what disintegrates?

¢-- The eye disintegrates. Forms disintegrate. Consciousness at the eye consciousness disintegrates. Contact at the eye disintegrates. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye -- experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain -- that too disintegrates.

¢-- "The ear disintegrates. Sounds disintegrate....

¢-- "The nose disintegrates. Aromas disintegrate....

¢-- "The tongue disintegrates. Tastes disintegrate....

¢-- "The body disintegrates. Tactile sensations disintegrate....

¢-- "The intellect disintegrates. Ideas disintegrate. Consciousness at the intellect consciousness disintegrates. Contact at the intellect disintegrates. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect -- experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain -- that too disintegrates.

¢-- "Insofar as it disintegrates, it is called the `world.'")

L4: [5. Impermanence of the teachings of how the victorious ones and their sons attain nirvana.] :L4

¢(i.e. Impermanence of even the teachers and of their teaching.)

Even the teachers who come into these worlds, the many tathagatas and their retinues, go beyond suffering to nirvana. In considering how their teaching declines, there is the further teaching that our own lives are impermanent:

\     ###  
 \     Even the leaders of the world, the lord Buddha sages, °  
 \     Attended by their retinues of Buddha sons,  
 \     PratyekaBuddhas and hosts of shravakas,  
 \     As within the clear sky the always-existing moon  
 \     Is encircled by its attending garland of stars and planets;  
 \     Though these shine with brilliance in their luminosity,  
 \     They also teach impermanence by passing into nirvana.  
 \     See too how the measureless sun of the precious teachings  
 \     Sets ever more from generation to generation.  
 \     Then why should our bodies, like plantain trees without a heart,  
 \     Or like a phantom castle, fail to be destroyed.

Teachers came to this world of suffering. Their forms were seen. Vipashyi, Ratnach\_da, Vishvabhu, Krakucchanda, Karakamuni, Dipamkara, and Shakyamuni, like the full moon rising on an autumn evening, blazed with the brilliance of the major and minor marks. They were surrounded by hosts of stars as their retinue, shravakas, bodhisattvas, pure ones, world protectors, and so on. Their bodies blazed with splendor. Their speech was brilliant, and without meaningless chatter. Their spotless minds shone with their illumination. They were as firm as vajra, having passed beyond suffering.

¢(i.e. Anguttara Nikaya III.134 - Dharma-niyama Sutta - The Discourse on the Orderliness of the Dharma

¢-- The Blessed One said, "Whether or not there is the arising of Tathagatas, this property stands -- this steadfastness of the Dharma, this orderliness of the Dharma: All processes are inconstant (impermanent). "The Tathagata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, & makes it plain: All processes are inconstant.

¢-- "Whether or not there is the arising of Tathagatas, this property stands -- this steadfastness of the Dharma, this orderliness of the Dharma: All processes are stressful. "The Tathagata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, & makes it plain: All processes are stressful.

¢-- "Whether or not there is the arising of Tathagatas, this property stands -- this steadfastness of the Dharma, this orderliness of the Dharma: All phenomena are not-self. "The Tathagata directly awakens to that, breaks through to that. Directly awakening & breaking through to that, he declares it, teaches it, describes it, sets it forth. He reveals it, explains it, & makes it plain: All phenomena are not-self.")

¢(i.e. Diamond Sutra:

¢-- 21.Subhuti, do not say that the Tathagata conceives the idea: I must set forth a Teaching. For if anyone says that the Tathagata sets forth a Teaching he really slanders Buddha and is unable to explain what I teach. As to any Truth-declaring system, Truth is undeclarable; so "an enunciation of Truth" is just the name given to it.

¢-- 23. "Again, Subhuti, this Dharma is even and has neither elevation nor depression; and it is called supreme enlightenment. Because a man practices everything that is good, without cherishing the thought of an ego, a person, a being, and a soul, he attains the supreme enlightenment. Subhuti, what is called good is no-good, and therefore it is known as good."

¢-- 26. "...If any one by form sees me, By voice seeks me, This one walks the false path,

And cannot see the Tathagata."

¢-- 29. "Subhuti, if a man should declare that the Tathagata is the one who comes, or goes, or sits, or lies, he does not understand the meaning of my teachings.

¢-- Why? The Tathagata does not come from anywhere, and does not depart to anywhere; therefore he is called the Tathagata.)

Other teachers, gradually declining, depend on the supreme being of the Shakyas. If all of them were impermanent, how will my body, as insubstantial as a bubble, not be impermanent.

The Shrine of Impermanence says:

- ~ Ablaze with a thousand marks is the body of sugatagarbha.
- ~ If this is impermanent, established with merit a hundred times over,
- ~ Then, as unreliable as a breaking bubble,
- ~ How can, this, my body, not certainly be destroyed?
- ~ The one who is the benefit of sentient beings,
- ~ The Victorious One, the Sugata, passes like the sun,
- ~ The moon, the treasure of holy Dharma, is seen to set.
- ~ As for our goods, our retinues, and our enjoyments,
- ~ We should be ready to know that they are impermanent.

L4: [6. We are impermanent because our lives never wax but always wane.] :L4

¢(i.e. So if we are sure to die, we don't know when. We shouldn't wait for later to use this great but brief opportunity. All other activities are a waste of time based on vanity that will end up in the three lower realms.)

If even a vajra-like body is impermanent, why depend on this body, as insubstantial as a plantain tree. That is the instruction:

- \ ###
- \ Therefore, though it is certain that we are going to die, °
- \ Of where and when and how there is no certainty.
- \ Our life-span never waxing [increasing], is always on the wane [decreasing],
- \ Conditions of death are many, and those of living few,
- \ Life has no time to waste, so keep right to the point.
- \ From today onwards, what makes sense is to work with Dharma.

Just by being born, death is certain. The White Lotus of Holy Dharma says :

- ~ Wherever there is birth, death will be there too.
- ~ Wherever there is gathering, there is dissolution.

Though time is beginningless, everyone has died. The Good Marks Sutra says:

- ~ Who was ever known who might not die tomorrow?
- ~ Therefore this very day we should exert ourselves.
- ~ The Lord of Death and his considerable tribe,
- ~ Neither of the two, are any friends of ours.

Anywhere in the world, death is inevitable. Walking, standing, or whatever we are doing, we should be ready, thinking, « Is it today that I will die? » The Sutra of the Good Army says:

- ~ Mountains or steep ravines, defiles or precipices,
- ~ At home or in the streets, or on the bank of a river.
- ~ Somewhere upon the earth will be my last abode.
- ~ This is something that is not to be divulged.

~ THIS COMPLETELY REMOVES MY ENJOYMENT OF THE WORLD.

Because of conditions, the time of death too is uncertain. The scriptures say:

- ~ Some people die from choking on their food.
- ~ Others die from taking their medicines.
- ~ Why even say that beings have different conditions?
- ~ There is no certainty of the time of death.

Our life-spans never increase, but always grow shorter. Death is certain. The News of Impermanence, says:

- ~ Like the rock of a pool that was cut by falling water,
- ~ There is no increase, but always only decrease.
- ~ Since all of us must enter on the path of death,
- ~ Who can rely upon this incidental life.

The Bodhicharyavatara says:

- ~ Day as well as night it never stays at all.
- ~ This life eternally fleeting is getting ever-shorter
- ~ Having gotten shorter, it will not then increase.
- ~ Why would one like me not be going to die?

Few conditions are required for death other than birth in a womb. Death is certain. The News of Impermanence, says:

- ~ Though the conditions of death are a numerous multitude,
- ~ The conditions of our being born are very few.
- ~ Therefore since it is certain that we shall quickly die,
- ~ Let us keep the holy Dharma in our hearts.

L4: [7. How what seems external is inner impermanence] :L4

¢(i.e. Even our own mind, our presumed permanent self, is dependently arisen and thus impermanent. Its permanence is an illusion, like the illusion of inherently existing objects. Mind itself is the king of its mental fabrications. There is just the flow of change, without any inherently existing subjects or objects.)

One's own mind is even more mortal than an ancient ruined city :

- \ ###
- \ Sentient beings, like a bower gathered from the four elements °
- \ Are ornamented with moving thoughts like people inside.
- \ Composite, their dharmas arise from conditions and are destroyed.
- \ Since all is impermanent, like an ancient city,
- \ Let us quickly perform the actions of holy Dharma.

¢(i.e. Not only are external objects and bodies dependently arisen and thus impermanent, but so are all internal dharmas like: our feelings, our ideas, concepts, mental fabrications, our consciousnesses, our perceptions. All are based on subjective [relative] characteristics even though we usually attribute them to some kind of objective perception and consciousness. But it should be evident that our feelings for something or someone are pretty much dependent on how much pleasure they bring to us in the short term, and can easily change in time if those conditions change. Our concepts, ideas, theories, are also dependent on acquired and conventional concepts. Theories change, understanding change, none is absolute. Even our ways to re-act are based on acquired relative customs. Even our

perception and consciousness of something is based on past karma. Nothing is absolute, all can change with time and occasions. So there is no absolute discrimination based on permanent characteristics, permanent attributes, absolute concepts and ideas. They are all dependently arisen, conditioned, thus impermanent and empty of inherent existence. In that sense seeing the impermanence of all characteristics, all aggregates, all dharmas is an introduction to seeing the emptiness of inherent existence of all dharmas.)

¢(i.e. The teachings say that we can understand impermanence by seeing how friends turn into enemies and enemies turn into friends. -- Hannah Nydahl)

That is the exhortation. Ruined cities that are now abandoned were once well-constructed and filled with many beings. Later they became vacant. Look at this life as being like that. Kye ma'o! What is left of the former youth and wealth of these samsaric beings? Only the people's names remain. Their adornments destroyed, bones are all that is left of these beings who once emanated their various discursive thoughts.

Like this, our bodies, these bowers collected from the four elements, are now beautiful with clothing and ornaments. What people will later call by our names is our bones. "That's how it is," we should think from our hearts.

The Spiritual Letter says:

~ As we near the finish of the body, we glimpse its bleak end. At last its foul essence is not there at all. It is worn out, decomposes, and is completely destroyed. Know that its dharmas will be torn asunder.

L4: [8. An example of impermanence] :L4

¢(i.e. The example of the lamp. Being dependent on ever changing causes and conditions, themselves dependent ... at infinitum, there is no reliance at all in this life. We will all certainly die; it is just a matter of time. Only using the opportunity of this precious human life in learning and practicing the Dharma can help to reach the three possible goals: a rebirth in a higher realm, Liberation from samsara, or Enlightenment.)

Like being instantly killed in a dream in which we have enjoyed celestial bliss for a long time, at that time:

\     ###  
\     As the flame of a lamp that has been caught in a sandstorm °  
\     Flickers and is not steady, even for a moment,  
\     When suddenly we are struck by the fierce conditions of death,  
\     We shall not endure, but certainly will die.  
\     Therefore, practice the holy Dharma right away.

A lamp may endure a soft breeze rising from the hearth, but is quickly blown out when a strong wind arises. Our lives, like such a flickering lamp, are agitated by the incessant, soft wind of day and night. When we have grown old, death gives no respite, and as if by a fierce wind, we will be quickly blown away by conditions of illness or harm. Think about this being certain.

The Letter to Students says:

~ Like the tongue of flame of a lamp,  
~ Blown away by a mighty wind  
~ This tiny moment of life,

~ Has no reliance at all.

L4: [9. All is impermanent and must be left behind.] :L4

¢(i.e. Nothing remains (~2), but karma (~1) : At the moment of death all of our investments are useless; we have to abandon everything and everybody (nothing is without a cause, thus impermanent, nothing permanent, nothing eternal). There remains only the consequences of our accumulated karma (there is no cause without an effect, no discontinuity, no annihilation). And so, only the Dharma can help. But do we have to wait until it is too late to realize this? Only using the opportunity of this precious human life in learning and practicing the Dharma can help to reach the three possible goals: a rebirth in a higher realm, Liberation from samsara, or Enlightenment. All other activities are a waste of a good opportunity and accumulation of karma, the causes of more suffering in the lower realms. -- On one hand we might think we are eternal and thus should not worry about death. On the other hand we might think that there is nothing after death and that we don't have to suffer the consequences of our actions. Both are extreme wrong views. We should try to see reality for what it is while we can: not permanent or eternal or inherently existing, not impermanent in the sense of totally discontinuous -- a flow of interdependence without any real entities having their own essence.)

Moreover, as for thinking of impermanence; because, having left everything behind, we must go:

\     ###  
\     Attendants, pleasures, friends and relatives, °  
\     Youth and beauty, power and social rank--  
\     We have to leave alone, abandoning them all,  
\     Followed by black and white karma, until they both are emptied.  
\     Then there is no refuge other than the Dharma.  
\     Why should we not exert ourselves to go beyond them?

\*\*\*\*\*

At the time of death, none of the appearances of this life will be of any use to us.  
Only the Dharma will be our refuge from the execution of the karma of our virtue and vice.

\*\*\*\*\*

About this the Sutra of Instructions to the King says:

~ The time approaches when the king will go,  
~ Your cherished pleasures, friends and relatives  
~ Will not follow where you must go then.  
~ As for kings, wherever they may go,  
~ Karma follows after like a shadow.

¢-- (i.e. KARMA, IMPERMANENCE AND THE TWO TRUTHS:

¢-- At the time of death, nothing remains, but the consequences of our actions are not annihilated. There is impermanence (~2), but there is also karma (~1). Not eternalism, but not annihilationism. This is again the Middle Way between existence and non-existence. The same as between dependent origination (~1) and emptiness (~2). Karma represent the continuation of the chain of dependence; death represent the non-permanent-existence or emptiness of being. So the complementarity of these two concepts (impermanence and karma) is an introduction to the more advanced concept of the Union of the Two Truths: like emptiness and dependent origination.

¢-- From a gross model to a more global model:

¢---- Death, and impermanence are similar to saying "not existent", or an introduction to the more general concept of "emptiness".

¢---- Karma is similar to saying "not non-existent", or an introduction to the more general concept of "dependent origination"

¢---- The Union is "both impermanence and karma", like with "The Union of The Two Truths: dependent origination and emptiness"

¢-- The difference between the two models is that one operates at the level of "sentient beings", the other is at the level of "all dharmas" on whatever level they might be.

¢-- One alone is not enough:

¢----- Rejecting karma would be like rejecting half of the Two Truths, like rejecting the continuity of dependent origination, like falling into the extreme of nihilism by thinking that emptiness means that things are completely non-existent.

¢---- Similarly, ignoring death and impermanence, would be like rejecting the emptiness, falling into the extreme of eternalism or realism by thinking that things and beings have an essence, that they are inherently existing.

¢---- But the real nature of everything is not expressed by any of those extreme views: realism / eternalism, idealism / nihilism, dualism, monism / oneness. The real nature of everything is not existence (~2), not non-existence (~1), not both, not neither. It is called the Union of the Two, even though it is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization. It is called non-duality: not one (~1), not two (~2). It is called the inseparability of appearances (~1) and emptiness (~2), inseparability of the Two Truths, inseparability of dependent origination (~1) and emptiness (~2). Here we might call this introduction: the inseparability of karma (~1) and impermanence (~2). Things and beings do not last, but still there is no discontinuity.

¢-- So karma is a skillful means comparable to dependent origination, and impermanence is a skillful means comparable to emptiness. None is the real nature of everything which is beyond description. But we cannot reject those skillful means, or use just one. We need to use them both as method (using karma as upaya) and wisdom (using impermanence as prajna) to have a path in accord with the goal, with the real nature of everything. )

¢(i.e. THE PERFECTION OF THIS MEDITATION ON DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE:

¢-- There are two ways to look at perfecting this meditation in combining method and wisdom.

¢---- The gross level consist of using all dharmas, including this precious human life, and the Dharma, while remembering that they are also dependently arisen and impermanent. It is about the complementarity of acting in accord with the law of karma and impermanence. In this case "impermanence" is seen as the wisdom that complement the methods based on the observation of the law of karma.

¢---- The subtle level consist of meditating on impermanence of all dharmas, including this life, while remembering the emptiness of the three (subject, object, action), including the emptiness of all the elements in the Wheel of Life, in the theories of dependent origination, rebirth, bardo, etc., the whole path. In this other case "meditation on impermanence" is the method, the skillful means, and emptiness is the wisdom. It is like when we talk about the emptiness of emptiness.

¢-- The important point is to see the inseparability of the two complementary concepts as an aid to point toward the real nature of everything which is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization. One concept alone is not the whole story.)

¢(i.e. COMPLEMENTARITY OF IMPERMANENCE AND KARMA (like between emptiness and dependent

origination, or the two truths)

¢-- The Treatise of the Four Hundred Stanzas on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas, Aryadeva

¢-- 174. Whoever sees phenomena as like

¢-- A collection of mechanical devices (or dependent on causes and conditions)

¢-- And like illusory beings, (or empty of inherent existence)

¢-- Most clearly reaches the excellent state. (or we need both together)

¢-- 250. "Since functional things arise

¢-- There is no discontinuation (or karma, or dependent origination)

¢-- And because they cease

¢-- There is no permanence. (or no inherent existence, or emptiness)"

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- Guide to the Middle Way, Chandrakirti

¢-- "Living beings are seen to be transient (or dependently arisen, functional) and empty of inherent existence (or impermanent),

¢-- Like a moon in rippling water."

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- Mahayanavimsika, Nagarjuna

¢-- 3. "Neither Samsara (or impermanence) nor Nirvana (or permanence) exist,

¢-- But all is a complex continuum (no discontinuity)

¢-- With an intrinsic face of void (with no inherently existing entities),

¢-- The object of ultimate awareness." (the Union of The Two Truths)

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- Three Principals of the Path, Lama Tsong Khapa

¢-- 11. "As long as the two, the understanding of appearances--the infallibility of dependent arising, (or karma)

¢-- And emptiness--the non-assertion [of inherent existence], (or impermanence)

¢-- Appear to be separate, there is still no realization

¢-- Of the thought of Shakyamuni Buddha

¢-- 12. When [the two understandings exist] simultaneously without alternation,

¢-- And when, from just seeing dependent-arising to be infallible,

¢-- Definite knowledge destroys the mode of apprehending [an inherently existent] object,

¢-- Then the analysis of the view is complete.

¢-- 13. Further, [knowledge of the nature of] appearances [existing only nominally] excludes the extreme of existence

¢-- And [knowledge of the nature of] emptiness [as the absence of inherent existence] excludes the extreme of non-existence.

¢-- If [within] emptiness, one knows the mode of the appearance of causes and effects,

¢-- One will not be taken over by extreme views."

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- "Impermanence" is a temporary skillful means, so is karma (so are dependent origination and emptiness). The real nature is beyond those duality (not accepting the duality, not rejecting it = the Union = non-duality = inseparability).

¢-- "I salute him, the fully-enlightened, the best of speakers, who preached

¢-- the non-ceasing and the non-arising,

¢-- the non-annihilation and the non-permanence,

¢-- the non-identity and the non-difference,

¢-- the non-appearance and the non-disappearance,

¢-- the dependent arising, the appeasement of obsessions and the auspicious."

¢-- -- Nagarjuna's introduction to the Karikas.

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- "Homage to that perfect Buddha,  
¢-- The Supreme Philosopher,  
¢-- Who taught us relativity  
¢-- Free of destruction and creation,  
¢-- Without annihilation and permanence,  
¢-- With no coming and no going,  
¢-- Neither unity nor plurality;  
¢-- The quieting of fabrications,  
¢-- The ultimate beatitude!"

¢-- -- Praise for Buddha Shakyamuni for his teaching of relativity, by Je Tsong Khapa

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- "[In the true nature] there is neither permanence nor impermanence,  
¢-- Neither self nor nonself, neither clean nor unclean  
¢-- And neither happiness nor suffering.  
¢-- Therefore, the [four] mistaken views do not exist. (9) "

¢-- -- Selected Verses From Nagarjuna's Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- If things are not existing, how can they be impermanent or change ?  
¢-- Permanence and impermanence form a duality in our mind. Both are dependent on each other. The real nature of everything is not permanence, not impermanence, not both together, not neither. One should try to transcend this duality. Neither accepting it, neither rejecting it; the Middle Way between permanence and impermanence.

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- "What is meant by the "individually-adapted siddhaanta" ? One contemplates the way a person's mind works and then speaks Dharma for him [accordingly]. With regard to a given matter, perhaps he will take heed or perhaps he won't [depending upon one's skillfulness].

¢-- For instance, as stated in a sutra, "On account of various retributions for actions, one takes up various rebirths in the world, experiencing various types of contact and various feelings." [But], in addition to this, we have what is said in the Phaalguna Sutra: "There is no person who experiences contact. There is no person who experiences feeling."

¢-- Question: How can these two sutras be reconciled?

¢-- Reply: It was on account of there being a person who doubted future existences, who did not believe in offenses or blessings, who engaged in unwholesome conduct and who had fallen into the annihilationist view, that, out of a desire to cut off his doubts and cause him to forsake his unwholesome conduct and out of a desire to extricate him from his annihilationist view, it was therefore said, "One takes up various rebirths in the world, experiencing various types of contact and various feelings ."

¢-- [However], this Phaalguna believed in the existence of a self and in the existence of a spirit and [thus] had fallen into an eternalist belief. Phaalguna asked the Buddha, "Venerable one , who is it that experiences feelings?" If the Buddha had replied that it was such-and-such or so-and-so who experiences feelings, then [Phaalguna] would have fallen [even further] into eternalist beliefs and his views [which clung to the concepts] of a "person" and a "self" would have become doubly solidified and impossible to reverse. On account of this [the Buddha] did not say that there was anyone who experiences feelings or who experiences contact. [Teachings with] characteristics such as these fall within the scope of the "individually-adapted siddhaanta.""

¢-- -- Prajnaparamita - The Individually-adapted Siddhaanta

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- "The dharmas of the Buddha are incalculable in number and are as vast in scope as a great ocean.

¢-- As adaptations to the minds of beings, there are all sorts of different articulations of Dharma.

¢-- In some cases, there is the discussion of existence, in others, nonexistence.

¢-- In some cases, the positing of permanence, in others, impermanence.

¢-- In some cases, discussions of suffering, in others, discussions of bliss.

¢-- In some cases, the positing of a self, and in others, the absence of a self.

¢-- In some instances, there are discussions of diligently cultivating the three modes of karmic action and accumulating all manner of good dharmas, whereas in others, there are discussions of all dharmas as characterized by being beyond the sphere of aspirations (apra.nihita)."

¢-- In the case of those wanting in wisdom, when they hear all of these different explanations, they may be of the opinion that they are perversely contradictory and erroneous.

¢-- The wise, however, have entered the three types of entryways to Dharma, and in contemplating all of the discourses of the Buddha, they understand that they are all genuine Dharma and are not contradictory.

¢-- -- Prajnaparamita- Nagarjuna Bodhisattva on the Perfection of Wisdom

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- "Question: If impermanence is not actually the case, why did the Buddha speak of impermanence?

¢-- Response: The Buddha accorded with what was appropriate for particular beings and so spoke the Dharma for their sakes. (i.e. No absolute, only adapted skillful means. Staying away from any extreme by using its opposite antidote while not getting attached to it either.)

¢-- It was in order to refute the inverted view which imagines permanence that he spoke of impermanence.

¢-- In the opposite case, because people were unaware of or did not believe in later existences, he spoke of the mind going on into a later existence and being reborn in the heavens, explaining that the karmic causes and conditions of offenses and merit are not lost even in a million kalpas.

¢-- These are instances of the counteractive siddhaanta. They do not represent the supreme meaning siddhaanta. The ultimate reality aspect of all dharmas is neither permanent nor impermanent. (i.e. nor both, nor neither. It is the Union of the Two.) Then too, the Buddha spoke in place after place of the emptiness of dharmas. In the sphere of the emptiness of dharmas, impermanence [itself] is nonexistent. Therefore, to declare that the world is impermanent is an erroneous view. Hence one refers to the emptiness of dharmas."

¢-- -- Prajnaparamita- Nagarjuna Bodhisattva on the Perfection of Wisdom

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- The real or main means to liberate beings from sufferings is, as the great master of logical reasoning Dharmakirti has said in his Treatise on Valid Cognition, (Pramanavarttika):

¢-- The view of emptiness liberates,

¢-- And the remaining meditations are means to achieve it.

¢-- thus indicating that the wisdom realizing the emptiness of inherent existence is the only real means of liberation and the remaining meditations, that is the meditations on the nature of impermanence, suffering and so forth are auxiliary means of achieving and developing the understanding of emptiness.

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- 195.

¢-- Teaching existence, non-existence,  
¢-- Both existence and non-existence, and neither  
¢-- Surely are medicines for all  
¢-- That are influenced by the sickness.

¢-- 346

¢-- The approach of existence, non-existence,  
¢-- Both existence and non-existence, and neither,  
¢-- Should always be applied by those  
¢-- With mastery to oneness and so forth.

¢-- 385

¢-- If through seeing things one could refute  
¢-- The statement that things do not exist,  
¢-- Who then sees the elimination  
¢-- Of fallacies regarding all four theses.

¢-- 400

¢-- Against one who holds no thesis that [things]  
¢-- Exist, do not, or do and do not exist,  
¢-- Counter-arguments cannot be raised  
¢-- No matter how long [one tries].

¢-- -- Aryadeva, 400

¢-- \* \* \*

¢-- Method, Wisdom and the Three Paths - by Geshe Lhundrub Sopa

¢-- Question: Buddhism believes strongly about past and future lives. How is this consistent with the idea of impermanence taught by Buddha?

¢-- Answer: Because things are impermanent they are changeable. Because impurity is impermanent, purity is possible. The relative truth can function owing to the existence of the ultimate truth. Impurity becomes pure, imperfect becomes perfect. Change can cause conditions to switch. By directing the way our life builds and develops, we can stop negative patterns. If things were not impermanent there would be no way to change and evolve.

¢-- In terms of karma and rebirth, impermanence means that one can gain control over the stream of one's life. Our life is like a great river, never the same from one moment to the next. If we let negative sources flow into a stream it becomes dirty. Similarly, if we let bad thought, distorted perception and wrong action control our lives, we evolve into negative states and take a low rebirth. Alternatively, if we control the flowing of the stream skillfully we evolve positively, take creative rebirths and perhaps even attain the highest wisdom of Buddhahood. Then the coming and going or imperfect experiences subside and the impermanent flow of the pure perfection comes to us. When that happens the human goal has been achieved. )

The Sutra requested by Shriidatta7 , say:

- ~ By karmic confusion we are made to seek enjoyments
- ~ We are also distracted by our children and spouses.
- ~ By that we shall experience suffering alone.
- ~ They will do us no good at our appointed time.
- ~ Our beloved parents, siblings, children, and spouses,
- ~ Servants, wealth, and crowds of friends and relatives,

- ~ Will not travel with us when we go to death.
- ~ Karma will be an only child at that time.

At that time those who have gathered powerful bad karma will seem to be surrounded by those whom they have killed, and the minions of the Lord of Death will seem to lead them away with a noose.

The Bodhicharyavatara says:

- ~ If this is the day when a man is being led
- ~ To a place where he will have a limb cut off,
- ~ With dry mouth, blood-shot eyes, and such,
- ~ He seems quite otherwise than he was formerly.
  
- ~ When the utterly terrifying messengers of the Lord of Death
- ~ Having a form of flesh, seize us bodily.
- ~ How badly will we be stricken with the illness of great fear?
- ~ What need is there to say how terrible that will be?
  
- ~ Who is the sahdu8 that can be our guardian
- ~ One who is able to guard us from such frights as these,
- ~ Our flesh will crawl with panic, and with staring eyes,
- ~ We shall search for protectors in the four directions.
  
- ~ Having seen that in the four directions there are none,
- ~ We shall be enveloped in complete despair.

Then it will be too late to think about Dharma. It will be like criminals looking for a refuge as they are given into the hands of their executioners. From now on we had better remember that.

The same text says:

- ~ Even if we truly abandon laziness,
- ~ Then it is too late. Then what could we do?
- ~ After the Lord of Death has suddenly appeared,
- ~ We shall think, "Oh no, all is surely lost."

Thus:

- THE THREE JEWELS AND THE VIRTUE OF DHARMA ARE A REFUGE
- For those who have supplicated for this spotless gift.
- For those besides such beings, though they have appropriate virtue,
- Even our father and mother will be no refuge to us,
- Nor will a host of friends, and wealth and beautiful youth.
- All such refuges will sink into samsara.
  
- We should give over our bodies joyfully to the Buddhas,
- And likewise entrust to them our lives and our enjoyments.
- Other than the three jewels, there is no refuge at all
- On which we can rely while we are sentient beings.

L4: [10. The impermanence of the three times] :L4

¢(i.e. All beings of the six realms in the past, present and future are equal in being dependent on their causes and conditions, impermanent, subject to aging, illness, death,

[again and again in the cycle of samsara]. The only way out is to use this rare, precious, and very brief opportunity to learn and practice the Dharma. If we waste this great opportunity, we will end up in the three lower realms for a long time without even any knowledge of karma and its consequences. We will thus have no opportunity to get out of them except for one chance out of a billion billion.)

Samsaric existence and the being of ourselves and hosts of others are all more impermanent than we think:

\     ###  
\     Think of the existence of former and later worlds. °  
\     Countless former generations have passed away.  
\     Also most of the beings of the present world  
\     Certainly will not last another hundred years.  
\     Those of the future will follow in a similar way.  
\     Young and old are equal in their lot of passing away.  
\     Because we too will not transcend this common nature,  
\     Thinking that death is certain, let us practice Dharma.

Our existence was primordially good and pure, but think of the other spheres of apparent being to which we will later transmigrate. Look and see whether the people who lived a hundred years ago are still embodied. We who are now human beings a hundred years from now will be only names.

The Shrine of Telling the Reason Why says:

~ A person who just for a night  
~ Entered into a womb,  
~ Would suffer tremendous harm.  
~ Such going is irreversible.  
~ In the morning one would see  
~ Many different beings.  
~ By evening some would be gone.  
~ Of the many one would see later  
~ The next morning more would be gone.  
~ Numerous men and women  
~ Die even in their youth.  
~ Why are the young so cheerful,  
~ So confident they will thrive?  
~ Some will die in the womb.  
~ Some the day they are born.  
~ Some will be snatched away,  
~ In unexpected departures.  
~ Some will die old, some young  
~ But one by one they will go,  
~ Like fruit that ripens and falls.

¢(i.e. Samadhi Sutta (AN V.57) -- (Immeasurable) Concentration:

¢-- There are these five facts that one should reflect on often ...

¢-- "I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging." ...

¢-- "I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness". ...

¢-- "I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death". ...

¢-- "I will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me". ...

¢-- "I am the owner of my actions (kamma), heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and live dependent on my actions. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir"....

¢-- "I am not the only one subject to aging, who has not gone beyond aging. To the extent that there are beings -- past and future, passing away and re-arising -- all beings are subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging."

¢-- "I am not the only one subject to illness, who has not gone illness. To the extent that there are beings -- past and future, passing away and re-arising -- all beings are subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness."

¢-- "I am not the only one subject to death, who has not gone beyond death. To the extent that there are beings -- past and future, passing away and re-arising -- all beings are subject to death, have not gone beyond death."

¢-- "I am not the only one who will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me. To the extent that there are beings -- past and future, passing away and re-arising -- all beings will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to them".

¢-- "I am not the only one who is owner of my actions (kamma), heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and live dependent on my actions; who -- whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir. To the extent that there are beings -- past and future, passing away and re-arising -- all beings are owner of their actions, heir to their actions, born of their actions, related through their actions, and live dependent on their actions. Whatever they do, for good or for evil, to that will they fall heir."

¢-- So ... overcome all intoxication with health, youth, & life as one who sees renunciation as security.)

L4: [11. The impermanence of the three levels9] :L4

¢(i.e. All beings of the six realms in the three levels (on earth, in the air, in the oceans) are equal in being dependent on their causes and conditions, impermanent, subject to death, reborn in dependence on their karma [again and again in the cycle of samsara].)

Moreover:

\     ###  
\     Within the three levels from Hell up to the peak of samsara, °  
\     There is no liberation from the Lord of Death.  
\     All is impermanent, changing, and essenceless.  
\     Nothing stable, and things roll along like a wagon wheel.  
\     Particularly the human world has many afflictions.  
\     Being a place of harm by sickness and by döns,<sup>10</sup>  
\     By fires and falls and weapons; by poison and wild beasts.  
\     By kings and enemies, by robbers and the like,  
\     We will be ravished of life and our wealth will be destroyed.

There are no beings anywhere in the six realms, for whom death does not establish itself. We should recall that none of the six kinds of beings in the three levels transcend death.

The Sutra on Teachings that are the Bases of Discipline says:

- ~ Someone who is born without death being established
- ~ Such a one does not exist within this world.

- ~ Nor are there any in the air or in the oceans.
- ~ There are none who live among the tallest mountains.

When we die, as soon as we lose our bodies, this mind by its former karma undergoes rounds of samsaric existence in many worlds.

The Vast Play says:

- ~ Beings, by of the power of samsaric ignorance,
- ~ In divine and human paths, and those of the lower realms,
- ~ Are tumbled in samsara as five kinds of ignorant beings .
- ~ For example, as a pot is turned upon a wheel.
- ~ Baited with fine and pleasant forms and ravishing sounds,
- ~ Sweet fragrances, delicious tastes, and blissful touch,
- ~ The snare of evil times always traps these beings
- ~ For example, like a monkey snared in a hunter's net.

Many in the human realm are afflicted with leprosy, contagion, disorders of prana and bile, and other diseases. There are many injuries from birds, rakshasas, dakinis, gekas and döns. Kings, enemies, savages, dissipation of the skandhas, and so forth end hundreds of lives. These contend with the Lord of Beings for our body and life. Since we die without respite, we should try to practice the holy Dharma.

The Collection of Precious Qualities says:

- ~ With the many harmful spirits and diseases of the world,
- ~ Peace is a truly kind and beneficial gift.

L4: [12. Instantaneous Impermanence] :L4

¢(i.e. Even if we are without any apparent afflictions, or have great means for prolonging life, it is certain that we will die one day. There is no sure refuge from death. -- In fact, we are never the same for two infinitesimal consecutive moments. Being dependent on ever changing causes and conditions, it is like we are being newly born and dying at every instant. Like a river that is never the same because the water is always flowing, changing. -- There is no permanent body, no permanent mind, no permanent essence. But there is the functioning of causes and conditions / karma. Impermanence is an introduction to the wisdom of emptiness. Karma is an introduction to the Wheel of Life, and to dependent origination.)

Not only do we die of such afflictions, but even if we have no afflictions, the life of sentient beings is passing away:

- \ ###
- \ Even with no afflictions, the life of beings is passing. °
- \ Day and night, with the passing of every moment or instant,
- \ It is always approaching the land of the Lord of Death.
- \ As over waterfalls, water flows into the ocean,
- \ Or far to the west the sun declines until it sets.

Even though there are lives where someone can say, "I have not been harmed by incidental affliction," and though there are teachings that extend life by appropriate food and medicines and so forth, in the end it is of no use--we have to enter death.

¢(i.e. I should say something of samsara, this flow of forms of life coming one after the other that we find ourselves stuck in. We didn't come here having thought 'I am going to

come here'. We ended up here through no particular decision on our own part, not because we were free to come. In other words, we're caught within a flow of existence's, which can not stop because the moment we find ourselves taking birth in a form of life like this, we are moving towards death, and that death itself is a precursor of a state which simply goes towards another birth. And thus this flow or this samsara, going on and on, has no beginning and as it is now, will never end for us. Having this reality in mind, this reality in which we find ourselves caught, the Enlightened One said: 'You should know this to be suffering, you should know what causes it, you should know the end of it, and you should know the path to that end'.

¢-- The example that illustrates the idea is this. You have to first of all know that one is sick. When one knows one is sick one then goes to a doctor who has to find out what's causing the sickness. And then having identified what causes the sickness, prescribe a medicine. And by taking that medicine one gets well. That is the example. So similarly, one has to be aware that our being here, our state of our ongoing being, is itself a problem. The reason being that until one understands it to be a problem, until one knows it is suffering, one will never have the thought, 'I will have to get away from this'.

¢-- That is why one can think of suffering in many ways. You can think for example from six angles about how this is indeed suffering. If we look at the state in which we find ourselves, we see that contentment can never come. No matter how much we consume, we will always need something the next day. It is also a state in which there is nothing definite relative to other living creatures. They might be friends or enemies today but tomorrow they might have changed. Nothing is certain. It is possible that even somebody who is a heart friend will become a mortal enemy tomorrow, and somebody who is a mortal enemy today can be heart friend tomorrow. That is built into the situation in which we find ourselves. On top of this the body that we're carrying with us is something that is going to drop from us at some point. This is a situation in which we will find ourselves again and again, and each time we die we go forth totally alone, whether our mother, father, partner or friend, nobody but ourselves goes on each time. And this too; that our struggles to succeed will end in failure. In other words, that no matter how much we attempt to go up, the end of all going up is coming down. It is a part of the problem of being as we are.

¢-- You can look at it more significantly from the view point of a life form like we have. Not just any life form but human life form. Problems we face are the sufferings associated with being born, getting sick, getting older and of dying. The suffering of losing friends and the things which we like, and meeting with enemies and things we don't like. The suffering of unrequited hopes when we struggle for something we need or want, and no matter how much we try, sometimes, we just can't get it.

¢-- What all this is coming down to is that this great heap of meat and bone that we are sitting in here is itself what's meant by the 'suffering flow of existence'. In this sense, if we are as we are, we are capable of feeling cold, we can get burned and get to hot, we feel hunger and thirst. It's all part and parcel of this kind of reality. One also needs all sorts of things, for example one has to put a roof over one's head, one has to go and buy clothes. Many things become necessary indeed! And why do we go out to work? I mean we prefer to just take it easy, right. We don't go out to work for ourselves, we go to work for this heap of flesh and bones because 'It' needs us to work to keep it going. Look how hard we work for it, we really have to spend a tremendous amount of time on it to keep it fit and going well. We are servants to it (the body).

¢-- So you see, one is directing one's thoughts to a theoretical state in which this heap of flesh and bone didn't come forth with me stuck in it. One is getting an idea of what such a state might be. So say one gets to be born a celestial being. One stands up not with

this lump of flesh and bone but in some sort of light form. It is true, we wouldn't then have quite the problems that come with flesh and bones, but, it is only a temporary state of excellence, as the energy that keeps it going degenerates.

¢-- -- Commentary on "Praise of Dependent Origination of Tsong Khapa", Geshe Yeshe Tobten)

The Bodhicharyavatara says:

- ~ Though seemingly today, I am without any illness,
- ~ Even if I have food and am without affliction
- ~ This life is still no more than an illusory instant,
- ~ This body is no more than a momentary reflection.

ABOUT ITS NOT LASTING FOR EVEN A MOMENT, the Pinnacle of Precious Gathering says:

- ~ It was said by Subhuti, "The life of beings is like a waterfall.

The Sutra on Teachings that are the Bases of Discipline says:

- ~ Waterfalls descend in rivers to the sea
- ~ The sun and moon sink down behind the western mountains.
- ~ Day and night tick off their fragmentary instants.
- ~ Like these the life of beings must pass and disappear.

¢-- (i.e. Nothing remains the same for two consecutive moments. Heraclitus said we can never bathe twice in the same river. Confucius, while looking at a stream, said, "It is always flowing, day and night."

¢-- -- Thich Nhat Hanh)

¢(i.e. Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sutra

¢-- For the Buddha has declared,

¢-- "Bhikshus, in a single moment, you are born, you age, you die, you transmigrate, and you are reborn.")

¢(i.e. The Buddha likened the life span of a living being to a single point on the wheel of a chariot (i.e. the infinitesimal point where a circle touch a line). He said that, strictly speaking, a living being only endures for the time it takes one thought to arise and perish, just as the chariot wheel, whether rolling or at rest, makes contact with the ground at only a single point.

¢---- In this context, the past moment existed but it does not exist now, nor will it exist in the future;

¢---- the present moment exists now but did not exist in the past, nor will it exist in the future;

¢---- and the future moment, although it will exist in the future, does not exist now, nor did it exist in the past.

¢-- ... Remember that each of these thought-moments is said to last less than one billionth the time it takes to wink an eye.(i.e. the infinitesimal time where a point of a turning circle touch the base) Thus when the Buddha said that a living being endures only as long as a single thought-moment, he was talking about an extremely brief period of time.

¢-- -- The Tree of Enlightenment - An Introduction to the Major Traditions of Buddhism - by Peter Della Santina)

¢(i.e. Freedom and bondage - Patrick Kearney - an exploration of interdependent arising and the interdependently arisen in early Buddhism.

¢-- Buddhadasa therefore declares that birth is "the birth of the I concept ... and not the physical birth from a mother's womb." He argues that when someone decides to steal, he is

born a thief at that moment; if someone is lost in the experience of pleasure, he is born into heavenly realms at that moment; if someone can't eat fast enough because the food is so good, he is born a peta or hungry ghost at that moment.

¢-- In this sense the ordinary person is born very often, time and time again. A more developed person is born less frequently; a person well advanced in practice is born less frequently still, and ultimately ceases being reborn altogether.... As soon as anyone thinks like an animal, he is born as an animal that same moment. To think as a human being is to be born a human being.

¢-- Rebirth occurs but no-one is reborn: this is a paradox that cannot be resolved by philosophical thought, only by directly seeing the arising and cessation of one's own mind-body process.

¢-- While conventional, or linear, causation assumes separate, independent entities that give rise to other separate, independent entities over time, interdependent arising assumes there are no separate entities to begin with. Rather, it says that every "entity" exists only through its dependence on other "entities"; there is no independence, and therefore no separation.

¢-- The notion of a single human life span assumes an entity who exists from physical birth to physical death, but such an enduring entity is explicitly denied by interdependent arising. Govinda points out that according to the AbhiDharma birth and death are taking place with extraordinary rapidity every moment. "Three lifetimes" really means three consecutive periods of time, regardless of the unit employed.

¢-- Bhikkhu Bodhi says: To prevent misunderstanding it has to be stressed that the distribution of the factors into three lives is an expository device employed for the purpose of exhibiting the inner dynamics of the round [of birth and death]. It should not be read as implying hard and fast divisions, for in lived experience the factors are always intertwined.

¢-- In conclusion, while interdependent arising does not deny causation over time, it is fundamentally concerned with the structure of the experienced present. However, one aspect of the experienced present is its flow from past to future. Interdependent arising can, therefore, be used to explain causation over time in terms of continuity without someone who continues. To the degree that interdependent arising can explain continuity from one moment to the next, it can explain continuity from one lifetime to the next. From the viewpoint of interdependent arising, there is no qualitative distinction between the two.

¢-- Continuity from one moment to the next is structurally the same as continuity from one lifetime to the next.)

¢-- (i.e. From "Meditation on Emptiness, by Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche"

¢-- Once again, bring your attention away from hallucination to

¢-- the realities of life, the nature of which is impermanence and death (i.e. mindfulness of impermanence).

¢---- This frees our mind from delusion and karma so that we can not only bring to an end the entire round of suffering, the cycle of death and rebirth,

¢---- but also eradicate even the subtle errors of mind,

¢---- thereby attaining enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

¢-- All causative phenomena -- our life, our body, our mind, our self, our possessions, our relatives and friends, all other people -- are changing, not only day by day, minute by minute and second by second, but every tiny moment. They do not last for a fraction of a second. Because they are under the control of causes and conditions, they are in a state of constant decay and can cease at any time. This is the nature of our life.

¢-- If we can remain aware of this,  
 ¢--- we will prevent our mind from coming under the control of the delusions -- the  
 disturbing emotional minds that hurt us and other sentient beings, prevent us from  
 transforming our mind and gaining realizations of the path to enlightenment, and stop us  
 from seeing the ultimate nature of all phenomena.  
 ¢-- First we stop delusions from manifesting, and then, by actualizing the remedial path,  
 ¢--- we eradicate even the imprints that they have left on our mental continuum.  
 ¢--- By destroying the seeds of delusion, we attain nirvana, ultimate liberation from the  
 six realms of suffering and its cause, freedom from the circling aggregates, which are  
 samsara itself.  
 ¢-- These are the benefits of mindfulness of impermanence.  
 ¢--- We free ourselves of disturbing thoughts,  
 ¢--- immediately experience peace and satisfaction,  
 ¢--- free ourselves from samsara,  
 ¢--- and eventually attain enlightenment and enlighten all sentient beings.  
 ¢-- Contemplate all this. )

L4: [13. The impermanence of the conditions and time of our existence:] :L4

¢(i.e. Even our actual precious human life is impermanent. Being dependent of a multitude of  
 causes and conditions that are themselves dependent ... ad infinitum ... there is no way to  
 control everything. So we will surely die, but we don't know when. Everything is  
 impermanent, and all worldly projects are born to fail; all views are flawed. They are  
 futile and based on vanity. The only thing they do is to create more complexity, more  
 expectation, more conditioning, more karma, more causes for suffering. None of them could be  
 "the solution", "the absolute"; they are all dependently arisen, relative, imperfect,  
 impermanent. We become proud of them identify ourselves with them, fight others for them,  
 but they are all empty space. All just a waste of this precious human life if we get  
 attached to them. -- The only thing that can really help us is the Dharma, because, even if  
 it is also impermanent, it is the skillful means used to transcend all conditioning, all  
 uncontrolled karma formation, all suffering. It is efficient because it is based on the true  
 realization of the real non-dual nature of everything beyond all fabrications and  
 conceptualization, because it is based on the two accumulations of merit and wisdom leading  
 to the two kayas. But we have to remember that even the dharma is impermanent, just a raft,  
 and that we should not develop pride, or hurt others, because of it. We have to use both  
 method and wisdom all the time.)

\     ###  
 \     Having completed life's conditions, such as food, °  
 \     As sure as taking poison, will bring occasions of suffering.  
 \     With so many contrary conditions that do us harm,  
 \     How can this completion fail to be destroyed?  
 \     All of it must turn into a cause of death.  
 \     Never knowing how or when or where we die,  
 \     We have been seduced into futility.  
 \     Therefore, abandoning the dharmas of this world,  
 \     Let us turn to genuine practice from the heart,  
 \     Attaining the Dharma teaching of impermanence and death.

Though food is necessary for life, it is also a condition of sickness. Though it appears to  
 be temporarily beneficial, essentially it is an inevitable establisher of harm.

Even beneficial purification with baths and medicine leads to sickness, not to mention life being cut off by damage that actively opposes it. Since the conditions of death are changelessly many, let us consider the approach of death. Moreover, as above, WHOEVER LIVES WILL DIE. ONLY WHEN AND HOW ARE UNCERTAIN. We cannot even be sure that we will not die today.

And even if we could, the Bodhicharyavatara says:

- ~ "At least today I will not die," I say.
- ~ What reason is there to rejoice in that?
- ~ For still, the time when I become a non-existence
- ~ Will doubtless come to pass, in any case.

¢ (i.e. As the great eleventh century Indian master Atisha has said,

¢-- "The human lifespan is short, the objects of knowledge are many.

¢-- Be like the swan, which can separate milk from water."

¢-- Our lives will not last long and there are so many directions in which we can channel them.

¢-- We should be like the swan, which extracts the essence from milk and spits out the water.

¢-- There is so much that can be done: we should practice discriminating wisdom and direct ourselves to essential goals that benefit both ourselves and other beings in a way affecting this and future lives.

¢-- Method, Wisdom and the Three Paths by Geshe Lhundrub Sopa)

L3: [C. The three instructions of striving] :L3

¢(i.e. How to benefit from the Dharma: with the guru as a guide, by putting it into practice, with bodhicitta, remembering the emptiness of the three. Combining methods (guru, renunciation, disciplines, bodhicitta, contemplation, meditation...) and wisdom (impermanence, emptiness).)

-- 1. The instruction to practice at this favorable time of having the guru and oral instructions

-- 2. The exhortation truly to make an effort from our hearts

-- 3. The motivating power of compassion

L4: [1. The instruction to practice at this favorable time of having the guru and oral instructions.] :L4

¢(i.e. How to: In order to take full advantage of this precious human life, this Dharma, we need the guidance of a real teacher, a guru.)

At this auspicious time of completely attaining the free and well-favored human body, we should liberate ourselves from samsara:

\ ###  
\ If, having attained the ship of being free and well-favored, °  
\ Whose captain is the oral instructions of the guru,  
\ If we do not strive to cross the river of suffering,  
\ But stare at it fascinated, until there is no choice,  
\ At last we shall fall in, and so be swept away.

In the ship of external freedom and favor, having the holy guru as our guide, if we think we

do not need to work with the tradition of Dharma established by the Buddha Bhagavat, we are much deceived.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ Whoever, attains the path of Dharma of the Sages,
- ~ The tradition like a great ship, and throws it away again,
- ~ Will whirl like a giddy dancer in the ocean of samsara.
- ~ A mind that thinks that joy is certain is deceived.

L4: [2. The exhortation truly to make an effort from our hearts:] :L4

¢(i.e. How to: Put it into practice, because once this opportunity is gone, we are lost for ever in the wheel of suffering, and we are not in a position to help anybody.)

THIS IS BECAUSE IF WE DO NOT TRY, WE WILL NOT BE LIBERATED.

\     ###  
\     While we have this precious vessel praised by the Teacher, °  
\     Which offers an end to evil and attainment of what is pure,  
\     If we will not receive the wealth of the two benefits  
\     That for ourselves and also that for other beings,  
\     We only chain ourselves in the prison of samsara.

Those with the support, these freedoms, who do not practice the holy Dharma that benefits self and others will be bound forever in the noose of samsara. Those who use their leisure to turn back samsara, will establish the liberation of holy Dharma.

¢(i.e. Reflecting on impermanence and death in itself is not really a big deal, but thinking about it because of what follows after the death is important. If there is negative karma, then there are the lower realms of unimaginable sufferings, and this is something that can be stopped immediately. -- Remembering Death by Lama Zopa Rinpoche)

Urging practice, the Letter to Students says:

- ~ Whoever has the best gifts of the ocean of arising
- ~ Also plants the good seed of supreme enlightenment.
- ~ Its virtues are better than those of a wish-fulfilling gem.
- ~ Whoever has human birth, though lacking the fruition,
- ~ Having the power of mind attained by human beings
- ~ Should rely on the sugata path, which is the guide of beings.
- ~ Such a path is not attained by gods and nagas,
- ~ By sky-soarers, kinnaras or serpent gods<sup>11</sup>.
- ~ Having attained humanity, so hard to gain,
- ~ Whoever really thinks about the worth of that
- ~ Will practice very hard with the greatest diligence.

L4: [3. The motivating power of compassion] :L4

¢(i.e. How to: not using the Dharma as a weapon, instead knowing its emptiness and developing compassion. There is a danger of using the Dharma for self-liberation, or to use it to boost pride, and to hurt others. But, instead, a real understanding should boost the four immeasurables: equanimity, love, compassion, joy. -- Understanding the nature of

samsara, and seeing that all beings in the six realms are equal in being in the same situation, all stuck in this cycle of samsara, going through birth, aging, illness, death, again and again endlessly, without even understanding karma and its consequences, or knowing how to end it ... we then develop renunciation for worldly concerns, for any rebirth in any of those six realms, ... we lose our pride in our worldly investments, our ordinary knowledge, our views, ... and we also develop compassion of all other sentient beings in the same situation. Since everything else is impermanent, we are all equal in this. So we drop the need to discriminate for our ego, and adopt the point of view of equanimity, love and compassion. And we are motivated to work hard for Enlightenment, and feel great joy to have this opportunity.)

Third, for the human beings who have been so well-urged, there is also the motivating power of compassion. These words have been spoken so that we can protect beings. How can we not hold this in our hearts? Therefore, our aspiration to peace is always motivated by the guiding power of compassion.

\     ###  
\     Kye ma! As if we had been chained to solid rock, °  
\     Thinking mostly of this world, our sorrow grows.  
\     Not realizing what was taught; not understanding the teachings,  
\     Even though our day of death may be tomorrow,  
\     We fixate our lives as being long and permanent.  
\     Not grieving at samsara, with no speck of renunciation,  
\     We are consciously proud and knowingly confused.  
\     While we are so distracted, the rain of the kleshas falls.  
\     How can we ever be of use to sentient beings.

Kye ma! Sentient beings have been told how things are, but with a fool's intelligence, they do not comprehend the details of the symbols and the means of practice. Really having very little freedom to follow them, they will never realize them. They do not understand the explanations. Some, even while they are being urged to get rid of the appearances of this world right away, are actually attached to keeping them, motivated only by the actions of this world. Their karmas and kleshas blaze like a fire, and they are far from happiness. Others with the fire of aggression burning within them are jealous of others. They abuse them in many ways, provoking faults, spreading bad rumors, and belittling them. Some, no matter how many sufferings torment and oppress them, are not saddened by samsara and do never experience the least particle of renunciation. Some, who have heard just a little, dispute and condemn others because of pride and arrogance, emanating a thousand tongues of klesha flames in the ten directions. Dispensing with the natural goodness of their being, they burn up anything pure. As they break vows and samayas day and night, there falls a rain of evil. When we see this, sometimes the thought arises that we should give up and just try to practice profound samadhi alone in peaceful forests, with the intent of personal enlightenment. But for the most part, the powerful force of compassion produces the joyful thought, "Let's get enlightened!"

The following are verses on this highest of aspirations.

~ Those who are in the ten directions of the world,  
~ As many sentient beings as may be in existence,  
~ By my merit may all of them gain happiness,  
~ And may they all be free from any suffering.

- ~ Those who are sickly and those whose lives will be cut short,
- ~ May they have the good fortune and auspiciousness
- ~ Of lives that are long and happy, without attacks of sickness.
  
- ~ May those condemned to being poor and hungry beggars
- ~ Have abundant food and drink, and ample wealth.
- ~ May all in fear of bandits, savage ones, and kings,
- ~ Great abysses, water, fire, and other terrors,
- ~ Attain the happiness that is free from all such fear.
  
- ~ Whatever they wish for, may their wishes be established.
- ~ Because of always acting well and properly,
- ~ May they be liberated in enlightenment.
  
- ~ By a good Sakyong King may the whole earth be protected.
- ~ May his gentle kingdom widely spread and flourish.
- ~ May his ministers' Dharmic wishes be fulfilled.
- ~ May his servants always live in happiness.
  
- ~ May those who have the sufferings of the lower realms,
- ~ Be freed and have the happiness of the higher realms.
- ~ May those who have the sufferings of the higher realms,
- ~ Be peaceful and establish prosperity and bliss.
- ~ May sentient beings who dwell in the three realms of the world
- ~ All be happy in their minds and every thought.
  
- ~ Let no evil conceptions flash within their minds.
- ~ Day and night may they transcend them through the Dharma.
- ~ May there be good harvests in all the realms of beings
- ~ May they be free from every sickness and affliction.
- ~ May there be no strife and quarreling between them.
  
- ~ May they be happy, like the gods in heavenly realms.
- ~ May promoters of goodness be completely successful.
- ~ Those who want wealth and retinue, servants, and attendants,
- ~ May it be accomplished, just as they desire.
  
- ~ May merit and dominion increase for sentient beings.
- ~ May the Dharma increase for its renunciates.
- ~ For those who want virtue, may virtuous states of mind increase.
- ~ May life and auspicious fortune flourish and increase.
  
- ~ For those who practice dhyana, may samadhi and insight,
- ~ Higher perceptions, and miracle flourish and increase.
- ~ May there be the path and fruition of the Dharma.
- ~ May we come face to face with liberating wisdom.
  
- ~ Those who are tormented with pain and suffering,
- ~ May their minds be soothed, expanding with great joy.
- ~ May those who are idle and slothful, strive for enlightenment.
  
- ~ May those well-ornamented with the wealth of merit,
- ~ Those who have dhyana and discipline, never be separate

- ~ From all who need them in their fear and anxiety.
- ~ May the many children of the Victorious One
- ~ Have immeasurable body, life, and Buddha activity.
- ~ May benefit for others be completely perfect.
- ~ May they time they remain on earth be very long.
- ~ If anyone at any time who depends on me,
- ~ May happiness and prosperity of such beings increase.
- ~ Those who have mastered the vinaya, knowing what is allowed,
- ~ May they be possessors of the seven aryan riches<sup>12</sup>
- ~ Whether they praise or blame, or verbally disparage,
- ~ May all who see or hear, remember or contact me
- ~ Quickly cross the fearful ocean of samsara.
- ~ May those who even hear my name, because of that,
- ~ Be expelled from samsara in that very life.
- ~ Attaining bliss and liberated from samsara,
- ~ Let them be set firm as unsurpassable Buddhas.
- ~ May I always, like the elements, earth and so forth,
- ~ Be a sustaining ground for the sake of sentient beings.
- ~ May everything that is beneficial be established.
- ~ May those who are poor and suffer setbacks in samsara,
- ~ Needlessly tormented in blazing tongues of flame,
- ~ Become a happy throng, completely liberated.
- ~ May they always try to benefit other beings.
- ~ May beings' sufferings serve to ripen them for me.
- ~ Whatever merit I have, may it ripen sentient beings.
- ~ By any virtuous mental power I may have,
- ~ May beings attain to bliss and purification of suffering.
- ~ May suffering be unseen, even in their dreams.
- ~ May they attain an ocean of bliss and happiness.
- ~ Pervading the space of the sky in all the ten directions
- ~ As many Buddhas and sentient beings as there may be,
- ~ May they be associated with happiness.
- ~ May they be wealthy and prosperous, because of what I do.
- ~ Throughout the ten directions, for all who hear my name,
- ~ May there fall a rain of all that is desired.
- ~ Making offerings to Buddhas and other sentient beings,
- ~ May sentient beings of the six realms and ten directions
- ~ No more be surpassed by any victorious ones.
- ~ May I completely liberate every one of them.
- ~ May the endless ocean of samsara be empty.

Sukhavati<sup>13</sup>, totally beautified by ornaments of light, the precious source of all beings, is a universe filling the whole of space, established from clouds of pure happiness. By grasping this white yak tail scepter or jeweled umbrella, all the obscuring torment of the

three levels is cleared away.

In this undisturbed water, may the gradually blossoming lotus of the victorious ones be planted. May pleasant and delightful divine maidens, their heads adorned with fragrant lotus garlands, playing on a platform with water birds, lovingly caress the lotus anthers. By these teachings may human hearts be greatly exalted, floating in the water of explanation emanating as it does in the pure lands.

Free from the harm of the kleshas, completely filled with samadhi, may those excellent ones help all sentient beings cross over.

Like the undefiled young sun, whose eye is characterized by an excellent red light, wreathed in variegated stars. Becoming amrita for beings, their eyes shine more excellently than the brilliantly blazing light of Bhrama.

May the vast appearance of these radiant masters, revealed as great beings adorned with the mandala of the major and minor marks, fill the whole of space.

May all beings effortlessly reach that field, the supreme wealth of trikaya, the cloudless path of the sun and moon, free from even an atom of the nirvana of lower people.

Without duality of one and many, in uncompounded, primordial existence incomprehensible to thought, the spontaneous presence of peace, in the field of Samantabhadra may the purified minds of all beings heal their weariness. May they reach the space of the dhatu beyond wide and narrow, high and low, bias and partiality, concept and thought.

There may they remain without sadness and weariness, with excellent thoughts, exerting themselves to benefit self and others among the rocky mountains.

Urged on by the intention of benefit, one can hardly not be sad at the Dharma teachings of impermanence. For those with a mind that always grasps samsara and never turns back, teaching Dharma is like addressing a lump of stone or an animal.

The Instruction on Impermanence says:

~ Like me you too will die.

And:

~ There is no doubt about it.

~ Kye 'ud! I am an animal.

L3: [D. The final summary] :L3

¢(i.e. How to apply this meditation: Always remembering death while using this precious human life. Always remembering the real nature of all dharmas all the time while using them: their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, emptiness. Thus combining method and wisdom. This meditation is part of the foundation for the whole path leading to Enlightenment.)

There are two parts.

-- 1. How to think of impermanence in order to cross over from samsara

-- 2. The Benefits of the Teachings

L4: [1. How to think of impermanence in order to cross over from samsara.] :L4

¢(i.e. The actual meditation and post meditation instructions: A progressive path in order to always see the impermanence of everything, including our body and mind. This is like an

introduction to seeing the emptiness of everything all the time while using skillful means. Note: it doesn't say to drop everything, but just to see the real nature of everything as we use them. This is the exhortation to use wisdom (prajna) at the same time as we use methods (upaya). This is the perfecting of any methods, and in this case the perfecting about using this precious human life and the Dharma.)

Now the final summary teaches of the great exhortation to meditate and work until samsara is gone:

\     ###  
\     Whoever truly wishes to cross the ocean of evil °  
\     And establish the wondrously risen excellent qualities,  
\     Now should contemplate the certainty of death.  
\     Meditate day and night on impermanence alone.  
\     Again and again arouse renunciation and sorrow.

Whether going, staying, eating, sleeping, arising, walking, talking, or seeing a crowd of many people; and whether staying in villages, valleys, or monasteries, always meditate on impermanence. **WHATEVER WE SEE, HEAR, AND REMEMBER HAS THE NATURE OF IMPERMANENCE, AND THE MARKS OF IMPERMANENCE.** Remember the exhortation of impermanence.

The Bodhicharyavatara says:

~ Always, day and night, I should think of this alone.

If we do not think about it, what's the problem? Having come into the power of this life alone, there will be ambition, love of fame, desire, hatred, laziness, hoarding, indolence, cantankerousness and sometimes the Dharma's not arising. We will not quickly be liberated from samsara. We do not have enough time for ordinary tasks, let alone the liberation of enlightenment.

Strive with a long and continuous effort until Buddhahood is attained. Dipamkara, Shakyamuni, and so forth were at first sentient beings like us. But by their exertion, they became Buddhas. Now we are the ones wandering in samsara. Even though countless former Buddhas have come, we have not been healed by their realization of enlightenment.

Thinking that by our own karma, we will wander limitlessly in samsara, by now we should have been led to complete their path of enlightenment. **THINKING THAT THIS LIFE IS IMPERMANENT, LIKE A BORROWED MOMENT OR INSTANT, WE SHOULD TRY TO PRACTICE THE DHARMA.**

¢(i.e. Using skillful means, using this precious human life, while remembering the impermanence of everything. This is like an introduction to : using methods (upaya) while remembering the emptiness of everything (prajna). This is combining method and wisdom. This is in accord with the real nature of everything: not existence, not non-existence, ... It means that everything is impermanent or empty of inherent existence, but still not completely non-existent, a-causal, non-functional, or from the mind-only. We need to use skillful means, to use this precious human life, to learn and practice the Dharma, but we should not get attached to any of those. They are all like any dharmas: dependently arisen, impermanent, empty of inherent existence. Whether they are seen as "unsatisfactory" or "pure" is a matter of perception and progress along the path.)

The Bodhicharyavatara says:

- ~ If I do not make an effort from now on
- ~ I will simply go ever lower and lower still.
- ~ Though countless former Buddhas have come throughout the past,
- ~ Having the purpose of benefit for all sentient beings,
- ~ I, because of my own faults and shortcomings,
- ~ Was not within the scope of their healing ministrations.
- ~ If from this time on, I still act like that,
- ~ Again and again, as it has been before,
- ~ I will die and have to go to the lower realms,
- ~ Being cut in pieces and suffering other tortures.

L4: [2. The Benefits of the Teachings] :L4

¢(i.e. The benefits of this meditation: part of the foundation for the whole path, renunciation, motivation to practice, equanimity, love, compassion, joy, moral discipline, concentration, insights ... Enlightenment)

If we meditate day and night only on impermanence and death, in a short time we will accumulate a measureless accumulation of virtues. Then because of that,

¢(i.e. If you can practice mindfulness of the facts of life -- impermanence, impending death, emptiness and so forth -- in your daily life, if you can maintain constant awareness of the basic nature of phenomena, you will be able to stop disturbing, emotional thoughts from arising. Normally, these disturbing thoughts control our lives, torture us daily, always give us trouble and prevent our minds from experiencing any peace. Instead of peace, happiness and satisfaction, all we get from them is dissatisfaction, unhappiness and problems -- not only in this life but, through the karma they force us to create, in many future lives to come.

¢ Thus, practicing mindfulness of impermanence, death and emptiness -- the fundamental nature of phenomena, which cuts the root of suffering, ignorance, the unknowing mind -- everything we do in our lives becomes the cause of our liberation from all suffering and its cause. In this way, we can help others at a deeper level by also liberating them from the cycle of death and rebirth and its cause, the disturbing thoughts and the actions they motivate, karma. -- Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Virtue and Reality - Living with Bodhicitta)

¢(i.e. "if you understand impermanence you don't waste time" -- Padampa Sangye)

\ ###  
 \ Thus goodness and benefit will surely be established. °  
 \ Striving with fierce energy to establish them,  
 \ The mind of this life will be abandoned and cast away.  
 \ The confusion of fixating egohood will be destroyed.

\ ###  
 \ In brief, establish all the excellent qualities.  
 \ Restrict the mind to the root of all dharmas, impermanence.  
 \ This will be the cause of holy liberation,  
 \ Bringing us the end of everything that is evil.

¢(i.e. By remembering impermanence and death, karma and the lower realms of suffering, the mind is persuaded to use the solution of Dharma practice. Immediately the mind prepares for death. Immediately it purifies the heavy negative karmas that cause one to remain in the

lower realms, where there are unimaginable sufferings and no possibility to practice Dharma.

...

¢-- -- Therefore always remembering impermanence and death becomes so essential. Reflecting on impermanence and death makes life highly meaningful, and so quickly and so powerfully destroys the delusions and seed imprint. It is very easy to meditate on and one can cease the delusions. It leads one to begin to practice Dharma, and to continue and complete the practice.

¢-- -- Remembering Death by Lama Zopa Rinpoche)

¢-- (i.e. That which cuts craving for reward and honor,

¢-- The best spur to practise with effort in seclusion,

¢-- The excellent secret of all the scriptures,

¢-- Is initially to remember death.

¢-- -- Aryadeva, 400)

Death is certain, Thus our own death is certain. When the smoke of thinking, ceaselessly "Will we have even tomorrow," continually arises, the blazing fire of exertion in Dharma will also naturally arise; and so we will be led to the path of this and later benefits.

When appearances of this life are seen not always to have power, mind does not desire, be contentious, quarrel, grasp maliciously, be angry, harm others, and naturally leaves behind all afflictions. Pride and ego grasping cannot occur, and by the rising of the extraordinary, all is harmonious and pleasant. Since we know that wealth, retinue, and all relatives and companions are impermanent, desire and attachment to them will not arise.

When through these relatives and companions other harms or benefits arise, whatever joys and sorrows occur, no desire or aggression will arise. When these die or are separated from us, or even if we have nothing, the suffering of unhappiness will not arise. Wherever we go in the world, we will not return to the karma of desire and attachment.

Whatever suitable and unsuitable conditions arise, the individual marks of desire, aggression, and the grasping of attachment will not arise. Day and night will pass in happiness. Having come to the path of Dharma, we will fulfill our vows and difficult practices. Our activities will be spotlessly pure, unobscured by transgressions. Working with the Dharmic activities of the path, we shall accumulate the two accumulations a hundred times over.

Since our conduct will not be mixed with evil deeds, there will be no regret for anything we do. A special faith, compassion, and renunciation will newly arise. The Buddha and all the bodhisattvas will take care of us. Men and non-men will have no opportunity to harm us, and the gods of Abhirati will keep us within the whiteness of virtue. We will sleep in happiness, rise in happiness, go in happiness, walk in happiness, possess happiness, and live happy lives.

The higher worlds of the celestial realms will arise. We shall see the Sugata and his children. We shall hear the good Dharma. We shall meditate on the good path. We shall attain the good realm of Sukhavati.

The Sutra on Teachings that are the Bases of Discipline says:

~ Those who act with pure conduct

~ And meditate well on the path,

~ Will not suffer in dying,

~ As if freed from a burning house.

These and limitless other virtues will be attained.

¢(i.e. More on the subject:

¢-- THE DISADVANTAGES OF FORGETTING ABOUT DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE:

¢---- If one does not remember death, one does not remember Dharma.

¢---- And even if one remembers Dharma, if one does not remember impermanence and death, one does not practice Dharma. Even though you may accept that you can die at anytime, in your daily life you tend to think that you are not going to die soon - not this year, not this week, not today, not now. Because of this, you postpone your practice of Dharma.

¢---- Even if you practice Dharma, if you don't think about impermanence and death, it does not become pure Dharma.

¢---- If you don't think about impermanence and death, you don't practice Dharma, which means protecting karma by abandoning non-virtue and practising virtue;

¢---- and you constantly create negative karma instead.

¢---- Then at the time of death you become very upset and fearful, which means you are already experiencing the signs of going to the lower realms. Many terrifying appearances can come to you at the time of death.

¢-- Remembering Impermanence and Death by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

¢-- \*

¢-- THE ADVANTAGES OF REMEMBERING DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE:

¢---- If you remember impermanence and death, you lead a highly meaningful life. You are able to practice the paths of three levels of capability and achieve the three great purposes: the happiness of future lives, liberation, and enlightenment. Remembering impermanence and death is also a very easy way to control delusions.

¢---- You can overpower your delusions.

¢---- Remembering impermanence and death is very meaningful. It is very important at the beginning of Dharma practice, as it helps you to actually begin your practice, and then again to continue it so that you succeed in your attempt to achieve enlightenment.

¢---- (It leads one to begin to practice Dharma, and to continue and complete the practice.)

¢---- Then when death happens, you can die happily.

¢-- Remembering Impermanence and Death by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

¢\*

¢-- Contemplation and meditation on death and impermanence are regarded as very important in Buddhism for two reasons :

¢---- it is only by recognizing how precious and how short life is that we are most likely to make it meaningful and to live it fully and

¢---- by understanding the death process and familiarizing ourselves with it, we can remove fear at the time of death and ensure a good rebirth.

¢\*

¢-- Although understanding impermanence yields these immediate benefits here and now, it is particularly effective as an aid to our practice of the Dharma.

¢---- The understanding of impermanence is an antidote to attachment and ill-will.

¢---- It is also an encouragement to our practice of the Dharma.

¢---- And, finally, it is a key to understanding the ultimate nature of things, the way things really are.

¢\*

¢-- Contemplation on death and on other forms of sorrow such as old age, and disease, constitutes a convenient starting point for the long line of investigation and meditation

that will ultimately lead to Reality. This is exactly what happened in the case of the Buddha.

¢\*

¢---- It is the key that unlocks the seeming mystery of life. It is by understanding death that we understand life

¢---- By understanding the purpose of death we also understand the purpose of life

¢---- It softens the hardest of hearts, binds one to another with cords of love and compassion, and destroys the barriers of caste, creed and race among the peoples of this earth

¢---- It helps to destroy the infatuation of sense pleasure

¢---- It destroys vanity

¢---- It gives balance and a healthy sense of proportion to our highly over- wrought minds with their misguided sense of values.

¢---- It gives strength and steadiness and direction to the erratic human mind, now wandering in one direction, now in another, without an aim, without a purpose

¢---- "The disciple who devotes himself to this contemplation of death is always vigilant,

¢---- He takes no delight in any form of existence,

¢---- He gives up hankering after life, censures evil doing,

¢---- He is free from craving as regards the requisites of life,

¢---- His perception of impermanence becomes established,

¢---- He realizes the painful and soulless nature of existence

¢---- And at the moment of death he is devoid of fear, and remains mindful and self-possessed.

¢---- Finally, if in this present life he fails to attain to Liberation, upon the dissolution of the body he is bound for a happy destiny."

¢\*

¢-- THE NINE-POINT MEDITATION ON DEATH (from the Lam Rim tradition)

¢-- The 9 points comprise 3 main points, each of which has 3 reasons:

¢-- Death is definite (i.e. life is a terminal disease)

¢---- everyone has to die

¢---- our lifespan is decreasing continuously

¢---- the amount of time we devote to Dharma is very small (death will come whether we practice or not)

¢-- The time of death is uncertain

¢---- human life-expectancy is uncertain

¢---- there are many causes of death

¢---- the human body is very fragile

¢-- Only Dharma or spiritual insight can help us at the time of death

¢---- our possessions and enjoyments cannot help

¢---- our family and friends cannot help

¢---- our body cannot help

¢-- Preparing for Death and Helping the Dying, Amitabha Buddhist Centre

¢-- Conclusion:

¢---- I need to practice the Dharma

¢---- I will certainly die, and then there is rebirth depending on karma

¢---- I need to practice the Dharma now

¢---- I don't know when I will die, I don't know if I have enough time,

¢---- and then there is the state of mind at the moment of death

¢---- I need to practice pure Dharma

¢---- Without mixing it with the eight worldly concerns

¢---- Without developing attachment to the Dharma or its fruits, or using it to hurt people)

L3: [E. Dedicating the merit.] :L3

¢(i.e. The cause of suffering is the belief in inherent existence, in permanence, fixating and grasping. Knowing the real nature of everything there is no more fixating, grasping, suffering.)

Now the merits of well composing this are taught as a way for beings to attain blessings:

\     ###  
\     Thus by the amrita of this auspicious news °  
\     From the resounding drums of the thunder-clouds of Dharma,  
\     By the deep, melodious speech of beneficial instructions,  
\     May the weary nature of the minds of beings  
\     Unhinged by the kleshas and fixated thoughts of permanence,  
\     Be released this very day from all its weariness.

In benefit-producing white light, to the sound of divine drums, from the swelling ocean of good teachings, emerge water dragons of instruction with gaping mouths. For beings exhausted by samsara, the turbulent extremes of ever-grasping mind are completely pacified. By the primordial lord who draws breath in enjoyment of bliss and happiness in his excellent house adorned by the rays of the sun, may all weariness be eased.

~ Beings are distracted, as if they were in a dream.  
~ Gathering and dispersing, dharmas are hollow and empty.  
~ Though traveling to a market, companions match our path,  
~ They like impermanent dharmas soon will go their own way.

~ Like an flash of lightning among the autumn clouds,  
~ The life of beings hurtles by like a waterfall.  
~ Dharmas are impermanent with no stability.  
~ From today let us realize that with certainty.

~ Things and property and much collected wealth,  
~ Along with any fame and glory we possess,  
~ Are fickle dharmas. Mind can never rely on them.  
~ Let us know their nature of the four extremes.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

L2: [CHAPTER III. The Sufferings of Samsara (Developing Renunciation for Samsara)] :L2

The Third Chapter of the commentary on THE GREAT PERFECTION: THE NATURE OF MIND, THE EASER

OF WEARINESS called the Great Chariot

¢(i.e. THE METHOD based on dependent origination, causality: The nature of [the whole] samsara is suffering. Even the best situation eventually turns back to the worst again and again. There is no object or state in the three world that is reliable, no happiness that doesn't turn into suffering. Everything is unsatisfactory because impermanent, because

dependent on causes and conditions *ad infinitum*. The nature of this great source of many illnesses and harms should properly make us sad. When we analyze thoroughly the condition of suffering of cyclic existence that we ourselves are experiencing, when we deeply understand the depth of our own suffering, it is called renunciation. When that thought is swapped for others, for all other sentient beings, that is the thought of compassion, that is the great compassion.

¢-- ANTIDOTE: Realizing the nature of suffering of the whole *samsara*, we would not waste time aiming at a higher rebirth, or hiding in *dhyanas*, that would be only a short term solution. Realizing the consequences of the five poisons we should use their antidotes instead. When the faults of this "I" illusion are understood, then we exchange self for others as an antidote.

¢-- THE WISDOM REALIZING THE REAL NATURE of the mind and of everything: All problems and solutions, *samsara* and *Nirvana*, come from the mind. The root cause of all suffering is the ignorance of the real nature of our own mind, and of everything. Because of this ignorance we are attracted to the very cause of our suffering, we are investing in the wrong places. The fruition of suffering is the five *skandhas* (conditioned by past choices, investments, conditioning everything else in the present). But, *samsara* is empty of inherent existence. We can escape *samsara* by directly seeing its real nature.

¢-- PERFECTING - combining both method and wisdom together, gathering the two accumulations: There is this Wheel of Life with karma and its consequences (rebirth in the six realms) that we should contemplate. But all of this is empty of inherent existence, merely imputed by the mind; not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. So we should be not accepting it as inherently existing (frozen determinism), not rejecting it as completely non-existent (hot chaos). We should be considering the conditioning, so we don't end up in the three lower realms for an eternity, but at the same time see its real nature in order to be able to transcend it all. The Middle Way: not falling for any extremes, any obsession based on the inherent existence of one thing or something else. There is nothing to accept, nothing to reject. When we see the real nature of the five poisons, they automatically turn into the five wisdoms. By directly seeing the real nature of our own mind, and of everything, our three gates are automatically purified (*trikaya*), everything is seen as pure Buddha-fields, and our actions are Buddha activities.

¢-- PROGRESSIVE PATH ON THE EDGE BETWEEN EXTREMES: Seeing the reality of the six realms helps to generate renunciation and motivation for the Dharma, but it is seeing their emptiness that produces Liberation (or, better, seeing their non-duality). They are not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. Rejecting them ends up in Vajra hells; accepting them as real ends up in cold hells. And ignoring the question ends up as a stupid animal. -- The whole universe, the three worlds, have first to be seen as suffering. It is said that we would not be able to find any real peace and happiness in it. Then, after seeing their real nature, everything is pure, perfect Buddha-fields, *Nirvana*. And it has always been like that. -- The three impure gates are said to be conditioned by past karma, and conditioning future aggregates. Then, pouff, once their real nature is seen, they are the pure *trikaya* of a Buddha. -- The five poisons are transmuted into the five wisdoms by seeing through their real nature, not by rejecting them. -- And this real nature is not dependent origination, not emptiness, not both, not something else. It is said to be the Union of the Two. It is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization. It has to be directly seen without conceptualization. There is nothing to accept or get, nothing to reject or drop. Always staying on the edge between all extremes.)

There are four parts:

- A. The general explanation of the nature of suffering
- B. The extended explanation of the particulars
- C. The appropriateness of thinking about the sufferings of samsara
- D. The dedication of merit

L3: [A. The general explanation of the nature of suffering] :L3

¢(i.e. All problems and solutions come from the mind. The root cause of all suffering is the ignorance of the real nature of our own mind and of everything. Because of this ignorance we are continually attracted to the very causes of our own suffering: fixation, grasping, discrimination, analysis, intellectualization, control, investments in the five aggregates - in short accumulating karma. Everything that is caused is necessarily impermanent, unreliable, unsatisfactory. There is no objects in the three worlds, no state of existence / being / becoming, that is safe. Even the best situation turns to the worst after a while because of ignorance. The more we suffer, the more we try to control everything and the worst it gets. The more we get happy, the more we want of the same or better, and are afraid of losing it, the more we try to control everything, the worst it get. It goes round and round endlessly.)

There are eight parts.

- 1. The brief teaching of suffering (The three kinds of suffering)
- 2. The examples of suffering (Suffering of suffering)
- 3. The example of being seduced by desire
- 4. How beings are tormented in successive births within the six realms of beings
- 5. How enemies, friends, and relatives are uncertain
- 6. How we suffer in countless births
- 7. How, even if we attain the fruition of Bhrama and so forth, we will ultimately suffer
- 8. Suffering due to the nature of change (Suffering of change)

L4: [1. The brief teaching of suffering [The three kinds of suffering]] :L4

¢(i.e. The three kinds of suffering: physical, mental, cosmic / universal.)

After realizing the impermanence of dharmas, is the teaching of the suffering intrinsic to samsara. Anything one says about it falls short of the truth.

```
\      ###
\      For those among the dharmas of the three realms of samsara, °
\      Unremittingly changeable, there are the extremest sufferings.
\      With sufferings of suffering, change, and composite nature,
\      All beings of its six habitations live in extreme anxiety
```

The Sutra of Instructions to the King says:

- ~ O great king, this samsara is change.
- ~ This samsara is impermanence.
- ~ This samsara is suffering.

¢(i.e. THE THREE KINDS OF SUFFERING ARE

¢-- THE SUFFERING OF SUFFERING:

- ¢-- Dukkha as ordinary suffering. as bodily or mental pain. Physical pain, external causes.
- ¢-- Govinda: One of the lowest stage suffering is only bodily: physical pain, privation, and discomfort. -- In the most primitive form of Consciousness (animals, undeveloped human beings) suffering appears mostly as physical pain and bodily want and occasionally only in

its mental aspect. -- Birth, old age, and death - the first group - are the symptoms of bodily suffering.

¢-- HHDL : Suffering of suffering. This refers to things such as headaches and so forth. Even animals can recognize this kind of suffering and, like us, want to be free from it. Because beings have fear of and experience discomfort from these kinds of suffering, they engage in various activities to eliminate them.

¢-- Geshe Rabten: Suffering caused by suffering - This type of suffering includes the pain, sadness and everyday suffering recognized by all beings. Even the smallest insect can recognize it. No creatures want this suffering. The reason why all creatures are so busy and active is that they are trying to avoid this type of suffering. Ants, for instance, are busy all day and night to avoid suffering from hunger; countries fight each other for fear of suffering from domination (even though this method creates more suffering).

¢-- KKGR: Suffering of suffering is physical and mental pain (sickness, depression, etc.) -- the suffering of physical and mental pain brings about anguish -- The body composed of the five skandhas causes the suffering of physical and mental pain, for the moment we enter into it we experience suffering which brings about the feeling of pain.

¢--\*

¢-- THE SUFFERING OF CHANGE:

¢-- Dukkha due to change.

¢-- Govinda: On the next higher stage it is mainly mental: the discrepancy between our illusions (possession, stability, control, permanent self) and reality (impermanence, no-self, no absolute control), the disappointments of life, the impossibility to satisfy our desires. -- the average human being will be mainly afflicted with mental suffering (the second stage), though bodily suffering may be frequent and the refined form of the third stage may be attained occasionally. -- Not to obtain what one desires characterizes the second stage: mental suffering

¢-- HHDL : Suffering of change. This refers to situations where, for example, we are sitting very comfortably relaxed and at first everything is all right, but after a while we lose that feeling and get restless and uncomfortable. ... but as soon as we have solved certain problems, new ones arise. We have plenty of money, plenty of food and good shelter, but by over-estimating the value of these things we render them worthless. This sort of experience is the suffering of change.

¢-- Lama Thubten Yeshe : When Lord Buddha talked so much about suffering he was not referring primarily to physical illness and pain but to dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction is the real suffering. No matter how much you get, your desires do not abate; you always want more. That is suffering; that is deluded frustration. ... Buddhist psychology enumerates six fundamental delusions, which frustrate and disturb the peace of the human mind and cause it to become restless: attachment, anger, ignorance, pride, deluded doubt and holding distorted views. These are mental, not external phenomena. Those fundamental delusions come from the ego, they make the mind restless. ... If you do not know the nature of attachment and its object it's impossible for you to have loving kindness for your friends, parents and country. ... Our problem is that we lack intensive knowledge-wisdom, or awareness, or consciousness...it doesn't matter what you call it. ... When you understand your mind's view, or perception of things, you realize that all along you have been grasping at the sense world -- and at an imaginary, idealistic future that is simply a projection of your mind and has not the slightest physical reality--you have been completely unconscious of the present

¢-- Geshe Rabten: Suffering caused by change - This type starts as happiness and then changes into suffering. Most beings do not recognize this as suffering. Worldly happiness

looks like happiness, but in time it too changes into suffering. If we are hot and immerse ourselves in cold water it is very pleasant to start with, but after a while it becomes painfully cold. If we are cold and stay in the sun to get warm we will, after some time, suffer from being burnt. When friends meet after a long time they are delighted, but if they then remain continually together they may quarrel and grow tired of each other. This type of suffering includes anything that appears to be happiness and changes into suffering. If a person wants to become wealthy, works very hard and becomes rich, suffering is produced from the need for maintaining the wealth, fear of losing it, and desire for more. If one country wants to take over another, the oppressed country reacts, and mutual suffering is caused. The first of these two types of suffering is easily removable. The second is not, because it is not easily recognized. Thus, it is more deeply harmful. Even small insects can stop the suffering caused by suffering, and so can human beings, who, when they are ill, for example, can get treatment. But most people and animals think that the suffering caused by change is real happiness and spend their whole lives trying to achieve it; for example, people in business who devote their lives to making money and people who fight each other in wars, all in search of happiness.

¢-- KKGR: Suffering of change (impermanence of peace and happiness) is like eating food mixed with poison -- the suffering of change brings about a false sense of euphoria -- The joys of samsara are ultimately the cause of the suffering of change. It is written in the Karma sutra, "The kingdom of the gods and the kingdom of humans are the cause of suffering." No matter how high the rank you achieve in samsara, you will eventually fall, for you are fundamentally attached to temporary enjoyments which cause the suffering of hope and fear.

¢--

¢-- AND THE SUFFERINGS OF THE COMPOSITE:

¢-- The Dukkha of Conditioned Formations. The five aggregates of clinging are dukkha.

¢-- Govinda: On the third stage suffering is no more concerned with the petty cares of our own person and of our momentary life, it becomes more and more universal and essential. We are taking part in the suffering of others, and instead of regarding our personality as the highest value, we understand that by clinging to it, it has become a hindrance, a bondage, a symbol of limitation and imperfection. -- One who is on his way to enlightenment will be rather concerned with the essential form of suffering (the third stage). -- The five aggregates of existence (lit. 'clinging'), i.e. our personality, represent the essential form of suffering, its third stage. -- Birth, decay and death, which originally were felt as symptoms of bodily suffering, become objects of mental suffering as well - and finally the symbols of the essential laws of individual life to which we bind ourselves. This is indicated in the third part of the above-cited quotation, where the five Khandas themselves are designated as objects of suffering and described as aggregates of 'clinging' (upadanakkhanda). -- The Suffering which Buddhism is essentially concerned with is - I might almost say - cosmic suffering, the suffering implicit in the cosmic law which chains us to our deeds, good as well as bad, and drives us incessantly round in a restless circle from form to form. In short, it is the suffering of bondage. The experience of this suffering in its essential form, can only be born of a higher state of consciousness. -- Suffering is no longer felt as coming from outside, from a hostile world, but as coming from within. It is no longer something foreign or accidental, but a part of one's own self-created being.

¢-- HHDL : All-pervasive sufferings. Because it acts as the basis of the first two categories of suffering, the third is called, in Tibetan, kyab.pa.du.ched.kyi.dug.ngel (literally: the suffering of pervasive compounding).

¢-- Geshe Rabten: All-embracing suffering caused by mental formations - This type is even more difficult to recognize than the suffering caused by change. It is the suffering

inherent in samsara (the whole round of existence) and the cause of the previous two kinds of suffering. It covers, or embraces, all beings in samsara. As the earth is the foundation of our life, so this type of suffering is the foundation of the other two. If someone cuts us we automatically feel pain simply because we have bodies; our very existence is the root cause of this suffering. Because all beings exist in a state of causality, all are liable to suffering. This kind of suffering (duhkha) is produced from a harmful cause and all other suffering comes from it. All beings recognize the first kind of suffering; some recognize the second. But this third kind of suffering is very, very difficult to recognize. Without recognizing it, escape from samsara is impossible. This suffering is like a wound that does not give pain until it is touched. It is the ground containing all sufferings. When we remove this suffering we attain nirvana, or liberation.

¢-- 400: The subtle form of suffering : the aggregates themselves, the conditioning, are suffering - it we cling to them -, because impermanent: The body itself constitutes the pervasive suffering of conditioning. Without recognizing that the contaminated psycho-physical aggregates themselves are the subtlest form of suffering, we cannot develop the genuine wish to free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. Understanding the other two kinds of suffering (physical & mental) leads toward an understanding of this.

¢-- Aryadeva: "Therefore all that is impermanent Is said to be suffering."

¢-- KKGR: Pervasive suffering (root cause of all suffering-impermanence of the unenlightened body) is the nature of samsara. No matter what kind of conditions we enjoy, sooner or later suffering will pervade our worldly state, where our afflicted ordinary bodies are a source of pain. -- The five ordinary skandhas are the cause of pervasive suffering, but ordinary people do not recognize them as suffering, just as when stuck by plague, they do not notice minor illness. However, those noble beings entering the path recognize this as suffering, just as, when the plague abates, one notices the pain of a lesser injury.

¢-- Birth is suffering.)

By these the six kinds of sentient beings struggle and sink in the ocean of samsara.

L4: [2. The examples of suffering.] :L4

¢(i.e. Because they don't know the law of karma and its consequences, or the way out of samsara, beings create more and more causes for suffering. That is why it is so hard and rare to get out of the three lower realms and gain a precious human life.)

By these verses the examples of how the kleshas are produced are explained:

\     ###  
\     Like some person who is thrown into a fire, °  
\     Or attacked by a ravaging horde of savage men or beasts,  
\     Or imprisoned by some king, just like an animal,  
\     With successive waves of suffering (1) like the Unremitting Hell  
\     And having no chance of escape, our sorrows only increase.

Thus as the assembled faculties of sentient beings are not purified of former suffering, it will oppress them later. Unbearable, it is without measure or limit.

The Jewel Mala says:

- ~ Space in all the directions, earth, water, fire, and air,
- ~ Just as they are limitless, so are beings' sufferings.
- ~ They rise again and again, as waves rise in the ocean.

- ~ They are like always having to live in terror and fear
- ~ With vicious beasts of prey and cruel savages.
- ~ Like the dungeon of a king, getting free is difficult.

L4: [3. The example of being seduced by desire.] :L4

¢(i.e. All beings are subject to suffering and want to escape suffering. But because of their ignorance of the real nature of everything they are attracted to the causes of their own suffering. The more they desire to escape it, the more they discriminate, the more they try to control everything, the more they accumulate the causes of their own suffering. While doing this, they cultivate the three poisons [passion, aversion, delusion], the five poisons [one for each realm: anger, greed, ignorance, attachment, jealousy, pride].)

Though all sentient beings want to find happiness and be free from suffering:

```

\      ###
\      One may wish to find bliss, and be separated from suffering. °
\      But suffering strikes us, acting as both cause and effect.
\      Like a moth who is attracted by the flame of a lamp
\      Enticed by grasping, desirous of his wished-for object,
\      Or like deer, bees, and elephants,
\      Enticed by sound or smell or else by taste, or touch,
\      Beings are seduced by desire for the five objects of sense.
\      See how they never find bliss, but only suffering.

```

By the obscuring power of accepting and rejecting, though we may want powerful means of entering into the fruition, we do not produce the cause. How can we be free from accepting and rejecting? Those who want happiness should practice the cause, the virtuous path. We want to leave suffering behind, yet wholeheartedly enter into its cause, non-virtue. We practice all the causes of suffering, the five klesha-poisons, and the three chief kleshas. We are rushing to practice the source of all suffering, whose fruition is suffering itself, and experience of its different varieties. Still we just accept this and cannot even be ashamed of it. This is like a thief who is punished by having his hands cut off, but still robs us again. This time his punishment is having his head cut off.

The Bodhicharyavatara says: 1.28

- ~ We think we have the intention of getting rid of suffering,
- ~ Instead we run right to that very suffering.
- ~ Though we want happiness, BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE,
- ~ We conquer our own happiness like an enemy

¢(i.e. In the Bodhisattvacharyavatara, the great yogi and bodhisattva Shantideva wrote,

¢ "We all seek happiness, but turn our backs on it.

¢ We all wish to avoid misery, but race to collect its causes."

¢ What we want and what we're doing are in contradiction. Our activities aimed at bringing happiness just cause suffering, misery and trouble. Shantideva goes on to explain how even if we desire to obtain happiness, because of ignorance we usually destroy its cause. We treat the causes of happiness like we would an enemy. -- Tsenshab Serkong Rinpoche, Renunciation)

How do we conquer it? By the force of desire and attachment to the five desirables, the power of the kleshas increases, and we enter into suffering. A moth desiring the form of a

lamp's light, is burned when it is reached. Deer are killed because they listen to the sound of a flute. Bees who suck flowers, which are the source of nectar, get tangled when they close to them. Fishermen entice fish by the taste of food on the point of a hook. Elephants wanting to feel cool, go into lakes and die.

A song in the Dohakosha:

~ By the mudra of samsara all beings are seduced.

Also it says there:

- ~ Kye ho! The stupid are wounded by arrows it is said.
- ~ View them as having been enticed like gullible deer.
- ~ They are like fish and butterflies, elephants and bees,

The kleshas arise from the five sense-objects, and by their force we wander endlessly in samsara. This is more to be feared than poison, it is taught.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ Objects and poison alike are pleasant when first experienced.
- ~ Objects and poison alike are unbearably harsh when ripe.
- ~ Objects and poison alike are imbibed BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE.
- ~ Objects and poison alike are potent and hard to reverse.
- ~ Poison and objects, imputed with certainty by the mind,
- ~ Both do harm, but poison may simply be avoided
- ~ But injuries by objects are not so easily shunned.
- ~ Poison is only poisonous in a sentient being
- ~ Our feelings regarding objects are poisonous anywhere.
- ~ Poison when mixed with other poison is neutralized.
- ~ Thus supreme secret mantra is properly used as a cure.
- ~ Poison skillfully used is of benefit to man.
- ~ However, the great poison, objects, never will be so.

L4: [4. How beings are tormented in successive births within the six realms of beings] :L4

¢(i.e. So they just go round and round: suffering because of their past actions and creating more causes for future suffering. All of this while being totally ignorant of it. Depending on the major cause [poisons: anger, greed, ignorance, attachment, jealousy, pride] and the predominant types of suffering, they are associated with one of the six realms of this wheel of samsara [Hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demigods, gods].)

These samsaric beings whirl about with each other and suffer:

\     ###  
\     For gods, asuras, Hell beings, and the hungry ghosts, °  
\     For humans and animals, all beings of the six realms,  
\     Like the chain of buckets on a water wheel,  
\     Limitless sufferings follow each other in train.

The Precious Mala says:

- ~ Its three paths have no beginning, no middle and no end.
- ~ Like the circle that is made by whirling a fire-brand.
- ~ Mutual causes become the mandala of samsara. (i.e. The Wheel of Life)

L4: [5. How enemies, friends, and relatives are uncertain] :L4

¢(i.e. Because they desire to escape suffering, and because of their ignorance, they tend to discriminate: liking some, hating others, being indifferent to most. But those are only relative, circumstantial feelings. They forget the impermanence of such feelings. And it is because of such discrimination that they create more and more causes for suffering in the future.)

Thus when we are whirled within samsara:

\     ###  
\     In the course of the generations, every sentient being °  
\     Has carried the burden of being our friend and our enemy.  
\     Also they have been neither, or something between the two.  
\     The number of times that they have done us right or wrong  
\     Or benefit and harm transcends enumeration.  
\     Often a father becomes a mother and she a sister,  
\     And she again a brother, lost in uncertainty.  
\     We can never be sure if our friends will change to enemies

In all the generations from beginningless time a particular sentient being will have been the father of all the sentient beings in the three realms, and so forth. The number of times that it will have been their father, mother, and intimate cannot be counted.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ By desiring what is fine, deprivation, and death
- ~ Sickness, age, and so forth, are sources of many sufferings,
- ~ Samsara indeed is a treasury of every sorrow.

L4: [6. How we suffer in countless births:] :L4

¢(i.e. It has always been like that, suffering because of past actions, and creating more and more cause for future suffering. They have been in each of the six realms countless times. -- All discriminations, all choices, all actions, all investments (material and immaterial, bodily, emotional, concepts, knowledge, control) are based on this ignorance of the real non-dual nature of everything. They assume there are absolute objective characteristics, inherently existing dharmas, and that they can objectively perceive them, understand them, make impartial decision about them, and control them. They forget that everything is relative, that everything is interdependent. They believe in absolutes, and necessarily have to suffer the consequences of these mistakes in the future.)

\     ###  
\     If thus we think of the karmic succession in this world, °  
\     Our sorrow should increase to its ultimate extreme.  
\     If all our previous bodies, when we were born as ants,  
\     Were gathered up together and piled into a heap,  
\     Its height would surpass Mount Meru, with its four precious slopes.  
\     The tears we have wept would surpass the four oceans in their volume.  
\     When we have been a Hell being or a hungry ghost,  
\     The amount of molten copper that we have had to drink,  
\     And the foul volume of pus and blood and excrement,  
\     Is unmatched by the flowing rivers to the limits of the directions.  
\     Our other sufferings were as limitless as the sky.  
\     The number of time our head and limbs have been cut off,

\ Because of desire, is unmatched by the atoms of the world.

The Resting in Closely-attentive Mindfulness, says:

~ O monks, be sorrowful within the realm of samsara. Why? While we were being whirled about in beginningless samsara, we were born as ants. If their discarded bodies were brought together in one place, and made into a heap, it would be taller than Mount Meru. We have wept more tears than there is water in the four oceans. The countless immeasurable number of times we have become

~ Hell beings and pretas, we have drunk more seething molten copper, blood, urine, pus, and mucus than there is water in the four great rivers that flow down to the ocean<sup>1</sup>. Because of desires, the number of times that our head, eyes, and major and minor limbs have been cut off equals the number of atoms of earth, water, air, and fire in as many worlds as there are grains of sand of the river Ganges.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ More than the four oceans is the milk that we have drunk.
- ~ More than the retinue of existing individuals,
- ~ The heap of all our bones would be bigger than a mountain
- ~ If juniper berries were as many as our mothers,
- ~ The earth would not suffice for such a number of them.

L4: [7. How, even if we attain the fruition of Bhrama and so forth, we will ultimately suffer.] :L4

¢(i.e. While being ignorant of the real nature of everything, there is no way, even from the most ideal situation, that they will not end up in the worst situation (realms) after a while. There is no way to escape it; they will necessarily desire more, pile up mistakes and have to suffer the consequences. There is nothing they can do to control it, not even as a god, not even escaping in the most perfect dhyanas. All of those ideal states are all impermanent because they are produced, because they are dependent on causes and conditions, because they are all based on ignorance (the belief in inherent existence). It is the very fact that they are desiring something more, trying to discriminate and to control the situation that is the cause of their downfall. To desire something, and to discriminate, is to believe in something inherently existing, some absolute; and that is the mistake, the cause of future suffering. -- The only way out is to follow the Dharma (morality, concentration, wisdom) until they realize the real nature of their own mind, and of everything. Only then will they be able to transcend this cycle of conditioning.)

Moreover, when we course within samsara, here is what happens:

- \ ###
- \ Charnel vampire-ghouls, and demonic mountain spirits, °
- \ Beasts and snakes, and various things that creep and crawl
- \ Experience the countless pains and pleasures of this realm.
- \ Bhrama and Indra, and adepts of dhyanas formed and formless
- \ Defending their territory and seven precious possessions<sup>2</sup>
- \ Human rulers, whatever splendor and wealth they gained,
- \ Fell to the lower realms, suffering more and more.

In this time of samsaric succession, there are no realms of earth, water, mountains, islands, and space, where we have not been. Countless times we have been gods, nagas,

rakshasas, gandharvas, kimbhandas<sup>3</sup>, persons who experienced the sufferings of all the six lokas at once<sup>4</sup>, Bhrama, and Indra, and world-ruling kings. There is no joy and sorrow of any of these that we have not experienced. Again, we have been whirled down to the lower realms and lived among their extreme sorrows.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ What being exists that we have not been a hundred times?
- ~ What joy is there that we have not savored many times?
- ~ What glories, like splendid white yak tails, have we not obtained?
- ~ Yet whatever we have gained, our desires only increase.
  
- ~ There is no river upon whose banks we never lived.
- ~ There is no country's region where we have never lived.
- ~ There is no direction where we have never lived.
- ~ And yet the difficult power of our desire increases.
  
- ~ There is no sorrow that was not ours formerly many times.
- ~ Nothing could satisfy beings that we have not desired.
- ~ There is no sentient being that we have not engendered
- ~ But whatever we have in samsara, we are not free of desire.
  
- ~ Completely grasping at birth these widely meandering beings
- ~ Are rolling on the ground in ecstasy and sorrow.
- ~ There is no being with whom we have not been intimate.

L4: [8. Suffering due to the nature of change.] :L4

¢(i.e. Everything in the three worlds is unsatisfactory because impermanent, because dependently arisen / caused / assembled. All eventually go from good to worst, round and round like on a wheel. Even the most perfect situation is dependent on causes and conditions, thus impermanent, and thus unsatisfactory. There is no absolute causes that can be controlled perfectly all the time. Trying, with this ignorance, will only make things worst. -- It is because they forget that everything is dependent on a multitude of endless causes and conditions, continually changing, totally impermanent, not staying the same even for an infinitesimal moment, that they get attached to them, try to control them, and suffer when they change. Ignoring this, they just try harder to control everything, and hold on to them even more, creating more and more suffering. So is it because everything is in the nature of change, or because of our own ignorance, that we suffer ? -- A better solution would be to renounce desire for samsara's pleasure and aim for Enlightenment by relying on the Dharma and removing this ignorance. Then, after realizing the inseparability of appearances and emptiness or the Union of the Two Truths, everything would be seen as pure, perfect as they are. The problem is not with the dharmas, but with our own mind.)

These others who did badly in the mouth of samsara are worthy of further thought:

- \ ###
- \ Having enjoyed unlimited wealth within this life °
- \ These beings of exalted station, after they departed,
- \ Were stricken with poverty or even made to be servants.
- \ As wealth in a dream is gone as soon as we awake,
- \ If we thoroughly think of the sufferings of change (2),
- \ Arising from the impermanence of all our joy and sorrow,

\ Our sorrow increases, building ever more and more.  
\ Therefore beings within the three realms' habitations,  
\ Without desire for samsara's pleasures, should get enlightened.

¢(i.e. If you suffer, it is not because things are impermanent. It is because you believe things are permanent. When a flower dies, you don't suffer much, because you understand that flowers are impermanent. But you cannot accept the impermanence of your beloved one, and you suffer deeply when she passes away. -- Thich Nhat Hanh, Impermanence)

¢(i.e. We hold on to objects, people / beings, relation, status, way of life, feelings, ideas, religion, views, consciousnesses, memories, dhyanas, ..., to anything in the three worlds.)

So it is for Indra, the king of the gods, and Bhrama, the paranimitavashavartin gods, and those who have attained happiness among human beings. When they exhaust the fruition of their former virtuous karma Bhrama, Indra, chakravartins, gods, including samadhi gods and formless gods, and ordinary people who had a great fruition, by the power of former karma, death, and transmigration, must experience many afflictions, going to the lower realms and so forth.

The Sutra on Renunciation says:

- ~ When from their joyful and excellent existences
- ~ Lion-like lords of beings have to die and transmigrate.
- ~ The gods will speak to them, saying words like these:
- ~ This care-free life must be completely left behind.
- ~ The joys of the gods, however many they may be,
- ~ All of these arose from the cause of our good karma.
- ~ Now by these pleasant actions that you have in mind
- ~ All your collected virtue is totally exhausted.
- ~ Now, experiencing suffering from non-virtue that you have,
- ~ You will fall into the suffering of the lower realms.

Extensive manifestations of this kind will arise.

Also the Sutra on Teachings that are the Bases of Discipline says:

- ~ Wealth in a dream with houses and abundant enjoyments,
- ~ Dreaming that one has been made a lord of gods and men
- ~ Becomes quite non-existent as soon as we awake.

It is like that.

The Bodhicharyavatara says: 2.35

- ~ Like the experiences that we have in our dreams
- ~ Whatever may be the sorts of things that one enjoys
- ~ These become nothing more than objects of memory.
- ~ They all are gone. We do not see them any more.

When one transfers between lives, this also happens.

The Spiritual Letter<sup>5</sup>:

- ~ Indra who is worthy of homage from the world,
- ~ By power of his karma, falls back upon the earth.
- ~ Even after becoming universal monarchs,

- ~ Lords of the world are born again as others' servants.
- ~ Breasts and buttocks of celestial courtesans,
- ~ Are delightful to fondle, but after time has past,
- ~ Destined to be sausage in the Lord of Hell's machines,
- ~ Such lovers will be attended by knowledge hard to bear.
- ~ The touch of their shapely legs, is happily endured,
- ~ But having lived with tremendous joy for a very long time
- ~ Again in Hells of biting flames and rotten corpses
- ~ An equal result of unbearable pain will be produced.
- ~ After the joyful attentions of celestial maidens,
- ~ After this life of pleasure in exquisite groves,
- ~ By a forest of trees, with leaves like swords and daggers
- ~ Ones arms and legs and nose and ears will be cut to pieces.
- ~ Having lived in a place with divine girls free to hand,
- ~ All with pretty faces and golden lotuses,
- ~ Again we shall be helpless in the rivers of Hell
- ~ Forced into scalding water, as hot gates block return.
- ~ Desire for the realm of the gods will be very great
- ~ But having attained the desireless bliss of Bhrama again,
- ~ Once more we will fuel the fires of the Avici Hell.
- ~ We shall be thrown into constant suffering with no gaps.
- ~ Attaining the sun and moon, the light of our personal bodies
- ~ Will shine with brilliance to the limits of the world.
- ~ Then again we shall come into dismal murky darkness,
- ~ Unable to see so much as our own hands and feet.
- ~ Thus, as for the merit of those who were criminals,
- ~ After the triple lamp of the Buddha's teaching appears,
- ~ They will go where the sun and moon have never shone,
- ~ They will pass into chaos, limitless endless darkness.

THE THREE REALMS OF DESIRE, FORM, AND THE FORMLESS, ARE THE CITIES OF APPEARANCE, HALF-APPEARANCE, AND NON-APPEARANCE.

This is because they have coarse appearance, subtle appearance, and none at all. Those who are happy, not desiring the path at all, are instructed to establish unsurpassable enlightenment. But being without the leisure to establish merit, they must make an effort.

The same text says:

- ~ If our hair or garments suddenly burst into flame
- ~ The first thing we would do is put them out again.
- ~ Then we would try to keep it from happening again.
- ~ There would be no priority that would be higher than that.

☿(i.e. Here we are talking about the objects of consciousness / the various phenomena/beings in the three worlds.

☿-- BODY / COARSE: The Sense-World (including the Six Realms) is designated as purely the

domain of sensuous desires, since its objects are bounded, 'I'-conditioned, in their individualness set in contrast with the subject, incapable of union with the subject, and hence beget that state of tension (dualism) which we call craving. -- Material objects which are limited. Perceivable through the senses.

¢-- SPEECH / SUBTLE: The Realm of Pure Form is intermediary between the two other realms inasmuch as it has something in common with each of the two - with the sense-domain, the property of form-ness; with the formless domain, the property of abstraction, namely, from the egocentricity of the lower domain of the senses filled with desires. That this is no mere artificial, intellectual abstraction, follows from the intuitive character of these two domains. The properties of each domain are not something added to their particular character, but only modifications of the same. -- Immaterial objects which are limited. Not perceptible to the lower senses, but certainly to the higher senses, when free from 'I', and therefore able to merge completely into the object, to become one with it, to experience it from within -- The consciousness in the realm of Pure Form: the five jhanas.

¢-- MIND / VERY SUBTLE: The objects belonging to the Realm of Non-Form possess no limiting boundaries, are beyond all multiplicity and every kind of isolation or 'I'-entanglement. With this is excluded all possibility of tension, of craving. -- Immaterial objects which are unlimited. Perceivable by the mind. -- The consciousness in the realm of Non-Form: the fifth jhana. - ex. of objects: space, the infinity of space, the infinity of consciousness, nothingness, emptiness of consciousness

¢-- from Govinda)

¢(i.e. Buddhism divides the whole of sentient existence into three basic realms:

¢-- I. The sense sphere realm

¢-- II The realm of fine materiality

¢-- III The immaterial or formless realm

¢--\*

¢-- I. THE SENSE SPHERE REALM

¢-- This is the lowest realm. There are six planes of existence under this category.

¢-- (a) The hells, states of intense torment and suffering.

¢-- (b) The sphere of the 'pretas', the afflicted spirits (sometimes called the hungry ghosts). These are beings with strong, tormenting desires, insatiable hunger and thirst; they are always on the look out for food and drink.

¢-- (c) The animal kingdom. The dominant characteristic of the animals is dullness of mind and strong brutal desire.

¢-- (d) Sphere of the asuras Titanic beings dominated by the desire for power, by ambition and competitiveness.

¢-- The hells, spheres of pretas, asuras and the animal kingdom are called the 'plane of misery'. These are unfortunate and undesirable states of rebirth. In the sense sphere there are two fortunate planes of rebirth:

¢-- (e) The human world.

¢-- The Buddha points out that of all the planes of existence, the most fortunate for one seeking liberation is the human world, for it has a good balance between opposing factors of life. On the one hand, human life is not filled with unbearable suffering. It allows enough leisure, ease and comfort for us to reflect on the nature of existence so that we can develop our understanding. On the other hand, the human world is not so intensely pleasant and enjoyable that we become deceived by pleasures and enjoyment. The lifespan is not so long that it deceives us into thinking that our lives are eternal. It is short enough for us to become aware of the truth of impermanence.

¢-- (f) The world of the devas (heavenly world).

¢-- Devas are beings inhabiting the heavenly worlds, enjoying long life, beauty, happiness and power. But the life in the heavens is also impermanent, subject to pass away, and therefore heaven is not the ultimate goal for those following Buddha's path to liberation.

¢--\*

¢-- II REALM OF FINE MATERIALITY

¢-- This is a realm of subtle matter. These states of existence are much purer than even the heavens of the sense-sphere realm. There the mind becomes bright and luminous. The lifespan is incredibly long, lasting for many aeons. And the gross forms of matter are absent. These realms, however, are also impermanent. Life there eventually comes to an end and the person will be reborn elsewhere as determined by his kamma.

¢--\*

¢-- III IMMATERIAL OR FORMLESS REALM

¢-- These states of existence are entirely mental. The mind subsides without any material base, absorbed in pure peace, pure equanimity, for thousands of aeons. In these spheres too life finally comes to an end and the stream of consciousness takes rebirth elsewhere as determined by kamma.

-- From: Survey of Buddhist Cosmology, Beyond the Net)

L3: [B. The extended explanation of the particulars] :L3

¢(i.e. All the suffering from the six realms come from the mind with ignorance. All of it appear like that just because we don't know the real nature of our own mind, and of everything. Because we think there is a real independent world out there, and an inherently existing self perceiving it opposite to the world. -- The cycle of the conditioning by present five aggregates, the conditioned actual perception and actions, and their conditioning effect on the next set of five aggregates. We are creating our conditioning because of this ignorance. -- But everything can become pure if appearances are united with the realization of their real nature as they arise. The whole cycle is empty of inherent existence and can be transcended by realizing its real nature.)

There are three parts:

-- 1. The basis of confusion (How does confusion arise? The root: ignorance)

-- -- a. The basis of confusion in the three worlds

-- -- b. The basis of confusion in the eight consciousnesses

-- 2. The manner of confusion

-- -- a. By knowing or not knowing what we are there are liberation or confusion (three great doctrines of the yogachara tradition)

-- -- b. The suffering of wandering in samsara because of ego-grasping

-- 3. The Divisions of Confusion (The six poisons and their consequences)

-- -- a. The Hells

-- -- b. The suffering of the hungry ghosts

-- -- c. The Animal Realm

-- -- d. The human realm

-- -- e. The suffering of the asuras

-- -- f. The suffering of the gods

L4: [1. The basis of confusion] :L4

There are two parts.

-- a. The basis of confusion in the three worlds

-- b. The basis of confusion in the eight consciousnesses

L5: [a. The basis of confusion in the three worlds.] :L5

¢(i.e. There is the three levels of dharmas (the 3 worlds): the objects of the senses (material & limited), the abstract objects (immaterial & limited), and the unlimited objects like space (immaterial & unlimited). They are associated with the three impure gates: body, speech and mind. All of these objects are appearances naturally arisen in dependence on the mind (depending on past karma), thus impermanent, relative, conventionally named, empty of inherent existence. That is natural. It is only when there is ignorance of this, fixation and grasping, that they become impure and the causes of suffering, otherwise they are naturally arising wisdom, pure. So they can all be causes of suffering if hold on to. -- The purification of the body, speech and mind is accomplished by directly seeing the non-dual nature of the objects of those three levels, and their inseparability. Then there is no more belief in a real impartial observer seeing and being conscious of an independent separate / different world (nor are they thought to be the same). The fruit of this purification is seeing the four mandalas (outer, inner, secret, suchness), the pure Buddha-fields, the four non-dual kayas, and the two wisdoms.)

Whatever sufferings exist, their basis of dependence is the inner three realms.

THESE ARE BODY, SPEECH, AND MIND; OR DESIRE, FORM, AND THE FORMLESS:

¢(i.e. See C2-B-4 "The Impermanence of the Vessel and Essence" for an introduction to the three levels : Impermanence of all the levels of worlds and beings: A universe based on many interdependent levels from gross to very subtle: This flow of interdependence, and of impermanent objects and beings, is operating on an infinite number of levels, like a fractal that operates in the three worlds simultaneously (their distinction is only another artificial discrimination from the mind). But usually it is resumed with four levels: outer, inner, secret and suchness mandalas -- related to body, speech, mind, and inseparability of the three, also related to the four kayas, the four empowerments, the four offerings ... The message in this section is that everything is impermanent in any of those levels. And also that these levels arise and ceased in a particular order, from gross to subtle and then very subtle; that will be explained later with the bardo.)

¢(i.e. Unskillful karma of mind is the worst kind of karma because actions of body and speech arise from mind. ... All the sufferings of all beings in samsara are produced by mind. ... Body and speech are only servants of the mind. -- Geshe Rabten, The Graduated Path to Liberation)

¢(i.e. When all sentient beings become enlightened, there will be no samsara, no six realms, no three lower realms with hell, preta and animal beings. There will be the omniscient mind of enlightenment. The stream of our consciousness - actually, we are talking here about the subtle mind - never ceases. Since the continuation of this subtle mind never ceases, there is always the dharmakaya. When everyone has removed the two obscurations, there will be no such thing as samsara, nor even the lower nirvana, which is mere release from the bondage of karma and disturbing thoughts. You can understand from this that enlightenment and samsara exist by depending on the mind.

¢-- To use a simple example: while I might see someone as very ugly and undesirable, another person may see him as very enchanting and desirable. We are both seeing the same person at the same time. This simple example shows that the way things appear to me comes from my mind, according to my karma; and how things appear to the other person comes from his own

mind and karma.

☿-- This way of thinking is very useful in controlling the dissatisfied mind of attachment. While an object is appearing to you as beautiful, try to be aware that you have created this beauty. You have made it up. Your view, in which you believe one hundred percent, is that this object exists from its own side as beautiful. You believe that it is permanently beautiful. At the same time as this object is appearing beautiful to you, however, others may see it as ugly. Try to be aware that there are different views of the object. This makes it clear that your view of an object comes from your own mind. How an object appears to you depends on your mind. This helps you to understand generally your own karma and also different karmas. If the way of making commentary on an object, such as someone's face, were not dependent on the mind and karma of the individual observer, there would be no reason at all for the same object to appear differently to different people.

☿-- Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Everything comes from the mind)

\     ###  
\     In the cities of appearance, half-appearance and non-appearance °  
\     Tormented by composition, pain, and change,  
\     The compositions of senses, mind, and consciousness  
\     Are remorselessly turning mills of the objects of joy and sorrow,

-- BODY composed of coarse things is the city of appearance.

-- SPEECH, as appearance that is non-existent like an echo, is the city of half-appearance.

-- MIND, without the phenomena of the five gates and completely without things, is the city of non-appearance.

-- These are also called the realms of desire, form, and the formless.

The Entering the Intention says:

~ -- Body is the coarse, the desire realm. (i.e. the realm of sense objects)

~ -- Speech is the subtle, the form realm. (i.e. the realm of abstract objects; immaterial and limited)

~ -- Mind is the very subtle, the formless realm.

~ (i.e. the realm of immaterial and unlimited objects, like space, the infinity of space,

~ the infinity of consciousness, nothingness, emptiness of consciousness)

~ -- Within these three cities lives the child of apparent true existence.

☿(i.e. ALL APPEARANCES OF THE THREE WORLDS are dependently arisen and functional; but impermanent, empty of inherent existence. And that is perfect as it is. -- It is only when there is ignorance, fixation and grasping, that they become impure and the causes of suffering, otherwise they are naturally arising wisdom, pure. When they are with ignorance we talk about the impure body, speech and mind of ordinary beings, and of the wheel of samsara. When they are pure, without ignorance, we talk about the inseparable unborn non-dual trikaya, the wisdoms, the pure Buddha-fields, and the Buddha activities.)

That child is explained as naturally-arising wisdom. The three gates are tormented by the three sufferings. By the condition of conceptualizing everything, arising becomes experience of one confusion after another. How does confusion arise? The objects of the six senses individually come forth by means of the powers of the six sense-consciousnesses. By fixating these objects, there is continuous attachment to them as happiness, suffering, and neutrality.

These individually arising phenomena of form and so forth are called "consciousness." The first, coarse, general phenomenal process of conscious is insight, rigpa, or mind, sem. When we analyze the particular kinds, there are passion, aggression, and ignorance, a continual series of mental contents of one or another of these three kinds, comprising "content-mind," yid.

The Bodhisattvabhumi says:

- ~ The appearance of objects is known as consciousness
- ~ The first conceptualization of these is known as mind.

Subsequent particular analysis of these deals with the mental contents. This is content-mind. Mental contents are also established by mind as having universal relationships, similarities or classes that exist among mental contents.

When objects are evaluated by insight, at first there is a generalized perception of nature. The aspect that does this is mind. Then, by discriminating particular aspects, mental contents are individually designated conventionally. Because this is our real object understanding, and except for such analysis, there is no other.

¢(i.e. ORDINARY BEINGS, with ignorance of the real nature of all dharmas, think things are inherently existing independently of the mind, that there is a real objective perception of those objects, that there is real consciousness of those independently existing objects and characteristics, and thus that there is a real independent separate perceiver, a real stable self perceiving and being conscious. So they have feelings, desire, attachments, for the objects. They try to control them and suffer when they change.)

The Precious Mala says:

- ~ If you ask about the objects that are seen by mind,
- ~ They are what is conventionally expressible.
- ~ Without the mental contents, mind cannot arise.
- ~ Not to maintain them as co-emergent is meaningless.

At the level of a sugata and the completely non-conceptual natural state, apparent objects are individually discriminated by insight, but there is no mind, content mind, or consciousness. This is because there is no grasping of dualistic appearance, or awareness of a grasped object by a fixating mind.

¢(i.e. FOR A BUDDHA there is no belief in the inherent existence of characteristics and objects (dharmas), because there is no more ignorance of the real nature of everything. Appearances are seen for what they really are: dependently arisen and empty of inherent existence. So there is no belief in objective perception of real dharmas, or consciousness of real dharmas, and no belief in a real impartial observer either. The Buddha doesn't believe in this duality of two separated independent observer and object observer meeting with the action of perception and consciousness.)

The Praise of Vajra of Mind says:

- ~ Sentient beings, who have mind, content-mind, and consciousness, since they are accustomed to grasping and fixation, conceptualize them. Therefore, they do not have non-conceptual wisdom. Supreme wisdom is the mind, lo,6 that sees reality.

¢(i.e. CORRUPTION: Because of this ignorance, what would normally be pure wisdoms is turned into poisons causing suffering. Naturally arisen appearances empty of inherent existence are fixated, conceptualized, analyzed, classified, discriminated, ... because they are thought

to be inherently existing.)

The Structure of the Three Jewels says:

~ Neither mind, content-mind, consciousness; nor samadhi which is free from these are discarded. The secret mind of the sugata is incomprehensible by thought.

¢(i.e. PURIFICATION: Saying that appearances are empty of inherent existence doesn't mean that they are completely non-existent, or from the mind-only. Their real nature is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization. So this is not saying here that we should not discriminate, or drop everything, reject all conceptualization. It just means that we should combine the dynamic of the appearances with the wisdom of knowing their real nature, their emptiness of inherent existence.

¢-- The Buddha, having realized THE UNION OF THE TWO TRUTHS, see the real nature of everything as they arise. Thus he is not fooled by the appearances, doesn't develop fixation, attachment, defilements on their account. There is no more new uncontrolled karma formation, and no more of their consequences: future suffering.

¢-- So THE MIDDLE WAY is: not accepting objects of the three worlds as inherently existing, not rejecting them as completely non-existent, or from the mind-only.)

When form, sound, and so forth arise as the corresponding external phenomena, and the mind's insight apprehends them, it is called consciousness, literally nampar phenomenal awareness shepa. Since these mental productions appear to be objective phenomena, they are called nampar shepa. At the first time when we know objects, the aspect of insight, that apprehends, "this," is mind. The analyzer of the distinctions that arise continuously connected to that is content mind. After the instant of clarity when individual things first present themselves, the knowledge that discriminates object awareness analyzes them. If it is attached to them as pleasant there is desire or passion. if as painful, there is aggression. If there is neither, but attachment to "this," that is ignorance.<sup>7</sup> Examples are, seeing a good woman we once knew; seeing an enemy that once conquered us; and seeing a wall, water, a highway, a tree, and ordinary people, toward which we have neither joy or sorrow.

¢(i.e. Appearances, and perceptions are natural phenomenon arisen from emptiness. The problem is not seeing their real nature as they arise. The problem is to believe that they are inherently existing, independently of the mind, and to pursue the analysis, the conceptualization, the trying to control everything. There is no absolute need to analyze, conceptualize, discriminate, control. Because there is no absolute basis for that. There is no absolute distinction between wholesome and unwholesome, between object and subject, between objects / dharmas. Everything is non-dual. There is nothing to accept or do, nothing to reject or not-do or drop. It is just a matter of directly seeing the real nature of our own mind, and thus the real nature of everything: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither; inseparability of appearances and emptiness; inseparability of dependent origination and emptiness; inseparability of The Two Truths; inseparability of the trikaya.

¢-- Note: It is important to realize that this doesn't mean that there is absolutely no possibility for any impartiality or control at all. That would be totally contrary to everything we see around us. It is not because there is no absolute (inherently existing) causes, effects, and causality, that effect are without causes, that causes have no effect, or that there is no possible control at all. That doesn't mean that everything is meaningless, and that we should drop everything. That would be falling for one extreme: nihilism. The Middle Way is to stay away from all extremes. The efficiency of sciences should be a proof enough of the possibility of "some control". It is just not "absolute".

¢-- So, again, it means that, although everything is impermanent, unsatisfactory (empty of

inherent existence), we have to consider the law of karma and its consequences (causality, interdependence, dependent origination). We cannot talk about impermanence (or emptiness) without talking about karma (dependent origination); or vice versa. One without the other is only half of an introduction to the Two Truths. A good understanding consist of the Union of the Two: impermanence (or emptiness) and karma (dependent origination). They may look contradictory at the conceptual level, but this Union of The Two Truths is beyond all conceptualization. Until then we have to use both together, all the time.)

The Sutra on Teachings that are the Basis of Discipline says:

- ~ If we see amicable people, then we feel desire.
- ~ If harmful ones are present, our minds become aggressive.
- ~ For intermediate ones, our ignorance will increase,
- ~ In any case the gates of our faculties have been bound.

L5: [b. The basis of confusion in the eight consciousnesses] :L5

¢(i.e. Because of ignorance all present perception, consciousness, actions are conditioned by past karma, filtered by the actual five aggregates. The five aggregates represent the expectations, the investments done in the past, all based on the belief in the inherent existence of something (some actions, ideas, fabrications that probably brought some success in the past). They represent the crystallization of past karma. The present actions, in their turn, are going to condition future perception and actions, by being investments themselves. They are done while thinking that they are right, thus discriminating on the basis of a belief of something inherently existent. So conditioning perpetuates itself until there is a major failure, until the expectations based on ignorance are confronted with an unpredictable ever changing reality. All fabrications, material or immaterial, are born to fail at one point or another, because everything that is caused is dependent on those infinite number of causes and conditions, and thus impermanent, thus unsatisfactory. It is not knowing this, and having unrealistic hope based on ignorance, that cause karma formation (investing in the five aggregates) and its consequences: suffering.)

Now the ground of arising and divisions of these are extensively taught as follows:

- \ ###
- \ Alaya consciousness, content mind, and then the five gates, °
- \ Gradually proliferate, one upon the other.
- \ From that arise the cause and effect of samsaric suffering.
- \ THE ROOT OF SAMSAARA AND SUFFERING IS IGNORANCE,
- \ Having the confusion of grasping and fixation.
- \ By objects, conceptualization, and mind's habitual patterns,
- \ By fixating "me" and "mine," samsara is established.

¢(i.e. Desire and aversion are both produced by ignorance. We experience them because we do not know the real nature of things. The reason for practicing meditation is to overcome suffering; to overcome suffering we must overcome karma; to overcome karma we must overcome desire and aversion; to overcome desire and aversion we must overcome ignorance. Meditation overcomes ignorance. No beings want suffering; they all want to remove it. Most do not know how to, and some even create suffering in their efforts to remove it. People take medicines that cure sickness temporarily but cannot remove it forever. To remove suffering permanently, we must find its cause -- karma; we must remove the cause of the cause -- desire and aversion; we must remove the cause of these -- ignorance. Ignorance is the

deepest root of all suffering. If ignorance is removed, all that stems from it will automatically disappear. Escape from samsara is impossible unless ignorance is removed. If we sit in meditation without understanding the real reason for doing so we will achieve only limited results. If we want to remove ignorance, we must first discover its nature and that of its opposite, shunyata (emptiness). Then, through meditation on emptiness, we have to remove ignorance. There are two different kinds of ignorance: ignorance regarding the ego and ignorance regarding external phenomena. ... This twofold ignorance about the ego and outer phenomena is the root of all defilements, karma and suffering. To remove suffering we must remove this ignorance completely. The only way to do this is to meditate on emptiness. There are many other objects of meditation, but emptiness is the most important.-- Geshe Rabten, The Graduated Path to Liberation)

Here to distinguishes the different aspects, at the very time when awareness<sup>8</sup> of individual objects<sup>9</sup> arises, without divisions of their vividness, mind<sup>10</sup> which has insight of this is called the alaya-consciousness (8). Then the mind that fixates that, that peacefully saves it, with much analysis of objects at its leisure and so forth, is content-mind (7).

The Sutra of the Ornament of Manjushri's wisdom says:

~ Mind is the alaya consciousness (8).

~ The "I" fixator is content-mind (7).

The eye-consciousness sees, when forms are seen, depending on the eye. Similarly depending on the ear there is sound, depending on the nose there is smell, depending on the tongue taste, depending on the body touchables. These are the five consciousnesses (1-5) The arising of later knowledge from such former phenomena is called the ayatana (6). In Tibetan this is kyeche, meaning increase or proliferation of what has arisen. The objects and awareness of these have immeasurable conditions, and since these many and extensive aspects are not put aside, but "retained" this is called kham or in Sanskrit dhatu.

From the object there is the arising of the seemingly supported perceiver-mind.<sup>11</sup> From what is former, a connection to the later arises, and dharmin, the realm of dharmas, and dharmata, their nature, occur. This is interdependent arising. When the two minds of object and perceiver are combined, pleasure and suchlike phenomena are felt and included in insight. By the condition of contact, this is called feeling. The particulars of these and other aspects are beyond describing.

In brief, by the three poisons, arising from the three collections of objects, the senses, and the actions of concept mind,<sup>2</sup> come all motivating karmas. These karmas are unhappiness.

¢(i.e. Desire and aversion [discrimination] are both produced by ignorance. We experience them because we do not know the real nature of things. -- Geshe Rabten, The Graduated Path to Liberation)

¢(i.e. The Ratnavali of Nagarjuna says, "Every action arising from desire, aversion and ignorance produces suffering; every action arising from the absence of desire, aversion and ignorance produces happiness." -- Interview with Sakya Trizin)

¢(i.e. With regard to the six consciousnesses, the first five of these are what are called the consciousnesses of the five gates, the five gates referring to the five senses.

¢-- 1) The first of these is the eye consciousness. The eye consciousness is that which experiences as its object visual form, various shapes and colors and so on, on the basis of or relying upon the organic support of the physical eye. And that is the eye consciousness.

¢-- 2) The second is the ear consciousness, which in much the same way experiences its

objects, which are the various sounds, pleasant and unpleasant and neutral and so on, through the medium of relying upon its organic support, which is the ear.

¢-- 3) The third consciousness is called the nose consciousness, and it experiences various smells as objects, through the organic support, or relying upon the organic support, of the nose.

¢-- 4) The fourth is the tongue consciousness, which experiences various tastes " sweet, bitter, sour, salty, and so on " relying upon the organic support of the tongue.

¢-- 5) The fifth consciousness is called the body consciousness or tactile consciousness, and the objects of this consciousness are all forms of tactile sensation. Whereas the other four organic supports were specific sense organs, which primarily perform their specific functions, here the organic support is the entire body, all of which can detect or feel a tactile sensation. So the fifth consciousness is called either the body consciousness or the tactile consciousness.

¢-- 6) The sixth consciousness is the mental consciousness, and it's always enumerated by the learned as the sixth because in the case of any of the first five consciousnesses, it will ensue after them or follow upon them. In general, the object of the sixth consciousness is all things, anything that can be thought of, because it is this consciousness that thinks about the past, thinks about the future, thinks about the present. But also this consciousness experiences all of the objects of the five senses: forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations. However, it does not experience them in the direct and clear manner of the five sense consciousnesses themselves. What happens is that following the generation of one of the sense consciousnesses, a mental replica or image of that particular sense consciousness is generated, which is called a mental consciousness. This mental replica is not a direct experience, but has been called a vague approximation. And this vague approximation forms the basis for the subsequent conceptuality of recognizing it as such and such, or good and bad and so on, which ensues. Therefore, while it does base some of its content upon the five sense consciousnesses, the sixth consciousness itself does not rely upon a particular organic support like a sense organ. It's generated following any of the five and can also arise under other circumstances. It relies essentially upon cognition, or cognitive capacity itself, as its support.

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¢-- Now, the five sense consciousnesses are nonconceptual, which means that they can only perform their specific function of mere experience. So the eye consciousness sees forms and the ear consciousness hears sounds and so on. Therefore, they can only experience the present, and only directly. Now, the present and the past and the future are important concepts which are discussed a great deal in the study of Buddhism. The present, of course, ceases immediately, and by ceasing, it becomes the past. The future, which does not yet exist while it is the future, occurs, at which point, once it has occurred, it is not the future any more but is the present. So the present, this term "the present," or "now," really refers to an instant in between the past and the future. And this is all the five sense consciousnesses can experience. Your eyes, for example, can only see the present. Your eyes cannot see what is past nor can they see what is the future. And not only that, but your eyes cannot estimate or evaluate the present. Your eye consciousness only sees shapes and colors. It does not, in itself, recognize these various shapes and colors as some "thing" or another, does not conceptualize about them. Now, all of the five sense consciousnesses are, in the same way, nonconceptual.

¢-- The sixth consciousness, however, is conceptual, because it recognizes things, it brings concepts to bear upon experience and thereby confuses the experiences with the concepts about those experiences, including the confusion of a present experience with a past

experience of something similar or apparently the same. So the sixth consciousness, which is conceptual, not only experiences the present but brings the concepts of the past and the future to bear upon this present experience.

☿-- Those six consciousnesses are called unstable or fluctuating, which means that they are suddenly generated by the presence of various causes and conditions, and then they cease when those causes and conditions are no longer present.

☿--\*

☿-- The other two consciousnesses in the list of eight, which are the consciousness which is the mental afflictions and the all-basis consciousness, are by contrast referred to as constant consciousnesses, which means that they are not suddenly generated and then suddenly ceasing; they are always present. However, while they are always there, they are not clear or manifest or obvious, like the first six. They are always there, but they are very hard to detect.

☿-- 7) The first of these two, the seventh consciousness or the consciousness which is the mental afflictions, or klesha consciousness, is the innate fixation on a self that we all possess or that afflicts all of us. It's this innate assumption of "I." Now, this is present whether we recollect it or not, whether we think of it or not, whether we're conscious or not, whether we're walking or sitting. No matter what we're doing, this persists. Now, sometimes, when we think "I," we generate a literally conscious fixation on a self. That is not the seventh consciousness. That is the sixth consciousness's version of fixation on a self, because that is sometimes there and sometimes not. The seventh consciousness, this fundamental fixation on a self, is always there, and in fact it will be there until you attain the eighth level of bodhisattva realization.

☿-- 8) The eighth consciousness is called the all-basis consciousness, and it is the mere cognitive lucidity which is the fundamental basis for the rest of the functionings of mind. And because it is the basis for all of the rest of the mental functionings or activities, it's called the all-basis. Now, it is on this basis that all of the habits of samsara are piled: habits of karma, of kleshas, and so on. And through variations in one's habituation - the habits that you accumulate - then various results arise. Through various types of habituation, then you tend to cultivate more virtuous and fewer unvirtuous states of mind, or the other way around; and through all of these variations and habituation which produce habits that are laid onto or piled onto the all-basis, then you experience the world in your own particular way.

☿-- Various appearances arise, and you experience the fluctuations; and to the extent you experience fluctuations in the degree of mental affliction, you experience fluctuations in your intelligence and your compassion, and so on.

☿-- Now, the all-basis (8), together with the other seven - all of these - are what are called the eight consciousnesses.

☿--\*

☿-- And through the practice of meditation in particular and the practice of dharma in general, gradually these are transformed into what are called the five wisdoms, which means that their basic nature is revealed. And the full revelation of these, the full transformation of the manifestation of these from the samsaric manifestation of the eight consciousnesses into the pure manifestation, is the five wisdoms. The full and final extent of this is Buddhahood.

☿-- -- Transforming Samsaric Consciousness Into the Five Wisdoms, The V. V. Thrangu Rinpoche, Shenpen Osel 2)

☿(i.e. THE EIGHT CONSCIOUSNESSES

¢-- I will name the eight consciousnesses for people who don't know them. The first five are the eye consciousness, ear consciousness, tongue, nose and body consciousness. These five consciousnesses function through the organs to perceive the five external objects of sense. In themselves, these five are very partial and limited. The eye consciousness is only for form. It cannot taste or hear sounds or smell. Similarly, the ear is only for sound, not for seeing, tasting and so forth. Now how can these scattered consciousnesses be brought together into one united state? That is the function of the sixth consciousness which is like the driver or a judge who makes decisions. It receives and organizes the input of the five external consciousnesses and gives meaning to our experience. The sixth combines and integrates the sense consciousnesses into one. It is known as mind consciousness.

¢-- The first five consciousnesses are very immediate. They have no continuity. They only refer to the present. They cannot sense the past or the future. They only communicate directly with the present. They are very exclusive and one-sided. The sixth consciousness not only unites these five, it can also refer to the events and activities of the past and future. It is actually structuring our sense of time.

¢-- A closer look reveals that the mind has two sides. One, which we have called the sixth consciousness, is dealing with the business of the past, present and future; making decisions based on the information received from the first five consciousnesses. It is very neutral and rational. There is another side to this mind, the seventh consciousness, which is basically very emotional and gives rise to ego-clinging. On the basis of ego-clinging, ignorance, anger, attachment, jealousy, pride and doubt develop. All this arises in that singular aggregate we call the mind.

¢-- All seven of these minds are based upon an eighth consciousness which is known as 'kun-gzhi' in Tibetan, the ground of mind. It is sometimes translated as 'subconscious storehouse'. In Sanskrit, it is called 'alaya'. The nature of the eighth consciousness is neither positive nor negative; it is neutral. Alaya retains every basic habit-pattern of individuals. Everything is stored there; our good karma, bad karma, and neutral karma. All kinds of habits and whatever actions we perform during our lifetimes are registered there. This is why it is known as a 'storehouse'. Alaya is a consciousness, but it is very subtle.

¢-- When these eight consciousnesses are transmuted or transformed, they become the Five Wisdoms. The Five Wisdoms are symbolized by the five Dhyani Buddhas. They are the radiant spectrum of clarity qualifying the Dharmakaya. The central Buddha of Dharmadhatu Wisdom is Vairocana. The eastern Buddha of Mirrorlike Wisdom is Akshobya. The Wisdom of Equality is embodied in the Buddha of the southern direction, Ratnasambhava or Rinchen Jungnay in Tibetan. The western Buddha of Discriminating Awareness Wisdom is Amitabha or Opagme in Tibetan and the northern Buddha of All Accomplishing Wisdom is known as Amogha Siddhi. These are the principle Buddhas of the Sambhogakaya.

¢-- -- The Three Kayas, Khenpo Palden Sherab)

#### [THE TWO PATHS, THE TWO ACCUMULATIONS]

-- [MAHAYANA] From patience and so forth freedom from the three poisons arises. This is the great happiness, the great bliss.

-- [HINAYANA] On the path of the ten virtues and so forth, prajna and compassion are not fully accomplished. This is the path of the lesser happiness.

-- Accumulated by ignorant earthly beings, after the fruition of samsaric happiness is produced, it is exhausted. This is happiness proportional to merit.

-- The enlightened happiness produced by completely finishing the path is happiness proportional to liberation.

-- [DARK PATH] By the three poisons there is universally arising unhappiness. The lower realms and whatever suffering there may be are produced by this cause.

-- Happiness proportional to merit grasps the glorious highlights of divine and human happiness.

-- The happiness proportional to liberation is produced both by incidental highlights and ultimate true goodness.

¢(i.e. There are three types of karma, and their results. Unwholesome karma lead to unhappiness. Wholesome karma lead to happiness. And neutral actions lead to neutral effect. The result is in relation to the cause, and proportional to the cause. All actions (wholesome or unwholesome) based on ignorance lead ultimately to suffering because there is karma formation, investment in the form of the five aggregates, construction of something impermanent, unsatisfactory.

¢-- The Hinayana path, because it is based on such discrimination, cannot lead to total Enlightenment beyond all dualities. There will always remain a subtle form of karma, the basis of the discrimination between a self to be liberated and the rest of the world. There remains this duality.

¢-- The Mahayana Path, because it combines both method and wisdom, not accepting and not rejecting, can lead to total Enlightenment, Buddhahood. It uses the first five paramitas to accumulate merit, and the sixth to accumulate wisdom. Because it is in accord with the non-dual nature of everything (not existence, not non-existence, ...), it can lead to complete transcendence of all conditioning.)

The Precious Mala says:

- ~ As for passion, aggression, and ignorance
- ~ The karma produced by them is unhappiness.
- ~ As for non-passion, -aggression, and -ignorance,
- ~ The karma produced by them is happiness.
- ~ Unhappy karma is all suffering.
- ~ Happy karma is all the higher realms
- ~ And all the happiness of sentient beings

'Externally appearing things are like the things that appear to be other in a dream.' This means that grasping involves habitual patterns of objects. These various appearances of pure and impure are confused existence. Habitual patterns of reality are produced by the karma of bodily arising and also by the inner condition of not knowing suchness. These are the shandhas (i.e. Five aggregates), dhatus (i.e. Irreducible Elements), ayatanas (i.e. spheres of sense and sense objects), and so forth. From them arise all the kleshas, and the suffering that is their fruition, the support of the confusions of fixation.

¢(i.e. All perception and consciousnesses are filtered by the actual five aggregates which are the result of accumulated karma. They develop in a cycle: perception / action, karma, five aggregates, perception / action, ... Past success build up unrealistic expectations; the wheel turns until there is a big failure. While we forget the real nature of everything, we invest in a particular set of the five aggregates by accumulating more and more karma, until the consequences of karma formation manifest. It is because everything constructed, caused, is impermanent, unsatisfactory, empty, that one day we have to be deceived by our unrealistic expectations. So all of our perception and actions are conditioned by our actual five aggregates, and they produce more karma that will cause the next set of the five aggregates. All of this at the scale of every infinitesimal moment, and at the scale of lives.)

Luminous, naturally-arisen wisdom is in essence empty (~2), and by nature luminous (~1).  
It is the source of the unobstructed arising of various kinds of radiance.  
¢(i.e. This is a description of the three aspects of the real nature of the mind: empty,  
luminous, unobstructed)

¢(i.e. It is natural that appearances arise from emptiness. It is ok to discriminate, to  
act, to help all other sentient beings. The problem is to do it while having unrealistic  
expectations based on the belief in inherent existence. Discriminating with ignorance is a  
poison leading to karma formation and suffering, discriminating without ignorance is a  
wisdom, the basis for Buddha activities, and there is no karma formation (investment in the  
five aggregates, expectation).

When we become attached to this as the individualizing characteristics of grasping and  
fixation, insight arises as the habitual patterns of mind. The five or the three poisons  
arise. The root of confusion is fixating on the "I" and ego. Because of that, the confused  
appearances of samsara arise like reflections, dreams, or hairs drifting before the eyes.  
Moreover, fixation is fixated as "I", and grasped objects are fixated as "mine" with an  
attitude like that of the owner of a house.

¢(i.e. "The path to freedom is only to be found, by removing the ignorance which apprehends  
essence where there is no essence". -- Geshe Yeshe Tobten, Praise of Dependent Origination)

¢(i.e. "Ignorance is itself conditioned by the actual mind and body (the five aggregates). A  
cycle of self-reinforcing bad habits, samsara." -- )

¢(i.e. "So miss-knowledge as he translates it, or ignorance or bewilderment (it's in the  
next line here) means a positive apprehension of something being independently there. The  
opposite to something that comes about dependently. ... this ignorance or apprehension of  
essences in a universe which is in fact totally dependent-arisen. ..." -- Geshe Yeshe  
Tobten, Praise of Dependent Origination)

¢(i.e. "Nirvana the cessation of accepting everything [as real]." -- Nagarjuna, Karikas)

L4: [2. The manner of confusion,] :L4

There are two sections:

- a. By knowing or not knowing what we are there are liberation or confusion (three great  
doctrines of the yogachara tradition)
- b. The suffering of wandering in samsara because of ego-grasping

L5: [a. By knowing or not knowing what we are<sup>13</sup> there are liberation or confusion (three  
great doctrines of the yogachara tradition)] :L5

\ ###  
\ BY KNOWING OR NOT KNOWING WHAT WE ARE THERE ARE LIBERATION OR  
CONFUSION.

\ ###  
\ Now the basis and way of confusion are extensively taught, as follows:  
\ The changeless nature of mind, perfection, dharmakaya, °  
\ ###  
\ By ignorant fixation, takes on habits of false conception.  
\ Involving confused appearance of impure relativity,  
\ Dualistic appearance of objects as self and other,  
\ Then come to be grasped as really being two.

\ Intrinsically this presents itself as limitless suffering.  
 \ ###  
 \ When we have realized the ever-changeless nature of mind,  
 \ By the path of meditation on this unerring perfection,  
 \ We will properly reach THE FIELD OF PURE RELATIVITY.  
 \ Easing the weariness of the village of samsara.

¢(i.e. So appearances, luminosity, are naturally arisen from emptiness. They are not impure, to be dropped, to be purified, to be changed. The natural function of the mind is to create those appearances, like reflections in a mirror. The problem is when those appearances are not seen for what they are, when there is ignorance of their real non-dual nature. Then there is fixation, grasping, discrimination, conceptualization, analysis, etc. Then everything turns into poison. All of this because there is the belief in an inherent existent world and in the inherent existence of a self in opposition to it.

¢-- But once we directly realize the real nature of our own mind, and the real nature of everything, then there is no more problem; everything is then seen as pure; the three gates are then purified and united.

¢-- Everything has always been pure and perfect. The mind is the same before or after; there is nothing to add, nothing to reject, nothing to control, nothing to do, nothing to not-do. Trying to control was the problem. Samsara and Nirvana are not separate or different, but still not the same.

¢-- Even relativity (the theory of dependent origination, the Wheel of Life) (or even emptiness) can turn into a poison if it is seen as something inherently existing, as an absolute. This might be the problem in some Hinayana sects where there is so much attachment in discrimination between wholesome and unwholesome. But when dependent origination is combined with emptiness (and vice versa), as in the Mahayana, uniting both method and wisdom, then there is no more problem. There is no danger to fall into one extreme or another.

¢-- THE PERFECTION OF THE MEDITATION ON THE SUFFERING OF THE SIX REALMS, the Wheel of Life, is to do it while remembering that all elements are empty of inherent existence, that all suffering of the six realms are caused by our own mind, by our own investment, by our own karma. Dependent origination is not the real nature of everything. It is just a skillful means. The same for emptiness. The real nature of everything is called the Union of those Two Truths. It is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization.)

Here three great doctrines of the yogachara<sup>14</sup> tradition are taught. These are

-- false conceptions,

-- relativity,

-- and the perfectly established,

in Sanskrit, parikalpita, paratantra, and parinishpanna. (i.e. Cittamatra's The Three Aspects (Trisvabhava)

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF FALSE CONCEPTIONS, characteristics, and accountable false conceptions.<sup>15</sup>

-- By CHARACTERISTICS, from someone's viewpoint something is conceptually imputed, though it is non-existent, such as the horns of a rabbit or the alleged ego. This includes any bad doctrines and all the names and meanings of this and that established from that that may be presented by such a mind. What is this like? Some search for the real bodily existence of that to which the name "lion" is imputed, but do not find it. Though the phenomenal meaning

has been presented as "this," from mere arrogance, giving individual characteristics without any real remembered mental object, they may say it is like "fire." (i.e. Appearances from the mind-only, pure illusions with no valid basis.)

-- ACCOUNTABLE FALSE CONCEPTIONS are various aspects of the environment and inhabitants of the phenomenal world arising from the viewpoint of confusion--joy and sorrow, the skandhas, dhatus, and ayatanas. Because they really do not exist, but only appear like a dream from the confused viewpoint of mind, they are called accountable false conceptions. (i.e. Appearances dependent on the mind, but not from the mind-only. There is a valid basis.)  
-- Though all these things are natureless, they appear from the viewpoint of confusion. Since they are exaggerations, they are called parikalpita, or false conceptions, in Tibetan kun tak<sup>16</sup>, literally all-imputation or all-labeling.

The Bodhisattvabhumi says:

- ~ As for the false conceptions of parikalpita
- ~ Though non-existent, are produced by the mind of confusion.

THERE ARE ALSO TWO KINDS OF RELATIVITY, pure and impure.

-- PURE RELATIVITY is the pure fields and the objects of the pure seeing of the Buddhas, appearances that arise of Buddha fields, the seven precious things<sup>17</sup> and divine palaces of pure light. Some say that the relativity of yogachara tradition is unacceptable, since all such things are classified as personal appearance<sup>18</sup>. Such disputatious people have not seen this properly. This sort of relativity is not established by oneself from personal habitual patterns of awareness. It is not like the phenomena reflected in a mirror, which are produced by conditions. (i.e. Maybe pure relativity is dependent origination united with emptiness. The Union of The Two Truths as realized only by the Buddhas. Something that is beyond description, beyond any conceptualization. It is seeing things and phenomenon as not existent, but still not completely non-existent either, not from the mind-only. it is seeing things as dependently arisen but not with inherently existing causes, effect, causality.)

Whether everything is included within personal appearance should be analyzed. Either mind is included within mere appearance, or appearance is included within mind.

-- -- If it is like the first, at the time of mere appearance, there is no discernible boundary between phenomena that are included and those that are not included. Therefore "included" is a mere word, having nothing to do with real phenomena.<sup>19</sup>

-- -- If it is like the second, how can this be suitable? Someone might say, "Since appearance arises from mind, it too is mind." Then a boy child that comes from a woman would also be a woman, but this is not so. Excrement comes from the body, so it would be the body. This is clearly not the case.

-- -- Someone also might say, "Appearance is mind because it appears in mind." Then form would be visual consciousness, because it appears in visual consciousness. Buddhas that appear to erroneous sentient beings would be the minds of those beings. Fallaciously, these sentient beings with their erroneous minds would be Buddhas. Since sentient beings also appear to these Buddhas, the whole realm of sentient beings would all be Buddhas. Moreover, this fault that spotless Buddhas are also defiled sentient beings could never be abandoned. This is because if Buddhas were not mind, they could not arise at all.<sup>20</sup>

-- -- If someone says, "Phenomena are mind," then what is really cause and fruition would be a single thing. if this did not exist, neither could arise at all. Thus, an enemy and one's anger at the enemy would be the same single thing. Therefore, without the enemy, there could be no anger at the enemy.

-- -- Also it is not proper to say, "phenomena are mind because they are produced by mind." Then the details of a painting would be the painter, because the painter produced them. How

is it proper to maintain that external earth, stones, mountains, and rocks are mind? Admit that their arising from the habitual patterns of mind is confused appearance. If this were not so, when a hundred people look at one vase, the vase that is seen by them all would be their awareness, and all the hundred beings would be a single awareness. If this is maintained, it would be proper reasoning that if one of them gets enlightened, they would all be enlightened. If one went to the lower realms, they would all go there. If it is like these notions, sentient beings in the world like you and me would not exist at all, since all that appears like that would be other than one's own mind. Moreover, it would not be suitable that there were any other Buddhas besides the single one Shakyamuni. This is because all objects seen by him would be his awareness. If one maintains that, clearly he is us. These days many people fixate such traditions and completely obscure the Mahayana.<sup>21</sup> From what they say it would follow that a huge body could be covered by one the size of a lotus. A flower could have ear-rings. A gold face would be more than a mere ornament. An elephant would be just the sound of trumpeting.

If you ask what are PURE APPEARANCES, when it is proclaimed within proper reasoning that completely false phenomena that are spotless are mind-only, that tradition says:

~ These appearances of oneself to oneself are one's own mind appearing to itself, but the apparent object is not mind.(i.e. Appearances are not different or separate from the mind, but still not the same.)

Many yogachara texts say:

- ~ As many things that appear, that many are mind.
- ~ But that is not so for apparent objects themselves.
- ~ Having habitual patterns from beginningless time,
- ~ We are shaggy, as it were, with hairs before the eyes.

Appearance and the apparent object are distinguished. Others may think, "The apparent object of a mountain is a mountain!" but the clear appearances of fixation of mind arise in dependence on the faculty of sight. The objects we directly encounter, the phenomena fixated by our minds, are private, personal appearances.<sup>22</sup> Then when others encounter the same mountain, that their apparent objects are the same as ours does not follow. Apparent objects are fixations of what appears in sense perception in terms of the habitual patterns of former eye consciousness.

A mere abstraction,<sup>23</sup> a mental object, a luminous appearance of what does not exist, vividly appears in the mental sense. Therefore, even if appearances apprehended by the mind and the fixator of them, appearances of others and the fixator of them are all mind, the object which arises for and is perceived by the mind is classified as an apparent object. All the objects of the five gates appear even though they do not exist, like shaggy hairs before the eyes, because of beginningless habitual patterns. Thus they become dualized. It may be asked, "Do you therefore establish appearance and apparent object as different?"

For you also they are two. This is because they exist externally to apparent mind, and because this is maintained within the fixating mind.<sup>24</sup> These are one within the mind, but are called "two."<sup>25</sup>

It may be asked, "according to proper reasoning are they one? Here the apparent object caused by confused habitual patterns and the appearance ascertained by fixation, while both do not exist,<sup>26</sup> neither differs conventionally from the phenomena confused by habitual patterns. Moreover, since there are not really two such objects, they are established to be

not-two in nature. For we who profess madhyamaka, if we analyze, not only the thing which is the apparent object, but the appearance too is maintained not to be mind. {{217.5}} This is because mind is inner and does just so, not exist externally and external appearance that arises within the individual senses is analyzed as being within the mind. If appearances had an external aspect too, then peoples' consciousness would be two or more at the same time, or one's consciousness would be a material thing.<sup>27</sup> There would be many such fallacies.

Therefore, the fixator of appearance and non-appearance is mind, but appearance itself is not established as mind. What is or is not the word "tail" is grasped by the listening consciousness, but listening consciousness itself is not established as the word, "tail."

In brief, one's own mind, though seemingly externally projected does not really go outward, and therefore, external phenomena really appear inwardly. However, external appearance is never internal mind. Why? Because what appears does not exist. A variety of such things, white and red, arise.<sup>28</sup>

For one who has diseased eyes due to a disorder of the phlegm objects which are completely non-existent nevertheless appear, externally, internally and between. These are said to be natureless or empty of essence. Neither what is established as mind and what is established as other than mind are liberated from attachment to truly existent self-nature. In that respect they are indistinguishable. Some one may say, "Isn't this assertion that there are external objects-things which are not directly known, like that of the shravaka vaibhashika school?"

It is not the same. The vaibhashikas proclaim that these objects are established to have individual characteristics of material things. We, on the other hand, say that habitual patterns of confused appearance, appear to mind even though what seems to be there is non-existent like a dream. This approach is not refuted by madhyamaka, and so it is suitable.

Someone may ask why what has been proclaimed by us is not refuted by the prasangika madhyamaka school. Mere appearance is not refuted, but attachment to true existence is refuted.

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The teacher Nagarjuna says:

- ~ THUS THOUGH APPEARANCE ITSELF IS NOT TO BE REFUTED (~1),
- ~ ELIMINATE THOUGHTS THAT CONCEPTUALIZE THIS AS TRULY EXISTENT (~2).

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¢(i.e. True Emptiness doesn't deny dependent origination; and vice versa. In fact they are interdependent. One implies the other. They are not different, not the same. The real nature of everything is seen when this duality of dependent origination (or causality) and emptiness of inherent existence is transcended, when the two are "united". The real nature of everything is not dependent origination, not emptiness, not both, not neither. Transcending doesn't mean rejecting the duality, nor accepting it. The Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting the world. There is no absolute causality, but no complete absence of causality either. The real nature of everything is beyond all description, beyond all conceptualization, beyond all dualities. But we call it the inseparability of appearances and emptiness, or the Union of The Two Truths.)

{{218.5}}

The yogachara true-aspectarians proclaim that phenomena are mind. Both the true and false aspectarians assert the refuted tenet that the absolute is truly established as self-insight,<sup>29</sup> so how will they deny that confused appearances of habitual patterns arise while they are non-existent and that classifications of existents are really entered into? This is because these would be made into the classification of the relative at the same time.<sup>30</sup>

Thus outer relativity and the relativity of mind or insight,<sup>31</sup> arising after the former, its appearance depending on other previous objects, must be analyzed in terms of inner patterns. If seeming appearance of before and after is imputed, the name alone is the meaning, and they accord. If it is maintained to be other and different from what is present, one's own insight cannot be established as a characteristic of something other, because the very assertion is contradictory. This is not good reasoning.

The former text says:

- ~ Thus all these various different kinds of appearances,
- ~ Because they seem to be phenomena that are other,
- ~ Are the impure relativity of grasping and fixation.
- ~ The pure is also said to be relativity,
- ~ But what becomes through external power is not pure.
- ~ This too is explained as appearing to be something other.

The perfectly established is changeless and true. This changeless, completely established nature without confusion is the emptiness of dharmata, by nature intrinsically pure, without distinction of earlier and later. This changeless perfectly established is the quintessential natural state. The empowerment of this is established as empty or as threefold. (i.e. dharmin, the realm of dharmas, and dharmata, their real nature)

It is naturally empty of itself, other, and both.

-- As for emptiness of itself, it appears as non-existence, like the moon in water.

Individual characteristics are abandoned, and divided aspects of self and other do not exist; but spontaneously present dharmas are not put aside, there are both imputations of these and of the emptiness of their self- nature.

-- Other emptiness is the other emptiness of not having or the other emptiness of accountables.

-- Emptiness of both self and other has both emptiness of accountables and emptiness of the individual characteristics denoted by the words.

This luminous nature of mind, the nature, the dhatu, the essence, is empty of all fallacious things. It has the characteristics of the Buddha qualities. Its purity of essence is beyond faults and virtues, and establishing or clearing away.

Various defiled dharmas of confused appearance, red and white, arise. These false conceptions, the eight consciousnesses, are natureless. Their self-nature is empty. Accountable like a pillar or a vase, they are empty and fallacious. The pure nature is beyond faults and virtues, establishing or clearing away. The paths too are empty of themselves and have some virtuous and some faulty aspects. But the pure essence is beyond faults and virtues.

At the time of the ultimate purity, all injurious faults together with their habitual patterns are obscured in emptiness. This is the absolute itself. Whatever qualities of the absolute dhatu exist are also ultimate manifestations and are not empty.<sup>32</sup> The pure essence

is beyond faults and virtues, establishing and clearing away.

-- In brief, as for self-emptiness, the nature of dharmas of this and that has no true existence. From the two divisions, as for characteristics being empty of their own essence, whatever characteristic is described is non-existent like the horns of a rabbit. Though appearing from the viewpoint of confusion, it is without nature or reality, empty like the moon in water. Emptiness of self-nature of imputation, is emptiness of what is imputed by names, words, and letters. Except as mere mental constructions, the individual characteristics of these objects do not exist, as for small children what is imputed by the name "lion" really has a turquoise mane. What is actually denoted by the word used by this small child has a body without such a mane, but since the understanding producing name can have an understood symbolic meaning even when it is empty, all impute to it an effect-producing power.

-- In emptiness of other, a dharma is imputed to be empty of another dharma. From the two divisions, in other emptiness of not having the sun is said to be empty by not having darkness, a pillar, a blanket, and so forth. Here, dharmas that are non-existent within the sun are other real individual natures.<sup>33</sup>

-- As for emptiness of accountable others, "the sun" and "light-producer," and "the one with seven horses" are general accountable imputations. Since the natures<sup>34</sup> and particular included examples<sup>35</sup> expressed do not touch the individuating characteristics which are the meaning of the sun, it is empty of them.

-- What is empty of both self and other, is a dharma that has neither. From the two divisions. There are accountable imputations and real individual characteristics.

-- Within the one involving accountable imputations, are the skandhas, dhatus, and ayatanas and so forth, which are imputed by samsaric confusions. All such things are also empty of the individual characteristics of the three realms, since they are constructions of conventional mind in names. They have both empty individual characteristics, like the water in a mirage, and no individual characteristics, like the child of a barren woman. Though they are empty of any truly any existing nature, they unobstructedly appear, vividly luminous, with an emptiness like that of relativity.

If the three essences are divided in this way, there are six sorts of things of which there is emptiness. Though these are expressed by calling them empty of essence, they are also completely pure and by the accountable expression empty since being beyond mind is included as a second sense, all dharmas should be realized also to be empty in this manner.

As for what is said by exponents of nihilistic emptiness, since that style of emptiness is impossible, their dharma is like that of the outsider materialists, the charvakas. There is emptiness; but this non-empty emptiness is merely partial emptiness. It accords with the dharma of those of the eternalistic view of the shravakas and pratyekaBuddhas, and therefore it falls into both the eternalistic and nihilistic extremes, and simply should not be relied upon.<sup>36</sup>

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CORRECT PERFECT ESTABLISHMENT IS THE PATH OF TRUE LIBERATION.

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In realizing the natural state as it is, since THE PHENOMENA OF APPEARANCE ARE NOT PUT ASIDE, IN THE RELATIVE, merit can be accumulated. The nature of emptiness which is contemplated is the accumulation of wisdom within the absolute. Earnestly produce this dharmata like the sky free from one and many.(i.e. dharmin, the realm of dharmas, and dharmata, their real nature)

The former text says:

~ "Correct" is genuinely gathering the truths of the path.

In brief, we enter into the nature of mind, the changeless luminosity of suchness, after all dharmas are realized to be empty in the sense of being mere false conceptions. If we meditate on the path, impure confused appearance, along with the mind of false conceptions, becomes pure as it really is. The primordial state has been reached. The dharmas of the holy teachings are gathered into one as the inexhaustible body, speech, and mind, of the sphere of the ornament. One becomes a perfect master of the pure Buddha fields.

¢(i.e. UNDERSTANDING SUFFERING AND CONTROLLING THE MIND, Lama Zopa Rinpoche

¢-- There is no one type of action that constitutes the practice of dharma. Dharma is not something that has a definite form. Although people may meditate with legs crossed and eyes closed, these external postures themselves are not the essential dharma.

¢-- An action is considered to be a part of dharma practice solely on the criterion of its effect on the mind. If delusions are eradicated and sufferings diminished by what we do then this is dharma. Thus even if we spend most of our time working inside an office in a crowded city or doing menial labour and the like, we can still be practising dharma. The essential thing is that our delusions decrease in strength.

¢-- Any type of action can be transformed into a dharma practice if it is done with the proper motivation. If we keep in mind the importance of working to eliminate our ignorance so that we can more effectively help others overcome their suffering, then whatever we do is dharma. Buddhism, as one of the great world religions, teaches many methods for purifying our motivation.)

¢-- (i.e. SEEING INTO THE TRUE NATURE OF EMOTIONS, Lama Gendyn Rinpoche

¢-- Those who practice the vajrayana, the secret tantric teachings, have a sacred commitment not to reject the emotions of attachment, anger, ignorance, pride and jealousy. The reason for this is that if they give them up, they will never be able to discover the wisdom which is intrinsic to them. In abandoning the five poisons, we abandon at the same time any possibility of realizing the five wisdoms, since they will never be found anywhere other than in the emotions.

¢-- That is why when we are engaged in tantric practice, we must work with the different objects that give rise to emotional reactions in order to experience the corresponding wisdom. The very objects of attachment, hatred and so forth, become the means to liberation from emotional conflict.

¢-- Practically, this means that when one of the five poisons appears in the mind, we have to look directly at its essence until we understand that in fact it has no real existence at all.

¢--

¢-- PERCEPTION, EMOTION AND WISDOM

¢-- The emotions appear because of the conditions created by our confused mind. Our fundamental consciousness, which is in a state of ignorance at the present time, projects from itself the idea of a world experienced through the five senses, the five sense organs and their active relationship with external objects. Because of our previous habits, the mind projects from itself images which it considers separate from itself. These then become forms which act as objects for the eyesight, sounds which are objects for our hearing, and so on. The presence of these apparently independent objects causes the mind to become disturbed, allowing the emergence of the emotions.

¢-- For instance, when our eyes see a form, things do not stop there, we immediately react

to it. When we find the form pleasing, we feel attracted to it. If we find it unpleasant or repulsive, we reject it and want to get away from it. The same applies to all our other sensory information, whenever we hear, smell, taste or touch something.

¢-- Each time the sensory organs function we should look directly at the real essence of what is taking place. Gradually we come to see that the object we are perceiving is actually only the mind in action. No different from the mind, the object is the mind, and there is therefore no need to create any artificial duality by maintaining a clear distinction between subject and object. If we look at the essence of this non duality, the true nature of both the object and the mind that perceives it, we will discover the essence of the mind itself.

¢-- This perception of the essence of mind takes place when all previous thoughts have come to a stop and the next thought has not yet appeared. The mind is in the spontaneous present, its own reality. It is mind which sees its own essence, and this is what we call primordial wisdom. The presence of primordial wisdom in the mind then clears away the emotions automatically. It is just like lighting a candle in a dark room: as soon as the light is present the darkness automatically vanishes. Similarly, the simple fact of wisdom being in the mind serves to completely banish all emotions. If we succeed in meditating in this way, the moment we detect one of the emotions in our mind, in that very same instant we see its wisdom and thereby become free of its emotional aspect. This is what is known as the simultaneous appearance and liberation of the emotions. Each of the five poisons is then recognized to be one of the five wisdoms.

¢-- If however we do not manage to see the wisdom aspect of the event taking place in the mind, we become once again involved in duality. We follow the thought, become influenced by it, and begin to react to the object, either accepting it or rejecting it, until the mind is invaded by confusion and emotion and we end up having to experience the suffering that ensues.

¢-- It says in the text that if we give up the five poisons it will be impossible to find any wisdom. The activity of the emotions is the activity of the mind. Each emotion that appears is nothing other than the mind itself in action, so if we reject the emotions we are at the same time rejecting the mind. Yet it is only through its activity that we will come to discover the activity of wisdom, so in rejecting the emotional activity of the mind we reject at the same time the possibility of encountering its wisdom activity. This will never lead us to realize the ultimate reality of the mind.

¢--

¢-- A CAUTIONARY NOTE

¢-- To abandon the five disturbing emotions is to take a less direct path to enlightenment. It is the way followed by the sravakas. But seeing into the true nature of the emotions as and when they occur is not an easy task. If we just allow ourselves to be look at the emotions one after the other as they appear in the mind in the usual way, we are no different than before. Nothing has changed. If we actually enjoy our emotions, deliberately increasing their strength until we feel completely intoxicated by them, we are behaving like someone possessed, with the result that we accumulate the karma of a demon.

¢-- It may happen too that we become the kind of person who grows more and more proud of his ability to deal with the emotions by looking into their true nature. Despite the fact that his understanding is not fully developed, he increases the power of the emotions. The stronger they get, the greater becomes his pride. Nor does it stop there. Even though he is not really free of emotional confusion, he says that he is, and sets himself up as an example to others of how to experience the emotions without getting carried away by them. Motivated by great pride, he searches constantly to improve his reputation, to be recognized

as somebody very important, someone well known for his ability to work with the emotions. More and more out of control, ever more confused, he accumulates karma which grows more and more negative.

¢--

#### ¢-- A BUDDHA FOR EACH EMOTION

¢-- If we do manage to look directly at the reality of each of the five poisons as they appear, we recognize them to be none other than the five wisdoms.

¢---- In the poison of anger and hatred we perceive the mirror-like wisdom that corresponds to the Buddha Dorje Sempa.

¢---- Looking directly at the true nature of pride, we find the wisdom of equality and the Buddha Ratnasambhava.

¢---- In the nature of desire we discover the discriminating wisdom and the Buddha Amitabha.

¢---- If we look at jealousy we see the all accomplishing wisdom and the Buddha Amoghasiddhi.

¢---- And when we look at ignorance we find the wisdom of the dharmadhatu, reality itself, and the Buddha Vairocana.

¢-- These Buddhas also correspond to the different elemental energies in the body, each of which are related to one of the emotions. Seeing into the emotion produces not only the realization of an aspect of wisdom, it also transforms the corresponding element of the body into one of the five Buddhas.

¢-- On this path we do not seek to abandon the five emotions, only to look directly at their essence or reality, upon which they are automatically transformed right then and there into the five wisdoms and we generate spontaneously the minds of the five Buddha archetypes.

¢-- This type of practice is employed by those who meditate according to the mahamudra or the dzogchen tradition.

¢--

#### ¢-- ONE MEDICINE FOR ALL ILLNESSES

¢-- Looking directly at the essence or the nature of an emotion is a method which can be applied in all cases, just as we can use a single medicine to cure a hundred illnesses.

¢-- The practitioner of great capacity will use this method to flatten the emotions as soon as any of them appear in the mind. It is like placing a tiny spark into a heap of dry hay: it will immediately burst into flames and be completely destroyed. Although the original spark is tiny, it can burn away any amount of hay. Similarly, just one tiny spark of wisdom can burn away completely all the mind's confusion and the emotions associated with it, until all that is left in the mind is ultimate reality.

¢-- Those of middling capacity will use this method as follows. As soon as they detect the presence of an emotion in the mind when they are meditating, they will look at it directly with a naked glare. The emotion calms itself and releases its hold on the individual. This process is said to be just like recognizing the non-duality of waves and water. Many waves in movement, taking on a constant variety of different forms and shapes, can be seen on the surface of the ocean. and yet the content of the waves is simply the water of the ocean itself. There is no real distinction to be made at all between waves and water. Similarly, the many and varied emotional forms that appear in the mind are nothing other than the mind itself. There is therefore no reason to reject the emotion or to consider it different from the mind. The average practitioner will be able to understand this, and through experiencing directly the fact that the emotions are simply the mind, they will calm down of their own accord.

¢-- The practitioner of ordinary capacity will be able through this practice to be aware of the emotion as it appears in the mind. He will not become involved and get carried away by

the emotion, which is what usually happens. It is just like someone crazy suddenly coming to his senses; free of his madness his ordinary consciousness returns. Similarly, as soon as such a person realizes the presence of an emotion, he applies the practice he considers appropriate in that particular case. Being aware of the emotion, even if our awareness is not clear enough to free us completely from it, provides the starting point for the application of other, more accessible approaches.)

¢--

¢-- Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche: The answer to your question about the location of the realms is that it varies. The Buddha gave teachings such as the vinaya and AbhiDharma which are concerned with the relative existence or appearance of phenomena. In accordance with that approach, the Buddha gave the locations of realms to help ordinary beings to relate to the idea.

¢-- In that explanation, the hell realm was in the depths of the earth. Higher up, encompassing places in the earth and water, is the animal realm. The hungry ghost realm is between the hell and animal realms. The human realm is on the surface of the earth. The jealous god realm is above that of the humans and below that of the gods. The god realms are up in the sky like the stars, and they could also be on the earth.

¢-- However, at a more advanced intellectual level, in the higher teachings, Buddha has explained that there is no definite location of the realms. It is all karmic perception. Wherever we are, based on our karma, we conceive that realm. For example, think of this room. For us, this room is a nice, comfortable room. That is a human karmic perception. If a hell being came here, for that being, this room turns into molten, boiling lava. It is no longer a room. Similarly, for a hungry ghost, this room would become a very hot and painful experience. If a god came here, this room would become a palace or a paradise. One place can be perceived differently by different beings, so there is no particular location in terms of the higher teachings.

¢-- -- Introduction to Buddhism, KTD, Q & A)

L5: [b. The suffering of wandering in samsara because of ego-grasping.] :L5

¢(i.e. All the suffering of the six realms are produced this way. All based on appearances that are misunderstood. -- It is very hard to see through this endless cycle of conditioning. We are so much conditioned by our past karma in the form of the five aggregates. And most of the time the suffering and the desire to escape by controlling things and people is too strong. The idea of an inherently existing self perceiving separate objects of the three worlds is so well build-in the core of our whole body and mind. We are so much conditioned by all of this. The probability of a precious human life capable of transcending this is so extremely minuscule. Should we waste it ?)

Now because there is such a grasper and grasped, while we are wandering here in samsara, as if in a dream, we are compared to people sinking in a river:

\     ###  
\     E ma! How limitless is this realm of samsara. °  
\     How difficult it is to examine what it is.  
\     So painful is the weariness of the path of samsara  
\     That anyone born there has no happiness at all.  
\     This unbearable fruition is produced by unhappy actions,  
\     It is a self-projection which is wrongly understood,  
\     The sort of thing we often do within a dream.

\ ###  
 \ The natures experienced by individuals of the six lokas  
 \ Are confused appearances of what does not exist.  
 \ Therefore they give rise to measureless sufferings.

\ ###  
 \ Listen while briefly I summarize what has been taught about them.

The Analysis of Scripture says:

- ~ As if in a filthy swamp of foul and disgusting stench
- ~ Beings of the six realms have no happiness.
- ~ As if in a blazing pit where it is never cool
- ~ Those in samsara too never have any joy.

Within samsara they transmigrate from the desire realm to the realm of form. From the realms of form and the formless, they transmigrate into the realm of desire. From the realm of the formless, they transmigrate to the realm of form. Wherever samsaric beings exist within the six lokas, there is only suffering, and they have no chance of happiness.

For a little while, as explained in the scriptures etc., they may remember how those who have realization put aside the mind of joy in samsara and urged them to "practice the dharma of liberation." If they do not make an effort to do this, generally they will continue to wander in samsara.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ Whoever dwells within the ever-changing round of samsara,
- ~ Happily thinking that it is just a residence,
- ~ Will certainly willy-nilly many hundreds of times
- ~ Wander everywhere with like and dissimilar beings.

L4: [3. The Divisions of Confusion] :L4

¢(i.e. THE SIX REALMS are conditions created by our own mind falling for one extreme obsession or another. They represent extreme tendencies based on this ignorance.  
 ¢-- There is the extremes of total hot chaos (rejecting all causality, nihilism) and the frozen determinism (falling for total determinism) (in both case rejecting moderation, the Middle Way, falling for hatred, killing, torturing),  
 ¢-- falling for the obsession of calculus and control (greed, calculating, saving, wanting it all),  
 ¢-- being without any morality or compassion following the law of the jungle (ignorance of the law of karma / causality, stupidity),  
 ¢-- being slaves to our body and desires (attachment),  
 ¢-- falling for jealousy - envy - competitiveness,  
 ¢-- feeling superior and falling for extreme pride.  
 ¢ If we fall for those extremes tendencies we will necessarily have to go through similar suffering as those describes in each realms. The effect is always similar to the cause, and proportional to it. It all comes from the mind: do this, get stuck doing it again and again and get some of the same kind. Not because it is "an external law", but because it is all merely imputed by the mind.  
 ¢ The way out is always to realize the real nature of the three: the subject suffering, the object or cause of the torment, and suffering itself.)

- a. The Hells
- b. The suffering of the hungry ghosts
- c. The Animal Realm
- d. The human realm
- e. The suffering of the asuras
- f. The suffering of the gods

¢(i.e. There are six realms because there are six poisons, or defilements of the mind (Skt. klesha; Tib. nyon-mongs) that are the seeds or causes of the experience of the various realms. There are no more than six realms because there are no more than six poisons to act as seeds. The six poisons are:)

¢---- a. The Hells - hatred, or anger, which creates the experience of the hell realm

¢---- b. The suffering of the hungry ghosts - greed, or miserliness, which creates the hungry ghost realm

¢---- c. The Animal Realm - ignorance of how to act virtuously is the cause of rebirth in the animal realm

¢---- d. The human realm - attachment (virtuous action performed with attachment to the meritorious results) is the cause of human rebirth

¢---- e. The suffering of the asuras - jealousy (virtuous action sullied by jealousy) causes rebirth in the demigod realm

¢---- f. The suffering of the gods - pride, or egotism (virtuous action performed with pride) causes a godly rebirth

¢-- The defilements lead to unskillful actions, which generate karma, the infallible operation of cause and effect in the mental continuum of each individual. The negative karma caused by the defilements is the origin of the sufferings of the six realms. The only way to eliminate suffering is to practice the path, method or remedy that will remove the defilements and the negative karma that they produce.

¢-- By developing loving-kindness and compassion it is possible to diminish the defilements, but in order to uproot them completely, it is necessary also to develop the discriminating awareness (Skt. prajna; Tib. she-rab) that arises from the wisdom of emptiness. The development of loving-kindness together with wisdom is the result of following the path of Dharma, otherwise known as the five paths: path of accumulation, path of unification, path of seeing, path of meditation, and path of no learning.

¢-- The Four Noble Truths by Ven. Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche)

¢(i.e. In Buddhism, REBIRTH is part and parcel of the continuous process of change. Indeed, we are not only reborn at the time of death, we are reborn at every moment. ... Therefore, whether we look at the body or the mind, our experience is characterized by constant birth, death, and rebirth. -- )

¢(i.e. The notion of a single human life span assumes an entity who exists from physical birth to physical death, but such an enduring entity is explicitly denied by interdependent arising. Govinda points out that according to the AbhiDharma birth and death are taking place with extraordinary rapidity every moment. "Three lifetimes" really means three consecutive periods of time, regardless of the unit employed. ... Rebirth of consciousness is the rebirth of the assumption of a "self" as the basis/referential for everything else one does (duality self-world). Then, in the condition of ignorance, there is rebirth every moment; but much less often as we gain insight, until no more rebirth. -- Freedom and bondage - Patrick Kearney)

¢(i.e. All of this append in an infinitesimal fraction of a blink; not between three lifetimes. So not to be reborn is transcending the duality self-world every moments.)

¢(i.e. Suffering common to all beings in samsara  
¢-- Uncertainty  
¢-- No satisfaction  
¢-- Having to abandon our body again and again  
¢-- Having to take rebirth again and again  
¢-- Having to lose any higher status again and again  
¢-- Having to abandon all friends again and again)

L5: [a. The Hells (caused by hatred or anger) (antidote: loving-kindness and compassion)]  
:L5

¢(i.e. The two extremes where our own mind could lead us if we don't try to see the real nature of everything: falling for the extremes of total hot chaos or frozen determinism. To stay away from those two extremes, we should adopt the Middle Way and see the real nature of our own mind and of everything. -- "If someone in the Hells remains unterrified, But knows the nature of these endless samsaric torments, Then that person will have the means of passing beyond them. -- Beings with minds should then arouse their strength of effort To conquer these merely mental worlds of Hell." -- The hot and cold hell looks like the two extremes of total chaos and frozen determinism. Life is being on the edge between those two extremes. Like the Middle Way: avoiding all extremes. And this is done by knowing the real nature of those suffering, their real cause.)

¢(i.e. There is someone who asked me, "Ultimately, is there such a thing as the hells or not?" I'll tell you, right when people are alive, they are in the hells. You just look: Most people are full of afflictions, fighting and disputing. There is no rest from it. There is no stopping to it. Isn't this just being in the hells? What kind of meaning does this sort of human life have? What's more, there are floods, tornadoes, wars and human calamities which also are hells within the human realm. And again, consider the terrible diseases which tie up the body so that one suffers so much that one can't describe it. When cancer develops, one may hurt so much that he does not even wish to live anymore. Is this not just the hells?

¢-- But people still don't see through it and they still can't put it down. They still can't let go. They remain greedily attached and what's more they entertain no thoughts of loving-kindness or compassion. When they see a benefit for themselves they forget about any principle, even going to the point of committing arson and engaging in theft. But at the very end, they still remain on the wheel [of birth-and-death] where they continue to turn about without any prospect of a time when it will come to a halt.

¢-- Master Hsuan Hua on the Hells - A Selection from Lotus in the Spring Sun. - Kao-Hsiung, Taiwan. Wisdom Source Publications, 1995. Page 170. - Translation by Dharmamitra - Kalavinka WebSite)

¢(i.e. Just look around the world and extrapolate; since everything is mind, anything that you can think of can happen, and somewhere probably is happening. ... But there are definitely all kinds of lower realms. -- Lama Tashi Namgyal)

¢(i.e. There are quite a few hell realms in Buddhism, including eight hot hells and eight cold hells. In the hells, living beings suffer incalculable and indescribable pain. It is said that the suffering experienced in this human world as a consequence of being pierced by three hundred spears in a single day is only a minute fraction of the suffering experienced by the denizens of hell. The cause of rebirth in hell is repeated violent behavior, such as habitual killing, cruelty, and the like. Such actions are born of aversion, and living

beings who commit them suffer the pains of hell until the unwholesome karma they have generated through such actions is exhausted. This last point is important, because it gives us occasion to note that, in Buddhism, no one suffers eternal damnation. When their unwholesome karma is exhausted, the denizens of hell are reborn in more fortunate realms of existence. -- The Tree of Enlightenment - An Introduction to the Major Traditions of Buddhism - by Peter Della Santina)

L6: [1) The Hot Hells] :L6

Of the twelve hot Hells, the first is the Reviving Hell.

L7: [a) The Reviving Hell:] :L7

L8: [i) A brief explanation:] :L8

\ ###  
\ Over the blazing iron coals of the Hell of Reviving, °  
\ Beings meet and kill each other with their weapons.  
\ A voice says, "Revive," and again they suffer as before.  
\ They experience this until their karma is exhausted.

Above blazing iron coals, these Hell beings are gathered by their karma. They strike each other with sticks, battle-axes, iron clubs, disks and so forth. Seeing each other as hostile enemies, they seem to fight until all of them are killed. Then a voice from space says, "Revive," and right away they revive as they were before. They have to experience countless times the real suffering of being killed by their weapons.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Three hundred times a day by short sharp spears,
- ~ These are fiercely stabbed, and their sufferings
- ~ When they enter into the sufferings of Hell
- ~ Are an intolerable rain of sufferings.
- ~ Even one instance is unbearable.

L8: [ii) The measure of their lives] :L8

The measure of their lives is until their karma is exhausted, briefly, as it says in the ordinary sutras:

\ ###  
\ Fifty years within the life of a human being °  
\ Are just a day for the four great gods who are kings of the world.  
\ Their months are thirty such days, and twelve months make a year.  
\ Five hundred such years are a day of the Reviving Hell.  
\ They have to suffer for five hundred years of days like these.  
\ An exact calculation of this according to the sutras  
\ Is a hundred and sixty trillion years of human time.

The ordinary sutras of the Mahayana, the tantras, and the shastras say that individuals' karma being thin or thick<sup>37</sup> and by merely transmigrating between lives, those who fall into that place are not taught to have one single certain measure of life. Strong antidotes may arise in one's being and so forth, so that one suddenly transmigrates. Someone who was something like a tantric master might have to remain for many kalpas, until released from karmic obscuration.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Thus they experience quite unbearable suffering
- ~ Over the course of eight times ten million years.
- ~ For as long as their bad karma has not been exhausted,
- ~ For that long they cannot be free of that life.

In the case of the viewpoint of the ordinary sutras, the Abhidharmakosha says:

- ~ In the six levels of the Reviving and so forth,
- ~ One day equals the life of the desire gods.

According to the account given in the Objects of Mindfulness and Le Namje, fifty human years is one day for the great conquering kings of the four families. Thirty of these is one of their months, and twelve of these is counted as their year, and five hundred of those years is one day of the Reviving Hell. They suffer for five hundred such years.

If one counts this in human years, the Objects of Mindfulness says:

- ~ Beings endure a hundred thousand times ten million years and 62,000 in the Reviving Hell.

L7: [b) The Black Thread Hell] :L7

The Hell below this is the Black Thread Hell:

- \ ###
- \ In the Black Thread Hell they are sewn together with blazing needles, °
- \ Then just where they were stitched, they are cut apart again.
- \ Because of this, their suffering is terrible.
- \ ###
- \ If we take a day of a hundred and three human years,
- \ A thousand years of those is a day of the Black Thread Hell.
- \ According to the teachings, a thousand of their years
- \ Is twelve trillion, nine hundred sixty billion years of ours.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Some are sewn with needles, and parted like that again.
- ~ By sharp irresistible axes they are cut apart

If 133 human years is counted as a day, a thousand years of such days is one day of the Black Thread Hell. They endure a thousand such years.

If one counts the same period in human years, the Objects of Mindfulness says:

- ~ The years of beings in the Black Thread Hell are twelve hundred thousand and ninety six times ten million years.

L7: [c) The Hell of Crushing and Joining] :L7

Below that

- \ ###
- \ In the Hell of Crushing and Joining, beings are crushed to atoms °
- \ By mountains like horses, camels, lions, tigers, and so on.
- \ The mountains part, and again they are living, as before.
- \ ###

\ In iron valleys hammers pound them into dust.  
 \ While they are being crushed, streams of blood flow down.  
 \ Two hundred years are a day for the Aviha gods.  
 \ ###  
 \ Two thousand such Twin-god days are a day of the Crushing Hell.  
 \ There they are said to suffer for two thousand of their years,  
 \ Or thirty trillion, nine hundred and eighty billion years.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ Herded by two fearful mountains like giant shepherds
- ~ Gathered between them their bodies are crushed and reduced to dust.
- ~ They are separated by wind that does not cool at all.
- ~ Then again they are crushed to dust like that a hundred times.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Some are crushed like sesame seeds,
- ~ And others ground fine like flour.

There are certain gods who, because they are free from fighting with the asuras, are called "free from strife," Aviha, and because boys and girls emerge from their loins together, they are also called the "Twin gods." Two hundred human years make up one day for them. Two thousand of these days are one day in the Hell of Crushing and Joining.

Beings there must endure two thousand such years.

If this is divided in human years, the Objects of Mindfulness says:

- ~ Those of the Hell of Crushing and Joining endure 10,368,000 times ten million human years.

L7: [d] The Crying and Screaming Hell] :L7

L8: [i] A brief explanation] :L8

Then below that:

\ ###  
 \ In the Crying and Screaming Hell, beings are burnt in fires, °  
 \ This is why they weep and lament, they scream and wail.  
 \ They suffer by being cooked in boiling iron cauldrons.  
 \ ###  
 \ Four hundred years are a day for the Tushita gods.  
 \ Four thousand of these are a day of the Crying and Screaming Hell.  
 \ Their sufferings go on for four thousand of these years.  
 \ In human years this is a hundred and eighty trillion  
 \ Nine hundred and forty-four billion are also added to these.

The Spiritual Letter says:{{229.3}}

- ~ Some are burned by blazing embers continuously,
- ~ While they are being consumed, their mouths are gaping wide.
- ~ Some boiled in iron caldrons, or great copper ones,
- ~ Are cooked like meat that is being made into soup.

The Letter to Students says:{{229.4}}

- ~ Some fall into great soup-kettles and are boiled there
- ~ Others transmigrate to burning sand that gives off sparks.
- ~ They cannot see the ground on which they put their feet.

Four hundred human years are counted as one day among the gods of the Tushita heaven. Four thousand of these are one day of the Crying and Screaming Hell. They endure four thousand such years.

L8: [ii) The measure of their lives] :L8

If one counts this in human years the Objects of Mindfulness says:

- ~ Those of the Crying and Screaming Hell live for 10,944,000 times ten million human years.

```

\      ###
\      In the Hell of Great Screams, in a blazing iron house, °
\      Beings are burned in fires and hacked in pieces by Yama.38

\      ###
\      Eight hundred years are a day for the Nirmanarati gods.
\      Eight thousand of those are a day within the Hell of Great Screams.
\      Their sufferings go on for eight thousand of their years.
\      This amounts In human years to three quadrillion,
\      Five hundred and fifty-two trillion, six hundred and sixty billion.

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The Letter to Students says:

- ~ They live in Hell fire and a shroud of stinking smoke.
- ~ Tongues of flame pervade the circle of the directions.
- ~ Adorned with heaped white bones, like some terrible wreath.
- ~ As elephant skins appear as a means of threatening them
- ~ These beings cry out in pain and fear "Kye ma! Kye hu!
- ~ Some places great flaming fires are emanated
- ~ With an agonizing roar they rise and tower upward.
- ~ By day their voices peak in number and shrill volume
- ~ Inside their dwellings of bones, they loudly scream and howl.
- ~ Not even kalpa fire produces what they fell into.

Eight hundred human years are counted as a day of the Nirmanarati gods, and eight thousand of those years are a day of the Hell of Great Screams. They remain for eight thousand of their years.

As for the count of this in human years, the Objects of Mindfulness says:

- ~ They have to endure the Hell of Great Screams for 663,552,000 times 10 million human years.

L7: [e) The Hell of Heat] :L7

Below that:

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\      ###
\      In the Hell of Heat beings are in an iron house. °
\      Their brains are first exposed by using a short spear.
\      After that they are thoroughly beaten on with hammers.

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\ Inside and out they are seared by blazing tongues of flame.  
\ ###  
\ A day of the Paranirmitavashavartin gods  
\ Has the same length as sixteen hundred human years.  
\ Sixteen thousand of these is a day within the Hell of Heat.  
\ They suffer there for sixteen thousand of their years.  
\ Which equals three billion and eighty-four million human years,  
\ To which are added another hundred and sixty thousand.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ We see the noose of time in the hand of the Lord of Death
- ~ Poisonous snakes are coiled around the head and lap.
- ~ Crows, gulls, ravens, and vultures peck out eyes and brains
- ~ From living victims without the slightest hesitation.

Sixteen hundred human years is counted as one day by the Paranirmitavashavartin gods.  
Sixteen thousand of these are counted as one day in the Hell of Heat.

They endure sixteen thousand of their years, which in human years, as the Objects of Mindfulness says:

- ~ Those of the Hell of Heat endure this for 818,416 million times ten million human years.

L7: [f] The Very Hot Hell] :L7

Below this:

\ ###  
\ In the Very Hot Hell, among two rows of iron houses, °  
\ They are burned in fire and stabbed with three-pointed weapons.  
\ Their heads and shoulders are parted, then joined with bandages.  
\ They also suffer by being boiled in copper cauldrons.  
  
\ ###  
\ The length of their lives is half an antahkalpa.  
\ It is beyond being counted in terms of human years.  
\ In four small kalpas the world arises and endures.  
\ It is destroyed and there is nothingness.  
\ The length of these is equal to one antahkalpa.  
\ One great kalpa is eighty intermediate ones.

A sutra says:

- ~ In the Very Hot Hell are a host of blazing fires
- ~ Their bodies are pierced and stabbed by vajras and by tridents.
- ~ They are boiled in great copper cauldrons and tied in bandages.
- ~ They only rest while burned by fires within and without.

The measure of their lives is unfathomably long. In four stages the world arises, endures, is destroyed, and remains in emptiness. Each of these is counted as one antahkalpa or intermediate kalpa. They live for half of such a kalpa.

The Objects of Mindfulness:

- ~ Those of the Very Hot Hell experience their sufferings for half an antahkalpa.

This should be kept in mind.

L7: [g] The Avici Hell] :L7

Below that:

\     ###  
\     In the Uninterrupted Hell, in blazing iron houses °  
\     Aside from the clamor of lamentation of the Hell beings,  
\     The fire and those beings cannot be separately seen.  
\     Just As the burning flame of a lamp will cling to its center,  
\     There is just a spark of life in the center of the fire.  
  
\     ###  
\     They have to suffer this for the time of one antahkalpa.  
\     Since there is no greater suffering than this,  
\     Therefore it is called the Uninterrupted Hell.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ As dry grass burns from the heart, they are burned by blazing fires.
- ~ From throats and mouths repeatedly issue smoky flames.
- ~ Falling from inner hunger, their innards burst and splatter.
- ~ They produce an indescribable howling cry.
  
- ~ Wishing to be freed from their great suffering,
- ~ Again and again, they watch from within the opening gates
- ~ Seeing other places, they wait until they open.
- ~ As soon as they go forward the gates shut tight again.
  
- ~ Then there is further pain of unbearable depression.
- ~ Like a falling rain of sharp and blazing arrows, the guardians beat them with sticks, and boiling tears flow down.
  
- ~ Because they are being stewed in a pot of molten iron,
- ~ Drinking in a heaped up wreath of tongues of flame,
- ~ Smoke rises from the holes of mouth, and nose, and ears.
- ~ Eyes and brains ooze like cream in blazing tongues of flame.
- ~ That fire, as if furious at those piled bodies,
- ~ Flare like piles of dry firewood that are being kindled.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Among the unbearable sufferings of all of these
- ~ Those of the Avici Hell are worst of all.

The Analysis of Karma says:

- ~ At the gates of the Avici Hell is an iron mountain of 60,000 yojanas. The Hell beings, exhausted by getting by it, transmigrate to new lives.

There are an immeasurable number of them, it is taught. This is manifested by very heavy karma of having abandoned Dharma, broken samaya etc.

The Objects of Mindfulness says:

- ~ Those of the Avici Hell transmigrate after having passed there an intermediate kalpa.

Even if they are born as a king, their powers will not be sound, so it has been taught.

¢(i.e. "Obviously, the practice of Tantra is not for everyone, as practitioners must have a solid foundation in wisdom and compassion before attempting to use passion in the path or they may experience negative consequences such as rebirth in the Vajra hells, which are said to be below even the Avici Hell (i.e. the Hell of Uninterrupted Pain)." -- Is Deity Yoga Buddhist? The Philosophical Foundations of Tantric Practice by Brian T. Hafer)

¢(i.e. So on the one hand, failing to keep samaya is not something that can cast you into the depths of the Avici hell of uninterrupted torment. But on the other hand, samaya is essential to keep in order to get anything done.-- The Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, Commentary on Tilopa's Mahamudra Upadesha)

¢(i.e. Some enter students at random, without examination. °

¢-- At first they speak virtuously; but later they disparage.

¢-- With black-motivated mixtures of public and private actions,

¢-- They deviously slander the retinue of the guru.

¢-- In fruition they will go to the Avici Hell. -- C5

¢--\*

¢-- If even in a dream, faults are seen in the guru,

¢-- As soon as one awakes, if one does not confess,

¢-- This will proliferate as the cause of the Avici Hell. -- C5

¢--\*

¢-- The Prajnaparamita in Eight Thousand Lines says: Subhuti, those who accumulate the karma of depriving others of the Dharma will be born as beings of the lower realms or among those who have fallen into wrong views. They will suffer among the beings of the great hell, the Avici Hell. Having been contained in its fires for a kalpa, they will be born in the great hells of other world systems. There too, when they have been contained in fire for a kalpa, It is taught that they will go to another, and so forth beyond measure.-- C4

¢--\*

¢-- The Buddha told Ananda, "If a person is not filial, when his life ends and his body decays, he will fall into the Spaceless, Avici Hell. ... -- The Sutra about the Deep Kindness of Parents and the Difficulty of Repaying It

¢--\*

¢-- Those who put erroneous views into action are base and evil people in the present lifetime and then become bound to fall into the hells in later lifetimes. - Prajnaparamita - Wisdom section

¢--\*

¢-- In order to reach enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings we should be happy and willing to spend countless eons in the lowest hell, Avici. This is what taking the harms that afflict others upon ourselves refers to. -- HHDL

¢--\*

¢-- See also: Shurangama Sutra)

¢(i.e. THE WORST HELL IS RESERVED FOR NIHILISTS

¢-- Karmavajra asked, "When one meditates on the clear light, are there pitfalls? Or not?"

¢-- He said, "Your question is extremely good! If someone does not understand, there are pitfalls....

¢-- First, the pattern of mistaking the actuality (i.e. emptiness, purity); in general, what we call 'actuality' is the introspectively known reality which exists just like this, free from the adulteration of present artificial consciousness, originally clear emptiness

wherein nothing is (intrinsically) established. When a person meditates on emptiness without focusing just on that, he falls into the error of cutting off enlightenment at emptiness, by not freeing his mind from the holding of emptiness. (i.e. The danger of taking emptiness for something inherently existing, not empty itself. It may lead to nihilism.)

¢-- The sign of error is that thoughts arise such as that 'above there is no Buddha, below there is no hell, the utter lack of establishment of anything is emptiness.' (i.e. When one think the emptiness means nothingness.)

¢-- The fault of the error is that the mind that thinks 'everything is empty,' on the positive side, abandons all religious practice such as devotion, purification of perception, refuge-taking, spiritual conception, love, and compassion, and engages in the enterprises of this life, and, on the negative side, all his practice is contaminated in the activities of sin. For one who thus engages in such perversion of the truth, there is no place to go but the Vajra hell. (i.e. The path itself is seen as meaningless.)

¢-- The fruit of such evil activities is that,

¢---- on the positive side, since such a one has distorted the truth of the virtuous orientation, he conceives the nihilistic view of the fundamentalists, (i.e. He falls into the extreme of nihilism.)

¢---- and on the negative side, by distorting the orientation toward causality, he wanders in the ocean of suffering. (i.e. He loose all understanding of karma and cannot progress on the path at all and worsen his own conditions in samsara.)

¢-- Karmavajra! There are many who say they realize emptiness, but there are very few who actually realize the real condition of ultimate reality!" ...

¢-- -- Garland of Supremely Healing Nectars, Tsong Khapa)

¢(i.e. Q. If there really is no self, than what is reborn?

¢-- A. The continuum of mind, the serial mind-stream of a person and the results of his deeds give rise to a new being. In any case, rebirth is a relative truth. The interpretation of relative truth differs from school to school, from religion to religion. The Madhyamika believes the relative to be whatever we see, without examination: the view of ordinary people. Relatively, there is rebirth, but not ultimately.

¢-- Q. If we don't accept the existence of beings, since all things are emptiness, what reason do we have for being compassionate?

¢-- A. Everything is not just emptiness; emptiness is also a wrong view, an extreme - the true nature of things is away from extremes. In order to realize this, you have to accumulate a great deal of merit and the best way to do this is to practice love and compassion for all sentient beings. Until this merit has been accumulated, the understanding of Emptiness will not arise.

¢-- -- Interview with Sakya Trizin)

L7: [h] The summary of the meaning of these] :L7

Now there is the summary:

\ ###  
\ In each these different Hells that have been mentioned above, °  
\ The tongues of flame are seven times hotter than the last.  
\ Each is lower, with greater suffering, than the last.  
\ Beings suffer until their karma is exhausted.

As for these Hells that have just been described, the tongues of flame become seven times hotter [from one to the next].

The Analysis says:

- ~ Hellfire from one to the next
- ~ Increases by seven times.
- ~ Likewise the sufferings
- ~ Are seven times the last.

More and more sufferings are stacked up, like blisters on top of leprosy. As if their sensations had become seven times stronger, their sufferings are also seven times stronger. They must endure this until their karma is exhausted.

L7: [i] The ephemeral Hells] :L7

L8: [i] The Main Explanation of the temporary Hells] :L8

Included among these Hells are the following:

- \ ###
- \ The ephemeral Hells may be in the mountains, trees, or sky. °
- \ In water, fire, or rocks, or in uncertain places.
- \ Groups or single beings remain there for a while.
- \ In those places they suffer their respective torments.
- \ That explains their being called "ephemeral Hells."

The beings of the ephemeral Hells are in mountains, rocks, water, fire, space, and so on, or in uncertain places, like a pestle, rope, refuse rag, a burning piece of wood, or a log. There may be different kinds of beings together, or one alone. They may be hot, cold, wet, or dry, ripped apart, cut up, boiled, whatever sort of suffering it may be, but each of them unbearable. This may last half a day and night, just a moment, or for all eternity, since they suffer by the force of different karmas. Thus they are called ephemeral.

The Sutra on Teachings that are the Basis of Discipline says:

- ~ Then son of Maudgal from across the ocean,
- ~ the Hell of the beings of the ephemeral Hells are in places like a pestle,
- ~ or a tree, and they are seen to be tormented by many different kinds of suffering.
- ~ Within the realm of samsara, beings have no pleasure.
- ~ They are like the beings of the ephemeral Hells,
- ~ All tormented by their individual sufferings,
- ~ As if they had been forced to live in a blazing land.

L8: [ii] In order to refute other kinds of wrong conceptions:] :L8

- \ ###
- \ Some mistakenly say that the name "ephemeral" °
- \ Is given as few are there, or since their lives are short.
- \ But scorpions live for quite a while among the rocks.
- \ And once there was an ephemeral Hell that had the form
- \ Of five hundred shravakas gathered for their noontime meal.
- \ It is said that they took up weapons and struck each other.

Some say are called ephemeral since each day they become non-existent. This is not the right sense here.

- ~ After many human generations in an iron house.
- ~ Still they have many years to remain within this Hell.

With such harm, and some alone and companionless, they are called ephemeral. When Shro\_ako\_\_kar\_a39 arrived in a vihara, from one with a net beating a gandi,40 as soon as 500 beings had taken the form of shravakas, they quarreled with each other, and resolved it with weapons.41 The moment the hostilities were over, they were no longer seen, so the scriptures say.

L7: [j) The Neighboring Hells] :L7

L8: [i) The brief teaching.] :L8

Around the Avici Hell are 16 others:

\ ###  
\ The Neighboring Hells are found by the Uninterrupted Hell. °  
\ They are found in each of its cardinal directions.  
\ These are the fire pit Hell, the Hell of putrid stench,  
\ The plain of weapons, and the river without a ford.  
\ In all there are four times four--sixteen such Hells.

L8: [ii) The extensive explanation] :L8

There are six sections describing these, which open in whatever direction one turns.

L9: [a)) The Fire Pit Hell:] :L9

\ ###  
\ Thinking that its ten million gates have now been opened, °  
\ Beings come forth from within the uninterrupted Hell.  
\ Seeing shady river valleys, when they enter the running water,  
\ Having sunk into blazing coals up to their knees,  
\ Their flesh is burned away, leaving bones as white as lotuses.  
\ Then revived, as before, their suffering is extreme.

First, their karma mostly restrains them in the iron houses of the Avici Hell, where sufferings of heat are afflicted with increasing sufferings. Then, thinking that the gates have opened, they flee. As they approach, driven by iron dogs, they seem to see a pleasant shady ravine.

About what they suffer the Letter to Students says:

~ A crowd of torn people are herded by dogs with gaping jaws  
~ Long thorn-like fangs with vajra tips rip at their bodies.  
~ There is a ravine and river completely lacking water,  
~ Full of dismal ashes and licking tongues of flame.  
  
~ While driven they are mutilated by corners of rocks,  
~ Having sharp razor points that tear unbearably.  
~ Fleeing into the river, they sink into the ashes.  
~ Their flesh and bones are burned, and then they revive again,

L9: [b)) When they think they are free,] :L9

Here is what they reach:

\ ###  
\ As soon as they enter the cooling ponds that they have seen, °

\ They sink in a putrid, stinking mire of rotting corpses.  
\ Worms with metal beaks of copper, iron, and gold,  
\ Piercing their bodies, bore and tunnel into them.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ Some move about like little worms and insects.<sup>42</sup>
- ~ Because of the crowd their bodies are immobile.
- ~ Or else they rot away upon the fields.
- ~ With lives blocked by the trap of their karmic nature
- ~ They live without being even able to move.

L9: [c)) Then:] :L9

\ ###  
\ As soon as they return to the pleasant plains they have seen °  
\ They are cut to pieces by blazing daggers while still alive.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ Into a grove whose branches are swords with dagger leaves,
- ~ They run exhausted, and of course their bodies are wounded,
- ~ by many three pointed short spears, arrows, and sharp swords
- ~ Fangs in the mouth of the Lord of Death pierce as they fall.

L9: [d)) And then:] :L9

\ ###  
\ When they have entered into pleasant leafy groves, °  
\ They are overcome by a forest of sharp swords

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ Enduring many torments difficult to bear
- ~ Day and night, their bodies are grievously destroyed.
- ~ As they go among green trees which they formerly saw
- ~ They cannot help falling onto leaves of a hundred weapons.
- ~ There in long entanglements they are badly wounded.

L9: [e)) And then] :L9

\ ###  
\ Passing from there to a very pleasant mountain peak, °  
\ They see their former homeland and go as if they were summoned.  
\ Flesh and blood are scraped away with sharp iron spoons.  
\ Vultures peck their brains, as they are climbing upward.  
\ Then they think that they are called to descend the mountain,  
\ And again they are scraped by the spoons, as when they first went up.  
\ At the edge of the plain are men and women with sharpened beaks.  
\ In the blazing embrace of these their suffering is extreme.  
\ After that they are eaten by many dogs and jackals.

Then they think that there is a very pleasant mountain. When they go there, these former men and woman seem to see all the features of the countries where they formerly lived, and seeing people once close to them, thinking they are calling, they ascend. As they are scraped with iron spoons, their flesh and blood multiplies. As they come down, they suffer

the same pains of being scraped as when they went up.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ As they quickly climb this slope of unbearable shalmali trees,<sup>43</sup>
- ~ There is a host of briars. Sharp spoons scrape them through.
- ~ With terrible pain, they destroy inside, and then subside.

And also:

- ~ When they move downward, from iron briars going upward,
- ~ They Remember many sharp things roughly piercing their bodies,
- ~ Then sometimes by the sharpness and the painfulness
- ~ Of blazing three pointed spears, their bodies cannot descend.
  
- ~ Then by crows whose beaks are marked with symbolic weapons
- ~ They are driven along by ordinary needs
- ~ Of their bellies and such, and as they are lost and scattered.
- ~ Some fall into fearful abysses of mountain chasms.

Also

- ~ From all the women a hundred tongues of flame come forth.
- ~ They live ornamented by massive wreaths of flame.
- ~ Toothed like saws these do not ever leave their bodies.
- ~ Lured into pleasant groves, they embrace unite with them.

L9: [f)) And then:] :L9

- \ ###
- \ Also having seen the cool streams of flowing rivers, °
- \ As soon as they joyfully go and are immersed in them,
- \ They sink to their waists in hot ashes, and flesh and bones are consumed.
- \ They see the guards of Yama keeping them from the two banks.
- \ There they have to suffer for many thousands of years.

The Objects of Mindfulness says:

- ~ When they go there, they see streams. As soon as they step into them up to their waists, their flesh is burned, and even their bones turn to powder and separate from them. When again they are revived, on the banks where they formerly were, the beings of the Lord of Death appear to be standing.

L7: [k) The instruction on eliminating those sufferings.] :L7

They are as follows:

- \ ###
- \ If someone in the Hells remains unterrified, °
- \ But knows the nature of these endless samsaric torments,
- \ Then that person will have the means of passing beyond them.

That is the instruction.

L6: [2)) The Cold Hells,] :L6

There are three sections

-- a) The eight cold Hells.

- b) The explanation of the measure of time.
- c) The Instruction of striving in the means of liberation from these Hells

L7: [a) The eight cold Hells.] :L7

Now the sufferings of cold are explained:

\     ###  
 \     There are also eight Hells where there are the torments of cold. °  
 \     In extremely frigid places of snow and so forth,  
 \     Arbuda, Nnirarbuda, Atata, and Hahava  
 \     Huhuva and Utpala, Padma and Mahapadma.<sup>44</sup>  
 \     In blackest darkness their bodies are ravished by swirling blizzards,  
 \     Devoured by living things with sharp and flaming beaks.  
 \     Until they reach the end of their karma they shiver there.

Having been afflicted, in cold and snowy places, cold and dark, blasted by black winds, they are covered with blisters and, when the blisters burst, with wounds. Except for sneezing "achu!" they cannot speak. They lament, "kye 'ud!" and their teeth chatter, so that no speech can get out. They are wounded like a blue utpala lotus with fine roots and big leaves turned inside out. Like a red lotus, they are split into four pieces. Like a big lotus they are split into eight pieces. From their wounds come fine streams of fluid. Insects crawl in and eat.

As for their immeasurable sufferings from cold, the Letter to Students says:

- ~ They are many beyond example, exposing even their bones.
- ~ Their hungry bodies shiver, becoming shriveled and crooked.
- ~ A hundred blisters rise with fluid, and as they break,
- ~ Insects ravage them with beaks as sharp as swords
- ~ To their feet the blood and gore comes dripping down.
- ~ Their teeth chatter helplessly. Their head and body hairs tremble.
- ~ Sore eyes, ears, throats and noses, torment all these beings.
- ~ With bodies and minds corrupted to the very center,<sup>45</sup>
- ~ They remain in those Cold Hells, and loudly cry and wail.

L7: [b) The explanation of the measure of time.] :L7

The time of their suffering in these eight Hells:

\     ###  
 \     The length of their lives in the Hell which is called Arbuda °  
 \     Is as long as it would take to empty out  
 \     A sesame store in Kosala<sup>46</sup> containing 200 bushels<sup>47</sup>  
 \     By removing only a single grain in a century,  
 \     In each of the other cold Hells, it is twenty times the last.

The Objects of Mindfulness<sup>48</sup> says:

- ~ If the storage bin of the city of Kosala were full of sesame seed full of sesame seed without any gap,
- ~ The lives of the beings in the Blistering Hell are as long as it would take to empty it by removing one grain every hundred years.
- ~ The others each last for twenty times longer than the last.

In accord with this, the Abhidharmakosha says:

- ~ From within a sesame store every hundred years
- ~ Removing a single seed until they all are emptied,
- ~ That is the length of life within the Blistering Hell.
- ~ The lives each of the others are twenty times the last.

L7: [c) The Instruction of striving in the means of liberation from these Hells] :L7

Thus thinking of these immeasurable sufferings of heat and cold:

\     ###  
\     Beings with minds should then arouse their strength of effort °  
\     To conquer these merely mental worlds of Hell.

So it is taught. The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Evildoers, as soon as their breath has ceased,
- ~ When they are cut off by time, at the end of life,
- ~ Having heard of Hell's measureless sufferings,
- ~ To be fearless through emptiness requires the vajra nature.
  
- ~ If having seen pictures of Hell and heard of it,
- ~ Remembering, reading, or merely glancing at pictures,
- ~ People are often stricken with unbearable fear
- ~ Why speak of the actual experiences of ripening?

L5: [b. The suffering of the hungry ghosts (caused by greed or miserliness) (antidote: selflessness)] :L5

¢(i.e. Another extreme where our own mind could lead us if we abandon ourselves to the obsession of trying to control everything. -- "Having seen this saddening nature of how things are, Accordingly, persons, to gain their liberation, Should distance themselves from samsara's hedonic calculus. By that the true peace of holy Dharma will be established." -- By seeing the real nature of everything, one comes to understand that there is no possible absolute control. It is like there is an infinite number of causes and conditions; everything is interdependent on everything. There is no beginning to the chain of causes, and no end to the chain of the effect. Limiting the number of causes to a few is just a mental fabrication. All causes and effect are empty of inherent existence. Not seeing this, one fall into the extreme of control obsession of the hungry ghosts who are never satisfied of what they have. The solution is to see the real nature of causes, effects, causality, control.)

There are three sections.

- 1) The way they live.
- 2) Those who live in the air and in space.
- 3) Encouragement to practice Dharma, not Desiring Samsara.

¢(i.e. The next realm is that of the hungry ghosts. Living beings in this realm suffer chiefly from hunger and thirst, heat and cold. They are completely bereft of the things they desire. It is said that when the hungry ghosts see a mountain of rice or a river of fresh water and run toward it, they find that the mountain of rice is only a heap of pebbles and the river only a ribbon of blue slate. Similarly, it is said that in the summer even the moon feels hot to them, while in the winter even the sun is cold. The foremost cause of

rebirth as a hungry ghost is avarice and miserliness born of attachment and greed. As with the denizens of hell, the living beings in this realm are not condemned to eternal existence in the form of hungry ghosts, because when their unwholesome karma is exhausted, they will be reborn in a more fortunate realm. -- The Tree of Enlightenment - An Introduction to the Major Traditions of Buddhism - by Peter Della Santina)

L6: [1) The way they live:] :L6

\     ###  
\     Pretas stay and roam in their world of hungry ghosts. °  
\     Their bodies are large with great paunches. Their hands and feet are small.  
\     Their necks are slim with mouths no bigger than a needle.  
\     Finding no food or drink, they are racked by hunger and thirst.  
\     Trees and flowers, medicinal herbs, and wholesome things  
\     Wither away as soon as these pretas look at them.  
\     Externally they eat vomit, or things that are foul and vile.  
\     If they do see food and drink, they seem to be kept away.  
\     Because of inner defilement, their food is consumed by fire.  
\     Smoky tongues of flame are spewing from their mouths.  
\     Obscured with malicious anger, they always fear deprivation.  
\     In terrifying places, they suffer helplessly.

Living in space, externals are obscured for them, and since externals they do experience are not pleasing, they do not get what they want. Their evil bodies have to eat evil vomit, and even if these ravening ones see food and drink, it seems to be guarded, or as soon as they get to it, it dries up. By that they suffer. Their inner obscurations are even worse. Flames blaze from their bellies, and emit smoke. As for their obscurations generally, on top of that they always suffer poverty, deprivation, hunger, thirst, ugly forms, and sensory distortion. They always have to be fed by others. They are fearful, without refuge and protector.

The Letter to Students says:

~ Unbearably tortured by thirst, they seem to see spotless streams.  
~ They want to drink, but as soon as they can, the water  
~ Is full of clots of hair, mixed with fish dung and pus  
~ Trailing mud and slime, and blood and excrement.  
  
~ In time winds disperse the water, and they are among cool mountains.  
~ If there they see green growing groves of sandalwood  
~ Above them, the forest flames, with sharp thick tongues of fire,  
~ Blazing embers fall and they cannot help themselves.  
  
~ Fearful ocean waves rise and crash over them  
~ Even if they get beyond that foamy trouble,  
~ Millions of harsh red clouds of howling, gritty wind  
~ Whirl and drown everything in a fearful, sandy desert.  
  
~ If the rain-clouds come that they are praying for,  
~ A rain of iron arrows, falls with smoke and embers,  
~ Hot vajra boulders crush and ravish them completely,  
~ Seeming of golden color, wreathed with orange lightning,

~ A rain of these falls everywhere upon their bodies.

L6: [2] Those who live in the air and in space:] :L6

As for this subtle assembly:

\ ###  
\ The spirits of the air are evil hungry ghosts.<sup>49</sup> °  
\ By miraculous actions they go unhindered anywhere,  
\ Accomplishing their various manifestations of harm.  
\ Bringing sickness, they ravish health and cut off life  
\ A month for human beings is just a day for them.  
\ Five hundred years of theirs are fifty thousand of ours.  
\ They suffer thus within the realms of the Lord of Death.

These too are among the hungry ghosts, and their suffering is immeasurable. Their realm is unpleasant, dangerous, fearful, hungry and thirsty. Whoever is close to their hearts is infected with fatal diseases. They themselves are always tormented by these as well, and spread these diseases. Life and health are ravished away, and only harm to others is accomplished. They are beings unhappy to meet.

Going about by miraculous power, they appear as guardians of narrow paths. Their individual bodies are like gates, bubbles, half burned or split pieces of wood, and various dogs and birds. Some by former slight merit have enjoyments, but also suffer many sufferings. Mostly events occur at the wrong season and moreover even in their enjoyments there are limitless sufferings and so forth.

The same text says:

~ Even in a snowstorm they are afflicted by heat.  
~ Helplessly chilled by winds, they are even cold in a fire.  
~ By such unbearable ripenings they are stupefied.  
~ Various kinds of things wrongly appear to them.  
~ Even the eye of a needle seems many terrifying miles,  
~ With their great bellies, even if they drink an ocean,  
~ It will not wet so far as even the end of their throats.  
~ By the heat of their mouths they are thirsty for even a drop of water.

The Spiritual Letter says:

~ Hungry ghosts are impoverished by never-ending desire.  
~ The suffering so produced is continuous and unbearable.  
~ Hunger, thirst and cold; heat, fatigue, and fear,  
~ Produce unbearable sufferings that always attend them.  
  
~ Some with tiny mouths as small the eye of a needle.  
~ And bellies as big as mountains are tormented by hunger.  
~ They cannot get rid of the false perspective of their eyes.  
~ They do not have the power to seek out anything.  
  
~ Some are naked with bodies formed of skin and bones  
~ They are dry like the sun-baked tops of desert palms.  
~ Some are ablaze with fire from mouths and genitals?  
~ As food of burning sand falls into their gullets.

- ~ Some of the lower ones do not even get
- ~ Pus and excrement, or blood and other filth.
- ~ From their throats, they mutually infect each other.
- ~ Buboes arise, and then exude a ripening pus.
- ~ For pretas, even in the springtime of their lives,
- ~ Even the moon is hot and even the sun is cold.
- ~ Trees are fruitless and barren, blasted by their glance,
- ~ As soon as they are looked at, rivers and springs dry up.
- ~ Sufferings attend them continuous and unhindered.
- ~ As for the karmic noose of their evil activity,
- ~ The bodies of some of them are quite tenaciously held.
- ~ They will not die in five or even ten thousand years.

One human month is counted as a day of the pretas. Five hundred of their years is taught to be 50,000 human years.

L6: [3) Encouragement to practice Dharma, not Desiring Samsara.] :L6

As for the endless ways of suffering:

- \ ###
- \ Having seen this saddening nature of how things are, °
- \ Accordingly, persons, to gain their liberation,
- \ Should distance themselves from samsara's hedonic calculus.
- \ By that the true peace of holy Dharma will be established.

That is the good instruction.

L5: [c. The Animal Realm (caused by ignorance) (antidote: meditation on dependent origination)] :L5

¢(i.e. Another extreme where our own mind could lead us if we abandon ourselves to the belief in "natural selection", the "law of the jungle" with no morality or compassion, totally ignoring the law of karma. -- "Having thought about this, those who want liberation From the world of animals, to benefit themselves, Should customarily travel the path of accurate vision. Striving day and night to be absorbed in the wholesome." -- This is the realm of blind stupidity, with no morality, no compassion, where the fittest, the better equipped, win (natural selection). There is absolutely no understanding of the law of karma and its consequences, no understanding of the real nature of everything. The way out is to develop wholesome (morality), compassion, in order to be in a position to develop insights (wisdom) later.)

-- 1) Animals too are without happiness.

-- 2) The instruction to be diligent in the Dharma.

¢(i.e. In the next realm, that of animals, living beings suffer from a variety of unhappy circumstances. They suffer from the fear and pain that results from constantly killing and eating one another. They suffer from the human beings who kill them for food or for their hides, pearls, or teeth. Even if they are not killed, many domestic animals are forced to work for people who drive them on with hooks and whips. All this is a source of suffering. The principal cause of rebirth as an animal is ignorance. The blind, heedless pursuit of one's animal desires; preoccupation with eating, sleeping, and sexual gratification,

accompanied by disregard for the need to develop one's mind and practice virtue -- all these lead one to be reborn as an animal. Now, when we say, for instance, that aversion is the cause of rebirth in the hells, that attachment is the cause of rebirth among hungry ghosts, and that ignorance is the cause of rebirth in the realm of animals, it does not mean that an isolated act motivated by aversion, attachment, or ignorance will result in rebirth in the corresponding class of living being. What it does mean is that there is a definite, proven relationship between aversion or hatred and rebirth in the hells, just as there is between attachment and greed and rebirth among the hungry ghosts, and between ignorance and rebirth among the animals. If unimpeded and unobstructed by countervailing virtuous actions, actions habitually motivated by these unwholesome attitudes are likely to lead to rebirth in these three states of woe. -- The Tree of Enlightenment - An Introduction to the Major Traditions of Buddhism - by Peter Della Santina)

L6: [1] Animals too are without happiness:] :L6

\ ###  
\ In the animal realm, those who live within the four oceans °  
\ All devour each other, in measureless suffering.  
\ Even if they hide in the dark places of the land,  
\ They fear heat and cold, and hunger and thirst, and being eaten.  
\ Wild beasts and birds throughout the human realm  
\ Are in danger from sharp weapons and also from each other.  
\ Horses, oxen, camels, as well as donkeys and such,  
\ Have limitless pains of carrying burdens and being beaten.  
\ They are killed for their skins, and for their meat and bones.  
\ They cannot see the limitless suffering of their nature.  
  
\ ###  
\ Nagas suffer the pain and pleasure of midday and midnight.  
\ And the pains and pleasures of coming day and coming night.  
\ In some places there fall rains of abrasive, burning sand.  
\ In some they are forsaken, alone without companions.  
\ Mostly stupid, they fear soaring birds and such.  
\ They meet with a great variety of sufferings.  
\ Their lives, uncertain, are sometimes just a day.  
\ Divine Takasaka and others are said to live a kalpa

The great oceans between the four continents are filled without gaps with fish, conches, crocodiles, and the like, crawling like grain in chaff. The big ones eat the little ones, the little ones eat still littler ones, and so forth.

Others from this continent to the surrounding iron mountains-hide under fire in darkness inside the earth, since the sun and moon do not appear there. As in the water, they eat one another, and have measureless sufferings of hunger and thirst.

The scattered animals on the face of the world, living in the human realm's mountains, plains, water, rocks, sky, and so forth, small creatures, worms, insects, birds, wild animals, and so forth, each have their particular sufferings of heat, cold, hunger, thirst, being eaten by each other, and so forth--measureless illness and affliction. In particular they are tormented by hunters, fishermen, and birds of prey. Some die for their flesh, skins, and bones, or are used beaten and bleeding and then killed at the end of their

labors, and have limitless other sufferings.

In the serpent realm too though there are appropriate pleasures of day and night, morning and evening, there are also the many particular sufferings of hot and cold, hunger and thirst, and so forth.

Where some live thousands of rains fall, and some are forsaken by any. Some are entirely alone and companionless. In general they are stupid and afraid of birds, vidya mantra, and immeasurable other harmful phenomena. Their lives are uncertain. Some live only an instant, a day, and so forth. The kings of nagas, like Takasaka, live for an intermediate kalpa.

The Abhidharmakosha says:

~ That of Takasaka is a kalpa.

The Sutra Requested by Ocean says:

~ He lives in the ocean for an intermediate kalpa.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Those who live within the animal realm
- ~ Have various sufferings of bondage and beating.
- ~ They are worked and driven with whips and hooks and so forth.

L6: [2) The instruction to be diligent in the Dharma:] :L6

- \ ###
- \ Having thought about this, those who want liberation °
- \ From the world of animals, to benefit themselves,
- \ Should customarily travel the path of accurate vision.
- \ Striving day and night to be absorbed in the wholesome.

For these reasons, those desiring liberation from the fate of those who have gone astray among the animals, from the goodness and so forth of holy Dharma, should strive with this opportunity of the great human and divine path of the ten virtues that accord with merit, the four dhyanas, and the four formless attainments. This is the instruction of the ultimate great path of liberation through the accumulations of merit and wisdom. Its essence is emptiness and compassion. Strive to meditate on that path by the six paramitas and so forth.

L5: [d. The human realm (caused by attachment, passions) (antidote: meditation on repulsion)] :L5

¢(i.e. The human realm with its precious human life is the best, not because there is no suffering, but because there is not too much and not too few, because there is enough incentives and freedom to have the motivation and means to see through the whole process of conditioning, and gain complete Enlightenment. -- Meanwhile, the human life has its the three kinds of suffering, and the eight types of suffering, and all its dangers to fall into the three lower realms. The only way to escape them completely and definitively is to turn to the Dharma.)

There are nine sections:

- 1) The torments of the eight sufferings
- 2) The suffering of old age
- 3) As for the suffering of sickness
- 4) The suffering of death
- 5) The suffering of meeting with enemies

- 6) The suffering of being separated from those dear to us
- 7) The suffering of deprivation
- 8) The suffering of defilement
- 9) The Instruction of exertion in the means of liberation from this

¢(i.e. The human realm is the most favored of the six realms because, as a human being, one has the motivation and opportunity to practice the Dharma and achieve enlightenment.

¢-- One has this motivation and opportunity because the conditions conducive to practicing the path are present.

¢-- In the human realm, one experiences both happiness and suffering. The suffering in this realm, though terrible, is not as great as the suffering in the three realms of woe. The pleasure and happiness experienced in the human realm are not as great as the pleasure and intense happiness experienced by beings in the heavens, nor are humans overwhelmed by the unbearable suffering that beings in the hells undergo. And unlike animals, human beings possess sufficient intelligence to recognize the necessity of looking for a means to achieve the total end of suffering.

¢-- Human birth is difficult to gain from a number of points of view. First of all, it is difficult from the point of view of its cause. Good conduct is the foremost cause of rebirth as a human being, but truly good conduct is exceedingly rare. Second, human birth is difficult to gain from the point of view of number, for human beings are only a small fraction of the living beings who inhabit the six realms. Third, it is not enough simply to be born as a human being, because there are countless humans who do not have the opportunity to practice the Dharma. It is therefore not only necessary to be born as a human but also to have the opportunity to practice the Dharma, developing one's qualities of morality, mental development, and wisdom. The Buddha used a simile to illustrate the rarity and precious nature of opportune birth among human beings. Suppose the whole world were a vast ocean, and on the surface of this ocean a yoke floated, blown about by the wind. Suppose, further, that at the bottom of the ocean there lived a blind tortoise who came to the surface only once every hundred years. The Buddha said that it is as rare to attain opportune birth as a human as for that tortoise to place his neck through the yoke when rising to the surface. Elsewhere, it is said that to be born as a human being with the opportunity to practice the Dharma is as rare as it would be to throw a handful of dried peas against a stone wall and have one pea stick in a crack in it.

¢-- Thus it is foolish to waste human existence, not to mention the fortunate conditions that we enjoy in free societies such as the opportunity we have to practice the Dharma. It is extremely important that, having this opportunity, we make use of it. If we fail to practice the Dharma in this life, there is no way of knowing where in the six realms we will be reborn, or when we will have such a chance again. We must strive to free ourselves from the cycle of rebirth because failing to do so means that we continue to circle endlessly among these six realms of existence. When the karma, wholesome or unwholesome, that causes us to be born in any of the six realms is exhausted, rebirth occurs, and we find ourselves again in another realm.

¢-- It is said that all of us have circled in these six realms since beginningless time. It is also said that if all the skeletons we have had in our various lives were heaped up, the pile would exceed the height of Mount Sumeru, that if all the mother's milk we have drunk in our countless existences were collected together, it would amount to more than all the water in all the oceans. Now that we have the opportunity to practice the Dharma, we must do so without delay.

¢-- The Tree of Enlightenment - An Introduction to the Major Traditions of Buddhism - by

Peter Della Santina)

¢(i.e. Praise of Dependent Origination, by Geshe Yeshe Tobten

¢-- [UNDERSTANDING SAMSAARA = SUFFERING --> Renunciation, Desire to escape all rebirths]

¢-- I should say something of samsara, this flow of forms of life coming one after the other that we find ourselves stuck in. We didn't come here having thought 'I am going to come here'. We ended up here through no particular decision on our own part, not because we were free to come. In other words, we're caught within a flow of existence's, which can not stop because the moment we find ourselves taking birth in a form of life like this, we are moving towards death, and that death itself is a precursor of a state which simply goes towards another birth. And thus this flow or this samsara, going on and on, has no beginning and as it is now, will never end for us. Having this reality in mind, this reality in which we find ourselves caught, the Enlightened One said: 'You should know this to be suffering, you should know what causes it, you should know the end of it, and you should know the path to that end'.

¢-- The example that illustrates the idea is this. You have to first of all know that one is sick. When one knows one is sick one then goes to a doctor who has to find out what's causing the sickness. And then having identified what causes the sickness, prescribe a medicine. And by taking that medicine one gets well. That is the example. So similarly, one has to be aware that our being here, our state of our ongoing being, is itself a problem. The reason being that until one understands it to be a problem, until one knows it is suffering, one will never have the thought, 'I will have to get away from this'.

¢-- That is why one can think of suffering in many ways. You can think for example from six angles about how this is indeed suffering. If we look at the state in which we find ourselves, we see that contentment can never come. No matter how much we consume, we will always need something the next day. It is also a state in which there is nothing definite relative to other living creatures. They might be friends or enemies today but tomorrow they might have changed. Nothing is certain. It is possible that even somebody who is a heart friend will become a mortal enemy tomorrow, and somebody who is a mortal enemy today can be heart friend tomorrow. That is built into the situation in which we find ourselves. On top of this the body that we're carrying with us is something that is going to drop from us at some point. This is a situation in which we will find ourselves again and again, and each time we die we go forth totally alone, whether our mother, father, partner or friend, nobody but ourselves goes on each time. And this too; that our struggles to succeed will end in failure. In other words, that no matter how much we attempt to go up, the end of all going up is coming down. It is a part of the problem of being as we are.

¢-- You can look at it more significantly from the view point of a life form like we have. Not just any life form but human life form. Problems we face are the sufferings associated with being born, getting sick, getting older and of dying. The suffering of losing friends and the things which we like, and meeting with enemies and things we don't like. The suffering of unrequited hopes when we struggle for something we need or want, and no matter how much we try, sometimes, we just can't get it.

¢-- What all this is coming down to is that this great heap of meat and bone that we are sitting in here is itself what's meant by the 'suffering flow of existence'. In this sense, if we are as we are, we are capable of feeling cold, we can get burned and get too hot, we feel hunger and thirst. It's all part and parcel of this kind of reality. One also needs all sorts of things, for example one has to put a roof over one's head, one has to go and buy clothes. Many things become necessary indeed! And why do we go out to work? I mean we prefer to just take it easy, right. We don't go out to work for ourselves, we go to work for this

heap of flesh and bones because 'It' needs us to work to keep it going. Look how hard we work for it, we really have to spend a tremendous amount of time on it to keep it fit and going well. We are servants to it (the body).

¢-- So you see, one is directing one's thoughts to a theoretical state in which this heap of flesh and bone didn't come forth with me stuck in it. One is getting an idea of what such a state might be. So say one gets to be born a celestial being. One stands up not with this lump of flesh and bone but in some sort of light form. It is true, we wouldn't then have quite the problems that come with flesh and bones, but, it is only a temporary state of excellence, as the energy that keeps it going degenerates.

¢-- \*

¢-- [UNDERSTANDING THE ROOT CAUSE OF SAMSAARA -- to find a method to cut the causes]

¢-- Lets go back to just how did it happen that I rose up, as it were, in this form of flesh and blood. One finds the causes to be, mentally speaking, these kankas or afflicted emotions (skt. klesha) in ones mind, and the actions that they motivated. If I didn't have these, I wouldn't be always getting stuck in these heaps of flesh and bone. In a word, I wasn't born miraculously, there were were causes for my birth. The causes for birth are actions that one performed and actions which were motivated by particular kankas in the mental state, particularly the afflicted emotions. It is through getting rid of these kankas in one's mental make-up that one gets rid of the causes to be in a state such as we now find ourselves.

¢-- It is easy to say kankas or kleshas, there are so many of these mental afflicted emotions. But really, if you boil it all down to the main ones, what one identifies is attachment and hatred and confusion. These are the main kankas. One has then, particular kleshas or kankas stuck in one's mind, and you can't burn them off, you can't cut them out and you can't rub them away. You can't just rid of the mind of them in this way. One has to somehow have a method to get these things out of one's mental world, one needs some kind of antidote.

¢-- The main klesha is confusion, which consists of an apprehension of truth. Say one is looking at a stone pillar off at a distance, but somehow it looks as if it is a person is over there. It really appears as a person even though there is no person, there's just a stone pillar but we believe in a person standing there. Similarly with everything that we're aware of in the universe. Every time we become aware of anything we think, 'hey, that's real, isn't it? Yeah that's real and it's truly what it seems to be, yes, that's how it is'. In exactly that same way we accept something as real or true by the way it seems to be, even if it is not real or true. It is the same as if you see something in the dark and think 'watch out, it is a snake', but in fact it is a coiled up rope. All of a sudden one feels tremendous animosity towards it. Better get rid of it! Better kill it! When you turn on the lights you suddenly see all of the grounds for one's animosity and fear are not there at all. But as for ourselves we had no doubt, it was really a snake, we were totally settled on it, totally certain about it. It was reality.

¢-- We apprehend something, we hold on to it, we believe in it; 'But as for me, don't be silly, of course I am here, absolutely exactly as I seem to be. That person who hurt me is most certainly there, trying to get at me and I don't like them. The person who is helping me is definitely there helping me, and yes indeed, I like them very much.' Thus, based on this confusion comes hatreds and attachments. Since one is so sure that indeed 'I' am here and indeed that person hurts me or helps me is there, then that person who's so certainly there should immediately turn up once one searches for them analytically. Something appearing as so real, one should obviously be able to find. Something so real should become clearer and clearer when one's goes looking analytically for it. Through that analytical

search, one begins to chip away at this ascent, the belief in a reality that is in fact not there. With the awareness that the reality I always believed in has never been there, one begins to get insight into emptiness and begins to find an anti-dote to the problems.

¢-- As it's said, when one gets rid of the confusion about the truth all the other kleshas are just blown away. But one might say, 'what about all those wrong things I did in the past, do they just disappear?' No, they all remain as things one did. In other words one's karma remains, but with the absence of this belief in truth, there is no longer conditions for the results which one would have otherwise experienced to come forth. So this is a method to remove these afflicted emotions or kleshas from one's mental world and thereby to free one from suffering.

¢-- On the historical level then, it was the Buddha who sat near the Niranjana river under the Bodhi Tree and found Enlightenment there, having struggled for so long to understand. Then, after going to Sarnath He taught this:

¢---- 'Know this to be suffering and know these to be the causes of suffering, having this samsara and these kleshas in ones mind.

¢---- That's the enemy of the Dharma.

¢---- That's the enemy of the Truth, the enemy of the Way, the enemy of spiritual life'.

¢-- These kankas or these things which stick to our inner state of mind, these afflicted emotions, these hatreds, attachments and this basic confusion which allows us to believe in realities which are not real. And it's the fight, as it were, against these inner enemies which is the fight to be fought when one is attempting to pursue a spiritual life.

¢-- And this is in essence what Buddhism comes down to,

¢---- that one sees or one faces up to the problems one is caught in, the problem which is here now.

¢---- One identifies the causes of it, in essence these psychological afflicted emotions or kleshas.

¢---- And one seeks to free oneself from suffering by removing from one's mind those kleshas.

¢---- When a person has got strong kankas or kleshas, that person will be agitated and upset. If one doesn't have a way to bring oneself to peace, to a feeling of well being, how can one lead others to well being.

¢-- [So, the 3 Levels of Motivation -- in terms of these causes of suffering]

¢---- The spiritual practices which stop one progressing along the flow of existence in a bad state are the first level, or first step.

¢---- A second deeper level is a spiritual practice which gets rid of these kleshas from our inner states of mind. When one's mind is no longer afflicted by these, one's peace, one's well being is firm and ongoing forever.

¢---- But there is a deeper lever than that, also, because that would just be me who attained peace. In fact there is the needs of others that one has to keep in mind. I have to, in other words, develop my talents into a state in which I am Enlightened in order to do something for them. There are indeed those worthy beings who have found freedom for themselves, but that's not enough. There is the freedom of all other living beings too. That must concern me. If I were to develop my talents to such a level that I were Enlightened, I could lead so many other living beings also into that state of unending peace.)

¢(i.e. Q. Lama, could you please talk a little about karma.

¢-- Lama. Sure: you are karma. It's that simple.

¢-- Actually, karma is a Sanskrit word that, roughly translated, means cause and effect.

What does that mean? Yesterday something happened in your mind; today you experience the

effect. Or, your environment: you have certain parents, you live in a certain situation, all that has an effect on you. As you go through life, every day, everything you do, all the time, within your mind there's a constant chain of cause and reaction, cause and reaction; that's karma. As long as you're in your body, interacting with the sense world, discriminating this is good, that is bad, your mind is automatically creating karma, cause and effect. Karma is not just theoretical philosophy, it's science, Buddhist science. Karma explains how life evolves; form and feeling, color and sensation, discrimination; your entire life, what you are, where you come from, how you keep going, your relationship with your mind. Karma is the Buddhism's scientific explanation of evolution.

¢-- So, even though karma is a Sanskrit word, actually, you are karma, your whole life is controlled by karma, you live within the energy field of karma. Your energy interacts with another energy, then another, and another, and that's how your entire life unfolds. Physically, mentally, it's all karma. Therefore, karma isn't something you have to believe in. Because of the characteristic nature of your mind and body, you are constantly circling through the six realms of cyclic existence, whether you believe in karma or not. In the physical universe, when everything comes together — earth, sea, the four elements, heat and so forth — effects automatically result; there's no need for belief to know this happens. It's the same thing in your internal universe, especially when you're in contact with the sense world; you're constantly reacting. For example, last year you enjoyed delicious chocolate with much attachment but haven't had any since, so you miss it badly, "Oh, I'd really love some chocolate." You remember your previous experience of chocolate; that memory causes you to crave and grasp for more. That reaction to your previous experience is karma; the experience is the cause, the missing is the result. It's actually quite simple.

¢-- -- Lama Yeshe, Make Your Mind an Ocean - Your Mind is Your Religion)

L6: [1) The torments of the eight sufferings:] :L6

Now, though they have attained the higher realms:

\     ###  
\     Humans also have no chance of happiness. °  
\     Sorrows, unhappiness, strife, and war and such,  
\     Before we are rid of one, we suffer with another.  
\     Sometimes our food is changed by being mixed with poison.  
\     Food, clothing and requisites fail us, and therefore we get sick.  
\     Later sufferings we have ripened then come forth.

\     ###  
\     There are the three kinds of suffering and also the following:  
\     Birth and age, sickness, death and hostile people;  
\     Being parted from those we love and what we want,  
\     As well as the pain of having to deal with what we get.  
\     The suffering of these eight is without measure and end.

What kinds of suffering do people have?

THE THREE GREAT ROOT SUFFERINGS are the sufferings of:

- 1). Suffering,
- 2). Change
- 3). Conditioned existence.

THE EIGHT KINDS OF [HUMAN] SUFFERING that always grasp us in samsara are:

- 1). Birth,
- 2). age
- 3). sickness
- 4). death
- 5). meeting with hostile enemies
- 6). being separated from dear intimates
- 7). not getting what one wants
- 8). sufferings intimately associated with the five skandhas.

-- In the suffering of suffering, one misery is heaped on another. It is like our father dying, and then our mother dies too.

-- In The suffering of change, as much as one's present pleasure is the suffering it emanates. This is like a house falling apart when someone has not been careful about the site, or poison mixed with food.

-- The suffering of conditioned existence is like having eaten poison. Though our food, clothing and activities are not directly harmed, they are involved in the subsequent sickness; or from one's senses being injured, later injuries follow on that.

The Dulwa Lung<sup>50</sup> says:

- ~ The misery of samsara
- ~ Arises from the skandhas.
- ~ There are the three sufferings
- ~ Of suffering, change, and conditions.
- ~ From the eight varieties,
- ~ People suffer terribly.

THE SUFFERING OF BIRTH is predominantly before birth occurs. Thus wandering in the intermediate state between lives, spirits who come near and enter, as they grasp existence in the mother's womb:

- ~ Prana mind and bindu of ignorant consciousness.
- ~ Gather as oval and oblong, and then a solid lump,
- ~ Then we are like a disk, then like a fish and tortoise,
- ~ In seven weeks a body is gradually engendered.
- ~ When the mother is tired, hungry or thirsty, hot or cold,
- ~ Even a little bit, we suffer immeasurably.
- ~ Dark and close, it is fearful with an unpleasant stench.
- ~ We must suffer unbearable suffering of restriction.
- ~ After seven weeks, for twenty-six following
- ~ The deceptions of the senses and limbs are being established.
- ~ For a total period of thirty-six weeks,
- ~ The bodily embryo grows and gains the power to move.
- ~ Then soon to be extruded between the girdle of bones,
- ~ By our karmic energy we are turned head downward.
- ~ There is greater pain than dying, like the Crushing and Joining Hell.
- ~ After birth, being touched is like being skinned alive.
- ~ Being washed is like our flesh being scraped away with razors.

From the intercourse of the father and mother there is a mixing of the essence of the red

and white bindus, which constitutes consciousness. In the first week, the embryo has the shape of a fluid oval like mercury. In the second, there is an oblong shape like mucus.<sup>51</sup> In the third there is a lump shaped like a finger. In the fourth there is a hard lump like an egg. In the fifth, there is a disk like a lotus petal. In the sixth, it is like the fish as which Vishnu incarnated. The seventh is like a tortoise. For example, the head, feet, and hands are very non-prominent like those of a tortoise.

Then for twenty-six weeks, the limbs of the body, the fingers, the eyes and other senses and their supporting structures, the hair of the head and body, the heart and veins on the inside, the prana and dhatu essences, blood and lymph, masculine and feminine organs, and so forth develop along with the ayatanas.

During the thirty-sixth week, in the body that has developed, there is the downward moving power of consuming food and drink, and produced by the fetus's eating and drinking, there is occasional movement and restless thoughts and the body becomes uncomfortable. During these stages, the fetus dwells in darkness. It seems close and disgusting. There is the suffering of being restricted, and if the mother's belly is too well satisfied, it thinks it is being squashed by mountains and oceans. If she is tired and strongly agitated, there is suffering like being thrown over a cliff.

Young boys, remain with their faces looking inward from the mother's right side, covered by their two palms.

Girls stay looking outward from the left. Then by the wind of karma their heads turn upside down. Having been extruded through the pelvic girdle, at birth they suffer as much as those in the Hell of Crushing and Joining. As soon as they are touched, it is as if their skin was being taken off. When they are washed, they suffer immeasurably, as if their flesh were being cut off with razors. The sufferings of growing, can be briefly seen from those of entering the womb.

Of these the Letter to Students says:

- ~ Confined, accumulating unbearable unwholesome stench,
- ~ Enclosed in unmitigated darkness and narrowness.
- ~ Having dwelled in the Hell-like place that is the womb,
- ~ The body, completely restricted, must suffer great suffering.
  
- ~ Gradually ground like sesame oil, how will it be born?
- ~ But in the sutras it says its life will not be lost.
- ~ Indeed its condition is highly fit for suffering.
- ~ Living in filth, by looking about it is badly harmed.
  
- ~ By the damp womb it is fettered, in unbearable fearful stench.
- ~ The pain of development is as bad as being destroyed.
- ~ Like coming on something disgusting, former memory is lost.

L6: [2] The suffering of old age] :L6

Then in stages:

- \ ###
- \ The suffering of age is very hard to bear. °
- \ After youth decays, there will be no more pleasures.
- \ We cannot get up and down without the help of assistants.

\ As bodily heat is impaired, our food is hard to digest.  
 \ Our strength is failing and we begin to tremble,  
 \ So that it is difficult either to go or stay.  
 \ Our joints decay. We cannot get where we want to go.  
 \ The senses fail. The eyes are dim and cannot see  
 \ We cannot hear sounds or voices any longer.  
 \ There are no sensations of smell and taste and touch.  
 \ Memory is not clear. We sink in an ignorant sleep.  
 \ Perception of things is failing, so there are few qualities.  
 \ Delicious food and such appear as the opposite.  
 \ As life is failing, thoughts are disturbed by the fear of death.  
 \ Like a child's, our patience and span of attention are small.  
 \ We are quickly gone, like a lamp whose oil is spent.

By the slipping away of youth, the strength of the body deteriorates. The joints disintegrate. Food does not nourish. The senses cloud. The eyes are fuzzy. The ears become increasingly deaf. The tongue stammers. Memory is lost. Objects and food that were previously delightful are no longer pleasurable. To the dimming sense organs of the tongue food and drink, do not taste like they did when we were young. We are afraid of death. Like a child again, we have little patience. There are such immeasurable sufferings.

The Letter to Students says:

~ Then for all persons, age,  
 ~ The hand of the Lord of Death,  
 ~ After it has grasped us  
 ~ With no chance of letting go,  
  
 ~ Our hair turns gray and white,  
 ~ All our collection of teeth  
 ~ As if for a joke are taken.  
  
 ~ Our joints all come apart.  
 ~ Our minds become impaired.  
 ~ Our situation becomes  
 ~ As bad as being in Hell.

L6: [3) As for the suffering of sickness:] :L6

\ ###  
 \ The suffering of sickness is very hard to bear. °  
 \ The bodily nature changes, and mind becomes unhappy.  
 \ Our enjoyment of things no longer give us pleasure.  
 \ There is increasing fear that we will lose our lives.  
 \ We wail a lament about this unbearable suffering.

When we are afflicted with sickness our minds are distressed and no joy arises. Perception is interfered with, and we are irritated. We must die, or sometimes we just think it would be better if we did. We want to die, but at the same time the torment of dying rivals Hell.

The Commentary on the Praise of the Hundred Actions says:

~ As for embodied beings  
 ~ Tormented by sickness,

- ~ It feels like being in Hell.
- ~ Rising higher and higher,
- ~ Such is the misery
- ~ Of suffering in samsara.

L6: [4) The suffering of death] :L6

When one's time is exhausted, or even if it is not really exhausted, but one throws it away:

- \ ###
- \ The suffering of dying is even greater than this.°
- \ There is our last meal and our last words are spoken.
- \ For the last time we get dressed. We go to our final sleep.
- \ Body and life, attendants and servants are left behind.
- \ Friends and relations, wealth and enjoyment, are left behind.
- \ We cannot stay, but still we fear to go alone.

For the last time we lie down, rest, talk, eat, get dressed, and come to the last appearances of this life. Attendants and enjoyments are left behind. We have no power to keep living, and leave alone and companionless. Having thought about how we will do it, with an unhappy heart, with a strong feeling that one's essence is being destroyed, life ceases.

We experience wandering in the bardo. Without refuge or protector, our skandhas are lifted on a litter. We are taken to the charnel ground. We are eaten by jackals and so forth. Our assembled intimates suffer immeasurably.

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ How is it going to be?
- ~ This fearful Lord of Death
- ~ Walking at my head,
- ~ Whether oppressed or doubtful,
- ~ The pain will seem like vajra.
- ~ Those who harm the mind,
- ~ After having oppressed it
- ~ Relations and the household
- ~ With tears streaming down their faces
- ~ We see their pain like vajra.
- ~ That having infiltrated
- ~ Into our deepest nature
- ~ Is most unbearable like entering murky darkness.
- ~ This body we guarded so zealously
- ~ And all its accustomed pleasures
- ~ Will be completely lost.
- ~ Firmly bound at the feet
- ~ Of the terrible Lord of Death
- ~ Our head tuft is pulled out,
- ~ Our fate will be determined.
- ~ As we are taken by him,

- ~ By the roar of those nearby
- ~ One's many screams and cries
- ~ Are never heard at all.
- ~ Between water hard to cross and piled heaps of boulders,
- ~ Pricked by sharp piercing thorns,
- ~ Those on this frightful path,
- ~ Bound by the noose of time,
- ~ By the things of the Lord of Death
- ~ They are fiercely driven with sticks
- ~ And herded like animals.

L6: [5] The suffering of meeting with enemies:] :L6

- \ ###
- \ By the suffering of meeting people we dislike °
- \ We are oppressed by fear of the danger of being unpleasantly harmed.
- \ If we meet with hostile enemies, we will no longer be able to have our bodies, lives, and enjoyments.

L6: [6] The suffering of being separated from those dear to us:] :L6

- \ ###
- \ To separate from people and the country that we love°
- \ Causes sorrow, lamentation, and unhappiness.
- \ Remembering their qualities, we are tormented by longing.

If we are separated from our dear friends and relatives who are kind to us, remembering their qualities, our minds are tormented with suffering.

L6: [7] The suffering of deprivation.] :L6

As for the suffering of being deprived of desirables:

- \ ###
- \ In the suffering of being deprived of what we want °
- \ A tormented mind arises when we do not succeed.
- \ We are worn out by poverty, like hungry and thirsty pretas.

If we do not succeed in our goals, our minds are unhappy. When we are deprived of possessions or of something desirable, we are tormented by unhappiness.

L6: [8] The suffering of defilement:] :L6

- \ ###
- \ Form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness °
- \ Which comprise the five perpetuating<sup>52</sup> skandhas,
- \ Because of defilement are the ground of all suffering.
- \ They have been said to be its source, support, and vessel.

The Middle Length Prajnaparamita says:

- ~ Subhuti, because the closely connected skandhas are defiled, they are the place of all suffering.

They are the support of all suffering. They are the vessel of all suffering. They are the

source of all suffering. Moreover, since form manifests the harm of suffering, it is its place. Since feeling takes on suffering, it is its vessel. Since perception is the first gate to being disturbed by conceptualization, it is its support. Since the doer and understander arise among formations and consciousness, they are its source.

These are so explained in the Great Commentary on the Prajnaparamita in Eight Thousand Lines.

L6: [9] The Instruction of exertion in the means of liberation from this.] :L6

Now there is the instruction on eliminating unhappiness:

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\      ###  
\      Thus within the limits of this human world, °  
\      With suffering as cause and effect, there is no happiness.  
\      To be liberated from this, think of the excellent Dharma.  
\      That offers the means of liberation from samsara.
```

As for the path, by the action of the cause of suffering, unhappiness, there is subsequent suffering. Sometimes, by the fruition of former actions, there will be suffering. We should be liberated from that.

L5: [e. The suffering of the asuras (caused by jealousy) (antidote: joy)] :L5

¢(i.e. Another extreme where our own mind could lead us if we abandon ourselves to the obsession of jealousy, hatred and envy; always comparing ourselves with others and fighting to be better. Animals kill and eat other species; asura continually fight among themselves. So they are never in peace and security. -- The way out is to stop fighting others trying to be better, to be happy for them, and to concentrate on the Dharma instead.)

-- 1) How they are unhappy  
-- -- a) The way of their unhappiness  
-- -- b) The instruction to be diligent in practicing Dharma

¢(i.e. The realm of the demigods. The demigods are physically more powerful and mentally more acute than human beings, yet they suffer because of jealousy and conflict. According to ancient Indian mythology, the demigods and gods share a celestial tree. While the gods enjoy the fruit of this tree, the demigods are custodians of its roots. Consequently, they are envious of the gods and constantly attempt to take the fruit from them. They fight the gods but are defeated and suffer greatly as a result. Because of this rampant jealousy and conflict, rebirth among the demigods is unhappy and unfortunate. As in the case of the other realms, there is a cause of rebirth among the demigods. On the positive side, the cause is generosity, while on the negative side, the cause is jealousy and envy. -- The Tree of Enlightenment - An Introduction to the Major Traditions of Buddhism - by Peter Della Santina)

L6: [1] How they are unhappy:] :L6

L7: [a] The way of their unhappiness:] :L7

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\      ###  
\      Asuras likewise are without a chance of happiness. °  
\      Through hatred they have senseless quarrels, disputes, and wars.  
\      Through envy they cannot bear the splendor of the gods.  
\      Their warlike perspective supports many hundreds of sufferings.
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They fight and quarrel even with their own kind. Having seen the happiness and wealth of the thirty three gods, they are tormented with fires of hatred and jealousy. Sometimes, in the wars which they fight with the gods, their heads and limbs are cut off. They are injured by vajras, arrows, wheels, and so forth, and sometimes die, or suffer from fear of dying.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Since by their nature asuras
- ~ Hate the splendor of the gods,
- ~ Their minds all suffer greatly
- ~ Though they are knowledgeable, by the obscurations of beings,
- ~ They do not see things truly.

As for this explanation that they do not see truly, their seeing is like that of the path of seeing of the shravakas and pratyekaBuddhas, but not like that of the Mahayana.

The Edifice of the Three jewels says:

- ~ If one explains an account of the dharma of those lives, the gods, nagas, asuras, and sky soarers of the animal realm, the kinnaras, and the big bellied hungry ghosts beyond number with respect to dharma do not have even a particle of the dharma eye, nor do they attain spotlessness.

Therefore, the way of their vehicles should be realized.

L7: [b) The instruction to be diligent in practicing Dharma:] :L7

- \ ###
- \ Therefore, those who are going to happiness and peace °
- \ Should quickly practice the Dharma, that leads to liberation.

L5: [f. The suffering of the gods (caused by pride or egotism) (antidote: giving)] :L5

¢(i.e. Another extreme where our own mind could lead us if we abandon ourselves to the obsession pride and egotism, or being attached to the temporary bliss of dhyanas. Even though everything seems perfect, it is also impermanent, and they inevitably fall into the lower realms because of strong desire and carelessness. Gods have much more to loose than any other being, so they suffer much more at the end. -- In short, all samsaric happinesses, all caused happinesses, are impermanent and thus unsatisfactory. We should renounce samsaric pleasures, and strive for complete Enlightenment instead. We shouldn't accumulate good karma just to have a good time in a higher realm; but to gain a precious human life, and have the opportunity to transcend the whole samsara cycle. It all depends on our own effort; no Buddha can do it for us. The only way the three gems can help us is if we make the first steps. After that it becomes easier and easier as we progress. The only other alternative is to keep making mistakes based on ignorance and suffering their consequences again and again endlessly.)

There are four sections

- 1) The suffering produced by death and transmigration
- 2) The associated suffering of their subsequent samsaric birth
- 3) The suffering of defiled bliss
- 4) How we should establish liberation

¢(i.e. The realm of the gods is the happiest of the six realms. As a consequence of wholesome actions done in the past, observation of the codes of good conduct, and the

practice of meditation, living beings are reborn among the gods, where they enjoy sensual pleasures, spiritual happiness, or supreme tranquillity, depending on the level of the realm in which they are born. Nonetheless, the realm of the gods is not to be desired because the happiness of the gods is impermanent. No matter how much they may enjoy their existence, when the force of their wholesome karma is exhausted, the effects of their good conduct and experience of meditation spent, the gods fall from heaven and are reborn in another realm. At that moment, it is said that the gods suffer even more mental anguish than the physical pain suffered by other living beings in the other realms. The gods are reborn in the heavens as a consequence of their practice of good conduct and meditation, but there is also a negative factor associated with rebirth in the heavens, and this is pride. -- The Tree of Enlightenment - An Introduction to the Major Traditions of Buddhism - by Peter Della Santina)

L6: [1) The suffering produced by death and transmigration.] :L6

Thus in the heavenly realms:

\     ###  
\     Also the gods of the realm of desire have endless suffering. °  
\     Drunk with desire, they are careless. They fall in the changes of death.  
\     Their flowers wither, their thrones no longer give them pleasure.  
\     Abandoned by their friends, they dread their coming state.  
\     For a week these gods will have unbearable emotions,

The victorious Four Great Kings and the Thirty-three, and the Twin Gods, and the Ganden gods and the Thrulga gods and Shenthrol Wangje appear to be happy. But even this happiness does not go beyond the suffering of change and the suffering of conditions. At the time of their deaths, the color of their bodies becomes unpleasant. Their thrones do not please them. The flowers wreathing their brows wither. Their clothes smell bad. A pain they have never experienced before arises. They are troubled by the perception that they will leave their divine companions and be alone.

With the divine eye, they see the place where they will be born, they are terrified. When they faint away, from far away the gods who are their father and mother or intimates call their names, saying, "May you be born among human beings in Jambuling. There having practiced the ten virtues, once again may you be born here in the god realm." Having said that and scattered flowers, they depart. The day of such gods is a week.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ In the celestial realms, as they are very happy,
- ~ The suffering of death and transmigration is therefore great.
- ~ Having contemplated that, superior ones
- ~ Do not crave for celestial realms that will be exhausted.
  
- ~ Their color of their bodies becomes unpleasant to see.
- ~ Their thrones no longer please them. Their wreaths of flowers wither.
- ~ Their clothes smell bad; and irresistibly in their bodies,
- ~ Arises a dread that they have never felt before.
  
- ~ These are the five presages of being summoned by death
- ~ And their transmigration from the celestial realm.
- ~ That arise for gods within the realm of the gods.

- ~ As with men on the earth who are going to die
- ~ There are those who are summoned to view their deaths.

L6: [2] The associated suffering of their subsequent samsaric birth] :L6

\ ###  
 \ The samadhi gods of such realms of form, as the realms of Bhrama, °  
 \ Exhausting their former karma, fall down into samsara.  
 \ They suffer the suffering of having foreseen this change.  
 \ They see how their karma of formless shamatha will be exhausted.  
 \ They suffer anticipating their subsequent state of samsara.  
 \ Though they have gone to heaven, they cannot rely on it.  
 \ Therefore, fortunate ones should gain enlightenment.

During their great fruition in the Bhrama realms, the samadhi-gods have natural bliss. But they too die, and this is transformed. they suffer over entering into their subsequent births.

Nagarjuna says:

- ~ Those with self-existing samadhi like the Bhrama realms,
- ~ Though they have the brilliance of limitless light and color,
- ~ Since they have not seen their latent ego-conceptions,
- ~ After they die, they cannot help being born in Hell.

Those gods who remain one-pointedly in formless shamatha, also die and transmigrate, and then with formations of suffering on seeing their subsequent samsaric birth, they must be reborn.

The Spiritual Letter says:

- ~ Since they are in such a samsaric state asuras
- ~ As well as Hell beings, animals, and hungry ghosts
- ~ Are not good births and therefore we should know these births
- ~ To be the vessels of many further kinds of harm

L6: [3] The suffering of defiled bliss:] :L6

\ ###  
 \ All beings who are attached to samsaric happiness °  
 \ Are tormented for their craving in a fiery pit.

Moreover, they sow the seeds of subsequent existences in the lower realms where there will be nothing but the flow of the four great currents.<sup>53</sup>

The Letter to Students says:

- ~ Gathering fiery suffering in the world of destruction,
- ~ Beings who expect to be happy are manifesting pride.
- ~ They will be flung to the giant mouth of the Lord of Death.
- ~ They sow the seeds of the tree of subsequent rebirths.

L6: [4] How we should establish liberation,] :L6

There are four sections.

- a) How if we do not establish it, we shall not attain liberation
- b) Since we have not been tamed by the Buddhas in the past, if we do not make an effort

now, we will not be liberated by them.

-- c) The instruction that compassion will not enter into bad karma

-- d) How, even though suffering has been explained, we are not saddened

L7: [a] How if we do not establish it, we shall not attain liberation] :L7

We may think that we will really be protected by the Buddha from the lower realms, but here, if by ego we have done evil deeds, the fruition of the lower realms is ripening within us.

As for the teaching that it is difficult to have an opportunity of being seen with compassion:

\     ###  
\     Enlightenment and the means to it depend on us. °  
\     So it has been said by the Teacher of gods and men.  
\     It cannot be the incidental gift of others,  
\     Just as dreams in the coma of sleep cannot be stopped.  
\     If this could be done, samsara would already have been emptied  
\     By the rays of compassion of the Tathagata and his children.  
\     You yourself must gird yourself in the armor of effort.  
\     Now is the time to ascend the path of liberation.

Being liberated from the lower realms and from samsara depends on our own efforts. This cannot be done by any amount of effort or skillful means by someone else.

The vinaya says:

- ~ I, by teaching you the means of liberation
- ~ Teach you to strive for freedom depending on yourselves.

That is the right idea. Attempting to let the karma of one's self-accumulated projections reverse itself, is like eliminating a dream, by going to sleep and having another dream. If that was workable, these immeasurable samsaric beings would already have been emptied previously by the light rays of compassion of the Buddhas.

L7: [b] Since we have not been tamed by the Buddhas in the past, if we do not make an effort now, we will not be liberated by them.] :L7

Therefore, by our own defects:

\     ###  
\     Those like us who have not practiced the remedy, °  
\     As was done by countless Buddhas in the past,  
\     Will wander on the desolate path which is samsara,  
\     Whose nature is to be a path of evil deeds.  
\     Think how, as before, if we do not make an effort,  
\     We will produce the sufferings existing within the six realms.

The Bodhicharyavatara says: 4.13-14

- ~ For the sake of benefiting sentient beings
- ~ There have been countless Buddhas, teaching in the past;
- ~ Though this is so, simply because of my own defects,
- ~ I have not been the object of their curative actions.
- ~ If now again I act in such a way as that,

- ~ Having acted again and again in just that way,
- ~ How will I be worthy of their consideration?

L7: [c) The instruction that compassion will not enter into bad karma:] :L7

\ ###  
 \ The sufferings of samsara are as limitless as the sky. °  
 \ As unbearable as fire, and as various as all objects.  
 \ Our lack of care for ourselves is really such a shame.  
 \ How can we have a chance to enter into compassion.  
 \ The wise and skillful deeds of Buddha activity  
 \ Are said to depend on the karma of those who are to be tamed.  
 \ Therefore having come to recognize our faults,  
 \ Mindful in our hearts of the suffering of samsara,  
 \ So that we and beings may be liberated from samsara,  
 \ Let us truly embark upon the path of peace.

The sufferings of samsara are as limitless as space and cannot be encompassed by thought. They are a mass of fire difficult to endure. Since their existence is not reasonable, enduring the variety of seeming net of red and white apparent external objects is not right.

The Bodhicharyavatara says: 4.29

- ~ This is an inappropriate and shameful object of patience.

Since such patience is truly shameless. Not seeing the rays of the sun of the Buddha's compassion, we are like people in the darkness under the earth who have no chance to enter into sunlight. Just as the darkness under the earth has its own impure manner of existence, unassociated with conditions that produce light, within the murky darkness of one's own being, it is difficult for compassion to have an opportunity. The compassion of the Victorious One also appears only in accord with the merit and good fortune of those who are to be tamed,

The Avatamsaka Sutra says:

- ~ Just as, even if the disk of the moon arises,
- ~ When there is no vessel, it will not shine there,
- ~ Also the ever-shining moon of the Buddha's compassion
- ~ Will not shine where there is no vessel of good fortune.

Since this is so, it is right to exert ourselves in the means of true liberation.

L7: [d) How, even though suffering has been explained, we are not saddened] :L7

Suitability for that is like this:

\ ###  
 \ If our suffering now is hardly bearable, °  
 \ How will we bear the pain that is truly unbearable.  
 \ If we are not even a little sorry when this is explained,  
 \ Our hearts must be great lumps, composed of the hardest iron.  
 \ Our minds must surely be as thoughtless as a stone.

Shantideva says:

- ~ If even the amount of suffering I have now
- ~ Is irresistible and more than I can bear,

- ~ What about the sufferings of sentient beings in Hell?
- ~ How will I be able to bear such pain as theirs?

Think about that, and don't just say "Well it isn't my fault!"

The Basket-like Talk says:

- ~ We hear of samsaric suffering, and yet we are not sad.
- ~ We who are like that are certainly very foolish.
- ~ As if we were made of stone or a piece of solid iron.
- ~ We clearly show ourselves to be just mindless fools.

L3: [C. It is right to contemplate the sufferings of samsara.] :L3

¢(i.e. The goal of contemplating the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and suffering of all kind of lives (possible destinations) in any part of the three worlds (including the six realms, and the immaterial worlds), is to realize the suffering nature of the whole samsara, to generate renunciation for the whole samsara, and a strong desire to escape it all, and to generate compassion for all sentient beings trap in the same situation. Even the best situation ends up as the worst after a while because of our ignorance, mistakes, wrong investments and their consequences. -- The goal of analyzing the whole process of suffering is to understand that all problems and all solutions come from our own mind. We are the ones creating our own karma, creating our five aggregates that are conditioning everything we experience. Because of ignorance of the real nature of our own mind and of everything, we are creating our own conditioning in a loop, like developing a bad habit.)

For that reason:

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\      ###
\      Samsara is a valley of unbearable suffering. °
\      Knowing mind as the source of many different kleshas,
\      Kleshas and sub-kleshas, and those that are universal,
\      Who would want this state of samsara to increase further?
\      So let us quickly be victorious over samsara.
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The nature of samsara is suffering. The fruition of suffering is the five skandhas (3). These are the six causes. The five root kleshas and the twenty lesser kleshas are all included in the truth that all is suffering. The nature of this great source of many illnesses and harms should properly make us sad.

¢(i.e. The entire wheel of rebirth, the whole of cyclic existence, has the nature of suffering. -- Geshe Lhundrub Sopa, Method, Wisdom and the Three Paths)

¢(i.e. Once you have seen so clearly the disadvantages of cyclic existence you will want to get out. ... It also becomes the very special cause of great compassion. When you analyze thoroughly the condition of suffering of cyclic existence that you yourself are experiencing, when you deeply understand the depth of your own suffering, it is called renunciation. When that thought is swapped for others, for all other sentient beings, that is the thought of compassion, that is the great compassion. -- Venerable Ribur Rinpoche, Three Principals of the Path)

¢(i.e. To practice Dharma, understanding suffering is the first essential. Without this understanding, the will to get out of suffering does not arise. ... This recognition is the first door to practicing Dharma and also the reason for practicing. ... Not only sentient beings but also the whole environment -- trees and so on -- are undergoing change. All

beings in samsara are suffering all the time. If we do not recognize suffering fully we will not practice what is necessary to get out of it. -- Geshe Rabten, The Graduated Path to Liberation)

☿(i.e. Samsara pervades the six realms. Therefore birth in any of these realms brings suffering. We all exist in an ocean of suffering. By recognizing the reality of samsara and becoming detached from the six realms, one is able to cultivate a mind free from suffering, thereby achieving Enlightenment. -- Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche, Contemplation of SUFFERING)

L3: [D. The dedication of merit of the situation] :L3

Now the merit of proclaiming the nature of these in song is dedicated as a cause of benefiting sentient beings:

\     ###  
\     Therefore, by this dharma feast, the source of happiness, °  
\     May as many beings as dwell in the three habitations  
\     Be able to nourish themselves on joy and happiness,  
\     Wearied by all the various kinds of suffering,  
\     Today may the nature of mind, be able to come to rest.

☿(i.e. First we should develop mindfulness of our own suffering; then we should extend this mindfulness to all living beings. Consider how all beings do not wish to have any suffering, yet are caught in a suffering predicament. This type of thinking leads us to compassion. -- Tsenshab Serkong Rinpoche, Renunciation)

☿(i.e. The meaning of the mind of compassion is just like this. With a mind of sympathy and pity one universally contemplates the sufferings of the beings of the ten directions and then composes this thought, "Beings are pitiable. Don't allow them to undergo all of these various kinds of suffering." And so in the same way [one takes up] the mind devoid of hatred (chen), [the mind] devoid of animosity (hen), [the mind] devoid of hostility (ywan), and [the mind] devoid of cruelty (nao) and so proceeds forth until [one directs these thoughts] towards [the beings of] the ten directions in like manner. -- Prajnaparamita)

That is the aspiration. And by the auspiciously-caused merit of this wreath of genuine words and meanings, may all the beings here in the three worlds of beginningless samsara, impoverished and exhausted in the Dharma of accumulation of merit, be enriched by the true wealth of the noble ones, so that their weariness be eased.

- ~ May those tormented by masses of fire in Hell and so forth
- ~ Be cooled by a lake of celestial water gently falling.
- ~ Wreathed in a circlet of jewels, their faces adorned in light,
- ~ Having gone to the higher realms, may they reach enlightenment.
  
- ~ Thus may hungry ghosts, animals, and asuras,
- ~ Human beings and gods, becoming of equal fortune,
- ~ Having attained the joy of the celestial realms,
- ~ Attain the enlightened peace, where not even an atom exists.
  
- ~ Awakening from the pure view of good dharmas of meditation.
- ~ And also the absorptions of the four formless attainments,
- ~ By having completely perfected themselves in merit and wisdom
- ~ May they attain a state like that of lord Amitabha.

- ~ By this true and virtuous intention which is mine
- ~ May all samsaric beings be led to total peace,
- ~ Striving day and night, may they perfect the two benefits.
- ~ May they attain the limitless major and minor marks.

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L2: [CHAPTER IV. "Karma, Cause, and Effect"] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [CHAPTER V. Relying on the Spiritual Friend] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [CHAPTER VI. Going for Refuge] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [CHAPTER VII. The Four Immeasurables] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [Chapter VIII. Bodhicitta, the mind focused on supreme enlightenment] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [Chapter IX. Unifying the developing stage and the perfecting stage] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [Chapter X. The view of Prajna that realizes the Ground without dwelling in dualistic extremes] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [Chapter XI. Meditation, the chapter of spotless samadhi] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [Chapter XII. Actions of benefit (the three limbs of unwavering samadhi)] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L2: [Chapter XIII. The Fruition, the Great Self-Existence] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

L1: [Third main section of the Great Chariot's Commentary: the conclusion] :L1

L2: [Chapter XIV: Conclusion and Final Summary] :L2  
 [see other files for this chapter]

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[End]