

Commentary on In Praise of the Dharmadhatu

Nagarjuna — HYMS · Nagarjuna

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Commentary on
In Praise of the Dharmadhatu
(Dharmadhatustotra)
by Arya Nagarjuna
By The Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

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L1: [Introduction, by Lama Tashi Namgyal]

\ Know that perception involved with the duality of perceiver and perceived is consciousness.
 \ Know that awareness itself, liberated from perceiver and perceived, is primordial awareness: the Dharmadhatu.
 \ -- Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche
 \ The phenomena that appear to the mental consciousness, the chief of them all,
 \ Are conceptualized and then superimposed.
 \ When this activity is abandoned, phenomena's lack of self-essence is known.
 \ Knowing this, meditate on the Dharmadhatu.
 \ -- Nagarjuna, In Praise of the Dharmadhatu

\ I do not see consciousness.
\ I see awareness.
\ -- Milarepa The Very Venerable

It is said in the Buddhist tradition that sentient beings suffer because they misperceive reality. Not seeing accurately what is, the minds of beings give rise to dualistic perception, ego clinging, and all the emotional afflictions that arise from ego clinging. Based on emotional afflictions they act, creating karmic latencies that ripen as suffering in their future. This process, and the solution to it, is stated clearly in the 43rd verse of Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu:

\ The phenomena that appear to the mental consciousness,
\ the chief of them all,
\ Are conceptualized and then superimposed.
\ When this activity is abandoned, phenomena's lack of self-essence is known.
\ Knowing this, meditate on the Dharmadhatu. (43)

The perceptions of the five sense consciousnesses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch - are pure and unobscured, which means that they are free of any form of non-conceptual. But unenlightened sentient beings do not experience that non-conceptual purity. Every moment of direct non-conceptual sense consciousness is followed instantly by a moment of direct non-conceptual mental consciousness, which is then instantly followed by a mental replica or image of that particular direct mental consciousness, which is not a direct experience, but has been called a vague approximation. We would probably call this vague approximation a projection, as in, "You are projecting." It is this vague approximation or projection that forms the basis of the subsequent non-conceptual that recognizes it as such and such, or good or bad and so on, which immediately ensues. In the words of Thrangu Rinpoche, this ". . . sixth consciousness . . . 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."

The consequence of this process is devastating. It means that we are never experiencing accurately what is happening; we are always involved in some degree of conceptual misperception. And therefore our reactions and responses to what we experience are always going to be, even in the most ideal of circumstances, somewhat skewed. In less than ideal circumstances, our reactions can be catastrophic.

The whole purpose of dharma study and practice is "the abandoning of this activity," which results in our recognition of the true nature of things, the dharmata. When we recognize the true nature of things, our responses to life are accurate, helpful, intelligent, and compassionate. But this recognition is not easy to come by. One must, in fact, deconstruct one's experience piece by piece. This process begins first by coming to understand the dilemma we are in. Once we have come to understand that our problems, and indeed the world's problems, result from ego-clinging, the next step is to develop the wisdom and the courage to recognize that there is no other purpose in life that even approaches in importance the deconstructing of ego and ego-clinging. Once one has developed that courage, one can gradually eliminate distractions and simplify one's life sufficiently to make the practice of dharma one's main concern.

The deconstruction of ego proceeds in stages.

-- First we must let go of acting out our emotional reactions to events; which is to say, we must purify the veil of karma (iv), the push-button reactivity of our behavior. In order to do so we practice ngöndro (a).

-- Next, we must allow the emotional confusion of our minds (iii) to subside, which means we must practice shamatha (b) or the meditation of calm abiding.

-- Next we must develop the clear seeing, or the superior seeing of vipashyana (c); we must come to see the true nature of our experience for what it is, and then we must meditate, resting in that state until all confusion and roots of confusion have been eliminated. Seeing through confusion is to see through the process of conceptualizing and superimposing our conceptual version of things onto our experience and then taking that as real. Truly knowing the truth of this process sets one free from it, and instantaneously "phenomena's lack of self-essence is known.

--"The true nature of things, the dharmata, is known.

The Dharmadhatu, primordial awareness, the clear light nature of mind, is known.

-- Knowing this, we meditate on the Dharmadhatu (i.e. mahamudra), and this meditation leads directly to the full realization of Buddhahood.

This is the import of this issue of Shenpen Ösel.

The non-conceptual that we superimpose upon our experience like plastic overlays in an anatomy text are better understood when we understand that there are four types of thoughts:

1. the thought of "I,"
2. the thought of "mine,"
3. the thought that names,
4. and the thought that attributes characteristics to what is named.

It is our clinging to these that is the source of our problems. If we have a row with a friend, part of our suffering comes from the identification or naming of the person as our friend, and the expectations that this person will manifest the characteristics that we attribute to friends. Friends love you, they share your interests, and are supportive of you. Our anger with our friend during our row arises from the fact that their behavior is not consonant with these characteristics. If we did not think of the person as "friend," their behavior would not be so distressing to us.

Deeper even than this level of conceptual designation is that we have identified this person as "our" friend, "my" friend. If someone else is having a row with "their" friend, it may not bother us at all; in fact it may even become a source of amusement and delight. If "our" children misbehave, we suffer; if someone else's children misbehave, we may think it regrettable and be mildly sorry for it and concerned, but we will not suffer in the same way. If a salesperson drops an expensive Rolex watch on the floor, we will probably not suffer. But if we drop the same watch after having bought it, then we are likely to suffer considerably. Yet the watch is the same watch, the children and our friend are just people. The source of our suffering with respect to all of these objects is the fact that we think of them as "mine." If we hear that a school bus has gone off the road and several children have been killed, one of which might be our own, we suffer tremendously. But the instant we discover that not our children, but someone else's children have been killed, the greater part of our suffering is over. The identification of things as "mine" sets us up for

suffering.

But without "I" there can be no "mine," and without the fundamental misperception that splits our experience into two poles, a perceiver and a perceived, and the subsequent identification of the subjective pole of our experience as being of paramount importance, there can be no "I," and thus no clinging to "I." Without clinging to "I" there is utterly no suffering. Without clinging to our conceptual versions of perceiver and perceived, there is no misperception, and where there is no misperception, there is the clear light nature of mind and reality; there is happiness and all positive qualities.

The benefits to an individual of letting go of the activity of conceptualizing and superimposing are apparent. But the benefits to society at large are also immense. Where there is no conceptual overlay, where there is no conceptual confusion and no ego-clinging, the confused energies of karma and klesha are transformed naturally, spontaneously, and effortlessly into the energies of wisdom, which radiate outward as warmth and light and blessing to all sentient beings. In the words of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, where there is no ego-fixation and no conceptual misperception, there is "radiation without a radiator." This radiation of blessing, which is sometimes called the power of compassion, pacifies emotional affliction, enriches the minds and experience of sentient beings, magnifies their attention so that they can be taught the path to peace, and destroys their obstacles. This radiation strikes beings deep in their hearts and inspires them to drop their small-mindedness and to concern themselves with the benefit of others. For those who have been involved in social movements and politics and still aspire to bring peace, harmony, freedom, prosperity, and happiness to the world, the profoundest political act is, therefore, to meditate upon and realize the Dharmadhatu. For in the words of Lao Tsu, "The wise person accomplishes everything by 'doing nothing,' and the people think that they did it themselves." It is important to point out once again that this path cannot be learned and practiced through the reading of books alone. The instructions and transmissions of a qualified lama are essential, for it is the lama who points out the true nature and then gives us the means to meditate upon it and bring the experience of it to fruition, which is the realization of Buddhahood. The lama's instructions might be exactly the same as what you have read in books, but the former carry with them the transmission of a lineage of enlightenment, while the latter is a mere shadow.

So, if you find the references to Shakya Chogden's outline in Rinpoche's teachings confusing, you might want to look at our outline before you read Rinpoche's teachings. But if you are not distracted by these references and can simply read quickly through them, the teachings will present themselves clearly.

-- Lama Tashi Namgyal

L3: [An Outline for Help in Following Rinpoche's References to the Commentary]

Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche presented the teachings of In Praise of the Dharmadhatu according to a commentary written by Shakya Chogden, entitled Ascertaining the Dharmadhatu: An Explanation of Praise of the Dharmadhatu. This commentary in turn presents the teachings according to an outline to which Rinpoche and the translator frequently refer during the course of the teachings. Based on these references, we have endeavored to make our own outline of Khenpo Rinpoche's presentation for the benefit of those who might be confused by these references. This outline should not be taken as an accurate rendering of the original

outline in the commentary. It is certainly incomplete, since Rinpoche taught only the first 43 verses of the 101 verses of the root text, and it may also add items to and omit items from the commentator's original outline. And it is certain that many of the headings will be found to be differently worded.

A. Homage and Short Description of the Dharmadhatu. (1-2)

B. Dharmadhatu Described as Radiant clarity. (3-11)

- The analogy of butter and milk. (3,4)
- The analogy of the butter lamp. (5-7)
- The analogy of the sapphire in the stone. (9,10)
- The analogy of pure gold. (11)

C. Answers to Arguments Raised in Debate. (12-25)

- If the Dharmadhatu were present, beings would be Buddhas.
- Refuted by means of the rice example. (12,13)
- If the Dharmadhatu were present, beings would have the essence of Buddhahood.
- Refuted by means of the banana tree example. (14-17)
- Any antidote that clears obstructions to realizing the Dharmadhatu would also clear away the Dharmadhatu.
- How the Dharmadhatu and obstructions can coexist.
- The example of the clouds which obstruct the sun and moon. (18,19)
- The example of water deep in the earth. (23)
- Why the Dharmadhatu would not be cleared away by clearing obstructions.
- The example of fire cleaning soiled cloth. (20-21)
- The example of teaching emptiness. (22)
- Why the Dharmadhatu is not the same as self.
- The example of the Dharmadhatu not being male or female. (24,25)

D. The Remedy That Removes Obstructions. (verses 26-35)

- The remedy for the afflictions: the wisdom that realizes the selflessness of the individual. (26)
- The remedy for the cognitive obscurations: the wisdom that realizes the emptiness of phenomena. (26)
- The remedy for both the afflictions and the cognitive obscurations: realization of the emptiness of phenomena. (26)
- The reason that it is necessary to understand that phenomena are empty.
- Why kleshas must be cleared away. (27)
- Why thoughts must be cleared away. (27)
- The reason that it is possible to understand that phenomena are empty.
- An explanation of how it is possible to understand
- ... that thoughts of samsara are empty. (28)
- ... that thoughts of nirvana are empty. (29)
- The remedy that removes obscurations.
- Abstract thoughts are all imaginary. (30)
- Uniquely characterized phenomena do not exist. (31)
- Why sentient beings are confused. (32)
- The Buddha teaches the nature of phenomena to be freedom from extremes. (33)
- It is impossible to describe this freedom. (34-35)

E. Dharmadhatu Called by Different Names. (verses 36-43)

---- According to Stages: sentient beings and Buddhas. (36-37)

---- According to Different Modes of Completely False Appearance: the five sense perceptions and the mental perception. (38-43)

Lama Tashi Namgyal

L1: [Commentary by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche]

L2: [Nagarjuna's commentary on the intention of the third turning of the wheel of dharma]

In September of 1998, the Very Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche gave a series of teachings in Seattle on Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu. The following edited transcript is from the evening of September 18. Rinpoche gave the teaching in Tibetan; it was orally translated by Ari Goldfield.

Rinpoche wishes a very warm tashi deleg, first to Lama Tashi, and to all of the members of the dharma center; and to everyone else he wishes a very warm tashi deleg this evening. Along with that he makes the aspiration that our wisdom - that results from listening to, reflecting on, and meditating on the teachings of the genuine dharma - will increase and increase.

Rinpoche came last year and saw many of you here, and he was very happy then; and he is very happy to be able to return this year and see you all once more.

And to get us all into a festive mood, on what is a very, very happy and festive occasion, it would be very good if we sang the song of the lord of yogis, Milarepa, called The Song of Meaningful Connections (1) (i.e. see songs at then end of this file). It is important that we recall what constitutes an auspicious connection and what its nature is. [Students sing. See page 19.]

Rinpoche asks that before listening to the teachings, we give rise to the precious attitude of Bodhicitta, which means that we aim to attain the state of perfect enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, who are limitless in number. In order to do that, we must listen to, reflect on, and meditate on the teachings of the protector, the great and noble Nagarjuna, and specifically on his Praise of the Dharmadhatu, with all of the enthusiasm that we can muster in our hearts. This is the precious attitude of Bodhicitta; please give rise to it and listen.

Last year we studied the teachings of the protector Nagarjuna that focused on the second turning of the wheel of dharma, specifically his teachings from the five collections of reasoning such as

- The Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning,
- The Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness,
- The Refutation of Criticism,
- and The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way.

This year we will study the protector Nagarjuna's commentary on the intention of the third turning of the wheel of dharma, which is called

- Praise of the Dharmadhatu.

L3: [A. Homage and Short Description of the Dharmadhatu. (1-2)]

The first verse is a prostration to the Dharmadhatu :

\ There is something which as long as left unknown
\ Results in life's three planes of vicious circle.
\ Beyond all doubt, it dwells in every being.
\ To the Dharmadhatu I devoutly bow. (1)

¢(i.e. The potential is there in everybody. Nirvana is not a new product, a new view. All we have to do is to realize the real nature of our own mind, and thus of everything. The root cause of all suffering is this ignorance of the real nature of our own mind.)

The commentary on this verse, written by Shakya Chogden, reads: "That which, as long as it is not known and not seen, results in the chariot of the kleshas" dragging sentient beings through the three realms of existence is the Dharmadhatu. It definitely dwells or abides in all sentient beings. When we explain it, if you say that it is a mere non-affirming negation, meaning that it is mere emptiness, a vacuum, mere nothingness, emptiness alone, then it would be meaningless to say that sentient beings go around in samsara and it would be meaningless to say that the Dharmadhatu dwells in all sentient beings. There are two reasons why this is the case.

-- First, if the true nature of sentient beings were mere emptiness, they could never transmigrate through cyclic existence;

-- and secondly, if the Dharmadhatu were mere emptiness, then it would also exist in entities which are not sentient beings.

In short, this is a prostration to the true nature of the mind, the Dharmadhatu, the mind itself, where there is nothing to prostrate to and there is no one prostrating.

The second verse begins the section in which the Dharmadhatu is described:

\ When that which forms the cause for all samsara
\ Is purified along the stages of the path,
\ This purity itself is nirvana;
\ Precisely this, the Dharmakaya, too. (2)

¢(i.e. To do that we need to go progressively, slowly purifying the perception of the mind, seeing through all the different levels of illusions.)

There are three causes of samsara.

-- The first is karma, defiled action;

-- the second are the kleshas, the mental afflictions;

-- the third is conceptual mental activity, non-conceptual.

The basis or the ground in which these three are purified is the Dharmadhatu, which is primordial awareness, inherent awareness, originally present wisdom. The path of practicing the dharma is what purifies these three causes. It clears away all of the adventitious, fleeting stains that obscure the true nature of the mind but are not part of its true nature. When these adventitious stains are cleared away, what remains is pure primordial awareness. This is given the name nirvana. It is also given the name Dharmakaya. This also tells us what the Dharmadhatu is.

In short, what is the Dharmadhatu? It is the very essence of our present mind, the very essence of this present moment of mind, which essence is radiant clarity. It is completely free of any flaw; it is naturally perfect just as it is. Therefore, the true nature of mind is the ultimate thing to realize; it is the ultimate object of meditation. When purified of stains, it is nirvana.

L3: [B. Dharmadhatu Described as Radiant clarity. (3-11)]

In the extensive explanation of the Dharmadhatu [the remaining verses of In Praise of the Dharmadhatu], there are three main sections.

1. The first describes the ground. It describes how, even during the time sentient beings are in samsara, the Dharmadhatu is completely pure and naturally abides in a completely pure state of being.
2. The second describes how, at the time of the path - which in this case refers to the time when a practitioner becomes a noble bodhisattva in the path of the Mahayana - what is called the Dharmakaya, which possesses the two types of purity, naturally develops in stages.
3. And finally, the third section describes how at the time of the fruition, when Buddhahood has been attained, the three kayas and enlightened activity are spontaneously present.

In the first section, which describes the Dharmadhatu at the time of the ground, when sentient beings are still in samsara, there are also three parts.

- The first part [verses 3-11] describes the Dharmadhatu as being, by its very nature, radiant clarity.
- The second part explains that because the nature of Dharmadhatu is radiant clarity, it is possible to cleanse it of anything that might obscure it.
- And finally, the third part explains that in dependence upon the proper conditions, any sentient being's potential for enlightenment can awaken, and explains how, through this awakening of their potential, all of the stains can be cleared away. The first part of this description of the Dharmadhatu at the time of the ground teaches that even though the Dharmadhatu or the true nature of mind of any sentient being is radiant clarity or primordial awareness, inherently existent wisdom, we do not necessarily see it; we do not necessarily recognize that wisdom. And then it refutes the objection that this wisdom does not exist at the time of the ground when sentient beings are confused in samsara.

That primordial awareness exists even though we might not necessarily see it, is taught by means of four analogies.

1. The first analogy is that of butter and milk. Just as butter pervades milk, so primordial awareness pervades all sentient beings.
2. The second analogy is a butter lamp burning inside a clay vase. Just as a butter lamp burns inside a clay vase, so primordial awareness, which is of the nature of radiant clarity, is always there in sentient beings, even though they might not be able to see it through the vase of the cognitive and afflictive obscurations.
3. The third analogy is a sapphire encrusted in an ordinary stone. By this example it is taught that reaching the first bodhisattva bhumi clears away the darkness of ignorance that prevents one from seeing this radiant clarity, even though it is always there.

4. And finally, by the example of utterly pure gold, it is taught that at all times this radiant clarity perfectly exists.

L4: [B.1. The analogy of butter and milk. (3,4)]

The analogy of the milk and butter teaches that the Dharmadhatu exists even though we cannot see it, and that, when the stains are cleared away, it becomes evident:

\ As butter, though inherent in the milk,
\ Is mixed with it and hence does not appear,
\ Just so the Dharmadhatu is not seen
\ As long as it is mixed together with afflictions. (3)

¢(i.e. The potential is there in everybody. Nirvana is not a new product, a new view. We just don't see the real nature of the mind and thus perpetuate samsara.)

Butter always exists as the very nature of milk. But as long as the milk is mixed with the butter, you do not see the butter, even though it is, of course, there. Similarly, as long as the Dharmadhatu is mixed with the mental afflictions in ordinary sentient beings, even though it is there, we cannot see it.

The true nature of mind - the Dharmadhatu, radiant clarity - cannot be seen by ordinary beings, and there is a good reason for this. We are blocked by temporary stains from seeing it, just as milk prevents our seeing the butter that is present in it. Just as the milk obscures our vision of the butter, our afflictions and our concepts prevent our seeing the true being, the very nature of our mind, which is nonetheless present.

If the stains are cleared away, then we can see the Dharmadhatu:

\ And just as the inherent butter essence
\ When the milk is purified is no more disguised,
\ When afflictions have been completely purified,
\ The Dharmadhatu will be without any stain at all. (4)

¢(i.e. The potential is there in everybody. Nirvana is not a new product, a new view. We just don't see the real nature of the mind and thus perpetuate samsara.

¢-- But when the illusions are gradually seen for what they are, then one can see the real nature of the mind, and be free from all illusions. One then see that the real nature of the mind is "clear light" / empty, clear, unimpeded. This mind is then free, purified from all the veils.)

Purifying or refining milk, which leaves only the butter inherent in it, exemplifies the purification of our own confusion, which, when complete, leaves only the mind's true nature, which is the Dharmadhatu.

It is difficult for us to understand that inherent awareness or primordial wisdom can pervade and be equally present in all sentient beings. So examples are used. If we doubt that the nature of our own mind is the primordial awareness of the Dharmadhatu, then we should think of this example of butter being present in milk, and that will help clear away our doubts.

L4: [B.2. The analogy of the butter lamp. (5-7)]

The second example is of a butter lamp burning inside a clay vase, through which it is taught that the radiant clarity of the true nature of mind is always burning brightly, though we might not be able to see it. Nevertheless, it is always radiant clarity:

\ As a butter lamp that burns inside a vase
\ Would not even be slightly visible,
\ As long as left inside afflictions' vase,
\ The Dharmadhatu is not visible. (5)

¢(i.e. The potential is there in everybody. Nirvana is not a new product, a new view. We just don't see the real nature of the mind and thus perpetuate samsara.

¢-- But when the illusions are gradually seen for what they are, then one can see the real nature of the mind, and be free from all illusions. One then see that the real nature of the mind is "clear light" / empty, clear, unimpeded. This mind is then free, purified from all the veils.

¢-- This clear light nature is always present; it is just not seen for what it is when covered with the veils.)

A butter lamp burning inside a clay vase might not be seen. But not seeing it does not mean that it is not there; it is there. So too the primordial awareness of sentient beings is burning brightly, though it is obscured by the vase of mental afflictions that encases it, and so it is not visible.

Even though the mind's true nature is radiant clarity, we cannot see it because it is obscured by mental and emotional afflictions. But the next two verses read:

\ If one perforates the surface of the vase,
\ Whatever holes are made in whichever directions,
\ Through those and in precisely those directions
\ Light will shine, as is its nature to. (6)

\ At the moment when the vajra-like samadhi
\ Is able to obliterate the vase,
\ At that very moment the light burning inside
\ Will shine throughout the reaches of all space. (7)

¢(i.e. The potential is there in everybody. Nirvana is not a new product, a new view. We just don't see the real nature of the mind and thus perpetuate samsara.

¢-- But when the illusions are gradually seen for what they are, then one can see the real nature of the mind, and be free from all illusions. One then see that the real nature of the mind is "clear light" / empty, clear, unimpeded. This mind is then free, purified from all the veils.

¢-- This clear light nature is always present; it is just not seen for what it is when covered with the veils.

¢-- And the way to see this real nature of the mind, the way to purify it, is to turn inward, to develop concentration and insight, to seek the very subtle nature of the mind. It is indestructible like a vajra, because it is not a mental construction; it is not dependent; it is not a product; it is not impermanent. And from the Shentong point of view, it is not even empty of inherent existence.)

It is taught here by analogy that the vajra-like samadhi, which occurs on the tenth level of

bodhisattva realization and ushers in Buddhahood, obliterates the vase of adventitious and fleeting emotional and mental obscurations, allowing the radiant clarity of primordial awareness to blaze unimpededly throughout the infinite expanse of space.

When we meditate on selflessness, on emptiness, on whatever type of meditation we do, the entire point is to obliterate this vase of the mental afflictions. There are many different ways of smashing this vase so that our radiant clarity can shine.

The next verse answers an argument raised in debate - that this radiant clarity arises newly from meditation, and therefore must be created anew. This assertion is incorrect, as Nagarjuna explains:

\ The Dharmadhatu was never born,
\ Nor will it ever cease.
\ At all times it is free of all afflictions;
\ At the beginning, middle, and end, free from stain. (8)

¢(i.e. The potential is there in everybody. Nirvana is not a new product, a new view. We just don't see the real nature of the mind and thus perpetuate samsara.

¢-- It is indestructible like a vajra, because it is not a mental construction; it is not dependent; it is not a product; it is not impermanent. And from the Shentong point of view, it is not even empty of inherent existence.)

Someone might ask, "Doesn't this primordial awareness that arises at the stage of Buddhahood come from meditating on the path, and therefore is it not absent at the time of the ground, when one is an ordinary sentient being?"

The answer to this question is given in the following reasoning. The true nature of the mind is radiant clarity, which means that it is not produced by any cause or any set of harmonious conditions that brings it about. It is not created by causes or conditions. It is not something that newly arises in the absence of a previous continuum of it. It does not arise newly, for two reasons.

-- First, it is not something that comes to a halt through the ceasing of some continuum.

-- And secondly, because at any time or at all times the true nature of mind has been completely free of the afflictions; the afflictions, in essence, have never arisen, they never really happen. And so, therefore, the true nature of mind is continually present.

The Dharmadhatu is not an entity that somehow arises as a consequence of causes and conditions. It is not born of causes and conditions, nor is it created by causes and conditions. If the Dharmadhatu were an entity, it would have to cease at some point. Anything that is born must also cease. It would have to come into existence and then go out of existence. It would have to become a nothingness. But the Dharmadhatu is the basic nature of reality; it is not created by causes and conditions, so it never truly arises; and it never goes out of existence, either. So at the time of the ground (the beginning), at the time of the path (the middle), and at the time of the fruition (the end), it is always the same, in that it is always completely free of stain or obscuration. It does not arise freshly or new out of nothingness, it does not just come about or happen, because it is the Dharmadhatu.

L4: [B.3. The analogy of the sapphire in the stone. (9,10)]

The third example - of the stone and the sapphire - also shows that the nature of the Dharmadhatu is radiant clarity. But it is not until the first bodhisattva bhumi has been attained that the darkness that obscures it is cleared away. The verses read:

\ As sapphire, the precious gem,
\ Shines with brilliant light all the time,
\ But when confined within a grosser stone,
\ We do not see its bright light shine, (9)

\ Just so, although obscured behind afflictions,
\ The Dharmadhatu has no trace of flaw.
\ While samsara blocks its light, it does not illuminate;
\ Nirvana gained, its light will brilliantly shine. (10)

¢(i.e. The potential is there in everybody. Nirvana is not a new product, a new view. We just don't see the real nature of the mind and thus perpetuate samsara.

¢-- But when the illusions are gradually seen for what they are, then one can see the real nature of the mind, and be free from all illusions. One then see that the real nature of the mind is "clear light" / empty, clear, unimpeded. This mind is then free, purified from all the veils.

¢-- This clear light nature is always present; it is just not seen for what it is when covered with the veils.

¢-- And the way to see this real nature of the mind, the way to purify it, is to turn inward, to develop concentration and insight, to seek the very subtle nature of the mind. It is indestructible like a vajra, because it is not a mental construction; it is not dependent; it is not a product; it is not impermanent. And from the Shentong point of view, it is not even empty of inherent existence.)

Even though it is the basic nature of sapphire to be brilliant, when it is hidden inside a gross stone, we do not see that brilliance. In the same way, the nature of the mind is unimaginably pure. It could not be more pure. It is perfectly pure. But when our mental afflictions block it from our view, we do not see its radiant clarity. This is samsara; it is nothing more than that. Samsara is that condition in which one's mental afflictions prevent one from seeing the radiant clarity of the true nature of mind. And nirvana ensues when these afflictions have been cleared away and what has been there all along, which is this radiant clarity of the true nature of mind, shines naturally and freely.

L4: [B.4. The analogy of pure gold. (11)]

The fourth analogy - the example of utterly pure gold - again demonstrates that radiant clarity exists at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the path. There are two sections to this, an assertion and a refutation of debate. In the first section it says, "If someone were to argue, 'Well, at the time of nirvana, of course, there is radiant clarity; but at the time of the ground, when sentient beings are not Buddhas, there is no radiant clarity,' then the answer would be, 'If it wasn't there at the time of the cause, then how could it be there at the time of the result?'" The verse, which uses the example of refining gold from gold ore, reads:

\ If the fundamental element is present,

\ Work will yield the sight of purest gold;
\ If the fundamental element were lacking,
\ The labor would produce no fruit but woe. (11)

¢(i.e. Everything is already pure; it is a matter of purifying the obstructions, the veils, covering the perception, the real nature of the mind. Everything is pure in emptiness. Everything is peace when seeing the inseparability of appearances and emptiness.

¢This clear light nature of the mind is not produced, conditioned, impermanent, it is always there. But because we don't see this, we perpetuate samsara. It is a vicious cycle: because of not seeing it we continue to react or produce karma, because we continue to react, or because of the accumulated karma, we don't see it.)

If gold is present in gold ore, then when you refine it to remove the stone, you will see only pure gold. If, however, you try to refine a rock without gold in it, then all your efforts will be meaningless.

L3: [C. Answers to Arguments Raised in Debate. (12-25)]

The first part of the third section [verses 12-25 of Praise of the Dharmadhātu] refutes the three-pronged refutation of this point, that Buddha nature is present in sentient beings.

1. The first argument to be refuted is that, if the Buddha nature or Dharmadhātu were present in sentient beings, then sentient beings would be Buddhas.
2. The second argument is that, if the Dharmadhātu were present in sentient beings, then they would have the Buddha nature, they would have the Buddha essence.
3. The third argument is that, by the antidote that clears away the fleeting stains, the Buddha potential itself could also be cleared away and made to vanish, which is saying that the detergent we use to get rid of the stains would also get rid of the cloth. All three of these assertions are refuted.

L4: [C.1. If the Dharmadhātu were present, beings would be Buddhas]

L5: [Refuted by means of the rice example. (12,13)]

The first point tries to refute Nagarjuna's assertions by saying that, since you say that there is no difference in the Dharmadhātu between the times of the ground, the path, and the fruition, all sentient beings must be fully enlightened Buddhas.

This assertion is answered with the following analogy:

\ As kernels are not considered to be rice
\ As long as they are enveloped in their husks,
\ Just so the name of "Buddha" is not given
\ To all of those whom afflictions still enfold. (12)

¢(i.e. Not seeing the real nature of the mind we are not free from all of its illusions, so we are not Buddhas. As long as we are fooled by the mind's creations, fooled by the veils covering the clear light nature of the mind, we are building karma and suffering the consequences.)

Even though the Dharmadhātu pervades all sentient beings, sentient beings are not given the name Buddha because they are still enveloped by mental afflictions, just as a kernel is not

given the name rice as long as it is still enveloped by its husk.

The next verse reads:

\ And just as when loosened from the husk,
\ The rice itself is what appears,
\ Just so the Dharmakaya itself,
\ When loosened from afflictions, freely shines. (13)

¢(i.e. But once we see the real nature of the mind, and thus of everything, we are free from the traps of the mind's own creations. Then we are Buddhas. A mind that knows its own nature and which is constantly aware of this, a mind that is purified, is called a Dharmakaya.

¢-- Note: This is (Shentong) like objectifying the transcendental mind; thinking the very subtle mind is not empty of inherent existence itself. Giving it a name, Dharmakaya. From the Rangtong point of view, this is just a skilful means, and ultimately it is also empty of inherent existence. Its real nature is inconceivable, beyond all conceptualization.)

When the husk drops away, what is left we call rice. And when one attains freedom from all of the mental afflictions, then what is left is the true nature of the mind alone, and that is given the name Dharmakaya; it is also given the name Buddha.

L4: [C.2. If the Dharmadhatu were present, beings would have the essence of Buddhahood]
L5: [Refuted by means of the banana tree example. (14-17)]

A very subtle point is being made here. Even though sentient beings are not Buddhas, sentient beings still have the potential to become Buddhas. The argument made here against this proposition is that, if it were the case that at all three stages along the path a sentient being's nature were the same, then that sentient being would be a Buddha, and would have the essence of a Buddha at all three of these stages; or, if the sentient being did not have the Buddha essence, then the sentient being would have no potential to become a Buddha. The example that Nagarjuna gives here is a banana tree:

\ It is said, "Banana trees are void of pith."
\ One uses this example in the world.
\ But the fruit of such a tree has pith indeed;
\ when eaten, it is sweet upon the tongue. (14)

¢(i.e. Even though we are right now fooled by our own mind's illusions we can overcome this by carefully looking at the way the mind works and seeing its real nature. So we are not a Buddha while being fooled by it; but can get free just by knowing its real nature, and the real nature of everything: the inseparability of appearances and emptiness, the inconceivable truth.

¢-- When we say that the mind sees its own true nature, it does not see anything, and that emptiness is its true nature: that it is empty and operational at the same time. It then sees what it is not, and becomes free from all extremes. It sees that it is not existent, not non-existent, not both existent and non-existent, not neither existent nor non-existent. Eliminating those four extremes, it is free. It has always been clear light, but it was fooled by its own created natural fabrications.)

When you peel away the layers of a banana tree, there is nothing inside; nevertheless, the fruit of the banana tree is quite sweet. Similarly, at the time that one is an ordinary

sentient being, there is no trace of a Buddha nor anything resembling a Buddha. Nevertheless, at the time of the fruition, the sweet fruit of Buddhahood can be tasted. Even though the banana tree has no essence or core, because it has potential, it can grow a fruit that is very sweet to eat. Similarly, even though a sentient being does not have the essential nature of being a Buddha - you cannot find any Buddha in the sentient being - because the sentient being has the potential to become a Buddha, then the fruit of Buddhahood can come into being.

The banana tree itself does not resemble a sweet-tasting fruit, but it has the potential to produce a sweet-tasting fruit. Similarly, a sentient being does not have any essence that resembles a Buddha, but a sentient being has the potential to produce Buddhahood.

\ Just so, samsara has no pith,
\ And if beings can remove affliction's peel,
\ The fruit within is Buddhahood itself,
\ The nectar for all corporal beings to taste. (15)

¢(i.e. So even though samsara consist of being fooled by the mind's own creations and continually producing more karma because of that, there is a way out. And it is by becoming self-aware of the mind's own nature, which is clear light, that we become free. Even though samsara is a whole fabrication, there is a path to realize this within samsara. The real nature of the mind is already pure; it is a matter of realizing it. And this is not a view, not a fabrication of the mind, but the result of self-awareness, the primordial awareness.)

So within samsara, which lacks any essence at all, which does not truly exist, is the fruit of Buddhahood. If the peel of the afflictions is peeled away, then what remains can be enjoyed by everyone.

The commentary itself reads: "Even though ordinary sentient beings do not have the essence of Buddha, they have the potential of primordial awareness. If they did not, how could Buddhahood arise? A banana tree does not have the essence of being a sweet banana, but if it did not have the potential to produce that banana, then from where could the banana come?"

The next verse reads:

\ And just as from a given kind of seed
\ A fruit results resembling its cause,
\ Who with common sense would seek to prove
\ A fruit exists without its specific seed as cause? (16)

¢(i.e. Buddhahood is not conditioned, produced, but "uncovered", or "realized". Once we directly see the real nature of the mind in action in the present, how it created those "things", then we cannot be fooled by those illusions anymore. And being free from those illusions, seeing the real nature of the mind all the time, is Nirvana. Then everything is seen as pure, as they have always been: inseparability of interdependence and emptiness.)

A seed has the potential to produce a particular kind of fruit; if it did not, then how could that fruit possibly come into existence? Similarly, sentient beings always have the potential to attain Buddhahood.

\ The basic element which serves as seed
\ Is seen as the support of all great qualities.
\ Through gradual refinement, step by step,

\ The stage of Buddhahood will be attained. (17)

¢(i.e. So even though samsara consist of being fooled by the mind's own creations and continually producing more karma because of that, there is a way out. And it is by becoming self-aware of the mind's own nature, which is clear light, that we become free.

¢-- Note: Rangton would say: an illusion can become self-aware that it is an illusion. Sentong says: primordial awareness can become self aware of its clear light nature and become free from its own fabrications. In both case the mind becomes aware of the inseparability of appearances and emptiness, and transcend all fabrications.)

The potential to attain enlightenment - here referred to as the basic element - is like the seed which produces Buddhahood, and is asserted to be the basis for all the qualities of enlightenment. And through refinement of this potential, step by step, the state of enlightenment can be reached.

So we will stop here for tonight. There is quite an extensive commentary on these two verses, and Rinpoche says it would be better to pick that up tomorrow.

Now we will sing two songs by the lord of yogis, Milarepa, called

---- The Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition (2) and

---- The Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range (3).

---- These songs are perfectly in harmony with the view that is taught in this text, Praise of the Dharmadhatu.

-- In the first one (The Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition (2)) Milarepa sings of how

---- the true nature of mind is original wisdom or primordial awareness. He sings,

---- "The view is original wisdom, which is empty."

---- Original wisdom and primordial awareness in Tibetan are called yeshe, which is the same as the Dharmadhatu.

---- The same term is used in Praise of the Dharmadhatu by Nagarjuna.

-- In the second song, The Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range (3), Milarepa teaches that

---- the true nature of mind is radiant clarity,

---- which is the same view expressed in Nagarjuna's Praise of the Dharmadhatu. It is important for us to see what Milarepa is talking about when he is singing about

---- the true nature of mind as being either original wisdom or radiant clarity,

---- and important to understand how this type of view is in harmony with Nagarjuna's view.

First we will sing The Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition (2).

[Students sing both songs. See below and page 26.]

\ Rest with a child's independence.

\ Rest like an ocean free of waves.

\ Rest with a butter lamp's clarity.

\ Rest like a corpse, without arrogance.

\ Rest like a mountain, so still.

[Students meditate with Rinpoche.]

Now we will sing Rinpoche's song called Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe (4). It is important for us to sing this song because the twentieth century is a century that has seen tremendous scientific advancement, tremendous achievement in terms of the increase in material prosperity and advance in technology, and it is very important for us to make aspiration prayers that all of these developments be boons to world peace and happiness and not adversaries to it. This will only come about if we aspire that it come about. And so it is important for us to sing this song.

[Students sing Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe (4). See page 27.]

Sarwa Mangalam.

L2: [Buddhahood is the result of samsara, but not its essence]

Continuing the Very Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's teaching on Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu, the following edited transcript is from the morning of September 19. Rinpoche gave the teaching in Tibetan; it was orally translated by Ari Goldfield.

Sarwa Mangalam.

Rinpoche wishes everyone the heartiest tashi deleg this morning, and he makes the aspiration that our ultimate Bodhicitta, which cuts through the root of samsaric existence, and our relative Bodhicitta, which slams the door to attachment to one-sided selfish nirvanic peace, will both increase and increase and result in our performing incredible benefit for all the limitless numbers of sentient beings.

It would be good to sing Milarepa's Song of Meaningful Connections (1).

[Students sing. See song on page 19.]

Since Milarepa's song called Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition (2) is perfectly in harmony with the view taught by Nagarjuna in the text Praise of the Dharmadhatu, it would be wonderful if we sang it now.

[Students sing. See song on page 25.]

-- In Praise of the Dharmadhatu, Nagarjuna explains that the Dharmadhatu is primordial awareness.

-- Similarly, Milarepa explains that the ultimate nature of reality is primordial awareness.

-- Therefore it is very important for us to see how these two explanations are in harmony with each other.

-- If we ask what is original wisdom or primordial awareness, it is the inseparability, the undifferentiability of the expanse and awareness.

\ The Dharmadhatu is primordial awareness.

\ The ultimate nature of reality is primordial awareness.

\ If we ask what is

\ original wisdom or primordial awareness,

\ it is

\ the inseparability,

\ the undifferentiability of the expanse and awareness.

\ the Buddha potential, the Buddha element,

\ is
\ radiant clarity (clear light)
\ free of any clinging, free of any conceptual reference point, free of any focus

¢(i.e. If we seek the very subtle nature of the mind, beyond all illusions, all fabrications, what do we find ? Pure awareness without consciousness, without any conceptualization. All fabrications, karma formation, concepts, objects and phenomena are surimposed on the real nature of the mind. The pure nature of the mind and the real nature of everything is the inseparability of appearances and emptiness -- like The Union of The Two Truths. Everything is empty because dependently arise. Everything is dependently arisen because empty.)

Now we need to sing Milarepa's Song of The Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range (3). In Praise of the Dharmadhatu, Nagarjuna teaches that the Buddha potential, the Buddha element, is radiant clarity. And in his Song of The Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range (3), Milarepa sings of this same radiant clarity, that is free of any clinging, free of any conceptual reference point, free of any focus.

[Students sing. See page 26.]

In this house, the singing sounds really good.

We continue with the commentary that follows the seventeenth verse, which reads:

\ The basic element which serves as seed
\ Is seen as the support of all great qualities.
\ Through gradual refinement, step by step,
\ The stage of Buddhahood will be attained. (17)

¢(i.e. So even though samsara consist of being fooled by the mind's own creations and continually producing more karma because of that, there is a way out. And it is by becoming self-aware of the mind's own nature, which is clear light, that we become free.

¢-- Buddhahood is not itself a samsaric creation; it is freedom from all of those creations.

¢-- Buddhahood is not the essence of samsara, because samsara has no essence, no substance

¢... It could mean that a Buddha did not create the world because there is no real world, and no real first cause.

¢... We have the potential to become a Buddha, but do not have the essence of a Buddha already in us, otherwise we would be Buddha already.)

This verse continues to point out that, although sentient beings do not have the essence of Buddha - you could not describe them as being enlightened - they do have the potential to become enlightened, which potential, when refined and cultivated, results in their enlightenment. When the sweet fruit is referred to in the previous example, we should not think that this sweet fruit is the essence of the banana tree. It is the result of the banana tree or it is what the banana tree can produce, but it is not the same thing as the banana tree. If it were the same as the banana tree, then it would be co-emergent with it. In other words, whenever there was a banana tree, there would be the fruit; as long as there was the fruit, there would be a banana tree. These two things could not exist apart from each other. But obviously that is not the case. Buddhahood is the result of samsara, it is the fruition of samsara, but it is not its essence; it is not the same thing as samsara. The reason that Buddhahood is not taught as being the essence of samsara is that samsara has no

essence; it has no pith, it has no substance. And so therefore Buddhahood is not taught to be the essence of that which has no essence.

Then a question is raised, "It is true that it is taught that the banana tree has no essence - if you peel off the palms and the outer layers of the trunk, you do not find any core inside; and it is also taught that even though the banana tree has no essential core, it still has the potential to produce a result. So by that is it not taught, therefore, that the banana tree has some essence to it, by virtue of the fact that it can produce a fruit? And similarly, although it is taught that samsara has no essence, because samsara has the potential to produce enlightenment, then is it not taught that this potential is the essence of samsara, that this potential to produce Buddhahood is the essence of samsara? Is that not true?" And the answer is yes, that is the case. But, when it is taught that sentient beings have the Buddha nature or the Buddha essence, what that means is that they have the potential to reach enlightenment. It is not the same as saying that the nature or the essence of sentient beings is the state of Buddhahood itself. That is a distinction that we need to make. Because if it were the case that sentient beings had the very nature of a Buddha, of Buddhahood or awakening itself, then what would be the point of distinguishing the two? We would not be able to say there was any difference.

L4: [C.3 Any antidote that clears obstructions to realizing the Dharmadhatu would also clear away the Dharmadhatu. Refuted in three parts:]

L5: [a. How the Dharmadhatu and obstructions can coexist.]

Then the commentary refutes the argument that the remedy that clears away the adventitious stains would also clear away the Buddha potential. The argument states that if you say that the primordial awareness that is inherent at the time of the ground is itself not the same as the completely awakened state of Buddhahood, but rather that Buddhahood comes from this potential, then would it not be that the antidote which clears away all the stains would also clear away the potential? If it is not the same as enlightenment, and what is left over at the end is enlightenment, then the potential must disappear.

So how is this proposition answered? In two parts.

-- The first part shows why it is necessary to clear away the stains that obscure this potential from manifesting completely,

-- and the second part teaches why it is not necessary to clear away the potential itself.

-- Then, in addition, there is an ancillary section that shows that this primordial awareness is not the same as a self, that it is not the same as the "I" to which we refer in our general way of thinking.

Within this first part there is

-- a section that teaches what these obscuring stains actually are,

-- and a section that teaches how these stains are cleared away:

L6: [The example of the clouds which obstruct the sun and moon. (18,19)]

\ Although the sun and moon are unstained,

\ Five veils exist which manage to obscure them.

\ These consist of clouds and fog and smoke,

\ The face of Rahu and dust as well. (18)

\ And so it is, as well, for mind's clear light.

\ Five obscurations manage to obscure it:
\ Desire, laziness, and ill intent,
\ And agitation too, as well as doubt. (19)

¢(i.e. Not knowing the real nature of the mind, we are fooled by its own creations. Those illusions becomes obstacles to seeing the real nature itself. Believing in their inherent existence excludes the possibility of imagining the mind's clear light nature; we are not trying to see their real origination and emptiness.

¢-- We have to gradually clear them away by meditating on their real nature. We have first to calm the mind, to use antidotes to remove the five hindrances. With deep concentration, removing the five hindrances, we are in position to be able to see the very subtle nature of the mind. ¢-- By calming the mind, slowing it down, we are in a better position to see how it works.

¢-- This is about the way to break the vicious cycle of samsara. The justification of developing concentration, dhyana, in order to see the stop temporarily the influence of the defilements and then see the real nature of the mind.)

The sun and the moon have no stain at all from their own side. The only reason why we sometimes cannot see the sun's and the moon's light is that things get in the way. But that does not mean that the sun and the moon have any defect or any lack of purity from their own side. It is the same with the mind's true nature, which is radiant clarity. The mind's true nature is never touched or flawed by anything, but when we have strong desire, ill intent (a mind that seeks to harm others), laziness, agitation, or doubt, then these five different types of stains or obscurations prevent our seeing the mind's true nature.

Just as something passing between our eyes and the sun or the moon prevents us from seeing them, and not because there is any flaw in the sun or the moon themselves, just so it is something adventitious that passes between our own intelligence or our own prajna and the mind's true nature that prevents our seeing the mind's true nature, not because there is any inherent flaw or imperfection in the naturally perfect radiant clarity of the mind.

It is difficult for us to understand how it could be possible that our minds are completely perfect while at the same time we are experiencing the presence of different mental afflictions. Therefore it is taught how something could be completely pure in its own nature and yet be hidden from view. The example of the sun and the moon makes it easier for us to understand that the mind can be perfect even while our view of it is blocked by transitory fleeting stains.

L6: [The example of deep water – see verse 23 bellow]

L5: [b. Why the Dharmadhatu would not be cleared away by clearing obstructions.]
L6: [The example of fire cleaning soiled cloth. (20-21)]

The next two verses teach how the stains are cleared away, but the Buddha potential is not:

\ And just as fire can clean a soiled cloth
\ Miscolored with various marks and stains,
\ And just as when submerged within the fire
\ The marks are burnt away but not the cloth. (20)

\ In just this way the mind, which is radiant clarity,
 \ Is soiled by desire and the other stains,
 \ But the fire of primordial awareness burns up these afflictions,
 \ Without, however, burning away the radiant clarity. (21)

¢(i.e. While in deep meditation, all hindrances and obstructions are eliminated, but there remains the originary awareness, the pure potential. It is this part that can become aware of the real nature of the mind and aware that all things and phenomena are dependently arisen, merely imputed by the mind. It has always been there, even before all illusions. That awareness never goes away. Once we see the real nature of the mind and the dependence on the mind of all objects and phenomena, their emptiness of inherent existence, this originary awareness itself is not a fabrication of the mind, it is the very subtle nature of the mind.

¢-- That is the Shentong view. This originary awareness is inherently existent, not empty. Humm ... but further it is said that it is inconceivable.

¢-- From the Rangtong point of view, this whole theory is also a view coming from the mind. And the real nature is inconceivable.

¢-- So maybe we are talking about the Union of those two views here. Shentong insist on no non-existence, while Rangton insist on no existence. But the real nature is beyond those two views.)

There are certain types of clothes of the deities which are impervious to being burned by fire. They are cleaned by putting them into fire, and the fire burns away the stains. This is the same principle as dry-cleaning; the fire and the heat can make the clothes clean without destroying the cloth itself. Similarly the mind can be stained by desire and other types of afflictions, but when primordial awareness purifies these afflictions, it does not destroy the mind's basic nature, which is radiant clarity. In fact, it allows the mind's nature to shine more brightly than ever before.

The antidote for the afflictions could not possibly clear away the mind's true nature, which is the potential for enlightenment. The antidote purifies the potential but does not destroy it.

L6: [The example of teaching emptiness. (22)]

\ In the sutras of the Teacher,
 \ In whatever ways the Victor described emptiness,
 \ All of these ways can rectify afflictions;
 \ None can diminish the potential. (22)

¢(i.e. Emptiness does not mean non-existence. The emptiness of everything, the teaching of the Prajnaparamita, does not make the path non-existent. An illusion can help to see that everything is illusions, dependent on the mind. Even though the path is empty it is not useless and should not be dropped while in samsara.)

The "sutras of the Teacher," which teach about emptiness, refers to the Prajnaparamita sutras of the second turning of the wheel of dharma, sometimes called the sutras of the great mother of the transcendent perfection of wisdom. There is an extensive version, a middle-length version, and a shortest version; and in these teachings the Buddha taught in a variety of ways that phenomena are empty, and all of these different ways of teaching about

emptiness are antidotes to the mental afflictions, but none of them can destroy or diminish the potential for enlightenment. So, even though the afflictions are taught to be empty and things are taught to be empty, the Buddha potential is never taught not to exist. (i.e. emptiness does not mean non-existence.)

L6: [The example of deep water -- An example of How the Dharmadhatu and obstructions can coexist.]

The next verse reads:

\ Just as water deep inside the earth
\ Lies untouched and perfectly clean,
\ Just so can primordial awareness rest within affliction
\ And remain completely free of any flaw. (23)

¢(i.e. The fundamental nature of the mind is always pure. We are just fooled by its creations, thinking they are inherently existing, independent of the mind. -- When we finally realize that all objects, all phenomena, even the self, are merely imputed by the mind, what is left is not non-existence. But it is beyond all dualities, beyond good and bad. Everything is then seen as pure, without any obstructions. The mind is seen as clear light. The inseparability of appearances and emptiness becomes evident.) .

Water can lie in the middle of the dirty earth, but be completely clean. Like that, in the midst of all the mental afflictions, primordial awareness is always pure. It is never anything other than pure. Therefore there is no need to purify it or get rid of it; it is not something to be discarded, because its nature is pure before the beginning of the path, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end.

It is difficult for us to understand how it is that, within all of these mental afflictions, there can be a true nature of mind that is completely pure and completely perfect. It is difficult for us to separate these things out, difficult to understand that these afflictions are temporary and one thing and that the mind's true nature is completely pure and something else. That is why this example is taught. If we did not have these types of examples, it would be very difficult for us to understand.

L5: [c. Why the Dharmadhatu is not the same as self.]

L6: [The example of the Dharmadhatu not being male or female. (24-25)]

The ancillary section teaches that the Dharmadhatu is not the same as the self, not the same as the "I." Here it is taught that the Dharmadhatu is primordial awareness, which is not to be given up. There is no need to clear it away.

That primordial awareness is not the self is stated in the next verse:

\ The Dharmadhatu is not the self.
\ It is neither man nor woman either;
\ And being beyond everything perceivable,
\ Just how could it be thought of as oneself? (24)

¢(i.e. The real nature of the mind, the Dharmadhatu, is beyond all description, beyond all

conceptualization, beyond all dualities, beyond all views. Emptiness is not existence, not non-existence, not both, not neither. So any view, any description is necessarily not "it". So seeing that everything is empty does not destroy the Dharmadhatu, making it non-existent at all.)

This verse is teaching in the form of logical reasoning. The proposition offered is that one cannot properly conceive of the Dharmadhatu as being the same as a self.

-- If it were the self, then it would have to be either male or female, because that is what sentient beings are divided into, generally speaking, and the Dharmadhatu is neither male nor female. That is the first reason.

-- And the second reason is that it transcends or is liberated from all conceptual reference points. Conceptual mind cannot identify it as being this or that, one thing or another. So because it transcends all conceptual references, then just how could one possibly say that it is the self?

That Dharmadhatu is beyond all types of conceptual reference has two meanings.

-- First, conceptual mind can never grasp what Dharmadhatu or primordial awareness is, because it is not an object that conceptual mind can focus on or grasp.

-- Secondly, from the perspective of primordial awareness itself, it has no object of focus. It is non-conceptual awareness, without any specific reference point of itself. So it is neither something that can be focused on by conceptual mind, nor is it something that focuses on something else, or has any object of focus.

The next verse reads:

\ Within phenomena, all free of passion,
\ Male and female cannot be seen.
\ For the sake of taming those that desire blinds,
\ Terms like male and female are taught. (25)

¢(i.e. Once we see the real nature of the mind, that all objects and all phenomena are empty of inherent existence, merely imputed by the mind, then we are free from all attachments, all views, all obstructions. Then we do not see any permanent self, or absolute characteristics. But seeing that everything is empty does not remove the usefulness of all conventional truths, the usefulness of a path. We need both conventional truths (a raft, a path) and the Ultimate Truth (knowing the emptiness of the raft). The real nature of the Dharmadhatu is not something existent, like a permanent self, or a concept. It is beyond existence, non-existence, both, and neither.)

In the true nature of phenomena, there is neither man nor woman. The true nature of phenomena transcends all non-conceptual, transcends all conceptual reference points. Male and female are merely concepts that do not truly exist. And therefore phenomena are not actually truly existent objects of desire or objects of passion because their basic nature transcends non-conceptual; in this sense their basic nature is simplicity. And therefore phenomena cannot be identified as either being men or women or male or female.

Then the question is asked, why did the Buddha teach in terms of men and women and describe men and women? He did so in order to tame those who are blinded by their desire, blinded by passion, and therefore cannot see the true nature of phenomena for what it really is.

Therefore the Buddha explained how men become blinded by desire for women and how women become blinded by desire for men. And the Buddha taught how through the practice of prajnaparamita, meditation upon emptiness, and through the practice of vajrayana, one can

attain liberation from this type of desire. Thus the Buddha taught about men and women, not because men and women truly exist as such. The Buddha taught about men and women in order to tame sentient beings.

In the verse the words used are "man" and "woman." These terms actually refer to male and female. From the smallest bug up to the highest deity, male and female have desire for each other. Males have desire for females; females have desire for males. This desire is not something we need to create or to try to bring about; it is natural, it just happens.

Desire and passion between male and female are dealt with in different ways at different stages of the Buddhist path. According to the tradition of the shravakayana, desire is something that one just wants to get rid of, one wants to abandon. The practitioner does so by meditating on whatever is considered to be desirable as being filthy, disgusting, and an object of revulsion. In that way one frees oneself from feelings of desire.

In the Mahayana it is taught that the body of a woman or a man is just appearance and emptiness; it is like the reflection of the moon in water or like a rainbow. It appears but does not really exist; it is just a mere appearance; there is nothing more to it than that. And the mind of another being, whether man or woman, and one's own mind are clarity and emptiness. Then the other person, the object of desire, becomes an object of meditation. One just meditates; there is no need to try to get rid of anything - the other person, passion, desire, whatever - because everything is of the nature of emptiness. And so one uses the other person as a focus of meditation on emptiness.

And then in the vajrayana the practice is to meditate on the essence of the desire that arises between men and women. There are different ways of meditating on the essence of this desire in the four classes of tantra. By meditating on the essence of the desire and passion that arises between women and men, one comes to realize that this essence is bliss-emptiness and radiant clarity, and through this practice the passion is purified.

The commentary on these two verses describing how the Dharmadhatu is not the self first presents an opponent's proposition. If the Dharmadhatu is present at the time of the ground, at the time of the path, and at the time of the result, and if it never changes in any of these three stages, then is that not the same thing as saying that there is somebody who is liberated, that there is a self which is liberated, that there is some unchanging self which is there at the time of the ground, which then practices at the time of the path, and which then is liberated at the time of the fruition? Is that not the same thing as asserting that there is a self?

The answer to this argument is that the primordial awareness that exists at the time of the ground is not the self, because it is the Dharmadhatu. Then you might ask, why, just because it is the Dharmadhatu, does that mean that it is not the self? And Nagarjuna answers that the Dharmadhatu is not the self because all of these conceptual reference points like "self" and whatever else conceptual mind conjures up are completely imaginary, meaning that they are mere imputations [of confused minds functioning dualistically and conceptually]. They are mere conceptual fabrications, and do not truly exist. In the Dharmadhatu there is no duality between a perceived object and a perceiving subject; therefore, there is no attachment to the idea of a self, because there is no duality of perception in the first place.

L3: [D. THE REMEDY THAT REMOVES OBSTRUCTIONS. (26-35)]

L4: [D.1 The remedy for the afflictions: the wisdom that realizes the selflessness of the individual. (26)]

L4: [D.2. The remedy for the cognitive obscurations: the wisdom that realizes the emptiness of phenomena. (26)]

L4: [D.3. The remedy for both the afflictions and the cognitive obscurations: realization of the emptiness of phenomena. (26)]

Now we move on to the part that describes the remedy for the stains or defilements. We have looked at what the stains are. We have looked a little bit at what these stains obscure. Now we go on to the section that describes the remedy. And this will be followed by a part that describes the result that arises from using the remedy.

In the description of the remedy there is a brief explanation and an extensive explanation.

-- The brief explanation contains

---- an explanation of the remedy that clears away the mental-emotional afflictions - which is the prajna, the intelligence, the wisdom that realizes the selflessness of the individual

-

---- and a description of the remedy that clears away the cognitive obscurations, the obscurations to omniscience, which is the prajna that realizes the selflessness or emptiness of phenomena.

---- Finally, there is a description of the remedy for both of these, which again is the prajna that realizes the selflessness of all phenomena.

-- [see the extensive explanation of the Dharmadhatu below: E.1. Dharmadhatu Called by Different Names]

The selflessness of the individual and the selflessness of phenomena are both taught in the next verse.

-- The first two lines teach the selflessness of the individual,

-- the second two, the selflessness of phenomena:

\ "Impermanent" and "suffering" and "empty":

\ (i.e. The three universal characteristics of phenomena as taught in the Hinayana)

\ Three designations purifying mind;

\ But what refines the mind unto its utmost

\ Is the teaching that nothing has any self-nature. (26)

\ (i.e. Emptiness of all dharmas as taught in the Mahayana)

¢(i.e. The gradual realization of the emptiness of all phenomena, that they are all dependently arisen, merely imputed by the mind. First the three marks of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and no-self. Then the emptiness of all phenomena. This is realized by seeing the real nature of the mind.)

These first three terms are the first three seals of the Buddhist doctrine.

---- The first is that all composite phenomena are impermanent.

---- The second is that all defiled phenomena are suffering,

---- and the third is that all phenomena are without self, meaning the self of an individual.

-- So these three cleanse the mind of its belief in the self of an individual.

-- And then the greatest of all things that purify the mind or refine the mind is the understanding that nothing has any self-nature, the understanding of the emptiness of

phenomena.

The prajna that realizes the first three - impermanence, suffering, and emptiness - purifies the stains of the mental afflictions because it destroys the root of samsara, which is clinging to the self of the individual. The root of samsaric existence is belief in an "I," and the prajna realizing the selflessness of that "I" clears away all mental afflictions. Once one realizes that there is no "I," mental and emotional afflictions dissolve. These three - impermanence, suffering, and emptiness - can also be said to be the four aspects of the First Noble Truth, the Truth of Suffering. Each of the Four Noble Truths has four parts. These four parts are impermanence, suffering, selflessness, and emptiness. And here selflessness is subsumed under emptiness, so it is not mentioned separately.

With respect to the second two lines of the verse, the commentary reads, "What refines mind to its utmost is the remedy for the cognitive obscurations, which is the prajna that realizes that phenomena have no self-nature. This prajna clears away the root of the cognitive obscurations, which is clinging to the belief that phenomena are real." If we restate this slightly in the form of a reasoning, we would say, the prajna realizing the emptiness of phenomena clears away the cognitive obscurations because it cuts through the root of the cognitive obscurations; it destroys the root of the cognitive obscurations, which is the belief that phenomena have some type of true existence.

Last year, when we studied the view of the middle turning of the wheel of dharma from texts like Nagarjuna's The Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning and The Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness, Nagarjuna wrote from the perspective of negation, from the perspective of saying that things do not exist and that they do not have any essence.

This year, in explaining the teachings from the third turning of the wheel of dharma, Nagarjuna's perspective is different. It is from the perspective of affirmation, of saying what is there, what does exist.

\ Rest with a child's independence.
\ Rest like an ocean free of waves.
\ Rest with a butter lamp's clarity.
\ Rest like a corpse, without arrogance.
\ Rest like a mountain, so still.

¢(i.e. When one sees the real nature of the mind, one is not fooled by its own creations, its illusions, anymore. One is free from any obstructions, free from any attachment or fear. Nothing is disturbing the peace. No permanent self. Everything is seen as pure, inseparability of appearances and emptiness. One sees things, but knows that they are dependently arisen, empty of inherent existence. Empty, but not non-existent.
¢-- It is even beyond the thought that the mind is radiant clarity, beyond the thought that everything is empty.)

[Students meditate with Rinpoche.]

\ This way of meditating is to
\ look at the mind nakedly
\ - this is the view -

\ and then to rest in its naturally exquisite
\ clarity and radiance.

\ It is the meditation according to
\ the view that the mind's nature is radiant clarity.

\ These thoughts that the mind's nature is exquisite clarity or exquisite radiance are themselves only thoughts. They are thoughts about the experience in the meditation. But when they arise, if one rests relaxed within their essence, then these thoughts of exquisite clarity and exquisite radiance dissolve by themselves like waves dissolving back into the ocean.

¢(i.e. Even "radiant clarity" is just a concept trying to describe what is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization.

¢-- Both methods Rangton & Shentong are merely adapted skillful means that are pointing at the moon; they are not the moon, which is beyond all conceptualization, beyond all causality space and time, beyond any methods or paths. One uses reasonings to show the absurdity of all views, and then unite quiescence with insight meditation in order to transcend; the other one use the method to seek the very subtle mind and end up in the same place.)

In his song The Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range (3), Milarepa sings,

\ "When meditation is clear light river flow,
\ there is no need to confine it to sessions and breaks.
\ Meditator and object refined until they're gone;
\ this heart bone of meditation, it beats quite well."

Meditation is radiant clarity, clear light, and within this radiant clarity there is no object of perception or meditation, and there is no perceiver meditating. It is radiant clarity that is without reference.

Now let's sing Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe (4).

[Students sing. See page 27.]

\ 'Rest with a child's independence.
\ Rest like an ocean free of waves.
\ Rest with a butter lamp's clarity.
\ Rest like a corpse, without arrogance.
\ Rest like a mountain, so still.'

L2: [Selflessness is the remedy for the afflictions and cognitive obscurations]

L4: [D.3. The remedy for both the afflictions and the cognitive obscurations: realization of the emptiness of phenomena [or non-duality] (26)]

Continuing the Very Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's teaching on Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu, the following edited transcript is from the afternoon of September 19. Rinpoche gave the teaching in Tibetan; it was orally translated by Ari Goldfield.

Sarwa Mangalam.

Let us sing The Song of Meaningful Connections (1).

[Students sing. See page 19.]

Before listening to the teachings please give rise to the precious attitude of Bodhicitta, which means to aspire to attain the state of complete and perfect enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, who are limitless in number as space is vast in extent. In order to fulfill this aspiration, we must listen to, reflect on, and meditate on the teachings of the protector Nagarjuna in his text Praise of the Dharmadhatu with great enthusiasm in our hearts.

We are on the third part of the brief explanation of the remedy, which describes the wisdom realizing the selflessness of phenomena, that is the remedy for both the afflictions and the cognitive obscurations. It explains that all phenomena are empty of essence, or selfless.

In this third part there are two sections.

1. One is the reason why it is necessary to understand that phenomena are empty of existence,

The reason why it is necessary to clear away the notion that phenomena are true, itself, has two parts:

-- an explanation of why it is necessary to clear away the kleshas,

-- and an explanation of why it is necessary to clear away thoughts, which are the non-conceptual that form the cognitive obscurations.

2. and the other is the reason why it is possible to understand that.

L5: [D.3.a. The reason why it is necessary to understand that phenomena are empty.]

L6: [Why kleshas must be cleared away. (27)]

L6: [Why thoughts must be cleared away. (27)]

So the next verse reads:

\ As a child in a pregnant woman's womb
\ Is there and yet is not yet visible,
\ Likewise when covered by afflictions,
\ The Dharmadhatu is not visible. (27)

¢(i.e. When one sees the real nature of the mind, one become free from its illusions. But it is not possible to see the real nature of the mind in our present condition. We have to calm it, eliminating the five types of hindrances first, in order to see its very subtle nature. We have to stop temporarily all thoughts.)

Until we clear away the afflictions, we will not see the Dharmadhatu. If we change the words slightly, then we get a verse that tells us why it is necessary to clear away non-conceptual:

\ "As a child in a pregnant woman's womb
\ is there and yet is not yet visible,
\ likewise when covered by thoughts
\ the Dharmadhatu is not visible."

There are two kinds of thoughts.

-- The first kind of thought thinks [pointing to a vase], "That is a vase." That type of

thought is the thought that thinks of a name.

-- When you think that that vase has a fat belly, then that is the thought that grasps the characteristics of an object. The definition of vase, in Buddhist logic, is that it is something that has a fat belly and whose base is hidden. The belly is fat, the toes are hidden.

-- Both these forms of non-conceptual need to be purified. It is necessary to clear away the mental/emotional afflictions and the non-conceptual, because both of these block our vision of the Dharmadhatu.

L5: [D.3.b. The reason why it is possible to understand that phenomena are empty.]

How we can come to understand that it is possible to clear away these two kinds of obscuration has two parts.

-- The first is the actual explanation of how it is possible,

---- And in the first part, there is an explanation of how it is possible to clear away the thoughts of samsara,

---- and in the second, how it is possible to clear away thoughts of nirvana.

-- and the second is an explanation of the actual remedy that clears them away.

L6: [The actual explanation of how it is possible]

L7: [An explanation of how it is possible to understand that thoughts of samsara are empty. (28)]

As for clearing away thoughts of samsara, the commentary states that the antidote for the two types of afflictions or the two types of obscurations - meaning the [emotional] afflictions and the cognitive obscurations - is to realize that the elements - the four or five elements, meaning earth, wind, fire, water, and space - and everything that comes from these elements, have no self-nature. They have no nature of their own; they are empty of essence.

The verse reads:

\ Thoughts of 'I' and 'mine,'
\ Thoughts of a name and of characteristics,
\ All come from thinking that
\ The four elements and what comes from the elements are truly existent. (28)

¢(i.e. Samsara is empty; we should not grasp at anything in it. We think samsara is real because we think it is based on real elementary components. Once we realize that there is no real basis, then we can see that the whole samsara is empty, without root.)

Thinking "I," thinking "mine," thinking of a name, and thinking of the characteristics of an object - these four kinds of thought - come from thinking that the elements and that which arises from the elements truly exist. It is necessary to understand that these things do not truly exist.

L7: [An explanation of how it is possible to understand that thoughts of nirvana are empty. (29)]

As for thoughts of nirvana, a question arises about things that do not come from the four elements, like great compassion and all of the powers and good qualities that arise from making aspiration prayers. How does one get rid of the thoughts that these truly exist?

The way to do that is to understand that the causes of enlightenment, which are the Buddhas' making aspiration prayers and the Buddhas' great compassion developed while they are bodhisattvas, have no self-nature. By understanding that, clinging to them as real is abandoned.

We can make aspiration prayers to be of great benefit to sentient beings in the future, but we need to understand that these aspiration prayers have no inherent existence. The mind that makes these aspiration prayers has no inherent existence. Similarly, when we have great compassion for others, and when we generate compassion for others who are suffering, we must also understand that this compassionate mind does not inherently exist; it has no nature of its own:

- \ The Buddhas do not perceive
- \ Any characteristics of their aspiration prayers,
- \ Because the Buddhas are of the nature of self-awareness
- \ And have their own permanently pure being. (29)

¢(i.e. Nirvana is also empty; we should not grasp at it either. All of the concepts related to the causes of Nirvana and the Nirvana itself are also empty of inherent existence. One should not grasp at those either. Samsara and Nirvana are not different, not the same.)

The aspiration prayers that Buddhas make when they are bodhisattvas, and the form kayas [Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya] and the appearances of Buddha fields that arise as a result of those aspiration prayers, do not appear to the Buddhas themselves.

-- Buddhas do not perceive any of the characteristics which would demonstrate or would convey the existence of these things; they do not grasp onto those characteristics. That is one reason [that the merely superficial appearance of a Buddha and the appearance of Buddha fields do not appear to Buddhas themselves].

-- The second reason is that Buddhas are continually in a state of primordial awareness, which is self-aware; it is called distinctly self-aware primordial awareness. Primordial awareness is nondual. So there is no [conceptual] awareness of the characteristics; there is no separating out of the characteristics of different things. A Buddha or the awakened mind that rests in meditative equipoise in this way is endowed with the permanent dharmata, the unchanging true nature of reality. That awareness is Buddha. (i.e. No absolute objects or phenomena, or characteristics.)

On the other hand, the merely superficial appearance of a Buddha that we see [the Nirmanakaya] only arises from causes and conditions. So there is a difference between these two. When in the verse it speaks of this permanent true being that is enlightenment, then it is talking about the actual genuine nature of enlightenment, the actual genuine kaya or body or dimension of enlightenment, which is the Dharmakaya. And therefore it is by implication taught that what appears to us as the body of Buddha, as the form or appearance of a Buddha [the Nirmanakaya of a Buddha], is just a superficial appearance; it is just an appearance of something which has no self-nature, does not truly exist. It is a mere appearance.

And therefore it is not taught that within the continuum of sentient beings is the fully enlightened Buddha, because,

-- first of all, there is no connection between the sentient being state and the state of complete awakening - they are two different things;
-- and secondly, because to teach that would contradict the teachings that make clear that the Buddha in sentient beings is not the Buddha essence, the Buddha itself or Buddhahood

itself, but the potential for enlightenment.

What this tradition is teaching is the way to eliminate clinging to the characteristics of the result, thinking that the characteristics of the result truly exist; and the way that that is done is by teaching that all of the appearances that go with the result are just superficial appearances that do not truly exist, that do not exist from the perspective of the actual genuine dimension of enlightenment, which transcends the duality of perceiver and perceived [or of any other duality, for that matter]. Nonetheless, a Buddha would be able to see, when necessary, the potential functionality of such an object as flower vase, pencil holder, wine decanter, or bedpan.

In short, the appearance of a Buddha's kaya that we can physically see and the appearance of the Buddha fields arise from two causes. One is the making of aspiration prayers, and the second is the play or the creative display of the Dharmakaya, which is the Buddha's actual and genuinely true dimension of enlightenment.

¢(i.e. Meaning it is not existent, nor non-existent, nor both, nor neither. It is dependent of the mind, but not only dependent of the mind. Not realism, not idealism, not dualism, not monism. -- The Dharmadhatu, the Dharmakaya, are concepts helpful to realize that emptiness is not non-existence. Concepts created to help those who might fall into nihilism when presented emptiness as taught in the second turning of the Wheel.)

L6: [THE REMEDY]

Then comes a part on how to clear away the cognitive obscurations.

- First it is explained that what are called abstract characteristics or abstract thoughts - the thoughts about all of the phenomena in samsara and nirvana - are merely imaginary; whatever characteristics we impute to phenomena are merely imaginary.
- Then it is taught with respect to the actual phenomena themselves, which are uniquely characterized by being unique phenomena that are different from all other phenomena, that their unique characteristics themselves also do not really exist, and therefore that to think that characteristics of phenomena do exist is not in harmony with how the objects really are.
- Then it is taught how the intention of the Buddha is to teach that the true nature of phenomena is free from all extremes,
- and finally that it is impossible to describe what this freedom from extremes really is.
- Then the question is raised: What is the antidote that clears away thoughts that cling to the true existence of the characteristics of phenomena, that cling to the thought that the characteristics we perceive phenomena to possess - including afflictions and karma on the one hand, and the Buddhas' aspiration prayers on the other, both defiled and undefiled phenomena - are real?

L7: [Abstract thoughts are all imaginary. (30)]

The next verse reads:

- \ Just as the horns on rabbits' heads
- \ Do not exist except in the imagination,
- \ Phenomena are all precisely like that,
- \ Merely imagined, having no existence. (30)

¢(i.e. Everything is merely imputed by the mind. All of our classifications are merely imputed by the mind.)

The horns on the head of a rabbit are obviously only imaginary; they are nonexistent. In the same way, the general characteristics or the abstract images and thoughts that constitute the objects of our thinking mind with respect to any particular phenomenon are merely imagined and do not truly exist. They are merely conceptual thoughts about conceptual objects. Thus the general or abstract characteristics of all phenomena of the ground, the path, and the fruition exist only in the imagination. They do not exist as they are imagined.

What are general or abstract characteristics? When our thoughts connect any type of name with a particular object, that is a general characteristic. So, for example, if you think about "impermanence," this is only a general characteristic. And why is this considered a general characteristic? Because there are infinite kinds of impermanences. Every example of impermanence is different. But we grasp this as being only one thing. Our image of impermanence is that impermanences are all the same, all of the same quality, even though every single type of impermanence has its own unique quality. As another example, when we think "flower," the only thing that comes to mind is a general abstract image that has to cover every single flower in the universe, even though each one is unique. So flower is only a general abstract image. And these abstract images, which are all that our thoughts can conceive of, do not truly exist in any way outside of the mind.

In short, when we connect a name with an object, then that name that we are thinking of, the way that name causes us to think about that object, is a general characteristic, an abstract image which does not truly exist. If you think, "that is a person," then how many different kinds of people are there? There is an infinite variety of different kinds of "persons," so the name "person" can only be a very general image that has to account for all of those and make them all blend into one. But this type of image that appears to our conceptual mind does not truly exist.

We can think, "I am in pain; I am suffering." But really there are lots of different kinds of suffering. We can suffer because of people we do not like; we can suffer because of people we do like. We can suffer because of wealth; we can suffer because of an absence of wealth. So there are lots of different kinds of suffering that we can identify. But we do not differentiate among them when we just think, "I am in pain; I am suffering." And so this thought that blends and has to cover all these different kinds of suffering, can only be an abstract image that could never truly exist anywhere.

We could have suffering as a result of a boyfriend or a girlfriend. If we examine this particular kind of suffering, then the suffering of the past is completely finished, so it does not exist; the suffering of the future has not happened yet, so it does not exist; and the suffering of the present moment is not just one thing, because there is no one moment of suffering. Moments of experience are infinitely divisible, and fleeting. But what we do conceptually is lump the whole thing together into one big glob of suffering. In this way we have one abstract concept that covers all of these different things. But this concept is not real and does not truly exist. So suffering does not really exist.

Therefore, when we think, "I am suffering because of my friend," that is just a confused thought that clings to the existence of an abstract characteristic which does not truly exist. So the suffering does not really exist.

Therefore, all of our conceptual states of mind, which cling to the true existence of these abstract images, are confused, because these abstract things do not exist anywhere.

L7: [Uniquely characterized phenomena do not exist. (31)]

Next the commentary examines what are called the specific or the unique characteristics of any phenomenon. For example, if we look at fire, then fire is just a name, right? But the characteristics of a fire are the actual thing that it is hot and burning. That actual thing that is hot and burning is unique, because there is only one phenomenon like it in the world; nothing else is exactly the same. That is what is being examined here. It starts out with the objection that the previous example about rabbit horns does not hold water, because there are no horns on a rabbit's head; these rabbit horns are not a uniquely characterized phenomena because there is no such entity. There is no such thing as a rabbit with horns. But what about an ox's horns? An ox really has horns, and those horns are uniquely characterized; similarly, all of the uniquely characterized objects in samsara and nirvana and all of their unique specific characteristics really exist. The answer to that is that the specific characteristics of the horns of an ox cannot be truly perceived either, for the reasons stated in the next verse:

- \ Because they are not made of solid atoms
- \ The horns of oxen cannot be seen, either.
- \ Since not even tiny atoms exist,
- \ How could one imagine that something made of atoms exists? (31)

¶(i.e. All specific occurrences within any classification are also merely imputed by the mind. Everything is merely imputed by the mind, dependently arisen, empty of inherent existence.)

When you examine atoms to try to find out whether they exist or not, you cannot find any smallest unit of matter that is truly indivisible into ever smaller units of matter. By division atoms, the "smallest" units of matter, get smaller and smaller ad infinitum. You cannot find anything there at all. Therefore, how could you possibly say that bigger phenomena made up of these nonexistent atoms exist? How could you imagine that these horns have any true existence when the atoms which formed them do not even exist? Since there is no basis of imputation to which any name can be given, then even these specific unique characteristics do not exist, because for something to have its own specific characteristics, there has to be something there. But since there are no atoms there in the first place, then how can there be any specifically characterized phenomena?

L7: [Why sentient beings are confused [the belief in inherent existence] (32)]

The next part of the commentary teaches how sentient beings are confused. Sentient beings are confused because they perceive things as being real. Because they perceive characteristics as being existent, their perception is not in harmony with the way objects really are. The commentary begins, "How could an immature being possibly realize the true nature of phenomena, the specific and abstract characteristics of phenomena, when there is not even one phenomenon that exists in the way that immature beings perceive them?"

There are three types of children, three types of immature or childlike beings.

-- The first type is the worldly type of child, which is called a child in dependence upon there being somebody older.

-- The second type is someone who is not learned when compared with someone who is; the person who is not learned is called childlike.

-- And finally the third type is anyone who has not reached the first level of bodhisattva realization when compared to noble or enlightened bodhisattvas, who have.

Because of the difference in perception of these two classes of beings, those who have not reached that level of realization of the true nature of things are thought to be and are referred to as childlike or immature. So in this case, when reference is made to immature beings, it is referring to the third type and includes all beings who have not yet reached the first bodhisattva bhumi.

To further clarify the point that is being made, we could say: The way that immature beings perceive - which is to cling to the characteristics of phenomena as being real - is confused because there is not a single phenomenon, either uniquely or generally characterized, that exists.

The next verse reads:

\ Since phenomena arise dependently,
\ And since they cease dependently,
\ Not a single one of them exists.
\ How could the childlike think that they do? (32)

¢(i.e. It is because we don't see the real nature of the mind, that we don't see the mind creating those illusions, that we are fooled by them, thinking they truly exist. But they are all merely imputed by the mind, dependently arisen, empty of inherent existence.)

Or as originally translated:

\ Since arising is a dependent occurrence
\ And cessation is a dependent occurrence,
\ There is not one single thing that exists -
\ How could the naive believe that there is? (32)

Phenomena arise in dependence upon causes and conditions - they do not exist from their own side, independent of causes and conditions - and phenomena cease because of causes and conditions. Therefore, since they are only dependently arisen, they do not truly exist. How could immature beings think that they do truly exist? And the very brief commentary on this says that phenomena cease in dependence on causes and conditions because they arise in dependence upon causes and conditions.

The example that makes this easy for us to understand is the example of the moon's reflection in a pool of water, a water moon. A water moon appears because of different causes and conditions, and then it disappears because of different causes and conditions, but there is never really anything there - no real moon. And so there is no real arising and no real cessation; it was only a mere appearance and not something truly existent. If someone were to think that any particular water moon was a real object, and that its birth and cessation were real, then those would be confused thoughts. Similarly, no other phenomena can arise or cease in the way that immature beings think that they do.

L7: [The Buddha's intention [the Middle-Way: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither] (33)]

The fourth part describes the Buddhas' intention to teach the middle way that is free from all extremes. The Sugata, the one gone to bliss, proved that all phenomena are the middle way which abandons the two extremes:

\ Using examples like rabbits' and oxen's horns,
\ The Thus Gone One has proven
\ That all phenomena are nothing other than
\ the Middle Way. (33)

¢(i.e. No absolute. The Middle Way: not existence, not non-existence (and not both, not neither). Away from the four extremes of realism, nihilism, dualism, and monism. Everything is empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen. Everything is dependently arisen because empty of inherent existence. We need both concepts to express what is beyond any description, beyond any concepts. The four negations, the Tetrallemma, points toward transcendence from the four extreme positions, toward the inconceivable Buddha.)

-- The commentary explains that the horns of a rabbit exist in the imagination. They can exist as an expression, and they can also arise as an image in our minds. [So we cannot say that the horns of a rabbit absolutely do not exist. Recognizing this we avoid the extreme of nihilism.]

-- On the other hand, even something like the horns of an ox, which seem very solid, do not exist, because they have no essence, being made up of nonexistent particles. [Recognizing this, we avoid the extreme of realism.]

-- So in this way, when we think intelligently about phenomena that we imagine are established as existent entities by virtue of their own characteristics, we see that nothing exists in this way at all. [On the other hand, we also see that we cannot say that phenomena do not exist altogether, for they do exist as mere appearance.]

-- For this reason the Buddha taught that all phenomena are of the nature of the middle way, which is free from the two extremes of realism and nihilism. (i.e. Transcending the duality.)

If we were to apply this way of thinking to our planet, then we would think, since there is a right side up and an upside down to this planet, and since right now we in Seattle are obviously right side up, that the right side up must be like the ox's horns, and the upside down must be like the rabbit's horns, because we are all right side up.

But what about people who are below, on the "down under" side of the planet? For the people down there, they are all right side up too. So for them right side up is like the ox's horns - that is the way things really are, they are right side up; we are not right side up, they are right side up. And the upside down for them - which is we who are in Seattle - is like the rabbit's horns. And so really what this shows is that neither one truly exists. Both are epithets for the Buddha.

It is the same thing with our own thoughts of clean and dirty. We think that what we think is clean is really clean, is really the correct point of view. Like the horns of an ox, this point of view is in some sense "real." But then if somebody comes along and looks at something which we "know" to be dirty, and they call it clean, then they are obviously wrong. So their point of view is like the horns of a rabbit. Our own perceptions are right, and their perceptions are wrong. But really, if you think about it from an objective perspective, neither one is right; neither of these points of view truly exists as some sort of absolute.

L7: [It is impossible to describe this freedom [beyond all conceptualization – has to be directly seen in meditation by seeing the real nature of our own mind] (34-35)]

The next verse teaches how this freedom from extremes is inexpressible:

\ Just as one sees
\ The forms of the sun, moon, and stars
\ Reflected in vessels of perfectly clear water,
\ So is the consummation of signs and characteristics. (34)

¢(i.e. The Tetralemma, the four negations - not realism, not idealism or nihilism, not dualism, not monism - does not affirm anything, because the real nature of everything is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization, beyond any duality, beyond any view. So we cannot use ordinary knowledge to express or teach the real nature of everything; it has to be seen directly by turning inward and seeking the very subtle nature of the mind, while calming all hindrances, ... Only when directly seeing the real nature of the mind, can we truly see the real nature of everything, their dependent origination and emptiness, the inseparability of appearances and emptiness. Not existence, not non-existence. Something beyond this duality, beyond the four extremes. -- It is even beyond the concepts of dependent origination, emptiness, inseparability of appearances and emptiness, beyond the concept of the Middle Way, ... beyond all concepts, inconceivable.)

The commentary on this verse reads, "Imagine that if pure water were poured into a container made of silver, and then in this container one saw directly the reflections of the sun and the moon and the stars, one would see these mere reflections but not see anything that truly existed." This is the consummation or the perfection of the characteristics of relative phenomena.

\ This consummation is that all relative or superficial appearances
\ are just appearance and emptiness;
\ they are
\ the undifferentiability of appearance/emptiness,
\ which is something that
\ can only be directly realized and experienced
\ through meditation.

¢(i.e. The inseparability of appearances and emptiness, their non-duality: not two, not one. The Union of The Two Truths: dependent origination and emptiness.)

If we just think that that is the case, then [the notion of the inseparability of appearance and emptiness] is simply another [conceptual] superimposition on the true nature of reality. Whatever we think about reality, it is a superimposition onto the true nature of reality, which transcends non-conceptual. That is why this freedom from extremes that is the middle way is something that can only truly be experienced through the realization that comes from meditation. If we make it a mere object of our conceptual mind, then it takes on the same characteristics as in the previous two examples, the horns of a rabbit and the horns of an ox; it is not something truly existent.

When we see the reflection of the moon's appearance in a pool of water, what we see is just a mere appearance; but neither our dualistic consciousness nor our thoughts can perceive what the actual nature of that reflected appearance really is. What its actual nature is, and what the actual nature of all relative, superficial phenomena really is, is something

that can only be experienced through the realization that comes from meditation.

The next verse is written to help us further understand this point:

\ That which is virtuous in the beginning, middle, and end,
\ Is undeceiving and is marked by constancy,
\ And is free from self in this very way.
\ How could that be thought of as "I" or "mine"? (35)

¢(i.e. The Dharmadhatu, being beyond all conceptualization, cannot be what we usually think with the concept of "self". The Dharmadhatu is inconceivable, beyond all extremes. The Dharmadhatu is not a self.)

The Dharmadhatu is virtuous in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. Since its nature is completely in harmony with the way that noble beings [bodhisattvas] perceive, then it is undeceiving. And at all times - at the time of the ground, the path, and the fruition - it does not change; it is marked by constancy. This Dharmadhatu that noble beings see is selfless. So how is it that immature beings think that it is a self, perceive that there could be a self? This type of thought is confused; for as sentient beings perceive a self, this self that is perceived, either in individuals or in phenomena, does not truly exist.

When immature beings believe that genuine reality, the Dharmadhatu, is either a self or a truly existent phenomena - in other words, when upon this genuine reality sentient beings superimpose the existence of a self or the existence of phenomena where there is neither self nor phenomena - then that thought is confused, because the noble ones realize directly the selflessness, the absence of true existence, of any conceptualized phenomena in the Dharmadhatu. This reasoning is analogous to the reasoning that says, "When young children see a movie and think that the images in the movie are real, that type of thought is confused, because older people know that the images in that movie are not real."

L3: [E. Dharmadhatu called by different names (36-43)]

We have now arrived at the extensive explanation of the Dharmadhatu, which has two parts.
-- First come the stages in which the Victorious One, the Buddha, taught the dharma of the definitive meaning, meaning the way genuine reality really is;
-- and second, once we understand how the Buddha taught this definitive meaning in stages, we can understand how different names were given to genuine reality in the various stages of the teaching.

First comes the actual description of the stages, which begins with the following question.

If it is true that the Dharmadhatu, that primordial awareness, is perfectly present in all three stages of the ground, path, and fruition - or, as is explained in the treatise on Buddha nature, The Gyu Lama, at the stages of impurity, partial purity, and complete purity - then why is it that the Buddha did not always talk about the Dharmadhatu? Why, if it is present all along, is it mentioned in some places and not in others?

The answer to that question is that, even though the existence of the Dharmadhatu during all stages of the ground, path, and fruition is the definitive meaning, the Buddha purposely taught in stages that lead gradually to an understanding of the definitive meaning. And there was and there continues to be a necessity or reason for doing that. The reason is that sentient beings need to accumulate virtue in different stages or different levels of

understanding.

1. [TEACHING DEPENDENT ORIGINATION] At first sentient beings just need to accumulate merit; and at this stage it is taught that there is a self and there are phenomena in order that sentient beings may understand that the self will experience suffering as a result of negative actions and happiness as a result of positive ones.

2. [TEACHING EMPTINESS] At the second stage, which is the second turning of the wheel of dharma, in order to lead sentient beings to accumulate the virtue that is in harmony with liberation - in other words, the virtue that understands the absence of reality of the self of an individual and the absence of reality of the self of phenomena - the two types of selflessness are taught.

3. [TEACHING OF THE BUDDHANATURE] And finally, in order to inspire and enable sentient beings to begin to purify the two types of obscurations and to gather and complete in an authentic way the two accumulations - the accumulation of merit and the accumulation of wisdom - the basis for purifying the obscurations and for gathering the two accumulations, which is the primordial awareness of the Dharmadhatu, is taught. Primordial awareness is the base from which these activities are accomplished. And this primordial awareness - the inherent, original wisdom of the Dharmadhatu - is present equally at the time of the ground, at the time of the path, and at the time of the fruition.

All of the teachings of the Buddha, whichever they might be, are undecieving, because they have what is called the purity of the three types of analysis, which means that when you analyze them in one of three different ways, they are found to be authentic.

What are these three different ways?

1. First, if the object that the Buddha is talking about is something that is directly perceivable with the senses, then the Buddha's teachings must not be contradicted by any direct valid cognition of the senses. The direct perception of your senses and the Buddha's teachings must not be in conflict. If they are not in conflict, then that is the purity of the first type of analysis.

2. The purity of the second type of analysis concerns objects, like emptiness, which cannot be perceived with the senses, which can only be perceived through inference. And the Buddha's teachings on objects that are hidden in this way, hidden from direct perception, are valid because they are not contradicted by one's own inferential reasoning process.

3. And the purity of the third type of analysis concerns things that are extremely hidden, which cannot even be perceived through inference. And the Buddha's teachings on this type of extremely hidden object are held to be valid because they are not contradicted by what is called the valid cognition of the scriptures, which means that, when the Buddha talked about these types of things, his teachings were not contradicted by anything else he had said before or anything he said afterwards.

Then the debate is raised that, if you believe that the last turning of the wheel of dharma - which asserts that the primordial awareness of the Dharmadhatu pervades equally and in an unchanging way the ground, the path, and the fruition - is the ultimate word of the Buddha about the definitive meaning, about genuine reality, then that is just like the teachings of the non-Buddhists, who say that there is a truly existent self. What is the difference [between their truly existent self and your primordial awareness]?

The answer to that is, how could the Buddha's teachings about the primordial awareness of the Dharmadhatu be in any way similar to the teachings of other traditions which teach that there is a truly existent self? The Buddha, after all, taught in stages of understanding; and in the second turning of the wheel of dharma he had already finished teaching that there is no self. So how, in the subsequent turning of the wheel, could he have possibly taught that there is a self? He had already cleared away that issue. Had the teachings of the third turning been taught before the middle turning, then you might [legitimately] assert that there was some potential for confusion there. But since the Buddha had already finished saying that there is no self, then how could his teachings about the Dharmadhatu, about primordial awareness, be confused and asserted to be teachings that a self truly exists?

¢(i.e. So this Buddha-nature, this originary awareness, IS NOT A SELF !)

Now it would be good to sing the Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition (2) and the Song of the Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range (3).

[Students sing. See pages 25 and 26.]

\ ['Rest with a child's independence.
\ Rest like an ocean free of waves.
\ Rest with a butter lamp's clarity.
\ Rest like a corpse, without arrogance.
\ Rest like a mountain, so still.']

\ Past thought is gone.
\ The future thought has not arisen.
\ Look nakedly at this very present moment of mind and rest, relaxed, within it.

\ The way to rest is to rest with a child's independence.
\ Rest with the independence of not trying to stop anything nor trying to bring anything about.
\ Without any of the waves of thoughts of the three times, rest like an ocean that is unmoving.
\ Rest with a butter lamp's clarity or radiance.

\ The feeling of stupor arises when our minds are dense and not sharp.
\ Dullness arises when our minds are not clear.
\ And drowsiness arises when our minds are neither clear nor sharp.
\ So enhance the awareness and the brightness of mind by resting with a butter lamp's clarity.

\ Rest like a human corpse, without arrogance.

\ To think, "I am a good meditator;
\ my meditation is going really well,"
\ these are thoughts of arrogance;
\ so rest like a corpse, without arrogance.

\ Rest like a mountain, so still.
\ Whatever is happening around a mountain,
\ whatever conditions are happening,
\ they do not affect the mountain itself.

\ Similarly, do not be affected by any conditions, either good or bad.

[Students meditate.]

So now we will sing Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe (4).

[Students sing. See page 27.]

L2: [How different names are given to different modes of completely false appearance [all things we name are all dharmadhatu: appearance-emptiness, clarity-emptiness]]

Continuing the Very Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's teaching on Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu, the following edited transcript is from the morning of September 20. Rinpoche gave the teaching in Tibetan; it was orally translated by Ari Goldfield.

Not leaving out any beings that we may not like, please aspire to attain the state of perfect and complete Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. In order to do that, we must listen to, reflect on, and meditate on the teachings of the noble protector Nagarjuna's text, Praise of the Dharmadhatu, with great enthusiasm in our hearts. This is the precious attitude of Bodhicitta. Please give rise to it and listen.

L3: [F. Dharmadhatu called by different names. (36-43)]

L5: [E.1 Dharmadhatu called by different names according to stages: sentient beings and Buddhas. (36-37)]

We are on verse number 36, which begins the section that teaches why the Dharmadhatu, primordial awareness, is called by different names at different stages:

¢(i.e. Nothing really exist and change, or change into something else. There is just a flow of interdependence with no real entities in it; just inseparable appearances and emptiness, or inseparable clarity and emptiness when talking about the mind. We call this Dharmadhatu, non-duality, or simply say, using the Tetralemma, not existent, not-non-existent, not both, not neither. But all of this is merely pointing at the moon.)

\ Just as water, during the summertime,
\ Is spoken of as being something warm,
\ And the very same water, throughout the winter season,
\ Is spoken of as being something cold, (36)

\ Those ensnared in the net of the afflictions
\ Are referred to by the label, "sentient beings";
\ The very same when freed of states afflicted
\ As "Buddhas" are revered. (37)

¢(i.e. "So long as sentient beings misperceive reality they are known as sentient beings; as soon as they no longer misperceive reality they are known as Buddhas." The difference is in knowing the real nature of the mind, after having directly seen it, and constantly being aware of it.)

Depending upon the season and the state that the water is in, during the wintertime it can be called cold water, during the summertime warm water.

-- Similarly, the Dharmadhatu, primordial awareness, is given the name sentient being when an individual is still afflicted by kleshas, when kleshas still obscure the Dharmadhatu from their vision.

-- However, when the kleshas and the cognitive obscurations are all completely cleared away and primordial awareness manifests openly, unobstructedly, when primordial awareness is directly and perfectly realized, then the Dharmadhatu is called Buddhahood.

What name is given to the Dharmadhatu, either sentient being or Buddha, depends on the state of this individual.

L5: [E.2 Dharmadhatu called by different names according to different modes of completely false appearance: the five sense perceptions and the mental perception [senses, objects, consciousnesses – body & mind ...]. (38-43)]

If it is true that the essential nature of all phenomena is the Dharmadhatu, then, when there appear to be the twelve ayatanas or the twelve sources of consciousness, is not the appearance of these phenomena some type of contradiction? On the one hand they are said to be all of the same nature, yet they appear to be different types of phenomena. How can it be said that their nature is all essentially the Dharmadhatu, that they all have the same nature? Well, there is no contradiction here, and this is explained in the following verses.

What is explained here is how different names or different conventional terms are given to different modes of completely false appearance - the appearances of things which do not truly exist, but appear to exist to the confused mind.

The first one involves the eye consciousness and what appears to it:

\ When eye and form assume their right relation,
\ Appearances appear without a blur.
\ Since these neither arise nor cease,
\ They are the Dharmadhatu, though they are imagined to be otherwise. (38)

¢(i.e. The pure perception without any "labeling", without consciousness (recognition), is the Dharmadhatu. It is when we add labels, concepts, and believe in the true existence of the object, or phenomena, that we become fooled by the illusion. So the mind is already pure, clear light, and so is everything else. All already perfect. It is the belief in inherent existence, added to the pure primordial awareness, that is the problem. So it is said, the problem is "conceptualization".

¢-- Everything, those three, are already pure. It is ok to perceive, to discriminate; that is the pure intelligence of the mind working. The problem is to believe that those are absolute, really existing, inherently existing.)

Form and the other five outer sources of consciousness, making six altogether, do not appear to conceptual consciousness as they really exist. If we examine the outer sources of consciousness down to the smallest atom, we cannot find anything. For example, if we examine an eye in very fine detail, in atomic and subatomic detail, we cannot find even an atom that truly exists. The eye that perceives is not made of anything; it is just a mere appearance. Similarly, the form that appears to the eye sense consciousness is also not made out of any [truly existent] atoms; there is nothing substantially there at all. When these two things which are not composed of anything, which are just mere appearances, come together, then the eye sense consciousness that perceives form does so in a way that is non-conceptual.

When the eye sense consciousness perceives a form, it is an experience of perfect clarity that is unmediated by concepts, that is not polluted by any concepts about what is there; it is just a pure experience of clarity, of vision. At that time, the appearance is not arisen truly, nor does it ever cease, and this appearance-emptiness, this appearance which is empty of arising and empty of ceasing, which is empty of any existent matter at all, this appearance-emptiness undifferentiable is the Dharmadhatu. .

Later, when thoughts arise, we think, "Oh, this is form; and this is a nice looking form or this is an unpleasant looking form," or whatever thought might want to impute to the nature of that form. But its actual nature is appearance-emptiness.

To put this in the form of a logical reasoning, we would say that the eye sense faculty, the form it perceives, and the eye sense consciousness, these three are the Dharmadhatu, because the form and the sense faculty are empty of atoms - they are not made of anything substantial - and the consciousness that perceives is unstained by non-conceptual. It is the undifferentiability of clarity and emptiness. The example that illustrates this is the example of the meeting of the sense faculty, the form, and the consciousness in a dream.

So let's recite this verse three times. [Students recite.]

In connection with this, Guru Rinpoche composed seven supplications to himself for his students and later disciples to recite. One of these is called the Supplication that the Host of Thoughts be Self-liberated (5). The first verse of this supplication is very much in harmony with this particular verse from Nagarjuna's text:

\ All these forms that appear to eyes that see,
\ All things on the outside and the inside,
\ The environment and its inhabitants,
\ Appear, but let them rest where no self's found.

\ Perceiver and perceived, when purified,
\ Are the body of the deity, clear emptiness.
\ To the guru for whom desire frees itself,
\ To Orgyen Pema Jungne I supplicate.

☿(i.e. Their real nature is beyond existence and non-existence. When one knows the real nature of the mind, and look at the perceiver and the perception process itself, then one knows that they are all merely imputed by the mind, empty of inherent existence, the inseparability of appearances and emptiness. Everything is already pure, perfect. It is believing in a real (inherently existing) perceiver, real perception, real objects and phenomena that is the problem.

☿-- It is ok to see all of those forms, but we should not believe that they are truly existent. We should accept appearances and know that they are empty. The Middle Way: not accepting the appearances for what they seem to be -- inherently existing --, not rejecting them completely as if non-existent.

☿-- When everything is seen the Middle Way, then everything is seen as pure. Then the perception itself is said to be purified from all of its veils, all of its obstructions.)

Nagarjuna's next verse reads:

\ When sound and ear assume their right relation,
 \ A consciousness free of thought occurs.
 \ These three are in essence the Dharmadhatu, free of other characteristics,
 \ But they become "hearing" when thought of conceptually. (39)

¢(i.e. It is the same for the perception of sounds. Everything is already pure. They are the way everything works naturally. It is only when we add "inherent existence" to these objects and characteristics that we have a problem.

¢-- The Middle Way: not accepting the appearances for what they seem to be -- inherently existing --, not rejecting them completely as if non-existent. Not existent, not non-existent.

¢-- When everything is seen the Middle Way, then everything is seen as pure.

¢-- Then the perception itself is said to be purified from all of its veils, all of its obstructions.)

Based on the coming together of sound and the ear, an experience of consciousness that is mere clarity, that is the mere experience of hearing the sound, occurs. This consciousness is pure. The reason why it is pure is that there is no non-conceptual, there are no thoughts happening, and so the consciousness is pure. In the Tibetan it literally says it is pure of thoughts. So it is pure because there are no thoughts happening. It is a pure experience. At that time, this consciousness, to which this appearance is appearing so clearly, together with its object, are only the Dharmadhatu and nothing else. They have no other characteristics; they have only the characteristics of awareness and emptiness undifferentiable, because no other characteristics exist. Later, when the thought process kicks in, we can think, "Oh, I just heard a sound." But that only comes after the actual experience and is not connected with it. It is only a label that thoughts put on it after it happens.

The sound, which is not composed of any atoms, is not made of anything. The ear sense faculty is not composed of any "truly existent" atoms. And the ear sense consciousness is mere clarity that is not corrupted by any thoughts; it is not stained by any thoughts. And the coming together of these three is just like their coming together in a dream. There is no difference. Their nature is the Dharmadhatu. They have no characteristics [that exist] from their own side [independent of conditions from the "other" side]. They have only the characteristics of the Dharmadhatu.

But because we do not recognize what the Dharmadhatu is, then thoughts arise and we think, "Oh, that was a sound." So thoughts prevent us from knowing what the true nature of that experience was. Our obscuring thoughts prevent us from seeing that it is actually the Dharmadhatu and confuse us by labeling it as a sound, and then further labeling it is a "good" sound, a "bad" sound, or whatever.

When we hear something in a dream - before we conceptualize what it is that we are hearing - the sound and the sense faculty that perceives the sound are appearance and emptiness undifferentiable from each other. The sense consciousness that perceives it is clarity-emptiness undifferentiable, and it is all just the Dharmadhatu. But then, because we do not recognize the Dharmadhatu, we have a thought, "Oh, that is a sound"; and then we think, just as we do during the daytime, "That was a good sound, that was a bad sound," and we start to take action in response to that [conceptualized version of the] sound. We either try to do something to get more of that type of sound or to avoid that type of sound, all based upon this conceptual confusion.

In the Supplication to Guru Rinpoche (5) it says,

\ All these sounds that appear for ears that hear,
\ Taken as agreeable or not,
\ Let them rest in the realm of sound and emptiness,
\ Past all thought, beyond imagination.

\ Sounds are empty, unarisen, and unceasing;
\ These are what make up the Victor's teaching.
\ To the teachings of the Victor, sound and emptiness,
\ To Orgyen Pema Jungne I supplicate.

¢(i.e. Their real nature is beyond existence and non-existence.)

And the 39th verse of Nagarjuna's text reads:

\ When sound and ear assume their right relation,
\ A pure consciousness free of thought occurs.
\ These three are in essence the Dharmadhatu, free of any other characteristics.
\ But they become "hearing" when thought of conceptually. (39)

So we will recite this together three times.

[Students recite.]

The essence of any experience of perception is the Dharmadhatu. It is appearance-emptiness, clarity-emptiness. When we have a thought that this experience of Dharmadhatu is a sound, and take that sound to be real, then that is samsara. (i.e. Everything is already Nirvana; it is when we add "inherent existence" that it becomes samsara.)

The next verse reads:

\ Dependent upon the nose and an odor, one smells.
\ And as with the example of form there is neither arising nor cessation,
\ But in dependence upon the nose-consciousness's experience,
\ The Dharmadhatu is thought to be smell. (40)

¢(i.e. same as above ... the real nature is beyond existence and non-existence, but because we have not realized the real nature of the mind, we think objects are inherently existing and get stuck in samsara. But everything is already pure.)

The commentary reads, "In dependence upon the nose and an odor, there is smell; but in this appearance of form, there is neither any arising, there is neither anything happening, nor is there any ceasing of anything happening. And so the smell has no essence. But based on the experience of the nose consciousness, one thinks, 'I smelled something,' and the Dharmadhatu is conceptualized to be odor."

Again, the dream is a very useful example for us to think about. In a dream, the experience of nose consciousness's perceiving odor is, from the perspective of consciousness, clarity-emptiness; the odor is appearance-emptiness. It is the Dharmadhatu, but we do not recognize the Dharmadhatu, so even though it is just a dream, we think that we smelled something. We are confused in the same way we are during the daytime. We think that the smell is either good or bad and that we have to take some kind of action of adopting or

rejecting in response to it. We confuse the Dharmadhatu to be smell.

So now we will recite this verse three times.

[Students recite.]

The next two verses teach about the tongue consciousness (taste consciousness) and the tactile consciousness of the body. The first one reads:

\ The tongue's nature is emptiness.
\ The sphere of taste is voidness as well.
\ These are in essence the Dharmadhatu
\ And are not the causes of the taste consciousness. (41)

¢(i.e. same as above ...)

The commentary: "The tongue's nature is empty of essence. It has no existent essence. The sphere or the element of taste - that which is being tasted - also is void; it also has no truly existing essence. Both of these, the tongue and what is tasted, are of the essence of the Dharmadhatu. And therefore they are not the cause of the taste consciousness. It is only that thoughts think that they are." We think that there is a tongue and that there is something that the tongue tastes, and as a result we experience taste, the sensation of taste, in our minds. But this is only our conceptual mind at work. This demonstrates how conceptual mind clings to things which are truly nonexistent as being the cause of an experience that, in turn, is also entirely conceptual.

The tongue itself is not composed of any existent atoms. If you look to see what the atoms in that tongue are made of, you cannot find anything. So it is empty of essence. It has no existent essence. Similarly, taste is of the nature of voidness or emptiness. We could think that we taste something and it tastes good or it tastes bad, but the same experience of taste can be thought of in different ways, in completely opposite ways, by different beings. Some beings taste one thing and it tastes very good, other beings taste the exact same thing and they experience it as a very bad taste. So what this taste is is not definite. It is of the nature of emptiness. And it is the Dharmadhatu. When we are confused, we take the Dharmadhatu to be something truly existent and call it taste.

[Students recite verse.]

The tongue has two functions. It functions both as the faculty of the taste consciousness and as a faculty of the tactile consciousness. The middle part of your tongue feels form, experiences tactile sensation. The edges of it experience taste. It is important to know that our tongue has two functions.

However, these appearances - of a taste sense faculty and of a tactile sense faculty - are completely false appearances; neither of them truly exists. They are in essence the Dharmadhatu.

The next verse is about the tactile consciousness, the body consciousness:

\ The pure body's essence,
\ The characteristics of the object touched,

\ The tactile consciousness free of conditions -
\ These are called the Dharmadhatu. (42)

¢(i.e. same as above ...)

If one investigates, one finds that the body is pure (empty) of atoms. It is pure because it is not made of anything; there are no atoms there. The characteristics of the object that is touched are pure in a similar way because there are no atoms there either. And therefore the tactile consciousness - or literally the body consciousness - is liberated or free of conditions, the conditions that bring it about. Here, the two conditions referred to are called the focal condition and the empowering condition. The focal condition here is the object of touch, what the consciousness is focused on, and the empowering condition is the sense faculty, which is the body itself. Since these two conditions do not exist, the consciousness does not really exist either. Therefore, all three are the openness and spaciousness of the Dharmadhatu, and nothing other than that.

So the body, the tactile sense faculty, and the form that is touched or felt, these are appearance-emptiness. The consciousness is clarity-emptiness. All are the Dharmadhatu. But since we do not realize that, after the experience of touching something happens, we conceptualize it to be touch, and then we engage in all different kinds of activity, trying to get more of that type of feeling or trying to push away that type of feeling to get less of it, and that is samsara.

The actual experience of touch is the Dharmadhatu, because the body is the Dharmadhatu, that which is touched is the Dharmadhatu, and the consciousness experiencing it is the Dharmadhatu. But an instant later our thoughts arise and identify it and reify it as an experience of touching something, and these thoughts are like iron chains that shackle us. The more we think about it, the more we get wrapped up and tangled up in it. That is the way it is most of the time. If somebody is tied up and they try to move around, they just get more and more tangled up. That is what happens when we do not realize the basic openness and spaciousness of the experience, when we do not realize the Dharmadhatu.

It is just like an insect caught in a spider's web. First, it is not caught very much, just a little bit; but as it tries to escape and struggles, then the web wraps tighter and tighter around it, and it is much worse off.

\ In short, what binds us are our thoughts that the Dharmadhatu is something real.
\ There is nothing else that binds us.
\ If we can understand what the essence of these thoughts really is,
\ then they will be self-liberated.

[Students recite verse.]

The next verse reads:

\ The phenomena that appear to the mental consciousness, the chief of them all,
\ Are conceptualized and then superimposed.
\ When this activity is abandoned, phenomena's lack of self-essence is known.
\ Knowing this, meditate on the Dharmadhatu. (43)

¢(i.e. It is believing in the inherent existence of things that is the problem. The way the mind works is already pure. It tried to find regularity, acting like a mirror, an

associative memory, a simulator. But the crystallization of the models is the cause of all grasping. The mind forgets that everything is its own creation. But when it becomes self-aware of its own nature, then it is not fooled by its illusions anymore. The mind has the potential to transcend its own limitations by seeing how it is working in the present, how its own nature is to create those things and phenomena's appearances, how everything is merely labeled by the mind, how everything is empty of inherent existence.)

The commentary on the first two lines reads, "The completely false appearance of the mind and the phenomena that appear to the mind are what cause the mental consciousness to come into being. But the phenomena appearing to this mental consciousness are merely conceptualized, and once conceptualized are superimposed onto genuine reality as being existent, and are given whatever name we might choose to give them."

-- First we imagine the existence of a phenomenon, (i.e. first we build models)

-- then we superimpose that onto reality, (i.e. then we think they are reality)

-- and then we give it a name. (i.e. thinking the names represent reality)

-- But, as the final line of the commentary reads, "As it is superimposed, it does not exist." It does not exist as it is believed to. (i.e. but they are all merely imputed by the mind)

In the Supplication to Guru Rinpoche (5), it says,

\ All these movements of mind towards its objects,
\ These thoughts that make five poisons and afflictions,
\ Leave thinking mind to rest without contrivances.
\ Do not review the past nor guess the future.

\ If you let such movement rest in its own place,
\ It liberates into the Dharmakaya.
\ To the guru for whom awareness frees itself,
\ To Orgyen Pema Jungne I supplicate.

¢(i.e. The way to become free is to see the real nature of the mind. And to do that we have to develop concentration, free from the five hindrances. Only then can we directly see the subtle nature of the mind, the Dharmadhatu, which is beyond any description, beyond any conceptualization. By artificially purifying the mind (dhyana) we come to directly see its real nature (Insight) and then it becomes purified naturally, for ever (seeing through all of its illusions). The real nature of the mind and of everything is already pure. We superimpose concepts and obstructions onto the real nature of everything and thus perpetuate samsara. Be with self-awareness we can become free.)

-- If we connect Praise of the Dharmadhatu with the songs of Milarepa, we are joining Praise of the Dharmadhatu with the explanations of mahamudra.

-- If we connect Praise of the Dharmadhatu with Guru Rinpoche's supplication, then we join Praise of the Dharmadhatu with the explanations of Dzogchen.

Now we will sing Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe (4).

[Students sing. See page 27.]

Sarwa Mangalam.

L3: [End of Rinpoche's commentary on the verses]

L2: [At the meeting of the consciousness with its object, there is no real arising]

L3: [How the six consciousnesses are self-liberated through this mindfulness of what the experience really is]

Continuing the Very Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's teaching on Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu, the following edited transcript is from the afternoon of September 20. Rinpoche gave the teaching in Tibetan; it was orally translated by Ari Goldfield.

Sarwa Mangalam. Al la la ho.

We will begin by singing the Supplication to Guru Rinpoche (5).

[Students sing. See page 52.]

Now we will sing a verse from a song by Milarepa, the lord of yogis.

This verse also describes how the six consciousnesses are self-liberated.

So you should write this verse down on a piece of paper. It goes like this:

\ The meeting of appearances of the six kinds of consciousness,
\ This is the guide that turns adverse conditions into a path.
\ Is there anyone here who is able to keep to this path and follow it through?
\ The one for whom desire and craving have been consumed is happy.

☿(i.e. By directly seeing the real nature of the mind in action, in the present, at the junction/contact of the sense faculties, the objects being perceived and the consciousnesses. By seeing the mind in action, by being aware of the apparent origination of the object being perceived, one becomes free of the illusion.)

The rope that ties perceiver and perceived, when cut, is E Ma Ho!

[Students sing.]

Praise of the Dharmadhatu teaches how the meeting of the sense faculty, the object of the senses, and the sense consciousness, whichever particular sense it might be, is an experience that is self-liberated, meaning that it is free by its very nature.

This same point - that the six consciousnesses are self-liberated or self-liberating - is also taught in the Supplication to Guru Rinpoche (5). We supplicate Guru Rinpoche by singing,

\ Grant your blessing that purifies appearance
\ Of objects perceived as being outside;
\ Grant your blessing that liberates perceiving mind,
\ The mental operation seeming inside;

\ Grant your blessing that between the two of these,
\ Clear light will come to recognize its own face.
\ In your compassion, Sugatas of all three times,
\ Please bless me that a mind like mine be freed.

☿(i.e. Purification is being aware of the real nature of the mind at the same time as perceiving something. The Union of The Two Truths. Seeing appearances and knowing that they are merely imputed by the mind, dependently originated, empty of inherent existence.

Everything is already pure. It is the clear light nature of the mind to work this way.)

And again, Milarepa sings of how the meeting of objects and their consciousnesses is also the Dharmadhatu; it is self-liberated. So Nagarjuna, Guru Rinpoche, and Milarepa are teaching us the same essential point, which is profound and wonderful.

The meeting of the sense consciousness, the sense faculty, and the sense object in the waking state is just as it is in a dream. When there is no conceptual consciousness thinking about what is going on, then the nature of this meeting is the Dharmadhatu, and it is therefore said to be self-liberated, meaning that nothing needs to be done to change or alter whatever the experience is. It is free in and of itself. This experience is also said to be liberated through mindfulness. It is liberated through mindfulness because we tend automatically to have a thought about the experience following the non-conceptual experience. This conceptual thought is that something just happened. I saw something, I heard something, I touched something, and so forth. But if, at that point, we remember the Dharmadhatu, we remember the natural state of this experience, then it is liberated through our mindfulness of it. When we think about experience, then this non-conceptual is what binds us. But if we then look at the essence of that non-conceptual, if we remember that the nature of the experience is that it is self-liberated, then we are liberated through this mindfulness of what the experience really is.

So now we will recite Selected Verses from Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu (6).

[Students recite. See page 54.]

From among the six types of consciousness, the five sense consciousnesses are always non-conceptual in the way they perceive their objects. They merely perceive them and do not conceptualize what they are perceiving. The mental consciousness has both a non-conceptual and a conceptual aspect to it. After the first moment of direct sense perception of any object there is a moment of direct non-conceptual perception of the same object by the mental sense consciousness. But then after that moment, the conceptual aspect of the mental consciousness arises and begins conceptualizing about the object that is perceived. And these three instants of mind - an initial instant of non-conceptual direct sense perception, an instant of non-conceptual direct perception by the mental consciousness, and then an instant of conceptual mental consciousness - continue to follow one after the other with such speed that the experience becomes blurred and mixed together. So, for example, when we perceive an object before our eyes, the aspect of our mind that is the eye sense consciousness is perceiving it non-conceptually. Then instantly thereafter, each moment of non-conceptual perception by the sense consciousness is followed by a moment of non-conceptual perception by the mental consciousness; and then, immediately thereafter, the mental consciousness is thinking. And all of this is happening extremely fast to the point of being unnoticeable.

An example that shows that the five sense consciousnesses are non-conceptual in the way that they perceive is how our eye sense consciousness perceives all the people in this room. When we look at this room, then we can see everybody at once, and everybody appears very distinctly and individually. What appears are the uniquely characterized objects, the forms and the colors. But when our conceptual consciousness starts to work, then we can only remember one person's name at a time. We could never think of everybody's name at once. This shows how these two aspects of consciousness work differently. Eyes can perceive everything together very clearly, perfectly clearly, perfectly distinctly, but the conceptual

consciousness can only have one thought at a time.

When the eye consciousness perceives, it is not obscured by non-conceptual, by conceptual mental activity, so its vision is perfectly and exquisitely clear. It is an experience of exquisite clarity that is unmitigated by concepts.

As soon as we start to think about the objects - give them names, assign terms to describe them - then we no longer are seeing clearly, we are no longer seeing with clarity. The mind cannot perceive concepts clearly in the same way that it perceives directly, because as soon as conceptual mental activity starts to happen, that begins to obscure the mind's natural clarity.

Among the sense faculties, the mental sense faculty is not a physically existent object as are the other five sense faculties. What it is the very ceasing of the moment of sense consciousness that preceded it. It is not the sense consciousness before it stops, it is not the absence of anything that is happening after the sense consciousness stops; it is the very ceasing of the sense consciousness. So for example, if we were falling asleep, and as we were falling asleep we were to hear a loud noise, then there would be a moment of ear sense consciousness; then that would cease, and the very ceasing of that would allow for a moment of mental consciousness to perceive that sound directly and non-conceptually.

The mental sense faculty, and then the subsequent moment of direct non-conceptual perception by the mental consciousness, is what allows for the mental consciousness to then start to think about the object that is heard. So if we are just falling asleep, and everything is very peaceful and still, and there is no activity of any of the consciousnesses, and then if all of a sudden we hear a very loud bang, first we perceive that sound directly with our ear sense consciousness. Then the mental consciousness also has a moment of direct perception of that object without concepts. And then, based on that perception, the mental consciousness can start to conceptualize about that object and think, "Oh, what kind of noise was that? Maybe they are starting a war out there or something." And then all of our coarse conceptual activity begins.

The object of the mental consciousness that is perceiving directly and the object of the conceptualizing mental consciousness may seem the same, but what the direct valid cognition of the mental consciousness perceives is the uniquely characterized object itself. What the conceptual mental consciousness perceives is only an abstract image; it is the object connected with a name, with a term that describes it, some abstract general image of what it is. But the problem is that these moments follow each other very quickly. So there is a very brief moment of direct perception, and then a brief moment of conceptual activity, and then another brief moment of direct perception, then another moment of conceptual activity, and the whole thing just runs together.

This process is happening so fast that we confuse the uniquely characterized object to be the same as the object of our conceptual mind, the object that we are thinking about. But they are not the same. We do not realize that there are different stages of perception. There first has to be a moment of non-conceptual perception in order to have an object to start to think about. But because these things happen so fast, we unknowingly blend the whole thing together, and we think that the object we are thinking about is the same as the object that is really out there that is being perceived. But it is not; it is completely different.

According to the tradition of the Sautrantika, the Sutra School (Do Depa in Tibetan), this

moment that is the ceasing of the sense consciousness, that is also the mental sense faculty, is extremely hidden, meaning that it is impossible for an ordinary being, an ordinary individual who is not an arya, who is not realized, to experience this, to see it happen. It is impossible because it happens so fast.

In the traditions that posit the existence of self-awareness, the mind experiences both the conceptual activity and the non-conceptual activity itself. In other words, there is a self-experience; the mind is aware of its own experience. And so, along with this conceptual and non-conceptual activity, there is also the experience of the awareness of that activity, the mind being aware of its own activity.

For example, if you eat a piece of candy, then one aspect of the mind is focused on the candy, is focused on perceiving the taste and the tactile sensation that the candy produces. But one aspect of the mind is also facing inward and is experiencing that experience itself, which is the aspect of the mind that is self-aware, that is aware of what is happening. So one aspect is facing outward and experiencing the object; the other aspect is facing inward and experiencing itself.

When our bodies touch any given object, we experience it either as being something soft or as being something coarse and rough. Some sentient beings like the experience of soft, and others - elephants, oxen, pigs - like to feel very rough things against their skin. But whatever it is that we are experiencing, there are two aspects to the mind that experiences them. One aspect experiences the object itself and the other is facing inward; it is the mere clarity and the mere awareness aspect of the experience that is the mind experiencing itself.

So for those traditions that assert the existence of this self-awareness, then, for any moment of mind there is an aspect that is focused outward and an aspect that is focused inward and is aware of itself. But we should also understand that in essence these two aspects are not different from each other. They are the same in essence.

This way of explaining things is according to the tradition of the science of valid cognition, the tradition of Dignaga and Dharmakirti. And the reasonings used in this tradition are incredibly difficult to understand. They are quite complicated and require a lot of analysis.

In the tradition of valid cognition, what is discussed is how these consciousnesses arise; how does consciousness happen, and how does it work? It is not looking into whether or not the consciousness exists, whether or not it is absent of any truly existent essence, as Praise of the Dharmadhatu is teaching. Praise of the Dharmadhatu is teaching that at the very moment of the meeting of the consciousness with its object, these things are not really happening; there is no real arising. These phenomena have no existent essence. But our non-conceptual blocks our view of that; it blocks our view of the fact that these events are really just manifestations of the Dharmadhatu. They are nothing other than the Dharmadhatu, the unborn, unceasing Dharmadhatu.

When Milarepa sings of the meeting of the six kinds of consciousness, he is also singing that, when the consciousness and the sense faculty and the object all meet, experience itself never really happens. It is unarisen. It does not remain, it does not cease. It is the Dharmadhatu. But our conceptual mind, which thinks there is something happening, prevents us from understanding that. However, if we realize the nature of this experience, we can meditate on the essence of non-conceptual; we can look straight at the essence of

this non-conceptual, this thought, which is also the Dharmadhatu. In that way our thoughts are self-liberated, and since the experience of the consciousness's perceptions are also self-liberated, are also the Dharmadhatu, then whatever bad thing happens, whatever adverse condition happens, it does not matter. Whatever suffering we experience, it does not matter. Whatever adversity we run into, it does not matter.

The Supplication to Guru Rinpoche (5) also teaches how the six consciousnesses are self-liberated, are the Dharmadhatu; and it combines that teaching with a supplication to the lama, and so it is quite wonderful.

So now we will begin by reciting the Selected Verses from Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu (6)," then we will sing Milarepa's verse, and then we will sing the Supplication to Guru Rinpoche (5).

[Students sing. See pages 54, 51, and 52.]

L4: [Do you have any questions?]

L5: [The two inseparability]

Translator: For all six consciousnesses, are
-- the sense faculty and
-- the object appearance-emptiness and
-- the consciousness clarity-emptiness?

RINPOCHE: Yes,
-- the object of the consciousness and
-- the sense faculty are appearance-emptiness
-- and the consciousness is clarity-emptiness.

L5: [Difference between the two turnings of the wheel]

QUESTION: Rinpoche, could you speak a little bit about Nagarjuna's switch between the second turning of the wheel and the third turning of the wheel? Which turning of the wheel of dharma did Nagarjuna regard as definitive? And, based on the assumption that Nagarjuna felt the third turning was definitive, why is there so little written by Nagarjuna about the third turning of the wheel compared to the second turning of the wheel?

RINPOCHE:

-- The function of the second turning is to cut through all conceptual fabrications, to cut through all the different ideas about reality, and there are a great many of these ideas. There are many different views of reality held by other Buddhist schools and many different views of reality held by non-Buddhist schools, and Nagarjuna refuted all of them. So, for example, in The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, the MulaMadhyamakakarika, there are twenty-seven chapters, and in each chapter there is a different assertion that is refuted. So it takes that much to refute all those different kinds of assertions. And then in his other texts, too, he refutes even other assertions. That is the reason why there is so much written about the second turning.
-- The writings of Nagarjuna about the third turning of the wheel of the dharma are called

the Praises, and Praise of the Dharmadhatu is one of these. By the time Nagarjuna wrote these praises, all the refuting had been done, so there was no more need to go through that. What is taught here is from the perspective of experience, from the perspective of practice, and so it is taught how the six consciousnesses at the very moment they meet their objects are self-liberated, and how to rest in that experience of self-liberation into the Dharmadhatu, and so forth. It is all taught from the perspective of practice.

That is also why the explanations of how to rest the mind according to the traditions of Dzogchen and mahamudra do not need to be incredibly extensive. There is no longer any need to refute anything, there is no need to use reasoning to negate anything; all of that work has already been completed in the teachings of the second turning. In the traditions of Dzogchen and mahamudra it is just taught how to rest the mind in its own natural state.

Milarepa said to look at mind nakedly and rest, relaxed. All the work of analysis has been completed at that point. There is no need to refute other schools' views. There is no need to prove that phenomena are of the nature of emptiness. At this point we just need to practice, and we practice by looking at mind nakedly or directly and resting, relaxed.

L5: [Difference between consciousness and awareness]

QUESTION: What is the difference between consciousness and awareness?

RINPOCHE: The difference between consciousness and awareness is easy to understand.

-- Consciousness is confused. It is involved in the dualistic perception of perceivers, where there is a perceiver and there is something perceived,
-- whereas awareness is primordial awareness or original wisdom that is self-arisen and self-aware, aware in a way that is nondual.

[Rinpoche composes a two-line verse:]

\ Know that perception involved with the duality of perceiver and perceived is consciousness;
\ Know that awareness itself, liberated from perceiver and perceived, is primordial awareness.

Milarepa sang,

\ "I do not see consciousness.
\ I see awareness."

-- When you examine consciousness, which is involved in dualistic perception, it is like looking for the core of a banana tree; you just keep peeling away the layers and you do not find anything on the inside.

-- When we examine the nature of dualistic consciousness, we find there is nothing there. So Milarepa does not see it.

-- What Milarepa does see is awareness, and this awareness is nondual; there is nothing to realize and no one realizing it, there is nothing to see and no one seeing it.

If we want to sum up the view of the Shentong madhyamaka, the "empty of other" school, (i.e. the clear light nature of mind itself is not empty of its own nature according to the third turning of the Wheel) then that verse, that one line sung by Milarepa, is the most important line of all.

\ "I do not see consciousness.
\ I see awareness."

L5: [Repeat the verse]

QUESTION: Could Rinpoche please repeat the verse that he said twice before we meditated?
(The instructions given by Milarepa to Loden Gendenma.)

RINPOCHE: The instructions are as follows:

\ "Rest with a child's independence.
\ Rest like an ocean free of waves.
\ Rest with a butter lamp's clarity.
\ Rest like a corpse, without arrogance.
\ Rest like a mountain, so still."

L5: [Difference between Dharmadhatu and sunyata according to the two turnings of the wheel]

QUESTION: What is the difference between Dharmadhatu and sunyata (sunyata meaning emptiness), and how do they relate to each other?

RINPOCHE:

-- Here the Dharmadhatu is explained to be primordial awareness, awareness and emptiness undifferentiable. That is the explanation according to Praise of the Dharmadhatu and the third turning of the wheel of dharma.

-- According to the second turning, the Dharmadhatu is explained to be emptiness; it is explained to be simplicity or the freedom from all conceptual elaborations. There is not really any mention of awareness in the second turning as being part of what genuine reality is.

This awareness does not depend on any causes and conditions to bring it about. It is self-aware. It is non-dualistically aware. And it is undifferentiable from emptiness, from the Dharmadhatu.

So there are two different terms.

-- One is rigtong yermed, which literally means awareness-emptiness undifferentiable.

-- The other term is chöying yeshe, which literally means Dharmadhatu primordial awareness.

These two terms mean exactly the same thing.

In his song, No Birth, No Base and Union, Milarepa sings, "Without any direction, clarity shines timelessly." The clarity that is the true nature of the mind cannot be located in any directional point; it cannot be said to exist at any specific time. It is not locatable in terms of time or space. Therefore it is not an entity, it is not some thing that you can point to and say, "Oh, it is there, and it was there from this period of time to that period of time," or "It is over there." It is not like that. So then what are its qualities? In the next line Milarepa sings, "You cannot hold it, you cannot say what it is." This is teaching that the nature of this awareness is simplicity, freedom from conceptual elaboration. It cannot be grasped, it cannot be expressed in terms of its nature. And so in these two lines Milarepa sings of the true nature of mind being clarity-emptiness undifferentiable.

L5: [Four types of Union / Inseparability]

Then there is the part of the song about union. There are four different types of union or undifferentiability that describe the mind's true nature.

These are

1. appearance-emptiness undifferentiable,
2. clarity-emptiness undifferentiable,
3. bliss-emptiness undifferentiable,
4. and awareness-emptiness undifferentiable.

These words are very important.

The explanation of the union of bliss and emptiness is part of the extraordinary explanation of the vajrayana. As Naropa said to Marpa Lotsawa, "Passion has bliss-emptiness for a heart." So the essence of passion or desire is bliss and emptiness undifferentiable, which is why one's meditation in vajrayana is to meditate on the essence of passion, which is bliss-emptiness.

L5: [Difference between sense consciousness direct perception & direct perception of the mental consciousness]

QUESTION: As there is an experience of direct valid cognition of the mental consciousness after a moment of sense consciousness, is there also a moment of direct mental perception after a moment of conceptual consciousness?

RINPOCHE: First, the direct perception of the mental consciousness is unlike sense consciousness direct perception, because sense consciousness direct perception happens in a continuum - there are many moments of it - but there is only one moment of the mental consciousness's direct perception, which is produced right after any given moment of sense consciousness direct perception. So a moment of sense consciousness direct perception happens, which gives rise to a moment of mental consciousness direct perception, and that is it.

The answer to your specific question is no, the mental consciousness that perceives directly perceives in a way that is free of concepts, that is non-conceptual, and so it cannot possibly experience an object of the conceptual mind. The object of the conceptual mind is called the generally or abstractly characterized phenomenon. And what direct perception, either of the sense consciousnesses or of the mental consciousness, perceives is only the uniquely characterized object, the specifically characterized object.

According to the Sutra School, there are four types of direct valid cognition:

1. unconfused, non-conceptual perception of the sense consciousnesses is called sense direct valid cognition;
2. unconfused non-conceptual direct perception of the mental consciousness is called mental direct valid cognition;
3. unconfused non-conceptual self-experience (the mind experiencing itself) is called self-aware direct valid cognition;
4. and unconfused non-conceptual perception that arises as the result of meditation is called yogic direct valid cognition.

But the key to all of these is that they are all non-conceptual; direct valid cognition is always non-conceptual.

According to the tradition of the Vaibhasheka or the Particularist School, which is a lower school than the Sutra School, there are only three kinds of direct valid cognition:

1. the sense consciousness valid cognition,
2. the mental consciousness valid cognition,
3. and yogic direct valid cognition.

They do not assert the existence of self-aware direct valid cognition.

The reason why both the Sutra and the Particularist schools assert the existence of sense direct valid cognition and mental direct valid cognition is that they assert that there are outer objects to begin with. And so, [according to their view,] since there are truly existent outer objects, then there can be an unconfused perception of these objects by sense direct valid cognition and mental direct valid cognition.

According to the Mind Only School, the Cittamatra, outer objects do not really exist; they are just a result of confused habitual tendencies. And therefore, since there are no real outer objects, then there can be no unconfused perception of outer objects. And so they do not assert that perception of outer objects is in any way valid cognition; it is not valid cognition. And so the only two types of direct valid cognition that they assert are self-aware direct valid cognition and yogic direct valid cognition.

L5: [For the Madhyamaka schools, valid cognition is like everything else: not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither]

QUESTION: How do the Madhyamaka or the Middle Way schools explain direct valid cognition?

RINPOCHE: The explanations of valid cognition are mainly from the perspective of the sutra and the mind only schools, the Sautrantika and the Cittamatra. The middle way or the Madhyamaka schools say that since there is not a single phenomenon that truly exists, then there is no such thing as valid cognition. They do not assert anything; they do not have any of their own assertions from their own perspective, because there is nothing to make any assertions about. There is no one to make any assertions, so how could there be any assertions? But they do explain things from the perspective of others. So they explain valid cognition from the perspective of how it is thought of in the world.

In terms of the four types of direct valid cognition, if we are not analyzing to see whether or not these things really exist, then we can accept them all, because they are sort of in harmony with how we experience the world. Once we start to analyze, we cannot find any of them existing, and that is called "from the perspective of slight analysis." And then "from the perspective of thorough analysis," genuine reality transcends both the existence and the non-existence of all of these different types of perceptions. So that is the most profound view of the middle way consequence school or the Prasangika Madhyamaka, which is that you cannot say they exist, you cannot say they do not exist, they are neither existent nor are they non-existent. [Nor are they both existent and non-existent, nor are they neither existent nor non-existent.]

That is why the Middle Way Consequence School is given that name "consequence," because they do not make any assertions of their own, they only show the absurd consequences of everybody

else's assertions. They refute everybody else's view; and if they themselves were to posit a view, then their own reasoning could refute that view. So they do not have any view; they do not assert anything. The Prasangikas know that, if they start making assertions, it would just be evidence of their own confusion.

L5: [Difference between self-aware direct valid cognition and yogic direct valid cognition]

QUESTION: What is the difference between self-aware direct valid cognition and yogic direct valid cognition?

RINPOCHE:

-- Self-awareness, in this case, refers to the mind's own experience of what is happening in the mind, of its own feelings of happiness and suffering. So for example, if you experience happiness or suffering, you do not need somebody else to come and tell you that. Nobody else comes and says, "Oh, you are happy now," or, "You are sad now." You know it yourself. No one else has any ability to know that or to make it one way or the other. So the mind knows itself; it experiences its own sensations and its own emotions, its own experiences. So that is self-awareness or self-aware direct valid cognition, the mind's experience of itself.

-- On the other hand, yogic direct valid cognition is the experience of genuine reality that arises out of meditation. And so there is a very big difference between these two.

There are three parts to the definition of yogic direct valid cognition. It is unconfused, non-conceptual, and arisen from meditation. So the third part is what separates it, distinguishes it, from the other three types of valid cognition. Because the other three are all unconfused and non-conceptual, but only yogic direct valid cognition arises from meditation.

-- Also in the definition of self-aware direct valid cognition there are three parts: It is unconfused, non-conceptual, self-experience. So the third part, that it experiences itself, is what separates it from the first two types of direct valid cognition, which experience outer objects: sense consciousness direct valid cognition and mental consciousness direct valid cognition.

The definition of mental direct valid cognition is that it is the unconfused, non-conceptual experience of the mental consciousness. So since it is the mental consciousness, that separates it from sense consciousness direct valid cognition, which is experienced by the sense consciousnesses.

And then sense consciousness direct valid cognition is the non-conceptual, unconfused perception of the sense consciousnesses, which eliminates the possibility that it is mental direct valid cognition, because the sense consciousness is not the mental consciousness.

It is very important to know the difference between yogic direct valid cognition and self-aware direct valid cognition. Yogic direct valid cognition arises from meditation at a very high level. It is possible, indeed easy, to be confused and to think that one's own experience is the same as yogic direct valid cognition, that what one experiences oneself is what yogis and yoginis experience, and that is not the case. So we have to know that these two are different.

But if one meditates on one's own experience, on the essence of what one's own experience is, then it is possible that that will transform into yogic direct valid cognition. But the key is, you need to meditate on it.

For example, when one experiences happiness, the mind's experience of that happiness is self-awareness; it is the mind experiencing itself. If we can meditate on the essence of what that experience is, then it can become yogic direct valid cognition.

If you do not meditate, then you can experience happiness, but it is not yogic direct valid cognition.

QUESTION: Does yogic direct valid cognition include the other three kinds of direct valid cognition, once you realize their essence?

RINPOCHE: Actually, there is no meditation on the essence of sense consciousness direct valid cognition, because that is just a mere clarity and non-conceptual; and so what one meditates on is the essence of mental direct valid cognition and self-aware direct valid cognition. When you meditate on the essence of those two experiences of the mental consciousness, the sense consciousnesses are just free all by themselves.

The explanation of mahamudra sheds some light on this, because according to mahamudra, the mental consciousness is of the nature of what in Tibetan is called ösel, which we translate as clear light or radiant clarity. So the mental consciousness is of the nature of radiant clarity. And the sense consciousnesses are the creative play or the energy of that radiant clarity. So there is no need to meditate on them separately. Once you realize the nature of the radiant clarity, then the creative play of that radiant clarity is also self-liberated.

In the tradition of vajrayana, the meditations on the heat of tummo and so forth are meditations on the mind's own experience of bliss and emptiness. These are like meditating on the essence of self-awareness. They are not called that specifically, but if you joined these two explanation - the explanation given in Praise to the Dharmadhatu and the explanation given in the tradition of vajrayana, then you would say that those meditations are like meditation on self-awareness.

Bliss-emptiness is the mind's own experience of itself; and to meditate on that, focus on that bliss-emptiness, and then to rest, relaxed, within it, is to meditate within self-awareness.

Other questions?

L5: [First realize what the real nature of your own mind, then thoughts are self-liberating by directly looking at their essence]

QUESTION: Is liberation through mindfulness as easy as just being aware of the conceptual process happening, of labeling the object?

RINPOCHE: When we see this cup, that experience is non-conceptual; but then we think, "That is a cup." That is conceptual mental activity. Then to look at the essence of that thought is the self-liberation of the six consciousnesses. When we think "cup," it is that thought that binds us. But when we look into the essence of that thought, it just disintegrates and we are free, and it is very open and spacious and relaxed.

So we are not meditating on the cup here; the cup is not the focus of our meditation. The focus of our meditation is the thought that thinks that there is a cup. And so we look at the essence of that thought, and that essence is openness and spaciousness and relaxedness.

This liberation through mindfulness only happens for yogis and yoginis who have directly realized the true nature of mind. Those who have not attained this realization can use this meditation, but it does not actually truly liberate them. What has to come first is the realization or cultivation of an understanding of what the true nature of mind is. Then one can use this meditation to great effect.

This type of liberation through mindfulness is just like having a dream and knowing that you are dreaming. If you know you are dreaming, then as soon as you remember, "Oh, I'm dreaming," then all the confusion of taking everything in the dream to be real disappears.

If you look at a cup in this dream and you think, "Oh, there is a cup," and you look at a flower and say, "Oh, there is a flower," but then you remember, "Hey, I'm just dreaming," then you are free of all that, and it does not hurt, does not confuse any more.

That is an example of liberation through mindfulness. But you still have to use this method. There is no catch.

L5: [The so called direct valid cognition]

QUESTION: What is direct valid cognition?

RINPOCHE: Direct valid cognition is defined as being non-conceptual and unconfused.

In some traditions of the science of valid cognition, all types of direct experience are not direct valid cognition. But we are not making that distinction here; we are not making a distinction between direct experience and direct valid cognition.

Both parts of this definition are very important.

The part that says that it is non-conceptual eliminates other types of valid cognition, which are called inferential valid cognition. Through inferential valid cognition one comes to a correct conclusion, but through the use of thoughts and reasoning. So it is not direct. The part that says that it is unconfused eliminates the types of mental states that are also non-conceptual but are not valid cognition, as, for instance, if you look at snow mountains and they appear to be yellow because of some problem with your eyes. Or it is said that if you take some kinds of medicine, then you can see flowers in the sky and all different kinds of things, but that is not an unconfused perception, and so it does not count as direct valid cognition.

L5: [Cognition means perception of the mind]

QUESTION: [Inaudible.]

Translator: Yes, cognition means perception of the mind.

RINPOCHE: So we will stop here for today; and there will be time for questions tomorrow. There are a lot of questions and they are very good, but we've heard a lot of questions and explained a lot, so it is good to stop here for now.

So now we will sing Milarepa's songs, Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition (2)

and also The Song of the Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range (3). And since we have a new song here, which is Rinpoche's song called What it Means to be Lucky (7) (The Excellent Path laid with Precious Gems), we will also sing that.

When we have faith in the dharma, intelligence, and diligence that gives us the energy to practice, then we are incredibly lucky, and we have to remember that. It is very important to remember that, and so this is what we sing about in this song. The tune is the same as the tune for Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe (4).

[Students sing all three songs. See pages 25 and 26 and see below.]

So now we will sing Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe (4).

[Students sing. See page 27.]

So for those of you who had questions that we didn't have time to answer today, please keep them in mind, refine them, and there will be time to answer them tomorrow.

Sarwa Mangalam.

L2: [Buddha mind is aware of everything at the same time, no matter how much]

Continuing the Very Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's teaching on Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu, the following edited transcript is from September 21. Rinpoche gave the teaching in Tibetan; it was orally translated by Ari Goldfield.

Let us sing What it Means to be Lucky, the Noble Path laid with Precious Gems (7).

[Students sing. See page 62.]

Now we will begin by reciting the verses on the self-liberation of what are called the twelve sources of consciousness or the twelve ayatanas from Praise of the Dharmadhatu, which we passed out yesterday under the title, Selected Verses from Nagarjuna's In Praise of the Dharmadhatu (6).

[Students recite. See page 54.]

L4: [Do you have any questions?]

If people have questions about any of the verses that Rinpoche has explained up to this point, now would be a good time to ask.

L5: [Sentient beings and Buddhas are not different, not the same]

QUESTION: [Inaudible.]

Translator: So the question is about the explanation in the text that sentient beings and fully enlightened Buddhas have no connection in terms of being of the same essence. The text explains that they are not of the same essence.

RINPOCHE: We need to understand the conventional terms and how they are applied in this way of explaining. The text literally says that sentient beings do not have the heart of the Buddha. This term - sangye nyingpo - is usually translated as Buddha nature. So what does it

mean in this explanation that they do not have Buddha nature? It means that they are not the same as enlightened Buddhas. But it does not mean that there is no connection between sentient beings and the Buddha. Sentient beings have what is called Buddha potential. What these two terms are describing are different stages of the Dharmadhatu. At the stage that the Dharmadhatu is covered over by obscurations, then it is called Buddha potential; it is not called the Buddha essence. At the stage the stains are completely cleared away, then the Dharmadhatu is called the Buddha or the Buddha essence. So it is that difference in terminology that we have to pay attention to. Unenlightened beings have the same Dharmadhatu nature all along; it is just a matter of whether or not it is covered over by stains. The example that is given to show why they are not the same as the Buddha, but have the Buddha potential, is again the example of the banana tree, which is not the same in essence as the banana but has the potential to produce the sweet fruit of the banana.

And similarly, Dharmadhatu, primordial awareness, when obscured, when covered over, is called the Buddha potential; when it is free from stains, when it is no longer obscured, then it is called Buddhahood or nirvana.

The reason that this distinction is made - that the Buddha potential is not the same as enlightenment - is that there is a philosophical tenet held by the non-Buddhist Samkhya school that asserts that the result exists at the time of the cause, and that all that happens in any situation of cause and result is that the result, which is there all along, simply becomes manifest. But the whole result, according to this school, is there all along. But the Middle Way schools refute this view, saying that it is impossible for the result to exist at the time of the cause. So if they asserted that a fully enlightened Buddha existed at the time of the potential, then that would reflect the same view as the Samkhya School and the Middle Way schools would then no longer be able to refute that view.

So, to distinguish this presentation from the presentation made by the Samkhya School, it is explained that the Buddha potential is there in sentient beings, but not the result of complete enlightenment. But then, when the stains are cleared away, the Buddha nature completely manifests, and then there is full enlightenment.

L5: [We have the potential, but are not Buddhas yet]

QUESTION: In the Prayer of Mahamudra, by Rangjung Dorje, it says that beings by nature are continually Buddha. Is there a difference in explanation from a tantric perspective on this? Because they seem to be asserting that the actual Buddha is present. Is this way of explaining that sentient beings have the Buddha potential but not the Buddha essence in any way contradictory to an explanation of the tantric view that the nature of sentient beings is always Buddha and never changes?

RINPOCHE: The important thing here is to distinguish two different perspectives. From the perspective of primordial awareness itself, primordial awareness is never stained. From its own perspective, it is always completely free of any flaw. And so from that perspective then, it is unchanging, and it is the same at the time of the ground, the path, and the fruition. This is called naturally, completely pure nirvana, and is explained as one type of nirvana - naturally, completely pure nirvana: rangshin namdak nyangende. The other type of nirvana is called lobur dridral nyangende, and that means the nirvana that is free from fleeting adventitious stains, which is, in other words, the manifestation of actual enlightenment. This type of nirvana is explained from the perspective of sentient beings and

the stages of the path. So if you say these two are the same, according to Shakya Chogden in this commentary, the problem you run into is that you are then saying that the cause and the result are exactly the same thing. That is why they distinguish between these two types of nirvana and distinguish between [viewing the question] from the perspective of primordial awareness itself, and from the perspective of sentient beings and the stages of the path.

Also, it is possible that if people thought, "Well, my nature is Buddhahood, so I'm enlightened," that would be an arrogant way of thinking. And so, in order to prevent people from having that type of belief, which would just be arrogant [and therefore detrimental to them], it is said, "No, you are not enlightened yet; you have the potential to become enlightened, but it is not the same as saying that you are enlightened." So it is probably important that that be done.

L5: [The real nature of suffering: appearance-emptiness]

QUESTION: In What it Means to be Lucky, the Noble Path laid with Precious Gems (7), in the fourth section, what are the three sufferings?

RINPOCHE: The first kind of suffering is when we have an actual experience of pain, either mental or physical, which is called the suffering of suffering. The second kind of suffering is the fact that whenever we are happy, it changes. We could be happy in terms of our body being healthy, or we could be experiencing a mental state that we find enjoyable, but it does not last. And so that is the suffering of change. And finally, the third type of suffering is what is called the all-pervasive suffering of the aggregates. And this is just the fact that as soon as you have these aggregates, these five skandhas, you are suffering; they just go together. But this is not something that we perceive in terms of a direct feeling of suffering.

The literal translation of the third type of suffering is the all-pervasive suffering of what is composite. The aggregates are composite, which means that they are a result of causes and conditions, and they have no power to remain, even for an instant; they are constantly decaying. And there is nothing that anybody can do about it. So this suffering results from the fact that, even if you wanted them [the aggregates] to stay around, there is nothing we can do about it. For example, this body is changing moment by moment, and nobody can do anything about it. And mind too is changing moment by moment, and there is nothing we can do about that either; it just happens. The five aggregates are always changing, moment by moment.

So samsara is of the nature of the three sufferings, but according to the Mahayana these sufferings are appearance-emptiness; they are not real.

For example, you could be dreaming that you were burning in a fire; that would be the suffering of suffering. You could also go to a great party [in your dream] and something could go wrong; that would be the suffering of change. But neither of them is truly existent. According to the explanation that we are studying here, it is all the Dharmadhatu. It is only because we do not realize that it is the Dharmadhatu, that we think that it is real. But that does not mean that it is real. It is the Dharmadhatu.

\ When eye and form assume their right relation,
\ Appearances appear without a blur
\ Since these neither arise nor cease, they are the Dharmadhatu,

\ Though they are imagined to be otherwise. (38)

The eye sense faculty and the form [which is seen] have no atoms at all; they are not made of anything. There is not a single, present, existent, even tiniest, tiniest atom of any material thing, of any matter. There is nothing substantial there at all. And when these two things which are not made of atoms meet, they produce a perfectly clear moment of eye sense consciousness perception. But this moment of eye sense consciousness perception never really arises, and it never really goes out of existence either. It is the Dharmadhatu; and the only reason why it appears to us to be otherwise is that we think that it is something else. We just think that it is something else. There is no other reason why it should be like that. This vision is not something truly existent; it is just something that we imagine in our thoughts.

It is just like in a dream. If you see something in a dream, there are no atoms there or anything. And similarly, the eye is not made out of anything. And the consciousness that experiences this perception is just mere clarity; it is exquisite perfect clarity, clarity and emptiness. The form is appearance-emptiness, the sense faculty is appearance-emptiness, and the sense consciousness is clarity-emptiness; so it is all the Dharmadhatu. But then our thoughts come along and say, "Oh, no, that is not the Dharmadhatu; I just saw something." This is a dream, remember? It is just a dream. There is nothing there to see and there is nothing to see, but we still think that there is. And it is also like that during the daytime, there is no difference.

When our thoughts still think that there is something happening, then we still only have the potential. When we are free of these thoughts, then that is enlightenment, that is nirvana. This makes a very good connection, actually, between the stage of enlightenment and the stage of being a sentient being, because we can see exactly what the connection is and what the difference is. This is according to the tradition of the great pandit Shakya Chogden. So let's recite this first verse together.

[Students recite.]

L5: [The inconceivable Buddha's Omniscience]

QUESTION: Is it possible to relate to a sound that you hear that is a word, or to a form that you see that is a word, in the Dharmadhatu? How would the Buddhas understand anything, if they are always non-conceptual?

RINPOCHE: This is how it is for us. If we do not have concepts, if our conceptual mind just goes blank, then we cannot understand anything; we cannot converse, we cannot read. That is true. But a Buddha is not operating with what is called consciousness, namshe. A Buddha is operating with what is called yeshe, primordial awareness; and specifically it is called the primordial awareness that is omniscient, that knows all aspects. An example that is given to help us understand this is that, if you had a forest with countless trees in it and a mirror big enough, then all of the trees would shine in the mirror at the same time, no matter how many trees there were. And similarly, the Buddha mind is aware of everything at the same time, no matter how much it is. How does this work? Well, we cannot really conceive of how it works, because we can only operate with conceptual mind. So this literally is called something that is difficult to deduce, because our reasoning cannot conceive of this type of omniscience, which is a function of a Buddha's primordial awareness. Because we are

operating with consciousness, and a Buddha is not. So that is the main difference.

You cannot see a very small atom with your naked eye, but if you build an electron microscope, you can start to see atoms and subatomic particles. You cannot see a star that is very far away with your naked eye, but if you build a very large telescope, then you can start to see distant stars. Similarly, our consciousness does not have the ability to relate to how a Buddha's wisdom actually works, because a Buddha's wisdom is like this huge microscope that is much more powerful than our ordinary consciousness. So we cannot really conceive of it; all we can understand are examples such as these of how perception can be limited but then enhanced with these different types of machines. Through realization, one starts to uncover a Buddha's omniscience, but in terms of how it works, we cannot conceive of it, because our minds are too narrow in their focus.

If you are standing on your roof trying to have a conversation with someone even one house away, it is difficult. But if you have a telephone, then you can talk to anybody anywhere in the world. If you send a letter, it might take a couple of weeks to get somewhere, but if you use a fax machine, then you can send it anywhere in the world and no matter how near or far you are from that place, it takes virtually the same amount of time to get there. If we stand up on our roof, we cannot see very far, but if we have a television set we can see what is happening anywhere in the world without leaving our own home. Our own physical components of perception and communication are limited in their power. But we can increase and enhance their power immensely by connecting them with other types of substantial things. By these examples we can understand that, although our own minds are very limited in their abilities, a Buddha's mind is infinitely vaster and more powerful, and can perceive things in a radically different way. Through these types of examples we can understand how a Buddha's wisdom is really inconceivable in terms of the difference in ability and power when compared with our own consciousness.

There are four things that are explained to be difficult to understand. "Difficult to understand" means inconceivable.

So there are four things which are inconceivable.

1. The first one groups together two things, the power of mantra and the power of medicine. That reciting mantras makes sicknesses go away and has many other kinds of extraordinary powers, and medicine's ability to change things, these two are [in the final analysis] inconceivable as to how they actually work.
2. The second inconceivable is emptiness. Emptiness is not something that we can understand with our conceptual mind. Until we realize it directly, we really have no idea of what it is.
3. The third one is a Buddha's omniscience.
4. The fourth one is the particularities of karma - what action is going to lead to what result at what particular time.

These four things are inconceivable; there is no way that we can know them conceptually.

Nowadays, when scientists talk about the inconceivable energy of matter that allows different things to function, like faxes and telephones and things like that, then that is included in the first one. It is called the inconceivability of the power of substantial matter.

L5: [The need to accumulate merit]

QUESTION: Is meditation alone sufficient means to allow one to realize suffering to be Dharmadhatu, or do you need other means as well?

RINPOCHE: Meditation is the best method for realizing the nature of suffering. But we also need other methods too, in particular and mainly the path of conduct, meaning the accumulation of merit. Accumulating merit is like gathering the wood that will make the fire of wisdom burn very brightly. If we do not gather merit, then the wisdom fire is not going to burn very brightly at all. Actually, you can look at it also as two different stages of meditation. One stage of meditation is when you are sitting in meditative equipoise; the other stage is when you are in what is translated as "post-meditation." The word in Tibetan that is translated as "post-meditation" is jetop; it literally means "subsequent attainment." So it means the attainment after you are meditating. When you are not meditating formally, if you are viewing the world as an illusion, you are also increasing your realization. That is also a stage of meditation. And as you are viewing the world as an illusion, then you are also accumulating the merit that allows the fire of wisdom realizing emptiness to burn increasingly brightly.

Sometimes they say that the point of deity meditation is to meet the deity face to face, to really see the deity. But it is not always the meditation practice that allows you to do that. Sometimes it is great compassion that allows you to do that. So, for example, the noble Asanga meditated on Maitreya for twelve years and did not see a single sign of him. But then [in post-meditation] he developed great compassion, and then he saw Maitreya face to face.

The mahasiddha Tilopa meditated for twelve years in the western monastery called Sumapudey, with iron chains shackling his legs so that he would not get up and go elsewhere. There is such a tradition of meditation. You can tie yourself with a meditation belt so that you do not move; and then, so that you do not run away, you can bolt yourself to the ground. Tilopa did that for twelve years. He meditated on the creation stage; and he actually perfected the creation stage practice, in terms of the clarity of the deity, but he did not realize mahamudra through that practice. Then he got up - he must have unshackled himself - he got up and he went to town, and he got a job pounding sesame seeds and working as a bartender; and then through that he realized mahamudra.

Actually, he was not even the bartender, he was the assistant to the bartender. Tilopa was from the class of kings and as a result had a lot of pride. And so he took a job as a bartender's servant and a sesame seed pounder to get rid of his arrogance. There is no way that you can be arrogant and proud thinking, "Oh, I'm a great prince," when you are sitting there banging sesame seeds. And he also worked to eliminate his pride of being a really great meditator. Because it is also difficult to have pride in your meditative accomplishment as a famous meditator, when you are working as a servant, as a waiter, as a bartender, and as a sesame seed pounder. As a result of this menial work his pride decreased, and he was able to realize mahamudra.

That is why, if you meditate while working, if you can work and meditate at the same time, it is actually possible to completely realize mahamudra. It is possible.

L5: [We need both: Rangton & Shentong]

QUESTION: My question is about the view of the Rangtong or Empty-of-Self School, which comes from the second turning of the wheel of dharma, and the view of the Shentong or the Empty-of-Other School, that comes from the third turning of the wheel of dharma. Which of these teachings is definitive? It seems to be a matter of debate, which is very subtle and complex. If we do not know all of the subtleties and complexities of this debate, then what is the best way to think about how these two schools relate to each other?

RINPOCHE:

- In order to refute assertions, in order to destroy conceptual reference points or conceptual reference, the Rangtong is better.
- For meditation, for resting in meditative equipoise, Shentong is better.
- So actually we need both. This is the way that Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye explains it.

People have many different views about the true nature of reality. To refute these views, the best way is to use the different reasonings of the Rangtong, of the Empty-of-Self School, because there are so many, and because any type of assertion about reality as being this or that can be refuted by the Rangtong reasonings. If you just believed in the Shentong alone, and you left the Rangtong somewhere else, then you would have a difficult time with those assertions, because Shentong does not really address them; it is just about meditation, just about how to rest in meditation. So both are very important.

So when you say, as the Shentong does, "Oh, the Buddha nature is spontaneously present in every sentient being," then all of a sudden you have an assertion. And if you have an assertion or assertions, then it is difficult to start refuting other people's assertions [with the kind of logic that demonstrates that any conceptual understanding of the nature of reality is false and misleading].

If you say that sentient beings have the Buddha essence or the Buddha nature spontaneously present within them, then it is difficult, for instance, to refute the Samkhya School's view that the result is present at the time of the cause. This is why the people who stick only to the Rangtong and refuse to accept the Shentong view [as definitive] do not like the Shentong. They say, "Well, if you say that primordial awareness is at all times naturally present in sentient beings, then what is the difference between your view and the Samkhya view? There is no difference. If one accepts your view, there is no way to refute their view; and there would be no need to refute their view, either. Your view is the same as the view of this Hindu school." And so that is why they do not like the Shentong.

The refutation of the Samkhya School's view that the result is present at the time of the cause is very clearly made by Shantideva in his text *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, where he says, if the result exists at the time of the cause, then when you eat food you are eating shit. Because the cause of shit is food. So if the result exists at the time of the cause, then when you eat food you are eating shit; there is no difference. And also, if the result existed at the time of the cause, he said, then people would just buy cotton seeds and would wear them, because they would be the same as clothes. So it does not make any sense.

That is why in this commentary, Shakya Chogden says that at the time sentient beings are obscured from seeing the Dharmadhatu, they do not have the enlightened Buddha essence; what they have is Buddha potential. And then, when all obscurations have been cleared away, then they have the enlightened Buddha essence.

Therefore, when you are refuting someone else's view, the view of the Consequence School,

Rangtong, is better; but when you are meditating, the view of Shentong is better.

When meditating, you do not need to engage in refutation of others' views. All you need to do is rest in your basic nature. Our basic nature is the basic nature of mind, which is clarity and emptiness or awareness and the expanse undifferentiable. [Once it has been pointed out,] we just rest in that; and that is it. So Shentong is better for that.

That is why Milarepa sang,

\ "The view is original wisdom, which is empty;
\ meditation, clear light, free of fixation;
\ conduct, continual flow without attachment;
\ fruition is nakedness stripped of every stain."

That view is in harmony with the Shentong view.

It is important for us to do research on and to see what Milarepa had to say, what the Rangtong view is, and what the Shentong view is; we have to look into these questions. Research into the view is the most important kind of research we can ever do.

So we will sing Milarepa's song, Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition (2).

[Students sing. See page 25.]

This song of Milarepa's is completely in harmony with the view of Shentong, and there is no more profound explanation of the Shentong view than is found in this song. So you should memorize it. So now, please ask your question.

L5: [Shentong vs. Chittamatra]

QUESTION: Is Shentong the same as Chittamatra? Are the Shentong and Chittamatra views the same?

RINPOCHE:

-- Those who assert the Rangtong view throw the Shentong down with the Mind Only, the Chittamatra view, and they say that they are the same.

-- But those who say that the Shentong view is the highest view lift the Shentong up, and place Rangtong in the middle, between the Chittamatra and the Shentong.

We have to understand what this means.

-- If you say that the Shentong view and the Chittamatra view are the same, then what you are saying is that the highest view is the Rangtong;

-- and if you say that the Shentong view is the highest view, then you are saying that there are stages in the development of the view that go from Chittamatra or Mind Only to Rangtong to Shentong.

Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye explained it like this:

-- If you say that consciousness that is empty of duality truly exists, then you are a Mind Only School proponent;

-- if you say that primordial awareness empty of duality truly exists, then you are Shentong.

There is a difference. So we have to examine exactly what that means.

That is the most important statement out of the root text of The Treasury of Knowledge. It explains the difference. There is a root text and then there is commentary.

L5: [Shentong vs. Dzogchen & Mahamudra]

QUESTION: Is the Shentong view the basis of Dzogchen?

RINPOCHE: It is not explicitly stated like that, but it is the case that the views of mahamudra, of Dzogchen, and of Shentong are in harmony with each other. So we need to do research into this; we need to look and see what words the Shentong school uses to describe ultimate reality, what words mahamudra uses to describe ultimate reality, what words Dzogchen uses to describe ultimate reality.

According to Dzogchen, genuine reality is alpha pure primordial awareness or awareness that transcends mental operations - semde gyi rigpa. This is the same as what Milarepa is singing about in the last song.

L5: [Garment of attributes]

QUESTION: Rinpoche, would you give a little commentary on the notion that fruition risks getting clothed in the garments of attributes? What exactly does the "garments of attributes" refer to?

RINPOCHE: The "garment of attributes" refers to the spontaneously present qualities of enlightenment. But if one becomes attached to these qualities as being real, then they are not qualities any longer; they become clothing that covers over the nakedness of the fruition. The attributes of the fruition are spontaneously present, but if one fixates on them as being real, then they become clothing and thus an obscuration.

These attributes that are spontaneously present are inconceivable; what they are cannot be conceptualized. When we start to conceptualize them, saying, "Oh, they are this quality or that quality," then that all of a sudden covers them over. And that is why in his song No Birth, No Base and Union, Milarepa sings:

\ Even confused thoughts themselves are clear light that shines so brilliantly.
\ Experience is so bright like sun and moonlight.
\ Without any direction, clarity shines timelessly.
\ You cannot hold it, you cannot say what it is.

These last two lines, about clarity's shining timelessly without any direction, that you cannot hold or say what it is, point to the inconceivability of the fruition and to the inconceivability of primordial awareness, which cannot be described or grasped with conceptual mind.

L5: [We need some certainty on the path]

QUESTION: Please explain the line in the song,

\ "If certainty, which is in touch with what is meant, does not follow."

RINPOCHE: We need to have certainty about what reality is. If we do not have certainty, we have doubt. Doubt and certainty are completely opposite to each other. If we still have doubts, then it is impossible for just the words to free or liberate us from our clinging. So we should have certainty as to what actual reality is. If we do not have certainty and just go around saying original wisdom is empty, then it will not help.

So now we will sing the Song of The Profound Definitive Meaning Sung on the Snowy Range (3).

[Students sing. See page 26.]

Now it would be good if we sang The Six Questions (8).

[Students sing. See below.]

Rinpoche has composed his own commentary to this song, called The Essence of Amrita (9): a Commentary on the Meaning of The Six Questions (8), and he will now give us the reading transmission for that.

The first line is a prostration. It says, "Namo Guru Hasa Vajra Ye." Hasa Vajra is the Sanskrit name for Shepa Dorje, or Laughing Vajra in English, which is another name for Milarepa.

So we will sing this song together. The tune is the same as the tune for the original song.

[Students sing. See page 73.]

Now, whatever thoughts arise, look at them nakedly. Rest, relaxed.

Even if kleshas arise, mental afflictions arise, just look at them nakedly and rest, relaxed.

Let them be self-liberated as is described in the song, Six Questions (8).

Now let us sing Auspiciousness that Lights up the Universe (4).

[Students sing. See page 27.]

Sarwa Mangalam.

L1: [Analysis of all the verses of "In Praise of the Dharmadhatu "]

The protector Nagarjuna's commentary on the intention of the third turning of the wheel of dharma, which is called Praise of the Dharmadhatu .

¢(i.e. RESUMÉ:

¢-- To see the real nature of the mind, is to see the real nature of everything, is to see everything as pure and feel the Nirvana right here right now.

¢-- The Path is to seek the real nature of the mind.

¢-- Using self-awareness to transmute the ignorance into liberating wisdom realizing the true nature of the mind and of everything; to transmute the causes of suffering into purity.

¢-- When one understand how its own mind operates, by seeing it in action through self-awareness and deep concentration, then one understand the true nature of everything, that everything is merely labeled by the mind. From this one sees that the source of all suffering is those illusions, this belief in inherent existence.

¢-- One then becomes free from any attachment to those illusions, and free from the causes of all suffering. Then everything becomes pure: the mind is again radiant clarity, and the world is pure. The mind is no longer covered by the belief in those illusions, and all the associated defilements. The self and the world are no longer seen as in opposition. The impure body, speech and mind are transformed in the pure body, speech, and mind of a Buddha.

¢-- The gradual path is seen as a process of mind's purification, or discovering the real nature of the mind and of everything: removing the ignorance and its consequences through self-awareness and realizing emptiness. It consist of a double accumulation of merit (the five first paramitas, the motivation of Bodhicitta) and wisdom together; one supporting the other. When one finally "see", then everything is seen as pure; the potential is realized; the Dharmadhatu is finally seen. What it is is inconceivable, beyond all conceptualization, beyond all dualities, beyond all karma formation.

\ "The true nature of things, the dharmata, is known.

\ The Dharmadhatu, primordial awareness, the clear light nature of mind, is known."

\ -- The Dharmadhatu is the mind after the purification process, or the way it really works.

\ -- It is beyond concepts, beyond karma, ...)

L3: [A. Homage and short description of the Dharmadhatu. (1-2)]

[i.e. THE MODEL OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE MIND : removing this ignorance, those illusions, the causes of suffering]

\ 1. There is something which as long as left unknown

\ Results in life's three planes of vicious circle.

\ Beyond all doubt, it dwells in every being.

\ To the Dharmadhatu I devoutly bow.

¢(i.e. Ignorance of the real nature of the mind, and of everything, is the root cause of samsara, of the three realms. This real nature is common to everything (the Buddha is everywhere). Meaning everything is empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen, depending on the actual five aggregates, and conditioned by past karma.

¢-- The goal of life should be to know the real nature of the mind and of everything. Discovering the way the minds (and karma) works, directly seeing this real nature of the mind and of everything, is enough to reach Nirvana.)

\ 2. When that which forms the cause for all samsara

\ Is purified along the stages of the path,

\ This purity itself is nirvana;

\ Precisely this, the Dharmakaya, too.

¢(i.e. Solution: purification of the mind, removing the veils, the causes of samsara, using the graduated path. Removing this ignorance is enough to reach Nirvana.

¢-- Purifying the mind can be generalized into purifying the five aggregates, or purifying the body, speech and mind. The problem is not only conceptualization and the mind, it is the whole karma formation, the causes of the making of the five aggregates. Suffering is the five aggregates, not just conceptualization. The goal is to transform / transmute our impure body, speech and mind, into the body, speech and mind of a Buddha. And this is done using the gradual path combining both method and wisdom, using the Middle Way: not accepting, not rejecting.

¢-- Primordial awareness, Dharmadhatu and Nirvana are synonyms.)

L3: [B. Dharmadhatu described as radiant clarity. (3-11)]

L4: [B.1. The analogy of butter and milk. (3,4)]

\ 3. As butter, though inherent in the milk, (i.e. Analogy #1)
\ Is mixed with it and hence does not appear,
\ Just so the Dharmadhatu is not seen
\ As long as it is mixed together with afflictions.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the veils; the core has always been pure; the potential has always been present; it is just a matter of perception, of purification, of self-awareness.

¢-- When the veils are removed, we see the real nature of the mind, how it really works, and we are not fooled by its creations. We know the real nature of everything at the same time, because everything is dependent on the mind, and on accumulated karma.)

\ 4. And just as the inherent butter essence
\ When the milk is purified is no more disguised,
\ When afflictions have been completely purified,
\ The Dharmadhatu will be without any stain at all.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the veils.

¢-- When the mind is purified, it becomes primordial awareness, radiant clarity, the Dharmadhatu. By seeking the very subtle nature of the mind, one removes the veils one by one, and when one finally see the real nature of the mind, there is no more veils, no more ignorance, no more production of the causes of suffering, no more karma formation.)

L4: [B.2. The analogy of the butter lamp. (5-7)]

\ 5. As a butter lamp that burns inside a vase (i.e. Analogy #2)
\ Would not even be slightly visible,
\ As long as left inside afflictions' vase,
\ The Dharmadhatu is not visible.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the veils; the core has always been pure.

¢-- Until there is ignorance, we cannot see the Dharmadhatu, the mind's real nature, its radiant clarity. And this way we are fooled by its own creations.)

\ 6. If one perforates the surface of the vase,
\ Whatever holes are made in whichever directions,
\ Through those and in precisely those directions

\ Light will shine, as is its nature to.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the veils; the core has always been pure.

¢-- When one finally see the real nature of the mind, one also understand the real nature of everything.

¢-- It also means that there are many paths to help us seek the real nature of the mind.)

\ 7. At the moment when the vajra-like samadhi
\ Is able to obliterate the vase,
\ At that very moment the light burning inside
\ Will shine throughout the reaches of all space.

¢(i.e. Solution: developing the vajra-like samadhi

¢-- The final breakthrough is in Insight meditation, when we finally see the real nature of the mind in the present. When one finally see the real nature of the mind, one also understand the real nature of everything. Everything becomes pure.

¢-- It is taught here by analogy that the vajra-like samadhi, which occurs on the tenth level of bodhisattva realization and ushers in Buddhahood, obliterates the vase of adventitious and fleeting emotional and mental obscurations, allowing the radiant clarity of primordial awareness to blaze unimpededly throughout the infinite expanse of space.*)

\ 8. The Dharmadhatu was never born,
\ Nor will it ever cease.
\ At all times it is free of all afflictions;
\ At the beginning, middle, and end, free from stain.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the veils; the core has always been pure.

¢-- The real nature of the mind is right here, right now, to discover, to unveil. Nirvana is not about acquiring external knowledge, going somewhere, dropping something, ... it is about seeing the real nature of the mind and of everything. It is a matter of perception or self-awareness.)

L4: [B.3. The analogy of the sapphire in the stone. (9,10)]

\ 9. As sapphire, the precious gem, (i.e. Analogy #3)
\ Shines with brilliant light all the time,
\ But when confined within a grosser stone,
\ We do not see its bright light shine,

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the veils; the core has always been pure.

¢-- To discover the real nature of the mind, is to purify it from all the defilements. It becomes the primordial awareness that it has always been, radiant clarity (the clear mirror).)

\ 10. Just so, although obscured behind afflictions,
\ The Dharmadhatu has no trace of flaw.
\ While samsara blocks its light, it does not illuminate;
\ Nirvana gained, its light will brilliantly shine.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the veils; the core has

always been pure. Through this purification process of the mind, through seeking the real nature of the mind and of everything, through finally seeing the real nature of the mind, one transform the samsara into Nirvana.)

L4: [B.4. The analogy of pure gold. (11)]

\ 11. If the fundamental element is present,
\ Work will yield the sight of purest gold; (i.e. Analogy #4)
\ If the fundamental element were lacking,
\ The labor would produce no fruit but woe.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the veils; the core has always been pure.

¢-- If the very subtle mind was not already pure, it would not be possible to purify it or to produce Nirvana.)

¢[i.e. THE POTENTIAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE]

L3: [C. Answers to arguments raised in debate. (12-25)]

L4: [C.1. If the Dharmadhatu were present, beings would be Buddhas.]

L5: [Refuted by means of the rice example. (12,13)]

\ 12. As kernels are not considered to be rice
\ As long as they are enveloped in their husks,
\ Just so the name of "Buddha" is not given
\ To all of those whom afflictions still enfold.

¢(i.e. But we should not call ourself "Buddhas", because of this originally pure nature present in everything, because we are not pure right now. But when purified, the true pure nature is revealed. Then we call it "Buddha".)

\ 13. And just as when loosened from the husk,
\ The rice itself is what appears,
\ Just so the Dharmakaya itself,
\ When loosened from afflictions, freely shines.

¢(i.e. But we should not call ourself "Buddhas", because of this originally pure nature, because we are not pure right now. But when purified, our true pure nature is revealed. When the body, speech and mind are purified, they become the body, speech and mind of the Buddha.)

L4: [C.2. If the Dharmadhatu were present, beings would have the essence of Buddhahood.]

L5: [Refuted by means of the banana tree example. (14-17)]

\ 14. It is said, "Banana trees are void of pith."
\ One uses this example in the world.
\ But the fruit of such a tree has pith indeed;
\ When eaten, it is sweet upon the tongue.

¢(i.e. But when purified, our true pure nature is revealed.)

\ 15. Just so, samsara has no pith,
\ And if beings can remove affliction's peel,

\ The fruit within is Buddhahood itself,
\ The nectar for all corporal beings to taste.

¢(i.e. But when purified, our true pure nature is revealed.)

\ 16. And just as from a given kind of seed
\ A fruit results resembling its cause,
\ Who with common sense would seek to prove
\ A fruit exists without its specific seed as cause?

¢(i.e. So to be able to become a Buddha, we certainly have this potential already within. We just have to purify it using the gradual path.)

\ 17. The basic element which serves as seed
\ Is seen as the support of all great qualities.
\ Through gradual refinement, step by step,
\ The stage of Buddhahood will be attained.

¢(i.e. So to be able to become a Buddha, we certainly have this potential already within. We just have to purify it using the gradual path.)

¢[i.e. A PROCESS OF PURIFICATION USING SELF-AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING
EMPTINESS]

L4: [C.3 Any antidote that clears obstructions to realizing the Dharmadhatu would also clear away the Dharmadhatu. Refuted in three parts:]

L5: [a. How the Dharmadhatu and obstructions can coexist.]

L6: [The example of the clouds which obstruct the sun and moon. (18,19)]

\ 18. Although the sun and moon are unstained,
\ Five veils exist which manage to obscure them.
\ These consist of clouds and fog and smoke,
\ The face of Rahu and dust as well.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five obscurations, the stains -- in order to make the original purity visible.)

\ 19. And so it is, as well, for mind's clear light.
\ Five obscurations manage to obscure it:
\ Desire, laziness, and ill intent,
\ And agitation too, as well as doubt.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five obscurations, the stains -- in order to make the original purity visible.)

L5: [b. Why the Dharmadhatu would not be cleared away by clearing obstructions.]

L6: [The example of fire cleaning soiled cloth. (20-21)]

L6: [The example of teaching emptiness. (22)]

\ 20. And just as fire can clean a soiled cloth
\ Miscolored with various marks and stains,
\ And just as when submerged within the fire
\ The marks are burnt away but not the cloth,

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five

obscurations, the stains -- in order to make the original purity visible.)

\ 21. In just this way the mind, which is radiant clarity,
\ Is soiled by desire and the other stains,
\ But the fire of primordial awareness burns up these afflictions,
\ Without, however, burning away the radiant clarity.

¢(i.e. Solution: the fire of primordial awareness; a purification process; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five obscurations, the stains -- in order to make the original purity visible. -- Primordial awareness is the very subtle nature of the mind when it is purified from all the veils. It is always present but its functioning is handicapped by all of those veils. But it is always possible to use it to progressively become aware of those veils and to remove them progressively from gross to more and more subtle. Until the end of all veils it is this originary awareness that is making the accumulation of wisdom possible. At the end there is only this primordial awareness left. It is beyond all karma formation, beyond all concepts. We cannot describe it. It is conventionally called the Dharmadhatu, the primordial awareness, the radiant clarity.)

\ 22. In the sutras of the Teacher, (i.e. The Prajnaparamita Sutra)
\ In whatever ways the Victor described emptiness,
\ All of these ways can rectify afflictions;
\ None can diminish the potential.

¢(i.e. Solution: the various methods to realize emptiness. -- I think it also means that, although the very subtle mind is empty of inherent existence itself, it is not non-existent. it is not existent, not non-existent, not both, not neither. What it is is beyond all conceptualization, beyond all views, beyond all dualities, beyond all karma formation. Purifying the mind will not make it disappear.)

\ 23. Just as water deep inside the earth
\ Lies untouched and perfectly clean,
\ Just so can primordial awareness rest within affliction
\ And remain completely free of any flaw.

¢(i.e. The potential is always there; it is always possible to recover the pure nature; it is never destroyed.

¢-- I think the important message here is that we "can change" and purify ourself. The core is essentially pure, and the taints can be remove without altering the purity of the core.)

L5: [c. Why the Dharmadhatu is not the same as self.]

L6: [The example of the Dharmadhatu not being male or female. (24,25)]

\ 24. The Dharmadhatu is not the self.
\ It is neither man nor woman either;
\ And being beyond everything perceivable,
\ Just how could it be thought of as oneself?

¢(i.e. But WARNING : This originary nature is not an originary self; nor it is something we can conceptualize. Meaning that there is no permanent self, no permanent consciousness, no real very subtle mind. The Dharmadhatu is not itself inherently existing while everything else is empty of inherent existence. To think that we are purifying something real is just a skilful mean, an analogy. What the Dharmadhatu is is beyond any description; but it is not non-existent either.)

\ 25. Within phenomena, all free of passion,
 \ Male and female cannot be seen.
 \ For the sake of taming those that desire blinds,
 \ Terms like male and female are taught.

¢(i.e. Against the wrong conception that one needs to be a male to become Liberated. The discrimination between male and female is used only to help those who are blind because of their desire; a temporary skilful means.)

L3: [D. The Remedy that removes obstructions. (26-35)]
 L4: [D.1 The wisdom that realizes the selflessness of the individual. (26)]
 L4: [D.2. The wisdom that realizes the emptiness of phenomena. (26)]
 L4: [D.3. Realization of the emptiness of phenomena. (26)]

\ 26. “Impermanent” and “suffering” and “empty”:
 \ Three designations purifying mind;
 \ But what refines the mind unto its utmost
 \ Is the teaching that nothing has any self-nature.

¢(i.e. Solution: It seems to mean that the Hinayana (with the Trilogy of Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta) is a skilful means to help to purify the mind, but that the real purification is done with the Mahayana, the Middle Way, the realization that all dharmas are empty of inherent existence. --, and the final antidote -- emptiness.)

¢[i.e. WITH SELF-AWARENESS ONE PURIFY HIS PERCEPTIONS AND SEE THAT EVERYTHING IS EMPTY OF
 INHERENT EXISTENCE BECAUSE DEPENDENTLY ARISEN, OR MERELY IMPUTED BY THE MIND.]

L5: [a. The reason that it is necessary to understand that phenomena are empty.]
 L6: [Why kleshas must be cleared away. (27)]
 L6: [Why thoughts must be cleared away. (27)]

\ 27. As a child in a pregnant woman’s womb
 \ Is there and yet is not yet visible,
 \ Likewise when covered by afflictions,
 \ The Dharmadhatu is not visible.

¢(i.e. Solution: a purification process; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five obscurations, the stains -- in order to make the original purity visible. -- Things and phenomena are seen pure when the veils of ignorance are removed; when we see both together, the phenomenon and its ultimate nature, emptiness; when we see that everything is merely labeled by the mind; when we see that all perceptions are dependent on the actual five aggregates, conditioned by past karma; when we do not hold on to them thinking they are inherently existing on their own, or absolute. When we see both together at the same time then the perception is said to be pure.)

L5: [b. The reason that it is possible to understand that phenomena are empty.]
 L6: [i. An explanation of how it is possible to understand that thoughts of samsara are empty. (28)]

\ 28. From thinking “I” and “mine,”

\ And from thinking of names and grounds for these,
\ Four conceptual patterns come to be—
\ Due to elements and compounds too.

¢(i.e. One problem is conceptualization and believing in those concepts. The four types of thoughts:

¢-- the thought of "I,"

¢-- the thought of "mine,"

¢-- the thought that names,

¢-- and the thought that attributes characteristics to what is named.

¢-- Here conceptualization is shown as one of the cause of suffering. But the phrase "due to elements and compounds too" points to a more subtle cause than mere conceptualization. There are many skilful ways to think about emptiness.

¢-- I think the real problem is much deeper than just conceptual thoughts. The elaborated version of the theory of Dependent Origination talks about names & forms; but the root problem, applicable to all sentient beings, even those without any conceptualization capacity, is "karma formation". It is symbolized by the Buddha with "This That", the generalization of the theory to all sentient beings. It means that the most elementary unit of karma formation is the primary association of That with This. Assuming even the most elementary association like This-¢-- That is the source of suffering because there is no absolute This-That, no absolute causality.

¢-- So the problem is not just sur-imposing concepts upon pseudo pure non-conceptual perception; the problem is assuming that any association we make, using concepts or not, are real, absolute. And the solution is not merely by dropping all conceptualization, but by being aware that we are doing this kind of mistake and by transcending the limits of those with pure awareness.

¢-- So we have to be aware not only of the limits and pitfalls of conceptualization, but of all karma formation.)

L6: [ii. An explanation of how it is possible to understand that thoughts of nirvana are empty. (29)]

\ 29. The Buddhas do not perceive
\ Any characteristics of their aspiration prayers,
\ Because the Buddhas are of the nature of self-awareness
\ And have their own permanently pure being.

¢(i.e. One problem is discrimination, believing in real characteristics.)(i.e. The "permanently pure being" is referring to the theory of "pure perception" after being purified from all "taints". I think this pure perception means that, while perceiving something using old karma, one is "aware" of this, and do not take those perceptions as being absolute. Knowing everything is dependent on past karma, one does not grasp on anything, or discriminate thinking those are absolute characteristics. So it is being constantly aware of this that makes every perception pure. It is seeing the "thing" (perception) and being aware of its emptiness (its dependence on past karma, dependence on the mind) at the same time, in the same moment that makes the perception pure. They call it "direct perception without superimposed conceptualization", but is more than that.

¢-- When perception is free of grasping to anything, its basis is not consciousness of the external object, but the self-awareness itself. It becomes pure self-awareness, originary awareness.)

L6: [iii -- Abstract thoughts are all imaginary. (30)]

\ 30. Just as the horns on rabbits' heads
\ Do not exist except in the imagination,
\ Phenomena are all precisely like that,
\ Merely imagined, having no existence.

¢(i.e. But, everything is merely labeled by the mind.

¢-- I think it also means that there is no pure perception, no direct perception, the perception of all phenomena are always conditioned by past karma, filtered by the actual five aggregates.)

L6: [iv -- Uniquely characterized phenomena do not exist. (31)]

\ 31. Because they are not made of solid atoms
\ The horns of oxen cannot be seen, either.
\ Since not even tiny atoms exist,
\ How could one imagine that something made of atoms exists?

¢(i.e. No elementary components.

¢-- I think it also means that there could be no direct perception because such perception would have to be based on perceiving some raw reality, some elementary forms. But there is no elementary components, no atoms, no elementary mental process, ... Everything is empty of inherent existence, everything is perceived through the filters of the actual five aggregates, conditioned by past karma.)

L6: [v -- Why sentient beings are confused. (32)]

\ 32. Since arising is a dependent occurrence
\ And cessation is a dependent occurrence,
\ There is not one single thing that exists—
\ How could the naive believe that there is?

¢(i.e. No real origination, no real cessation, no real duration; no inherent existence. Everything is empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen.

¢-- I think it also means that there could be no direct perception because everything is empty of inherent existence because everything is dependently arisen. How could we directly perceive things that are not real. Direct perception means: perceiving reality without the veils of ignorance, by being aware that those perceptions are conditioned, by not being fooled by them thinking they are absolute, direct, raw.)

L6: [vi -- The Buddha teaches the nature of phenomena to be freedom from extremes. (33)]

\ 33. Using examples like rabbits' and oxen's horns,
\ The Thus Gone One has proven
\ That all phenomena are nothing other than the Middle Way.

¢(i.e. The middle way is the transcendence of the duality "dependent origination / based on existence and causality / the ordinary truth" and "emptiness / the ultimate truth". Avoiding both extremes of existence and non-existence. Using both the method (dependent origination, the path) and wisdom (emptiness) as antidotes, fighting the bad side of the other one, to stay in the middle. So all phenomena are not existing, not non-existing, not both, not neither. Existence and non-existence are not the same, not different.

¢-- In the frame of reference of "direct perception", the Middle Way, means seeing the

phenomena using the actual five aggregates, but through self awareness. Knowing that the perception itself is dependent on the actual five aggregates, conditioned by past karma. It is seeing conventional truths and knowing they are empty of inherent existence at the same time. It is called The Union of The Two truths.)

L6: [vii -- It is impossible to describe this freedom. (34-35)]

\ 34. Just as one sees
\ The forms of the sun, moon, and stars
\ Reflected in vessels of perfectly clear water,
\ So is the consummation of signs and characteristics.

¢(i.e. Meanwhile everything should be seen like a [magically- conjured] illusion, like a mirage, like the moon reflected in water, like empty space, like an echo, like the city of the Gandharvas, like a dream, like a shadow, like an image in a mirror, and like a [supernatural] transformation. -- From Prajnaparamita.

¢-- It means that not only are all phenomena empty of inherent existence because dependent on the actual five aggregates, conditioned by past karma, but also are all signs and characteristics. This means that all labels and all qualities are merely imputed by the mind, completely relative, never absolute. That means that all discrimination are relative, based on empty characteristics. It does not mean we should drop all discrimination. But that we should be aware while doing discrimination with the motivation of Bodhicitta that the basis for those discrimination are all empty of inherent existence. Not accepting discrimination as absolute, not rejecting discrimination because they can be skilful means; the Middle Way.)

\ 35. That which is virtuous in the beginning, middle, and end (i.e. the Dharmadhatu; see verse 8)
\ Is undeceiving and is marked by constancy,
\ And is free from self in this very way.
\ How could that be thought of as “I” or “mine”?

¢(i.e. Describing the dharma. This is not itself a thesis, a position, an attachment: it is a tool to destroy all thesis. A negation without affirmation. It is not just a temporary antidotes, a temporary method along the path. It is the final antidote.)

L3: [E. Dharmadhatu called by different names. (36-43)]

¢[E.1. Dharmadhatu Called by Different Names.

¢-- According to Stages: sentient beings and Buddhas. (36-37)]

\ 36. Just as water, during the summertime,
\ Is spoken of as being something warm,
\ And the very same water, throughout the winter season,
\ Is spoken of as being something cold, (i.e. No permanent characteristics. So no absolute discrimination or labeling.)

\ 37. Those ensnared in the net of the afflictions
\ Are referred to by the label, “sentient beings”;
\ The very same when freed of states afflicted
\ As “Buddhas” are revered.

¢(i.e. Even the duality sentient beings in samsara vs Buddha in Nirvana, has to be transcended. They are also merely concepts. There is no absolute characteristics as "sentient being" or "Buddha".)

¢[E.2. Dharmadhatu Called by Different Names.

¢-- According to Different Modes of Completely False Appearance: the five sense perceptions and the mental perception. (38-43)]

\ 38. When eye and form assume their right relation,
\ Appearances appear without a blur.
\ Since these neither arise nor cease,
\ They are the Dharmadhatu, though they are imagined to be otherwise.

¢(i.e. Purification of the perceptions. With self-awareness we come to understand the real role of the five aggregates in all perception, and the empty nature of all objects perceived. So we stop believing in real independent objects and phenomena, and on real perception with real sense organs, and real consciousness resulting from the union of those three. There is no real direct perception of real objects; all perceptions are conditioned by past karma. Pure perception is a key word for perceiving reality without the veils of ignorance. It is perceiving things and phenomena and knowing their real ultimate nature at the same time. This is done by being constantly aware of how the actual aggregates, and past karma, condition all perception. So we are not fooled by the illusion. We do not grasp at those illusions. We do not suffer when they change, because we know their real nature.)

\ 39. When sound and ear assume their right relation,
\ A consciousness free of thought occurs.
\ These three are in essence the Dharmadhatu, free of other characteristics,
\ But they become "hearing" when thought of conceptually.

¢(i.e. Purification of the perceptions. We stop believing in the reality of concepts. We still use concepts, but we know their Ultimate nature at the same time. We use conventional truths but we are always self-aware, and know the emptiness of inherent existence of those.)

\ 40. Dependent upon the nose and an odor, one smells.
\ And as with the example of form there is neither arising nor cessation,
\ But in dependence upon the nose-consciousness's experience,
\ The Dharmadhatu is thought to be smell.

¢(i.e. Purification of the perceptions)

\ 41. The tongue's nature is emptiness.
\ The sphere of taste is voidness as well.
\ These are in essence the Dharmadhatu
\ And are not the causes of the taste consciousness.(i.e. Purification of the perceptions)

\ 42. The pure body's essence,
\ The characteristics of the object touched,
\ The tactile consciousness free of conditions—
\ These are called the Dharmadhatu. (i.e. Purification of the perceptions)

\ 43. The phenomena that appear to the mental consciousness, the chief of them all,
\ Are conceptualized and then superimposed.

\ When this activity is abandoned, phenomena's lack of self-essence is known.
\ Knowing this, meditate on the Dharmadhatu.

¢(i.e. Purification of the perceptions.

¢-- Of the five aggregates, the mental consciousness is special for beings that have self-consciousness. Being conscious of something is always a comparison between a perception and some stored mental image or concepts. It is the result of the mind trying to find invariants in the flow of stimuli in order to be able predict and control the environment. But the stored image, or concepts, or view, or theory, is just a model, never an exact representation of reality. It is a simplification reducing the number of variables to a minimum. Once this model is stored in the five aggregates it is used to filter the incoming stimuli and to recognize or be conscious of things. But those things do not really exist like we think they do. It is our models (five aggregates) that makes those things seem to exist independently. By being self-aware of this we are not fooled by the illusions. We know that those phenomena or that the concepts we use are all dependent on the way our five aggregates are, conditioned by past karma. Seeing those phenomena, or using those concepts, and being aware of their real nature is enough to be liberated from them.

¢-- With primitive sentient beings without the capacity of conceptualization as us, the consciousness is a simple association between a stimuli and an acquired reaction.)

L3: [Here stopped Rinpoche's commentary]

\ 44. And so is all that is seen or heard or smelled,
\ Tasted, touched, and imagined,
\ When yogis [and yoginis] understand these in this manner,
\ All their wonderful qualities are brought to consummation.

¢(i.e. Purification of the perceptions.

¢-- When one sees, through self-awareness, the way those illusions of things being perceived are fabricated by his own mind, dependent on his actual five aggregates, conditioned by past karma, then one knows the real nature of everything: the dependent origination, the emptiness of inherent existence. Things and phenomena do not exist as we think they do, are not non-existent either, are not both existent and non-existent, and are not neither existent nor non-existent. When one purely sees like this, then one has reached the end of the path.)

\ 45. Perception's doors in eyes and ears and nose,
\ In tongue and body and the mental gate—
\ All these six are utterly pure.
\ These consciousnesses' purity itself is suchness' defining characteristic.

¢(i.e. The purification of these is itself the goal of the path. So it is a matter of perception, not a matter of going somewhere, or dropping something. The Middle way is not accepting things as they seem, not rejecting everything. It is seeing through all of those illusions, it is understanding how the mind, and the five aggregates work, how they filter everything, how all perceptions and thoughts is conditioned by past karma. Being constantly self-aware of this and not being fooled by those illusions is the goal. it is called The Union of The Two truths because we still use the conventional truths or perceive things and

phenomena, but we know at the same time their ultimate nature. Both together at the same time always.)

L4: [Self-Awareness is the cause and the result of the liberating wisdom.]

- \ 46. See how the mind has two aspects:
- \ It can be worldly, it can transcend the world.
- \ From clinging to a self comes samsara;
- \ When there is self-awareness, there is suchness.

¢(i.e. Solution : A mind can be impure or pure; ignorant or wise / self-aware. When the mind see how it operates, how it creates itself all of those illusions, the causes of all suffering, then it can transcend those limits and become free of all these illusions.)

¢(i.e. So the mind is either self-aware of its functioning or not. When it is not, then it is fooled by its own illusions; that is samsara. When it is self-aware, then it is not fooled by its own illusion; that is Nirvana.)

- \ 47. The ceasing of desire is nirvana,
- \ As is stupidity's and anger's end.
- \ For these to cease is Buddhahood itself,
- \ The refuge of ennobled beings.

¢(i.e. Solution : ceasing of the three poisons: desire, anger, ignorance -- When the mind, not being self-aware, is fooled by its own illusion, then there is feeling for them, craving, clinging, ..., suffering because of them. When this ignorance is remove, through self-awareness, there is no more desire or hatred for those illusions, no more suffering.)

L4: [It is a matter of seeing, or not]

- \ 48. One either proceeds with knowledge or proceeds without—
- \ Samsara and nirvana both have their source in the body.
- \ Either you are bound by your own thinking,
- \ Or, if you know the true nature, you are free.

¢(i.e. The solution is a matter of perception, self-awareness of how our own mind works. Knowing the true nature of everything -- merely labeled by the mind. -- So it is just a matter of knowing the real nature of everything, the way the mind and the body (the five aggregates) work, the way karma works, the way we create our own illusions and causes for suffering. And this knowledge, this wisdom is acquire by developing self-awareness.)

- \ 49. Enlightenment is neither near nor far.
- \ It does not go away nor come to you.
- \ Right there within the cage of your afflictions,
- \ Either you will see it or you will not.

¢(i.e. The solution is a matter of perception, self-awareness of how our own mind works. Knowing the true nature of everything -- merely labeled by the mind.)

L4: [To be able to "see" one needs to accumulate enough of both merit and wisdom.]

- \ 50. Abiding in the lamp of prajna
- \ Will lead to peace, the most sublime there is;
- \ Examining for self is the way to abide.
- \ This is taught in scores of sutra texts.

¢(i.e. The solution is a matter of perception, self-awareness of how our own mind works, prajna. Knowing the true nature of everything -- merely labeled by the mind. -- To develop this Liberating Wisdom one has to understand how his own mind works, how karma works. This is done with examining how one's own mind works in the present. It is not enough to understand the theory, one has to directly see this to be convince and to be able to change. One cannot "see" just by reading or understanding the theory. This direct observation is done in Vipassana Meditation, or Insights Meditation.)

\ 51. The strengths, all ten, assist the immature
\ With a blessing force like that of the full moon.
\ But as long as they are caught up in afflictions,
\ Beings will fail to see the Thus Gone Ones.

¢(i.e. Those who do not see. Even if one has all the mundane strengths and qualities, he will not "see" unless he goes through the gradual path, examining for himself, on himself, the Buddha's teachings.)

\ 52. Just as those in hungry spirit realms
\ See the sea as dry before their eyes,
\ Just so with those in ignorance's grip
\ Who think the Buddhas don't exist. (i.e. Those who do not see.)

\ 53. For lesser beings and those with lesser merit,
\ No matter what transcendent conquerors do,
\ It is like placing a precious jewel
\ In the hands of someone never known to see. (i.e. Those who do not see.)

\ 54. For beings who have amassed sufficient merit
\ The signs are radiant with shining light.
\ All thirty-two ablaze with brilliant glory—
\ Beings like these in Buddhas' presence dwell.

¢(i.e. Solution: Accumulate enough merit. -- For those who do see, the signs and teachings are right there to see, and the purity of everything is here to see.)

\ 55. The protectors inhabit forms of bodily dimension
\ For many kalpas, and many yet to come;
\ However, in order to tame disciples
\ They demonstrate different activities in the expanse that tames.
\ (i.e. For those who do see, the signs and teachings are right there to see.)

\ 56. On definitely targeting its goal
\ Consciousness engages in its object,
\ Within the purity of self-awareness
\ The bodhisattvas' grounds all inherently abide.

¢(i.e. For those who do see, the signs and teachings are right there to see. The Bodhisattva's Land are right here.)

¢(i.e. The solution is a matter of perception, self-awareness of how our own mind works, prajna. Knowing the true nature of everything -- merely labeled by the mind. -- When seeing with self-awareness, everything becomes pure. The Bodhisattva's Lands are right here, right now for the ones who see with self-awareness. -- The Bodhisattva still use conventional truths, perceive objects and phenomena, but he is constantly self-aware and always see the

Ultimate Nature of everything.)

\ 57. The mighty lords' magnificent abode,
\ The beautiful domain of Akanistha,
\ And consciousness, the three of these together
\ Can be blended into one, I dare to say.

¢(i.e. For those who do see, the signs and teachings are right there to see. The Bodhisattva's Land are right here.) (i.e. The solution is a matter of perception, self-awareness of how our own mind works, prajna. Knowing the true nature of everything -- merely labeled by the mind.)

\ 58. For the immature it renders total knowledge,
\ For noble ones affords variety,
\ To the mighty gods it grants long life,
\ It is the cause for life spanning kalpas' long march.

¢(i.e. I think "it" is for "self-awareness" or "prajna".)

¢(i.e. Solution : Accumulating both merit and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana.)

\ 59. It is that which guards the outer realm of beings,
\ And preserves their lives as well through countless kalpas,
\ It is that which makes it possible for life
\ To persevere within all living beings;

¢(i.e. Solution : Accumulating both merit and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana.)

\ 60. This the very cause that knows no end;
\ The results of such a cause are endless too;
\ When imperceptibility is realized,
\ Prajna becomes the condition for nirvana's dawning.

¢(i.e. Solution : Accumulating both merit and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana.)

L4: [Transmutation : awareness transforms the causes of suffering into purity, into nirvana]

\ 61. Enlightenment should not be thought far off
\ Nor should it be considered close at hand;
\ When objects, six in kind, do not appear,
\ The genuine is known just as it is.

¢(i.e. Solution : Nirvana is a matter of perception, of self-awareness. When the objects of the senses are no longer thought as inherently existing, then that is right perception.)

\ 62. Just as milk and water mixed together
\ Are present in the very same container
\ But a crane would drink the milk and not the water,
\ The case of transformation is like this:

¢(i.e. Solution : Self-awareness, primordial awareness, watching the mind in action, is enough to transmute the causes of suffering into Buddha's teachings, into purity, enough to

transform samsara into Nirvana.)

L4: [The gradual path : turning inward, purifying the mind, seeking the true nature of the mind and of everything, the two accumulations, the six paramitas, the two bodhicitta, the ten bhūmis]

\ 63. There is primordial awareness, there are covering afflictions,
\ Where both are found together in one body.
\ But the primordial awareness is what yogis [and yoginis] choose to take
\ And leave the ignorance behind.

¢(i.e. Solution : Instead of believing in the inherent existence of objects, the yogi turns inward with self-awareness and see the true nature of everything. He chooses to purify his mind from the veils of ignorance. What is left when all the taints are removed, when all the objects and phenomenon are seen at the same time as their Ultimate Nature, when all consciousnesses are transcended, is this pure awareness. I think it is an awareness of the flow (dependent origination) without seeing anything in the flow (emptiness), both together; without seeing a flow, without not seeing a flow ... What it is is beyond conceptualization, beyond karma formation ...)

\ 64. For as long as “I” and “mine” are held to exist
\ And the outside is imagined as well;
\ When both forms of selflessness are seen
\ The seed of existence is destroyed;

¢(i.e. Solution : When the objects of the senses are no longer thought as inherently existing, then that is right perception. Both sides of this duality are illusions, created together in dependence: the self and the world. They come together; they go together.
¢-- It seems to point to a path where the first steps are to relax the gross attachments and preoccupations about the ego. It seems to say that we should try to take care of the no-self first. That would be done by developing the Four Immeasurables, and the Bodhicitta. That is by replacing the self-preoccupations by exchanging self with others. A great skilful means. See below for more.)

\ 65. The Dharmadhatu is the ground
\ For Buddhahood, nirvana, purity, and permanence;
\ The immature impute the two kinds of self,
\ And yogis [and yoginis] abide without these two.

¢(i.e. Solution : When the objects of the senses are no longer thought as inherently existing, then that is right perception. Both sides of this duality are illusions, created together in dependence: the self and the world. They come together; they go together.
¢-- Seeking the real nature of the mind is the path to Nirvana, to Buddhahood.
¢-- It also means that the yogis see everything as illusions and try to exchange self for others. That would be Bodhicitta.)

\ 66. In giving one endures a range of hardships,
\ And ethics gathers in the benefit of beings,
\ Through patience one performs the good of all,
\ These three will cause the potential to unfold.

¢(i.e. Solution : A gradual path. Accumulating both merit and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana. The six/ten paramitas. Skilful means to

create the proper environment, relax the self-preoccupation, bring enough tranquility to be able to develop concentration and then wisdom.)

\ 67. Through being diligent in all the teachings
\ And steeping mind in meditative samadhi,
\ Through thorough reliance on prajna,
\ Enlightenment will grow and flourish.

¢(i.e. After moral discipline and renunciation, come the development of concentration, meditation and insights.)

\ 68. Prajna endowed with skillful means,
\ Prayers of aspiration that purify,
\ The mastery of strengths, and thereby wisdom,
\ These four will cause the potential to unfold.

¢(i.e. Solution : Accumulating both merit (using skilful means) and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana. We need both method and wisdom together. One support the other. They have to be developed like in a spiral.)

\ 69. “Do not commit yourselves to Bodhicitta”;
\ There are some who speak such dire word.
\ But were there no bodhisattvas to develop,
\ The Dharmakaya would be out of reach.

¢(i.e. Solution : Accumulating both merit (motivated by Bodhicitta) and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana. -- Among the skilful means to help relax the attachments to the self, the Bodhicitta is the chief. The less veils there is covering the real nature of the mind, the easier it is for this primordial awareness to shine and bring insights. So any method that we can use to relax the self preoccupations, the better it is. Exchanging self for other with Bodhicitta, or replacing the self with the personality of a deity as in Tantras, are not efficient means to do that and accelerate the progress.)

\ 70. One who throws away the seed of sugarcane
\ But wants to taste the sweetness its fruit yields
\ Will, without the seed,
\ Have no sugar at all.

¢(i.e. Solution : Accumulating both merit (motivated by Bodhicitta) and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana.

¢-- An important point here. It is not by rejecting everything that we will gain Buddhahood. We cannot reject the method (the skilful means, the accumulation of merit, the Bodhicitta), and take only wisdom (or the emptiness) and think we can reach Nirvana. We need both together.

¢-- The Middle Way is not accepting things as they appear, not rejecting everything because they are empty of inherent existence. The Middle Way is using both: using a raft to cross the ocean of samsara, and knowing that the raft is empty of inherent existence. So we use skilful means (exchanging self with others, Bodhicitta, tantras, ...) but we know they are empty. The Buddha also use adapted skilful means to help out of great compassion all sentient beings, but he always see the Ultimate Nature of everything at the same time. That is enough to reach and be in Nirvana.)

\ 71. When someone values seed from sugarcane,
 \ Maintains them well, and works to make them grow,
 \ A crop of sweetest sugar can be harvested.
 \ And just as what has come about like this,

¢(i.e. Solution : Accumulating both merit (motivated by Bodhicitta) and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana.)

\ 72. Through valuing the Bodhicitta fully, (i.e. Aspiring Bodhicitta)
 \ Maintaining it, and working with it well,
 \ The arhats and pratyeka-Buddhas arise
 \ As so the perfectly enlightened Buddhas.

¢(i.e. Solution : Accumulating both merit (motivated by Bodhicitta) and wisdom. The sources of all happiness here and now, and the causes of Nirvana. -- So it is important to value the skilful means of Bodhicitta, and other expedient means.)

\ 73. Just as seeds of rice and other plants
 \ Are treated by the farmer with great care,
 \ Aspirants who wish to make the greatest journey
 \ Are treated by their guides with greatest care.

¢(i.e. Seems to be a message for the teachers, the way they should practice their Bodhicitta, having great loving-kindness and compassion for their students, using adapted skilful means.)

\ 74. Just as on the fourteenth day of waning,
 \ The moon is barely visible at all,
 \ For aspirants who wish to make the greatest journey
 \ The kayas are but barely visible.

¢(i.e. Solution: a progressive purification process through the path using the six paramitas; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five obscurations, the stains -- in order to make the original purity visible.

¢-- Seems to be a message for the teachers, be patient with the students because they do not "see".)

\ 75. Just as the moon when it is new
 \ Visibly grows larger bit by bit,
 \ Those who have reached the bhumis
 \ See the Dharmakaya more and more.

¢(i.e. Solution: a progressive purification process through the path using the six paramitas; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five obscurations, the stains -- in order to make the original purity visible.

¢-- Only those students who have reached the first bhumi "see" enough.)

\ 76. Just as on the fifteenth day of waxing
 \ The moon has reached completion and is full,
 \ Just so for those who've reached the bhumis' end point
 \ The Dharmakaya shines complete and clear.

¢(i.e. Solution: a progressive purification process through the path using the six paramitas; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five obscurations, the stains -- in

order to make the original purity visible.

¢-- But the student will completely "see" only at the end. Only then do they see the real nature of the mind and of everything. Only then have they removed all the veils. They might think long before they have done the job; but that would just be another illusion based on the ego.)

- \ 77. The Bodhicitta, perfectly engendered, (i.e. Engaging mind of Bodhicitta)
- \ Through stable and consistent dedication
- \ To the Buddha, to the dharma, and to the sangha
- \ Does not decrease, and develops more and more.

¢(i.e. Solution: a progressive purification process through the path using the six paramitas; removing afflictions, the five veils, the five obscurations, the stains -- in order to make the original purity visible.)

- \ 78. When the four meaner deeds have been relinquished,
- \ And the four better deeds have been embraced,
- \ Just then is thatness definitely realized.
- \ This is what "the joyful" thoroughly signifies.

¢(i.e. First bhumi: The first is called the Very Happy station because in this first stage the Bodhisattva has recognized the Sunyata not only by thinking or just by visualization, but he has exactly and truly realized the Sunyata. Because he recognized the Sunyata, he is in another world, a world of Sunyata, not a world of ignorance or selfishness. So he feels very happy, and feels joy at having overcome the former difficulties. So it is called the Very Happy Station.)

- \ 79. "The stained" are those whom shifting patterns mark
- \ With the constant stains of desire and the rest;
- \ Whoever has grown free of flaw is pure,
- \ And this is what "the stainless" signifies.

¢(i.e. Second bhumi: The second bhumi is Vimala or Renounce the Defilement because as a Bodhisattva he knows how to get the Sunyata and abide in the Sunyata more and more. Within the Sunyata he knows everything is pure, while outside everything is defiled. Actually it may seem that the Renounce the Defilement stage should be even before the first bhumi, but here Renounce the Defilement means the very subtle, not the gross one. So the second bhumi is the stage of purity when the Bodhisattva experiences freedom from all possible defilement.)

- \ 80. Once afflictions' net is rent asunder,
- \ A flawless wisdom shines, and with its light
- \ Purifies all darkness past all limit,
- \ Removing it, and hence "illuminates."

¢(i.e. Third bhumi: The third bhumi is called Prabhakari or Shines Light Stage because as the Bodhisattva's meditation goes deep, his Samadhi shines light, so this is called the Shines Light or Enlightened Stage or Eminate Stage because a lot of light shines out from his Samadhi.)

- \ 81. It shines with light that is always pure;
- \ Primordial awareness, which eliminates diversion,
- \ Is steeped in light which shines on every side.

\ This bhumi hence is known as “radiant.”

¢(i.e. Fourth bhumi: The fourth bhumi is Arcismati or Burning Wisdom. The Bodhisattva has burned up all sorrows in the fire of wisdom so this is called the burning or glowing wisdom stage.)

\ 82. Since awareness, feats, and crafts are mastered here,
\ The range of meditative concentrations themselves,
\ And kleshas difficult to purify completely have been vanquished,
\ So “difficult to overcome” is its name.

¢(i.e. Fifth bhumi: The fifth bhumi is Sudurjaya or Very Difficult to be Victorious by Others. That means that few others can suffer such a difficult practice and get to this victory stage. It indicates mastery of utmost or final difficulties.)

\ 83. With enlightenment of all three types included,
\ And everything perfected and complete,
\ With birth no more, disintegration finished,
\ This level is “directly manifest.”

¢(i.e. Sixth bhumi: The sixth bhumi is called Abhimukhi or Appearance Stage. The appearance referred to is not something very common but something very special which appears: It is the Sunyata itself. You know there is Sunyata conception, Sunyata thoughts, Sunyata visualization, Sunyata of Happiness, there is Sunyata of Light, of Sun, of Fire, but here is the Sunyata itself which appears in its very embodiment. This means from an abstract idea comes a concrete countenance.)

\ 84. Since the bodhisattvas’ web of brilliant light with its display
\ Reaches every point in their surroundings,
\ And since they have crossed samsara’s swampy ocean,
\ They are called “the ones who reach far.”

¢(i.e. Seventh bhumi: The seventh bhumi is the Far from the World Journey Stage or Duramgama. This means the Bodhisattva keeps going further, far from the habitual karma, far from sentient beings, far from the Bodhisattva of the sixth stage. He is getting above ideas of self in order to save others.)

\ 85. Definitively guided by the Buddhas,
\ In contact with primordial awareness’s sea,
\ Spontaneous and free of any effort,
\ “Unshaken” by the maras’ echelons.

¢(i.e. Eighth bhumi: The eighth bhumi is called Acala, or No Moving Stage. Such a Bodhisattva cannot be moved by any kind of sorrow, by any kind of false view, by any kind of love of money, of fame, or reputation, by anything, good or bad; he cannot be moved and is calm and undisturbed.)

\ 86. Since yogis [and yoginis] at this level have perfected
\ The dialectics used to teach all points
\ Connected with precise correct awareness,
\ It takes the name, “select intelligence.”

¢(i.e. Ninth bhumi: The ninth stage is Sadhumati or Very Good Wisdom Stage because whereas in the fourth stage he attained wisdom of fire, here the Bodhisattva has the wisdom of

goodness also which means he can speak very well, he can promote the Dharma very well and can get very wide wisdom. In the Chinese language "Fa-Shih" means a teacher of Dharma who should reach this stage. When a Bodhisattva gets the goodness wisdom, the ninth stage, then he can begin to talk with others and give lectures for he then has obtained the finest discriminatory wisdom and knows where and how to save others.)

\ 87. The body at this point is made of primordial awareness,
\ Is equal to an unpolluted sky;
\ The vigilance afforded by the Buddhas
\ Forms the "cloud of dharma" everywhere.

¢(i.e. Tenth bhumi: The tenth bhumi is called Dharmamegha or Dharma Cloud. At this stage a Bodhisattva is not only able to talk to promote the Dharma but really can make Dharma rain, so this is the tenth bhumi's name.)

¢(i.e. At this point the mind is purified, all consciousnesses transcended, the only thing left is this primordial awareness, pure as the sky. Note: this Dharmadhatu is beyond description ... All descriptions and analogies of the sky are just that, not the sky itself.)

\ 88. The ground of the qualities of Buddhas,
\ The fruits of training fully held in hand,
\ The transformation, when perfectly completed,
\ Is given "Dharmakaya" as its name.

¢(i.e. The result: Dharmakaya -- the transformation of the impure body, speech and mind, into the pure body, speech and mind of the Buddha is accomplished.)

L4: [This simple awareness gives inconceivable results, transcendence of all : subject and objects]

\ 89. Samsara's tendencies are ponderable,
\ Freedom from tendencies is not;
\ You are completely inconceivable.
\ Who could ever have the power to know you?

¢(i.e. But WARNING : This originary nature is not an originary self; nor it is something we can conceptualize. With self-awareness we can transcend all objects of knowledge, all conceptualization, all karma formation, all dualities: the self and the world. The absolute nature of everything is beyond all this.)

\ 90. Beyond the pale of speech entirely,
\ And not an object senses' powers grasp,
\ Realizing you takes the mind's awareness.
\ I bow in praise of all that you embrace.

¢(i.e. But WARNING : This originary nature is not an originary self; nor it is something we can conceptualize, or model. With self-awareness we can transcend all objects of knowledge, all conceptualization, all karma formation, all dualities: the self and the world. The absolute nature of everything is beyond all this.)

\ 91. The illustrious heirs of the Buddhas,
\ By following the path step by step,
\ With the primordial awareness that attends the "cloud of dharma," (i.e. The tenth bhumi.)

\ Can see emptiness, the pure mode of being.

¢(i.e. Solution : Self-awareness, primordial awareness, watching the mind in action, is enough to transmute the causes of suffering into Buddha's teachings, into purity. Reaching the end of the gradual path, the impure body, speech and mind are transmuted into the pure body, speech and mind of a Buddha.

¢-- Seeing emptiness, the pure mode of being, means seeing the conventional truths and their Ultimate Truth (emptiness) at the same time. Using skilful means to help all sentient beings and knowing that they are empty at the same time. The "pure mode of being" includes both: the being (conventional truth) and the purity (emptiness).)

L4: [Result: Buddhahood -- pure being, seeing everything completely pure, inconceivable powers, helping all sentient beings with adapted skilful means out of the great compassion]

\ 92. As soon as mind has utterly been cleansed,
\ Samsara's caged confinement broken through,
\ These will then assume their rightful place,
\ Upon a wondrous lotus flower seat,

¢(i.e. Once the "illustrious heirs of the Buddhas" have completed the job they will be Buddhas.)

\ 93. Utterly surrounded on all sides
\ By lotus flowers, many tens of millions,
\ Each endowed with tantalizing anthers,
\ Their leaves alight with many precious gems.

¢(i.e. They will have all the powers and qualities of the Buddha.)

\ 94. The Buddhas with ten powers are replete.
\ Their fearlessness sets others' minds at ease.
\ Their qualities are inconceivable.
\ From simplicity's domain they never fall.

¢(i.e. Those powers and qualities are inconceivable, beyond any description, beyond causality space time, beyond all karma formation.)

\ 95. Through excellently practicing all paths,
\ They've gathered merit, garnered wisdom full.
\ So they are like the harvest moon on high
\ Surrounded by its court, the clustered stars.

¢(i.e. The results of accumulating both merit and wisdom: inconceivable powers, omniscience, living in a world of purity; Nirvana.)

\ 96. With a hand like the sun,
\ Buddha holds a flawless gem with light ablaze.
\ With this the Enlightened One empowers the most senior heirs,
\ This abhisheka greatest of them all.

¢(i.e. With these powers and qualities they can help the most advanced students and all other sentient beings without discrimination.)

\ 97. The mighty yogis [and yoginis] living on this plane

\ Look with god-like eyes on worldly beings,
\ Inferior because of mental blindness,
\ Whom suffering can frighten and distract.

¢(i.e. Even the most advanced students, the Great Bodhisattvas, have inconceivable powers to help all sentient beings out of compassion. But they do not have all the powers and qualities of a Buddha.)

\ 98. And having seen them, light rays from their bodies
\ Shine, without the slightest strain at all,
\ And open up what gates there are for all
\ Who wander in their own confusion's dark.

L4: [Superiority of this vehicle]

\ 99. Those who have reached nirvana with remainder
\ Believe they have reached nirvana that's without;
\ The nirvana that is reached in this tradition
\ Is a freeing of the mind of any flaw.

¢(i.e. Superiority of Mahayana over Hinayana.)

\ 100. Sentient beings' essence free of substance
\ Is the sphere that is encountered on this plane.
\ Seeing this is the royal Bodhicitta,
\ The Dharmakaya free of every flaw.

¢(i.e. All dharmas are empty without exception. So the Buddhas and Great Bodhisattvas help all sentient being while knowing that they are all empty of inherent existence. Emptiness of the donor, the gift, and the receiver. No Karma formation here.)

\ 101. When the Dharmakaya is seen in all its purity
\ This is transformation, wisdom's sea,
\ And from its depths a wealth of precious jewels
\ Fulfill beings' needs as they have always wished.

¢(i.e. The Buddha is everywhere for those able to see. The teachings are everywhere for those who can see.)

\ In Praise of the Dharmadhatu composed by the great Acharya Nagarjuna is hereby completed.

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[End]