



# Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes

Chapter Five  
The Distinctive Path  
of the Mahayana

by Maitreya through Asanga

with the commentary

A Garland of Light Rays  
by Mipham Rinpoche

*Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes*  
*The Fifth Chapter*

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A Garland of Light Rays  
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under the guidance of  
Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

translated by  
Michele Martin

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To Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

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## Preface

*Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes* is one of the five major treatises attributed to Maitreya, who inspired the great Indian scholar Asanga to write them down. This text gives subtle discussions of many subjects, which are grouped into five chapters covering the theory of the three natures, obscurations to liberation, the actual nature of phenomena, practices common to the different Buddhist traditions, and the distinctive path of the Mahanaya. This latter chapter was chosen for translation as it clearly presents Mahayana practice, giving a firm theoretical basis for meditation.

The commentary comes from Mipham Rinpoche, an outstanding scholar and master of meditation, who lived in nineteenth century Tibet. Although based in the Nyingma tradition, his broad and deep mind reached out impartially to all the four Tibetan traditions of Buddhism. His commentaries are known for their lucid and concise treatment of complex subjects, making them most valuable for students at all levels.

The translation of this text was made possible through the continued inspiration and guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, an accomplished yogi, and a chief abbot and senior professor at the Nalanda Institute for Higher Buddhist Studies in Rumtek, Sikkim. He is also the founder of the Marpa Institute for Translation. Khenpo Rinpoche first taught the root text and commentary in Bodhgaya, India, during the winter session of Marpa Institute in 1990, and again in Europe and the United States the same year. This translation is based on his extensive and subtle commentary and represents a working draft, made for the benefit of students wishing to further their understanding of Buddhist theory and the Tibetan language.

Whatever is clear and unmistakable reflects his influence, and whatever is unclear and mistaken belongs to the translator alone. Since this is a work in progress, it is hoped that future editions will rectify any errors through the feedback of those using the text.

The first drafts of the translation were made during sessions of Marpa Institute and while translating for Khenpo Rinpoche. The present version was completed at the Karmapa International Buddhist Institute in New Delhi, under the direction of Kunzig Shamarpa Rinpoche, to whom gratitude is expressed for providing the opportunity to bring this publication to completion. In addition, gratitude is due Khenpo Chodrak Tenphel, who gave generously of his time and elucidated many difficult points. The translation of the fifth chapter has also benefitted from those made by Anne Buchardi (into English), by Karl Brunnhotzl and Susanna Schefczyk (into German), and by the members of our French translation group. (There is also a Danish version by Birgit Ryborg.) Comments by Chryssoula Zerbini, Lodro Namgyal, Jim Scott, and Charles Martinson improved the text greatly, and Marvin Moser and Ben Bennett gave invaluable technical aid in producing the computerized text and the typesetting. May the study and practice of this text bring benefit to all beings.

Michele Martin  
New Delhi, 1991

## Translator's Note

The original commentary and root text have been slightly altered to make them more accessible. Sequential numbers, based on the text as a whole, have been added to the outline headings for ease of reference. The headings from the commentary were also added to the root text in Tibetan, which follows the Derge edition. At the beginning of each important topic, the Tibetan commentary gives as a whole all the relevant headings; these have been distributed to their respective places as they appear later on in the text. When the reprise of a heading was different from its first appearance, both instances are given together, or in some cases, combined. The chapter titles as they appear in the table of contents were also added to the body of the text, regrouping it into the main categories.

All the numbers within the texts themselves that are not spelled out have been added to clarify the various topics and arguments. The numbers in parentheses at the beginning of a paragraph indicate the corresponding page in Mipham Rinpoche's commentary, published by Karmae Garchen Sungrab Nyamso Khang in 1977 at Rumtek, Sikkim.

After each new subject heading, Mipham Rinpoche repeats the first few words of the root text in order to connect his discussion with the relevant root verses. Since the present English version combines the root text with the commentary, it was felt that these lines were not necessary and so they have not been included within the translation.

Following standard usage, brackets indicate interpolations by the translator. For the benefit of students, brackets are used frequently to distinguish more precisely the original text from these additions,

which are, alas, unavoidable when moving from the world of one language to another. An attempt has been made to render the English natural and clear, while staying as close as possible to the original, and to leave interpretations mainly in the footnotes, which are found at the end of the text.

# The Distinctive Path of the Mahayana

## 3.2.2. Explanation of the distinctive path of the Mahayana

### 3.2.2.1 Brief exposition

The teachings describe as unparalleled:

1. the practice, 2. the focus,  
and 3. the perfect accomplishment.

(746.6) How is this vehicle unparalleled? Briefly, the teachings delineate the meaning of [unparalleled] in three [points]: 1. unparalleled practice; 2. unparalleled focus, and 3. unparalleled, perfect accomplishment.

### 3.2.2.2 Detailed explanation

#### 3.2.2.2.1 The unparalleled practice

##### 3.2.2.2.1.1 Brief exposition

[There are] six aspects to the practice  
which [accomplishes] the paramitas:

1. what is genuine, 2. mental cultivation,
3. [being] in accord with the Dharma,
4. discarding extremes
5. [practice] with a specific [focus], and
6. without a specific focus.

(747.2) There are six aspects to the unparalleled practice, and what they accomplish are the six (or ten) paramitas. What are the six practices? 1. The practice of what is genuine, 2. the practice of mental cultivation, 3. the practice which accords with the Dharma, 4. the practice that discards pairs of extremes, 5. the practice with a specific [focus], and 6. the practice without a specific [focus].

# The Twelve Ways of Practicing

## What is Genuine

3.2.2.2.1.2. Detailed explanation in five aspects following the order above (1)

3.2.2.2.1.2.1. The practice of what is genuine

3.2.2.2.1.2.1.1. The twelve ways of practicing what is genuine

The essential character of what is genuine  
can be expressed in the twelve aspects  
of genuine:

1. vastness, 2. long duration,
3. purpose, 4. inexhaustibility,
5. continuity, 6. absence of difficulty,
7. mastery, 8. permeating,
9. striving, 10. attainment,
11. [the result in] concordance with the cause,
- and 12. accomplishment.

(747.5) The path of the bodhisattva, where one engages in and practices the paramitas, is considered superior to that of the sravakas and pratyekabuddhas since it is the practice of what is genuine, and so forth. If one asks about the essential character of being genuine, it can be expressed in twelve aspects, which are stated in the following way.

1. *Genuine vastness* means not aspiring to what is considered excellent in worldly terms and entering into the vast [extent of] qualities that are beyond this world.
2. *Genuine long duration* means engaging in joyful striving for three countless kalpas. (2)
3. *Genuine purpose* means practicing for the benefit of all sentient beings, limitless [in number].

4. *Genuine inexhaustibility* means that since one dedicates [all merit] towards great enlightenment, it does not become exhausted even in the expanse without remainder of the aggregates.(3)

5. *Genuine continuity* means that since one aspires to [the realization of] equality between oneself and others, one's virtue is brought to perfection without interruption.(4)

6. *Genuine absence of difficulties* means rejoicing [in another's accumulation of merit, etc.]. It is through such skillful means that [the paramitas, such as] generosity and so forth, are brought to perfection.

7. *Genuine mastery* means that through samadhis, such as the Treasury of Space, (5) the paramitas of generosity and so forth, are brought to perfection [and one is able to fulfill] whatever wish [others] may have.

8. *Genuine permeating* means that nonconceptual wisdom thoroughly permeates [the paramitas of] generosity and so forth.

These eight points describe the profound and extensive manner in which the paramitas are notably superior. [The next four points] categorize into different levels the practices having these ways [of being genuine].

9. *Genuine striving* brings about a significant increase in [one's] ability to sustain emptiness on the paths of accumulation and application.

10. *Genuine attainment* means that on the first [bodhisattva] level, one initially attains the path that is beyond this world.

11. *Genuine concordance with the cause* refers to the progressive arising of cause and effect in relation to the six paramitas [as they are practiced] from the second to the ninth [bodhisattva] level.

12. *Genuine accomplishment* means that on the tenth level, ultimate bodhicitta (6) is attained, and on the eleventh, the stage of the tathagata or buddhahood is attained.

# The Paramitas

## 3.2.2.2.1.2.1.2. What is to be accomplished, the paramitas

Because of these [twelve ways],  
the ten paramitas  
are said to have the meaning of being  
genuine.

(749.2) The ten paramitas are said to have the meaning of being genuine or supreme, because they are endowed with the twelve ways of being genuine as just explained. Since they are beyond the inferior levels, which are not genuine, but on this [worldly] side, they are called [literally] "gone [Skt: *ita*] to the other side [Skt: *param*]."

## 3.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. Detailed explanation

### 3.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.1. The essence

1. Generosity, 2. discipline, 3. patience,  
4. joyful striving,  
5. meditative stabilization, 6. higher  
knowledge, 7. skillful means,  
8. aspiration prayers, 9. strength,  
and 10. primordial wisdom.  
These are the ten paramitas.

(749.4) What are the ten paramitas? 1. Generosity is to give without attachment. 2. Discipline is not to waver from correctly taking up [what is to be taken up] and discarding [what is to be discarded].

3. Patience (7) is not to be affected by adverse situations, such as anger and so forth, and consequently, the mindstream remains completely undisturbed. 4. Joyous striving is to take delight in virtuous activities and repeatedly engage in them. 5. Meditative stabilization is to remain one-pointedly on an object of focus without wavering. 6. Higher knowledge [allows one to] distinguish perfectly all phenomena. 7. Skillful means [allow one to] bring about with ease the accomplishment of great benefit for oneself and others. 8. Aspiration prayers [allow one to] gather continuously great waves of the accumulations of virtue. 9. Strength [allows one] to overcome adverse conditions and to keep the practice of virtue (8) from going to waste. 10. Primordial wisdom [allows one to] comprehend fully what the ultimate is, according to the intended meaning presented in the Mahayana [scriptures]. These are the ten paramitas.

### 3.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.2. Their function

Their functions are: 1. taking care,  
 2. not harming, 3. forbearance of harm,  
 4. increasing positive qualities,  
     5. ability to lead into [the teachings]  
 6. bringing to complete liberation,  
 7. [rendering] inexhaustible,  
     8. always engaging  
 9. [making] definite, and 10. practicing and  
     bringing to maturity.

(750.2).The functions of the ten paramitas are the following.

1. Through generosity, one takes care of sentient beings by fulfilling their needs.
2. Through discipline, one refrains from harming others, giving up [both] harming others and its basis [or cause]
3. Through patience, one endures the harm done by others.
4. Through joyful striving, positive qualities further increase.
5. Through meditative stabilization, one is able to lead others into the teachings by demonstrating miracles, by suprasensible cognitions, and so forth.
6. Through higher knowledge, one brings [others] to complete lib-

eration by teaching the Dharma.

7. Through skillful means, such as the dedication of merit and so forth, the practice of virtue is rendered inexhaustible.

8. Through aspiration prayers, one takes a positive rebirth and thereby, always engages in [the practice of the paramitas, such as] generosity and so forth.

9. Through strength, one overcomes adverse conditions so that the practice of virtue will definitely lead to enlightenment.

10. Through primordial wisdom, one practices without error the Mahayana path [of the paramitas, such as] generosity, and so forth, and through this [path] one brings other sentient beings to maturity.

## Mental Cultivation

### 3.2.2.1.2.2. Mental cultivation

3.2.2.1.2.2.1 Brief exposition. The way to cultivate the mind through the three higher knowledges

#### 3.2.2.1.2.2.1.1. The quintessence

While examining the teachings just as  
[they] are put forth in the Mahayana,  
bodhisattvas at all times cultivate  
their minds  
through the three higher knowledges.

(751.2) What do the bodhisattvas cultivate with their minds? It is the teachings of the Mahayana exactly as [the Buddha] presented them. In the Mahayana treatises, the teachings were presented or put forth [in twelve sections, such as] the sutras, [the teachings] with a melody, and so forth. (9) The vast and profound Dharma was taught in many aspects: the three doors of liberation (10), the ten paramitas, the ten bodhisattva levels, the five paths, exceptional memory, samadhis, and so forth. Without error, [bodhisattvas] mentally cultivate these aspects just as they have been taught.

In what way [do the bodhisattvas cultivate their minds]? At all times, while focusing on the meaning of the vast and profound Dharma, they cultivate their minds through the three aspects of higher knowledge, [which arise from] intently listening, thoroughly reflecting, and continuously meditating. (11)

### 3.2.2.1.2.2.1.2. Its function

Causing the basic constituent to emerge,  
entering [into the meaning], and  
the perfect accomplishment of objectives.

(751.6) [The function of cultivating the mind] in this way, [while focusing on] the authentic meaning [of the Mahayana Dharma, has three aspects]. 1. Through cultivating the mind with the higher knowledge [arising from] intently listening, the qualities of the basic potential or the basic constituent (12) the emerge and become more evident. 2. Through cultivating the mind with the higher knowledge [arising from] thorough reflection, [bodhisattvas] enter into the meaning of [the Mahayana] with profound conviction. 3. Through cultivating the mind with meditation, [bodhisattvas] will perfectly accomplish the objectives they strive for on their path [of practice], and having entered the [first] stage, they will progressively accomplish the ultimate result.

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2. Detailed explanation. The way to cultivate the mind through the ten types of Dharma activity.

#### 3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2.1. Brief exposition

This [mental cultivation] is known as  
perfectly encompassing  
the twelve types of Dharma activity.

(752.2) A more detailed classification of mental cultivation according to the Mahayana Dharma is known as that which perfectly encompasses the ten types of Dharma activity.

#### 3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2.2. Detailed Explanation

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2.2.1. Description of the essential nature of the ten types of Dharma activity along with their benefits

1. Writing the letters, 2. making offerings,  
3. generous giving,
4. listening, 5. reading, 6. memorizing,
7. explaining, 8. reciting,

9. considering, and 10. meditating.  
The essential character of these activities  
contains immeasurable merit.

(752.3) The ten aspects presented above comprise all the ways of practicing or ways of conduct [that involve] the genuine Dharma. The ten are as follows:

1. Writing the letters, which is a support [for maintaining] the genuine Dharma of both the greater and lesser vehicles
2. Making offerings [in homage] to the Dharma and offerings to those who elucidate it
3. Giving generously to those who set forth the Dharma and helping them to fulfill their needs
4. Listening to the Dharma [without distraction], using the sense faculty of the ear
5. Reading Dharma texts
6. Memorizing words which express [the meaning of the Dharma]
7. Explaining to others the meaning of [these] words
8. Reciting aloud what has been memorized
9. Considering deeply the meaning of the Dharma
10. Meditating correctly with a one-pointed mind

These are the ten that summarize all the actions connected with the genuine Dharma, and so they are called “the ten types of Dharma activity.” The essential character of each one of these ten activities involves immeasurable merit. Since the genuine Dharma is the source of all benefits and happiness, and since it is a path that leads beyond this world, all actions connected with it are very meaningful. The benefits of writing or listening to even one verse are superior to all mundane practices of virtue — such extensive praise [of this Dharma activity] is found in the sutras.

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2.2. To explain in particular benefits of Dharma activity within the Mahayana

Because [it] is superior, because [it] does  
not become exhausted,

because [it] benefits others without [entering  
an inactive state] of peace.

(753.4) Why is it that in the Tathagata sutras only Mahayana Dharma activity is especially praised? Within the Mahayana, the ten Dharma activities, such as writing the letters of the Mahayana Dharma, and so forth, are superior to those of the lesser vehicle, for [two main] reasons [related to path and result]. The path of the Mahayana is superior to that of the sravakas, and further, [the Mahayana Dharma] brings results which include the inconceivable qualities of the kayas, of primordial wisdom, and so forth, which do not become exhausted even in the expanse without remainder of the aggregates. Since it is a Dharma that teaches such a path and fruition, [the Mahayana] is superior, and the benefits of writing this [Dharma], and so forth, are likewise superior. [The two reasons] given above can be further developed. The sravaka path brings about the accomplishment of benefit only for oneself, whereas the Mahayana path primarily accomplishes the benefit of others. The fruition [of the Mahayana path] is to engage in [this] activity without interruption, as [one does not enter into an inactive state of] peace for as long as the realm of sentient beings exists.

## Practice in Accord with the Dharma

### 3.2.2.2.1.2.3. Practice in accord with [the Dharma] 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.1. Brief exposition

[Practice] without distraction  
and without error  
is in accord with the Dharma.

(754.3) How is Dharma to be practiced in accord with [Mahayana] Dharma? Through calm abiding, there is no distraction from an object of focus, and through superior insight, the true nature of things (13) is seen without error. This is called "practice in accord with the Dharma," because it is practice that accords with the authentic meaning, just as it is clearly established in the teachings based on Mahayana Dharma. Furthermore, the true nature of things can be realized through flawless higher knowledge that relies on samadhi, [a state where] the mind does not stray to something other [than its focus]. This, then, is practicing the actual Dharma through calm abiding and superior insight.

# Calm Abiding

## 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.1. Detailed explation

### 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.1.1. Undistracted calm abiding

The wise should know the distractions:

1. drawing out, 2. engaging an object,
- 3: accordingly, savoring experience,  
dullness and agitation,
4. thoughts that believe
5. mental activity [involving] ego-clinging
6. the mentality of the small.

(755.1) What is undistracted calm abiding? It is any samadhi that is free of the six kinds of distraction. What are these six distractions?

1. *Inherent distraction.* Since the group of five [sense consciousnesses, such as] the eye consciousness and so forth, are naturally turned outward [to their objects], they draw one out of samadhi.

2. *Distraction towards the outside.* The mental consciousness radiates towards or engages an object.

3. *Distraction towards the inside.* Accordingly, distraction [occurs here] through savoring the experience of samadhi, and through dullness and agitation.

4. *Distraction in relation to characteristics.* With thoughts that believe [the experiences of] samadhi [to be special], one apprehends it as having [certain] characteristics and then clings to them.

5. *Distraction through adopting the [wrong] attitude.* [Here,] mental activity [operates] in conjunction with grasping onto the self. This is

[mental activity] imbued with ego clinging; [it is] the mental activity characterized by pride, which takes oneself to be quite superior to others.

6. *Distraction through [mistaken] mental cultivation.* One is entangled in the mental cultivation of the lower vehicles, [i.e.] not free of the mentality of the small vehicle. (14)

The hallmark of calm abiding as [taught in] the Mahayana is the undistracted calm abiding that results from eliminating what is to be eliminated, i.e., these six distractions. (15) This is faultless calm abiding, where one rests one-pointedly turned inward. Furthermore, the wise should know that Mahayana calm abiding is special for [three additional] reasons: it does not involve grasping onto characteristics, such as taking one's inner samadhi (16) as the only [requisite needed to bring about] purification and liberation; it does not involve the meditative stabilizations such those encountered in non-Buddhist traditions that entail ego-clinging, and further, it does not involve the mental cultivation of the lower paths where one meditates using an [object of] support.

# Superior Insight

## 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2. Unmistaken superior insight

### 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1. Brief exposition

1. Letters, 2. actual meaning, 3. mental activity,
4. not projecting, 5. and 6. the two characters,
7. impure and pure, 8. temporary,
9. no aversion, and 10. no pride.

(756.2) In the Mahayana, superior insight is the unmistakable realization of the authentic nature as it pertains to the way things truly are and the way they manifest. It is taught through a summary that has ten aspects: 1. letters, 2. meaning, 3. mental activity, 4. not projecting, 5. and 6. the two characters, true and comprehensive, 7. the pure and the impure, 8. the temporary, 9. no aversion, and 10. not being proud. [Superior insight] is unmistakable in relation to these ten.

### 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2. Detailed explanation following [the order of] the brief exposition

#### 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.1. Being unmistakable about *letters*, the means of expression.

Meaning [arises] through the connection of letters and through association. Meaning [does not arise] without this connection or without this association. This [understanding] is unmistakable about letters.

(757.3) First of all, meaning exists because letters, the means of expression, are connected one after the other in an unmistakable order, and [secondly] because the sign, composed of letters, [has come to] be associated in the mind with a particular meaning. For example, in a word like *pillar*, *pil* comes first and *lar* comes after. When one expresses them in this way, one makes understood that thing which has the function of holding up a beam. However, if *lar* comes first and *pil* after, or if they are separated from each other without any connection and expressed [this way], the [intended] meaning will not be understood. Furthermore, English-speaking people have previously [been accustomed] to associate this sign, compounded of two syllables, with the thing that has the function of holding up a beam. This sign, then, makes that meaning known, but those unfamiliar with English would not understand it. (17) In this way, a sign gains meaning both from [the proper] connection [of letters] and from association [with a meaning]. Conversely, letters lack meaning when there is no connection or no association. Being unmistakable about letters is to understand correctly in this manner.

The way meaning is understood from a sign composed of letters involves a connection [between a word and its meaning that is] newly created by an individual's conceptual understanding, and [therefore, this connection is] merely imputed. Consequently, there is no essential connection between a name and its meaning. In this way, one becomes certain and unmistakable about how the understanding of meaning arises from letters. Through [knowing] this, bodhisattvas [come to] the realization that [all things are] ultimately free of any meaning that can be expressed in words.

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.2. Being unmistakable about the *actual meaning* to be expressed, [knowing that] the completely imputed has no self-na-

What comes into being as dualistic appearance  
 does not exist in this way;  
 completely discarding existence  
 and nonexistence —  
 this is [being] unmistakable about the actual meaning.

(758.4) What comes into being as the dualistic appearance of a perceived object and a perceiving subject does not exist in the way it appears: although appearing, [these two] are not truly [established]. Understanding like this is to be unmistaken about the actual meaning, because this actual meaning or the true nature means that the extreme of existence has been discarded, since [a perceived object and a perceiving subject] do not exist in a dualistic manner, and that the extreme of non-existence has been completely discarded since [object and subject] exist as mere appearances. The realization born from this [understanding] is free of [the concepts of] a perceived object and a perceiving subject.

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.3. Being unmistaken about *mental activity*, [understanding it] as mere consciousness, [which constitutes] the dependent nature, the cause of dualistic appearances.

Mental activity [involves] thoughts  
that are conditioned  
by [previous] thoughts. [Knowing] its origin  
as the cause of dualistic appearances  
is [being] unmistaken about mental activity.

(758.6) One is conditioned by previous thoughts of a perceived object and a perceiving subject, and through this influence, there subsequently arises the thoughts that appear as the environment, objects [of the senses], and the body. (18) Knowing correctly what constitutes the origin of this mental activity is to be unmistaken about it: one realizes, just as they are, the inherent characteristics of mental activity or of mere conceptualization. What, then, is the origin or basis of this [mental activity]? The ground consciousness is known as the cause, since it is the cause of dualistic appearances. It is called "the ground [consciousness] of various habitual tendencies" from the point of view that [the ground consciousness] is a cause conditioned by various thoughts within it; and it is called "the ground consciousness that completely ripens" [from the point of view that] through their [residual] power, [habitual tendencies] appear as the various inner and outer phenomena. In this way, the ground consciousness is to be understood as the cause of everything.

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.4. Being unmistaken by *not projecting* the two extremes means that one has realized that dualistic appearances are not actual, but resemble an illusion.

Not existing ultimately and existing  
are said to resemble an illusion and so forth.  
This [understanding] is unmistaken  
about not projecting,  
because neither existence nor non-existence  
are projected.

(759.3) All phenomena, comprised of the duality of a perceived object and a perceiving subject, do not [take on] existence through [having] a self-essence, or [in other words], ultimately, they [do not take on existence through having] their own inherent characteristics: they exist as mere appearances, said to resemble an illusion or a dream. [Understanding like this] is called being unmistaken about not projecting, because one does not project or fall into either position of exclusively [assuming] existence or non-existence.

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.5. Being unmistaken about the *true character*, which is the perfectly existent [nature], free of a perceived object and a perceiving subject.

No concepts apply. For that reason,  
all [phenomena] are mere names.  
[This is being] unmistaken about the true character.  
[It is] the true character of the ultimate truth.

(759.5) From an ultimate point of view, no concepts of a perceived object and a perceiving subject pertain to the true character, because the object of genuine primordial wisdom, in nondual awareness of its own true nature, is the complete pacification of mental fabrications. Such an ultimate reality does not admit of various divisions. Whatever appears as phenomena with different aspects and however many there may appear — all of these do not exist as they appear [seeming] to have individual, separate, and specific characteristics. Ultimately, [a phenomenon] has no real self-essence: it is simply the

mere imputation of a name. For this reason, emptiness is the true character of all phenomena. Understanding in this way is called being unmistaken about the true character.

[It should be noted that] although in terms of worldly conventions, one speaks of the specific (or concrete) characteristics of a pillar or a vase in referring to the appearance of their individual aspects, [in this context the term for specific characteristics is used] to express the true character of genuine reality or the fundamental nature of all phenomena.

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.6. Being unmistaken about *the comprehensive character* of phenomena, understanding that no phenomenon falls beyond the pure nature that is devoid of duality.

Not included within the dharmadhatu —  
such a phenomenon does not exist.  
For that reason, [understanding]  
the comprehensive character  
in this [way] is to be unmistaken about it.

(760.4) The true nature of the dharmadhatu (19) lacks any duality: there exists not the slightest trace of anything that could be called a phenomenon that would not be included within it. Since all phenomena are included within the dharmadhatu, it is called the comprehensive character that pervades all phenomena. Understanding it in this way is to be unmistaken about the comprehensive character. (20)

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.7. Being unmistaken about what is *pure and impure*, [knowing that these] depend on whether or not the pure nature has been realized.

Depending on whether mistaken mental activity  
is not discarded or is discarded,  
an [individual] is impure or completely pure.  
This [understanding] is also unmistaken about  
that [which is impure or pure].

(760.6) Although one uses the terms *nirvana* and *samsara* or *pure* and *impure*, in the actual nature of things, there are no entities whatsoever that could be established as separate. What is called “impure” and “completely pure” applies to individuals, depending on whether they have not or have discarded their mistaken mental activity, such as having the view that a self exists, and so forth. Understanding like this is to be unmistaken about the meaning of pure and impure.

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.8. Being unmistaken in understanding that although [phenomena arise] as pure and impure appearances, [these] are *temporary* since the true nature remains pure.

Because the dharmadhatu is by nature  
pure like space,  
both [pure and impure] arise temporarily.  
This [understanding] is also unmistaken about  
that [which is temporary].

(761.2) Since the dharmadhatu is by nature completely pure, as space, it never changes: this is the [actual] meaning of the fundamental nature or the natural state. Both previously impure and subsequently pure [appearances] arise temporarily merely from the perspective of the way [phenomena] appear. Understanding like this as well is to be unmistaken about what is temporary.

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.9. and 10. The ninth and tenth points of this section are taken together

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.9. Being unmistaken about *no aversion* [understanding that] since [the true nature] is pure from beginningless time, it cannot be diminished by obscuring states. (21)

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.10. Being unmistaken in *not being proud* of additional qualities since there is nothing to be increased in what is completely purified.

[In the true nature] of phenomena and a person,  
there is nothing totally afflicted  
nor completely purified.  
Since there is no [self-essence], there is no aversion  
and no pride.

Here [this understanding] is unmistaken about these [two].

(761.4) In the true nature of a phenomenon or a person, there is nothing that becomes totally afflicted and nothing that becomes their complete purification, because neither phenomena nor a person contain a self-essence. Like space, whatever has no self-essence cannot be bound by obscuring states nor liberated from them. In this way, since there is nothing in the fundamental nature that becomes totally afflicted or completely purified, there is nothing to fear [by thinking that] the aspect of the totally afflicted, (including desire and so forth), increases, and there is no [reason for] being proud, [in thinking that] the aspect of the completely purified, (including faith and so forth), increases: no basis exists for what is to be feared and no basis exists for the fabrication of pride. Here, [understanding] like this is called being unmistaken about having no aversion and unmistaken about having no pride.

## A Supplementary Discussion

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.3. In conclusion, a supplementary discussion (22)

3.2.2.2.3.2.3.2.2.3.1 A brief explanation that combines, or presents as a whole, the ten ways of being unmistaken.

1. About what, 2. what, 3. from whence,
4. and 5. what is not confused
6. about what one is not confused
7. the result of confusion, 8. the result of no confusion.
9. and 10. the two ultimate instances.

(762.3) [This first account] is demonstrated through the enumeration of four [categories]: 1. the focus, 2. nonconceptuality, 3. objections, and 4. their refutation.

1. The first three points (23) show what one focuses on, or what is to be known, in terms of the three natures.

2. Two points [five and six] illustrate nonconceptuality mainly in terms of the consciousness which focuses. In relation to this, [the fifth point] explains being unmistaken about the true character from the point of view of the perceiving subject, which does not conceptualize, and [the sixth point] explains being unmistaken about the general character, [in terms of its] [object, i.e.,] the true nature or clear light, which is not conceptualized.

3. and 4. The remaining five points [4,7,8,9, and 10], present objections and their corresponding refutations. [Points nine and ten] present the

vajra words that illustrate the totally afflicted and the completely purified, and [points seven and eight] illustrate being unmistakable about [what is] pure and impure.

[In the discussion that follows, the opponent] raises [four objections related to these five points or verses].

1. If the totally afflicted does not exist, how could one focus [on it]?
2. If it exists, [then one would have to] say that [the true nature of phenomena] could not be naturally pure.
3. and 4. If many Buddhas could remove the obscuring states of innumerable sentient beings, then 3. the continuity of samsara would be severed, and 4. nirvana would increase.

Since all doubts, which question in this way, arise beginning with the points concerning pure and impure, these are considered topics of debate.

There are four replies to these [four objections].

1. [The proponent] responds [to the first objection by stating that] although ultimately, there is no perceived object nor perceiving subject, [phenomena] appear as an illusion. [This refers to the fourth verse.]

2. The opponent's [second] objection [was] that if [the true nature] is naturally pure, it is not logical to say that [it] was previously accompanied by obscuring states.

[The proponent] then justifies his position [by stating that] although [the true nature] is naturally pure like the sky, the way it appears depends on whether clouds are temporarily present or not. [This refers to verses seven and eight.]

3. and 4. [The opponent restates the third and fourth objections:] If one allows that [the true nature] is previously impure and subsequently pure, and further, since this purity will not revert [to impurity], thus creating a diminishing [of samsara or the totally afflicted], would one not be faced with the [consequences that] 3. the continuity of samsara

would be severed and that 4. nirvana would increase? These are the objections raised against the two points of 9. no diminishing and 10. no arrogance.

[The proponent responds] by advancing the essential point that [phenomena] are not truly existent. For this reason, there is no measurement for the totally afflicted nor for the completely purified, and therefore, they do not exhibit any diminishing.

[There now follows a more detailed discussion of the first three verses on letters, meaning, and mental activity.]

In the first [point above, dealing with] the focus, it was said that the three first verses relate respectively to the three natures: the perfectly existent, the completely imputed, and the dependent. (24) [In relation to the first verse about letters], how is the perfectly existent nature connected with the presence or absence [of meaning]? Letters take on meaning through [proper] connection and association [with a meaning]; however, since one knows [that the actual meaning they point to is] inexpressible in its very essence, one enters into the meaning of the perfectly existent that cannot be expressed by any term.

Or in another way, some Indian [scholars] state that Mahayana Dharma is the concordant cause [for realizing] the dharmadhatu and [also] the remedy for what is mistaken. Since it possesses such qualities, one can know unmistakably the fundamental mode of being of the extremely profound, perfectly existent nature. Further, others claim that whatever is perfectly existent is the [very] essence of emptiness and since it possesses a true nature that is essentially free of duality, [the perfectly existent] is mistaken about existence and non-existence. In this way, its meaning is shown implicitly through the words *presence* and *absence*.

Since [through] either of the first two points, [it is possible] to understand unmistakably the completely imputed nature, and since in this case, the perfectly existent is known as being merely empty of the completely imputed nature, [the first two verses] can be seen as having in common essential point [of the perfectly existent nature].

The second point, which is mistaken or not in error about meaning, illustrates only the completely imputed nature, stating that

although [phenomena] appear dualistically, they do not exist in that way. The [third point], being unmistakable about the origin of mental activity, [concerns] the dependent nature. Since it is the cause or basis of appearance, it is [considered to be] the origin; however, it is labelled the dependent nature from the perspective of its result or from the perspective of having already come into appearance.

It is further possible to give a presentation of all the [ten] points taken as a whole. [The root text is repeated here:] 1. about what, 2. what, 3. from whence, 4. and 5. what is not confused, 6. about what one is not confused, 7. the result of confusion, and 8. the result of the absence of confusion, and 9. and 10. these two are the final ones.

1. About what is one confused? [The completely imputed nature], which associates a word with a meaning, is [deluded] in that it confuses inexpressible, genuine reality with an appearing object of experience that has characteristics.

2. What is the essence of confusion? It is the mistaken state where what is nondual appears dualistically.

3. From whence does this confusion arise? What is its cause or origin? It comes from the ground consciousness itself, which is conditioned by concepts.

4. and 5. What is the essence of not being confused? 4. It is the certainty, [experienced] in between meditation sessions, that all phenomena are like illusions: they appear although they do not ultimately exist. And 5. it is the nonconceptual wisdom [that arises while] resting in meditative equipoise. These two are the essence or nature of not being confused.

6. About what is one not confused? About the meaning of the perfectly existent nature, which [means] being unmistakable about the comprehensive character, or that which is naturally luminous.

7. and 8. The result of confusion is obscuring states, and the result or concordant cause of non-confusion is nothing other than the totally purified. These [two points] define the totally afflicted and completely purified, illustrating them through the simile of the sky. The first result [of confusion] is taught from the point of view of conventional [truth] and the second [result of non-confusion] is taught from that of the ultimate.

9. and 10. As for these last two points, the wise should know that they are taught to be the two ultimate ones or two ultimate instances with respect to [the two results of 7. and 8.] just explained. (25) Concerning [the ninth and the tenth points], some Indian (26) scholars say that nirvana is the ultimate instance of both the totally [afflicted] and the [completely] purified. Furthermore, since it neither increases nor diminishes, [nirvana] is called "ultimate" [literally, "gone to the end"], because ultimately, [nirvana] has no limit to be encountered. Others say that because samsara is immeasurable, it does not diminish, and this is the ultimate instance of the totally afflicted. Since nirvana is immeasurable, there is nothing to be added, and this is the ultimate instance of the completely purified.

When considering samsara and nirvana in general, [one can apply] a finite measurement to them on a conventional level; [however], from the perspective of ultimate [truth], they have "gone to the end," and there is nothing truly existent that can be added to or subtracted from them.

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.3.2. The presentation of the ten vajra words or the ten ways of being unmistaken

1. Presence and absence, 2. unmistaken,
  3. the origin, 4. resembling illusion itself,
  5. non-conceptual, 6. always by nature  
utterly clear light
  7. what is totally afflicted and completely purified
  8. and in this way resembling the sky,
  9. not diminishing, and 10. nothing to be added.
- These are called the ten vajra words.

(766.4) Although one can find many different ways in which these vajra words are explained, the discussion here follows the treatises of the scholar Loten, who distinguishes them clearly. (27) Since these vajra words illustrate without error the true nature of the relative and ultimate [nature] of all phenomena that constitute samsara and nirvana, [these words] reveal [the two aspects of] superior insight into how phenomena are in their simplicity and how they are in their diversity. The ten [points] which are unmistaken in this way are called "the ten vajra words."

What are they? Following the order [of the ten verses] above, they are: 1. the presence or absence of meaning, 2. being unmistaken [about the ultimate meaning], 3. the origin, 4. resembling illusion itself, 5. nonconceptuality, 6. always by nature utterly clear light, 7. being totally afflicted and completely purified, 8. in this way resembling the sky, 9. no diminishing, and 10. no additional [qualities] to be obtained. These are called the vajra words in ten aspects, because they are difficult to understand through the ratiocinations of mere intellectuals.

## Discarding Pairs of Extremes

### The First Series

#### 3.2.2.2.1.2.4 The practice of discarding pairs of extremes

##### 3.2.2.2.1.2.4.1 The first series of seven [pairs]

1. The extremes of [being] separate or the same,
  2. [the extremes of] both the tirthikas and the sravakas,
  3. and 4. The two extremes of superimposition or denial  
[in relation to] either a person or a phenomenon,
  5. [the extremes of] unfavorable conditions  
and [their] remedies,
  6. the ideas of permanence and extinction,
  7. [the extremes of] a perceived object and  
a perceiving subject [in relation to] the totally afflicted  
and the completely purified.
- [There are] three [aspects to the totally afflicted].

(767.2) The path of the Mahayana abides in the way of the middle, free of pairs of extremes. (28) For what reasons?

1. [The first two pairs of extremes] take form and the other [aggregates] [to have either] the same essence as the self or a different essence. The middle path discards these [extremes]. Just as the Buddha spoke of [the absence of a self], ranging from the absence of an individual to the absence of a creator, likewise, the self has no essence apart from a self based on the aggregates. (29) And since there is no [essential self], its synonyms, such as an individual and so forth, are [merely] imputed entities that also do not exist. For this reason, the self is neither the same nor different from the aggregates.

2. Likewise, the tirthikas (30) assert a extreme that takes [the aggregates of] form and so forth to be permanent, and the sravakas assert a extreme that takes [the aggregates of] form, and so forth, to be impermanent. The middle path completely discards both of these [extremes], and one becomes used to (31) the absence of mental fabrications, [a state] where there is no conception of form and so forth, as permanent nor as impermanent. It is stated in a sutra, "Form is not permanent, nor is it impermanent."

3. and 4. There are two pairs of extremes [concerning an individual and a phenomenon]: superimposition, (32) which [assumes] that an individual and a phenomenon have a real essence, and denial, (33) which negates their mere appearance on a conventional level. The two [aspects related to] superimposition assume that an individual exists or that a phenomenon, such as mind, exists. The two [aspects related to] denial [assume] that an individual or a phenomenon do not exist. The middle path discards [both] the superimposition or denial of an individual, stating that whatever is in the middle (34) of [the assumption of] self and non-self is nonconceptual. The middle path [further] discards [both] the superimposition or denial of a phenomenon, such as mind, stating that here [in the middle path], there is no [principal] mind and no mental [factors], no [obscuring] mind and no consciousnesses.

5. It is [also] said that the middle path discards the extreme that regards what is not virtuous and what is totally afflicted as adverse conditions, possessing a real essence, and [the extreme] that regards virtue and what is completely purified as remedies, possessing a real essence. It is said that [in the middle path] neither of these two extremes is asserted, expressed [in thought], or spoken [in words].

6. [There is] the extreme of permanence, the idea that a phenomenon or an individual exists and remains without changing, and the extreme of extinction, the idea that a phenomenon and an individual do not exist, or that the mindstream is cut off, [thus preventing] the connection [with a future life]. The middle path discards both of these extremes and relies on the middle where there is no permanence and no extinction.

7. Further, there is explanation in general of two [sets of] extremes [taken together]: one which [posits] both a perceived object and perceiving subject, and the other which [posits] both what is totally afflicted and what is completely purified. How are these [two related]? One clings to a perceived object and a perceiving subject in relation to what is totally afflicted, [i.e., the sequence of the twelve links of interdependent arising] from ignorance to ageing and death, and one clings to a perceived object and a perceiving subject in relation to what is completely purified, [ranging from] the cessation of ignorance to the cessation of ageing and death. The middle path discards both of these extremes. It has been extensively demonstrated that awareness and ignorance are nondual, and so forth.

There are three [aspects to] the totally afflicted: 1. the total affliction of obscuring states, (35) 2. the total affliction of actions, and 3. the total affliction of birth. The first, the total affliction of obscuring states, has three [aspects: it is] the cause of [wrong] views, the three poisons, and it sets up [the causes] for rebirth. The remedies [for these three] are knowing emptiness, lack of characteristics, and no expectation. (36) The second, the total affliction of actions, refers to actually committing virtuous and non-virtuous actions. The remedy for this is known as not to commit [these actions]. (37) The third, the total affliction of birth, has three aspects: 1. the one being born into the intermediate state, 2. with every instant from birth to death, the arising of the [principal] mind and mental events, and 3. the mental continuum of the one in the intermediate state. [These three comprise respectively]: 1. the state of existence related to death, 2. the state of existence related to birth, and 3. the state of existence related to the intermediate state. Their [respective] remedies are: 1. knowing that there is no birth, 2. knowing that there is no arising, and 3. knowing that there is no real [self-] essence.

Further, what is completely purified, freed of these three aspects of what is totally afflicted, is not grasped as possessing a self-essence. In brief, clinging to the thought that the dharmadhatu becomes totally afflicted or completely purified, one clings to the thought that the remedies, such as emptiness and so forth, will eliminate what is to be discarded. It is stated, however, that emptiness does not make phenomena empty: phenomena are empty by nature.

Consequently, as long as there are the extremes of something to be discarded and its remedy, or of something that is empty or not empty,

and so forth, one is involved with an object of experience, which is totally imputed, relative, and conventional. As the very essence of genuine reality, emptiness is inexpressible; from beginningless time it does not exist in terms of any extreme. Emptiness, therefore, does not make phenomena empty: from time immemorial they are emptiness through being empty of all extremes.

## Discarding Pairs of Extremes

### The Second Series

#### 3.2.2.2.1.4.2 The second series of seven [pairs]

##### 3.2.2.2.1.4.2.1. Brief exposition

The extremes of two concepts  
are stated in twelve aspects.

(771.1) In addition to what has been taught above, it is also stated that [there are also] the extremes of two concepts, or the concepts of two extremes, which [are presented] in seven aspects.

##### 3.2.2.2.1.4.2.2. Detailed explanation

1. The existence of an entity and the non-existence of an entity,
  2. what is to be pacified and what pacifies,
  3. something to be feared and the fearing of it,
  4. perceived object and perceiving subject,
  5. what is correct and what is mistaken,
  6. [acting as] an agent and not,
  7. and not arising and simultaneously [present].
- These are the extremes related to two concepts.

(771.2) What are the seven aspects, given in pairs of two extremes of concepts?

1. One extreme is the concept that an entity exists, and the other is the concept that an entity does not exist. The middle path is taught as a remedy for these two extremes. How is this? It has been extensively

taught that since [the view of non-existence] completely destroys the individual, it is not [true] emptiness, and [one should further understand that true] emptiness is empty of [any conceptualized] emptiness. [In this way,] the former extreme [is rejected by seeing entities as] empty [of existence] and the latter extreme [is rejected by seeing entities as] empty [of non-existence]. (38)

2. Another [pair of] extremes takes the concept of something to be pacified or given up, and the concept of what pacifies or the remedy as [two] separate things. Their remedy is the middle path, which teaches that since what is to be given up is not inherently existent, [it follows that] its remedy, as well, is not ultimately existent. As [the Buddha] taught: "Kashyapa, it is like this. If some people are afraid of the sky and cry in terror, 'Take away this sky!', Kashyapa, what do you think? Can the sky be eliminated?"

3. The thought that takes the three realms of samsara (the origin of suffering) as something to be feared, and the thought that is the [actual] fear and dread of it are extremes, which the middle path discards. As [the Buddha] taught: "Kashyapa, for example, it is like this. A painter creates himself the image of a certain demon with a terrifying appearance and then, petrified with fear, he faints falling flat on his face." (39) Having understood this example [as referring to] both samsara and to the fear of it, [both of] which are projected by one's own concepts, one discards these two extremes.

The earlier example of the sky was taught with the sravakas in mind. Not having fully understood that all phenomena are empty by their very nature, they think that what should be discarded is all phenomena, and that what does the discarding is emptiness. [In this way,] people fear emptiness, having grasped [it] as an object that brings about the destruction of phenomena. (40) So that they may abandon their fear, it is taught that from beginningless time, emptiness accompanies all phenomena as their inherent nature [and cannot be separated from them] in the same way that the sky cannot be cleared away. The latter example of the painter was taught so that bodhisattvas will remain in samsara for a long time and not grow weary of it. These two [examples] appear in the commentaries of the scholar Loten, where they are explained in many different ways.

4. [There is further] the extreme that is the concept of a perceived object [of the senses, such as] form and so forth, and the extreme that is the concept of a perceiving subject, [the sense faculties, such as] the eye and so forth. The middle path discards both of these. As [the Buddha] taught: “Kashyapa, for example, it is like this. A person, who creates illusions [of a tiger or lion, etc.], is devoured by the very illusion they projected.” This example illustrates that although a perceived object and a perceiving subject appear as two [different entities], they do not exist separately, [but] exist as mere appearances. If one of these two does not exist, [it follows that] the other does not exist as well. In this way, the example demonstrates that ultimately, [there is nothing that] exists as a perceived object and a perceiving subject.

5. Conceiving of what is untainted as correct, and of what is tainted as mistaken are also extremes, which the teachings of the middle path discard. As [the Buddha] taught: “Kashyapa, for example, it is like this. When the wind rubs together [two pieces of] wood, a fire starts, and the moment [this fire] has arisen, it proceeds to burn the two [pieces of wood].” In this way, fire arises from wood, which does not have the inherent characteristics of fire. Just as wood is consumed by fire, so in the context of the path of application, there is the wood of discriminating concepts, which are incorrect and tainted, from which arise the fire of the higher knowledge of the noble ones, which is correct and untainted. Similar to the fire [of wisdom] burning [the wood of] discriminating concepts, [the fire and the two pieces of wood in the first example] are both interdependently arisen and [thus] resemble an illusion. To prevent one from siding with either the concept of what is correct or the concept of what is mistaken, it is further taught that neither of these [concepts] exists through having a self-essence.

6. The [first] extreme is that of an agent. One takes the remedy of primordial wisdom that functions to discard what is to be discarded as [having] the essential nature of an agent that is truly [existent]. Or further, [one assumes that] primordial wisdom resembles an agent that anticipates [an action] in thinking, “I will discard what is to be discarded.” The [second] extreme of denial is the thought that [primordial wisdom] cannot perform the function of discarding, or

that it is not an [effective] agent. The middle path eliminates [both of] these [extremes].

As [the Buddha] taught: “Kashyapa, for example, it is like this. When a butter lamp is lit, pitch black darkness completely disappears, but the butter lamp, Kashyapa, does not think, ‘I’m going to clear away all of this pitch black darkness.’ Nevertheless, with the presence of the butter lamp, darkness disappears.” Although the butter lamp has no thoughts, it does have the power to clear away darkness; likewise, it is taught that although primordial wisdom clears away obscurations, as [the butter lamp, it has no thought to do so].

7. [Another extreme] is the thought that the remedy of primordial wisdom will not arise within the mindstream. One thinks that since obscurations have been present within the mindstream of sentient beings from beginningless time, they are very powerful and difficult to give up, and therefore, the remedy of primordial wisdom would not have the opportunity to arise: [A related] extreme is the concept, which assumes that once [primordial wisdom] has arisen, it cannot immediately remove what is to be discarded, and therefore, the remedy and what is to be discarded must remain together for a long and equal time, i.e., they are simultaneously [present].

It is taught that the middle path discards both [of these extremes]. As [the Buddha] taught: “Kashyapa, for example, it is like this. If some people light a butter lamp in a dwelling, a house, or a small abode where a hundred or a thousand years have passed since someone lit a butter lamp, what do you think, Kashyapa? Would the pitch black darkness say, ‘I’ve been here one hundred (or one thousand) years and I’m not leaving.’?” Once [light] has appeared, darkness is definitely eliminated: the two do not remain together simultaneously. Further, no matter how long the darkness [has been] there, it is [always] possible to light a butter lamp. Through this example, the extremes of these two concepts are eliminated.

[In summary,] this series of seven just explained is taken as a whole with each [section] containing a pair of concepts. [This series] is called, “the extremes of paired concepts,” because any thought, which apprehends in a way that does not accord with the fundamental mode of being of an entity, falls on either on the side of superimposition or on the side of denial. Entering into what is actually the

middle, just as it is, free of these extremes, is known as the path of the bodhisattva, or what is called "the practice of discarding pairs of extremes."

## Practices with and without a Special Focus

3.2.2.2.1.2.5. and 6. Combination of the fifth and sixth points from the main heading [on practice]

3.2.2.2.1.2.5. Practices with a special focus

3.2.2.2.1.2.6. Practices without a special focus

[Practices] with a special [focus] and  
without a special [focus]  
are understood in relation to the ten levels.

(775.6) The ten [bodhisattva] levels are known as involving a special focus and not involving a special focus. What are [these two]? [The first] is called “practice with a special focus” from the perspective that on the first level, [a bodhisattva] mainly practices generosity, and on the second level, [a bodhisattva] especially practices discipline, and so forth. [The second] is called “practice without a special focus” from the perspective that on all levels, [a bodhisattva] also practices correctly all of the paramitas. (41)

This completes the explanation of the path of unparalleled practice through the six aspects of practice.

## The Unparalleled Focus

### 3.2.2.2.2. The unparalleled focus

The focuses are stated as:

1. the presentation, 2. suchness [or] the dharmadhatu
3. what is to be practiced, 4. the practice,
5. comprehension,
6. definitive comprehension, 7. perfect comprehension,
8. perfect realization, 9. perfectly expanding,
10. conceptualization, 11. resting in naturalness, and
12. perfectly accomplished.

(776.3) How does one direct one's mind towards and then engage the object which is the basis of one's practice? [In the Mahayana,] the focus of [practice] is unparalleled, because its focus is not temporary as that of the sravakas, and so forth; rather, it is a focus that leads one into certainty about all the vast and profound meanings [of the teachings]. There are twelve aspects [to the unparalleled focus]: [the first] four relate to the essential nature and the [last] eight to the [bodhisattva] levels.

1. [The first] is *the unmistakable focus* on the subject matter [of the Mahayana] in its great variety of meaning, which is presented through different teachings, such as the ten paramitas, the [bodhisattva] levels, the paths, exceptional memory, samadhis, and so forth.
2. [The second is] *the focus on phenomena in their simplicity*. [It is directed towards] that which is the profound dharmadhatu devoid of

the two selves [of an individual and a phenomenon]; [this is] the fundamental nature or suchness.

These two are focuses through which the profound and vast meaning [of the Mahayana Dharma] is established with certainty, [and further,] they are summarized in the two truths [of genuine and apparent reality]. (42)

3. and 4. [The third aspect], *the focus on what is to be practiced*, and [the fourth], *the focus on practice* depend on the first two [focuses]. How is this? [The third is] the focus on what is to be practiced, i.e., the paramitas, which are taken up since they contain all the aspects of the vast path [of the Mahayana]. [The fourth is] the focus on practice. Since the profound dharmadhatu is realized, the paramitas are also permeated with higher knowledge, which realizes the three spheres of action as purified, (43) and thereby the practice becomes skillful and special. The practice is so described, because the paramitas are permeated with higher knowledge, which realizes the three spheres of action as purified. [In this way, the paramitas] become the untainted path and the perfections that are beyond this world.

The focus is unparalleled in having these [first] four aspects, which [then] become the focus of the [successive] stages of the path where they become more evident from level to level. (44)

5. Furthermore, what is called *the focus of comprehension* refers to focusing on the dharmadhatu and on [the paramitas of] generosity and so forth, with the higher knowledge arising from intently listening [to the teachings].

6. *The focus of definitive comprehension* refers to focusing on and realizing the meaning of both [the dharmadhatu and the paramitas] through the higher knowledge that arises from thorough reflection involving the four reasonings. (45)

7. Likewise, *the focus by means of correct and perfect comprehension* is a focus involving the nondual self-awareness that comes from meditation.

8. On the first [bodhisattva] level, *the focus of perfect realization* directly [perceives] the dharmadhatu.

9. [On the next] six levels, from the second to the seventh, [this] realization increases [through] *the focus that perfectly expands*.

10. On the seventh level in particular, [there is] *the focus that has no [coarse] concepts* of characteristics [when perceiving] the phenomena of conditioned existence or [the state of], peace, and which fully comprehends the teachings of the sutras, and so forth.

11. On the eighth level, *the focus [is] on resting in naturalness* without effort or activity. (46)

12. This [last] *focus [on the perfectly accomplished]* has three [categories], which pertain to the [final] three levels: perfectly accomplished primordial wisdom on the ninth, perfectly accomplished activity on the tenth, and perfectly accomplished, complete purification on the eleventh, [which is] the level of the Buddha, the enlightened state.

*The focus of perfectly accomplished primordial wisdom* is so named, because on the ninth level, [a bodhisattva] attains the perfect accomplishment of primordial wisdom in relation to the four correct discriminations. (47) *The focus of perfectly accomplished activity* is so named, because on the tenth level, mastery over activity is attained. *The focus of the perfectly accomplished, complete purification* is so named, because on the eleventh level (that of the Buddha, the enlightened state), the perfect accomplishment of complete purification is attained. [Here,] without exception, all the opaque screens of obscuring states and the obscurations to omniscience (48) [are eliminated]; therefore, totally and perfectly pure primordial wisdom sees or focuses on all phenomena in their simplicity and in their diversity.

# The Unparalleled, Perfect Accomplishment

## 3.2.2.3. The unparalleled, perfect accomplishment.

Perfect accomplishment [embodies]:

1. nothing missing, 2. not abandoning,
3. not straying, 4. perfect accomplishment,
5. perfect generation, 6. increasing,
7. completely workable, 8. not abiding
9. no obscurations, and 10. no interruption.

(779.1) Since one has entered the Mahayana path, whatever results are attained, be they temporary or ultimate, are accomplishments superior to those attained by sravakas and pratyekabuddhas. The accomplishments [of the Mahayana path] are demonstrated through ten aspects, which are said to summarize the meaning of the entire Mahayana [path]. In the *Sutralankara*, [they are listed as]: “1. the basic potential, 2. deep and abiding interest in the Dharma, 3. in accord with this, generating bodhicitta, 4. the practice of [the paramitas of] generosity, and so forth, 5. engaging in what is flawless, 6. bringing sentient beings to complete maturity, 7. perfectly purifying the buddhafields, 8. non-abiding, [dynamic] nirvana, 9. supreme enlightenment, and 10. demonstrating [enlightenment].”

The perfect way of accomplishing the ultimate fruition is clearly demonstrated through [these ten aspects]. 1. The basic potential of the Mahayana is awakened. 2. One has a deep and abiding interest in Mahayana Dharma, which provides the conditions for [this] awak-

ening. 3. The motivation is bodhicitta. 4. What is to be accomplished is the application of the six paramitas. 5. Having entered into the first level where flawless bodhicitta is realized, [a bodhisattva] engages in the levels of the noble ones. 6. Through skillful means, sentient beings are brought to complete maturity. 7. The buddhafields are perfectly purified. 8. Since the equality of conditioned existence and [the state of] peace is realized, the very essence of non-abiding, [dynamic] nirvana is brought to perfection. These [last] three [points, 6, 7, and 8, refer to] qualities found mainly on the pure [bodhisattva] levels. (49) 9. At the end [of the path, a bodhisattva] attains [the level of] Buddha, the supreme enlightenment, the unparalleled fruition. 10. Once having attained this, for as long as [samsara] exists, [a Buddha] perfectly demonstrates enlightenment or, in other words, [demonstrates] without interruption the way [to attain] buddhahood. "Without interruption" refers to the way [the Buddha] acts through the [two] form kayas to benefit sentient beings for as long as samsara exists.

In harmony with [the explanation based on the *Sutralankara* ], there is another [explanation from the perspective] of this [text].

1. The first among all causes [for enlightenment] is the perfect accomplishment of the basic constituent. [This is possible] when all conditions for the awakening of the basic potential of the Mahayana are present. [The conditions are known as] the four great wheels, including the spiritual friend, who teaches the Mahayana, and so forth. (50)
2. Following these, [through] the perfect accomplishment of a deep and abiding interest in the Mahayana, [one] never abandons the path of [this] supreme vehicle.
3. In the Mahayana, the perfect accomplishment of bodhicitta does not stray into the mentality of lower vehicles.
4. The perfect accomplishment of the practice brings about the perfection of the six paramitas.
5. The perfect accomplishment that enters into what is flawless, is the generation (on the first bodhisattva level) of the path of the noble ones, the perfect Dharma that is beyond this world.
6. From here to the seventh level, through developing and expanding the practice of virtue for a long time, perfect accomplishment [brings about] the complete maturity of sentient beings.

7. On the eighth level, perfect accomplishment [relates to] the complete purification of buddhafi elds. Through nonconceptual wisdom, the mind [becomes] completely workable (51) and the consciousnesses of the five doors [of the sense faculties], which face outward, are transformed.

8. [On the eighth level as well], perfect accomplishment [refers to receiving] a prophecy from the Buddhas [predicting that one will attain] the level of non-regression. [This accomplishment is possible] because the obscuring [seventh] consciousness, which faces inward, is transformed and actual nirvana, which does not abide in either extreme of samsara or nirvana, is realized.

9. Perfect accomplishment in terms of supreme enlightenment [or] buddhahood [arises], because obscurations no longer exist; both [kinds of obscurations] along with their mental tendencies have been completely exhausted.

10. The perfect accomplishment that demonstrates all aspects of enlightenment is the unparalleled, great enlightenment, embodying the inherent character of the three kayas, whose fundamental mode of being is [to manifest] without interruption [for the benefit of all sentient beings].

[Through these ten points], the way of accomplishment, continuing through to ultimate fruition, has been excellently taught.

### In Conclusion (52)

The treatise, *Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes*, is difficult to realize and [embraces] the heart [of the teachings].

[It brings] great benefits, and accordingly, it is meaningful [for all three vehicles].

All that lacks meaning is cleared away.

Sarva Mangalam

## Footnotes

1. Mipham Rinpoche combines the fifth and sixth points in the previous verse to make a total of five.

2. One countless kalpa is the number of years equal to ten to the sixtieth power. The thrust of the meaning is that one practices and accumulates merit for an inconceivably long time.

3. The term *aggregate* is *skandha* in Sanskrit and *phung po* in Tibetan, which literally means *a heap*, pointing to the fact that each of the five aggregates contains innumerable instances of its type. "The five aggregates are the five components which make up an individual and his experience, covering both the physical and mental aspects of existence. They are forms, feelings, discernments, mental formations, and consciousnesses." Jamgon Kongtrul, *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Ch. 8, Part I, "The Stages of Meditation of Shamatha and Vipshyana, The General Basis of All Samadhis," trans. by Kiki Ekselius and Chrysoula Zerbini, 1985, Dhagpo Kagyu Ling, France.

"The expanse without remainder of the aggregates" refers to an enlightenment attained by arhats, where the continuity of the aggregates is cut off, leaving them without a foundation for activity in the world. Bodhisattvas do not enter into this type of cessation, although on the eighth bodhisattva level, there is a slight danger that they may remain in a samadhi of cessation. The ultimate enlightenment of the bodhisattva path involves the realization of the three kayas, through which they continuously benefit sentient beings. This activity is possible, because the bodhisattva's realization is that of

profound emptiness, where no difference between samsara and nirvana is perceived. In contradistinction to arhats, therefore, bodhisattvas have no fear of staying in samsara.

4. The realization of equality between oneself and others is an aspect of the realization of emptiness, which itself is the ultimate virtue. This perfected virtue, then, is practiced continually through the three kayas.

5. This samadhi is especially related to the paramita of generosity. The great Tibetan siddha Thangtong Gyalpo (990-1139?) is said to have mastered this samadhi, which enabled him to bring immense benefit to others. He built numerous temples and bridges, and brought rain to end a twelve year drought.

6. The Sanskrit word *bodhicitta*, *byang chup kyi sems* in Tibetan, refers to the mind (*citta*) aspiring towards enlightenment (*bodhi*) for the sake of all sentient beings. It is often translated as *the awakening mind*. Ultimate bodhicitta is the realization of emptiness and relative bodhicitta refers to the practices that lead to this realization, such as that of the ten paramitas, and so forth. Relative bodhicitta has two aspects: *smon sems*, the aspiration itself, and *'jug sems*, the actual engagement in the practices.

7. The way this text defines the third paramita emphasizes its aspect of being able to sustain or endure negative situations, and as such it could also be translated as *forbearance*.

8. *Dge wai rtsa wa*, literally *virtuous roots*, also refers to the intention of practice, which is to bring all sentient beings to liberation.

9. These twelve sections or branches of the teachings are known in Tibetan as *gsung rab yen lag bchu gnyis*. The text gives the first two, which refer to the teachings given in prose, and to the teachings where at the beginning or end of a section, there are verses. This definition and those of the remaining ten are found in *Theg pa chen po mdo sdei rgyen gyi 'grel pa rin po che'i phren ba*, by Rgyal-sras Thogs-med Bzandpal, Gangtok, 1979, pp. 197.5-199.1.

10. These point to the three kinds of emptiness: 1. emptiness referring to the essential mode of being, which is empty by nature; 2. emptiness referring to the cause, which is free of characteristics; and 3. emptiness referring to the absence of desire for or expectation of a result.

11. The three adverbs attached to the present participles are not present in the Tibetan, but have been added to give a fuller meaning to the traditional terms.

12. In the Shentong tradition, the Tibetan term *rigs* (Skt: *gotra*), the *basic potential*, and *khams* (Skt: *dhatu*), the *basic constituent* here refer to the capacity for enlightenment that is always present within sentient beings, but covered over by temporary stains or obscurations which conceal it from awareness. Through practice, these stains are gradually removed and what was always there becomes increasingly apparent. The term *basic constituent* emphasizes the fact that it never changes, but remains absolutely pure from beginningless time. The term *basic potential* emphasizes the fact that it appears in different ways depending on an individual's capacity and aspiration. The awakening of the Mahayana basic potential marks the entry into the bodhisattva's path, which eventually leads to great enlightenment when the basic constituent is perfectly realized. For detailed discussions, see the chapters on this subject in *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* by Gampopa and in the *Mahayanottaratantrashashtra* by Maitreya through Asanga.

13. The Tibetan term *ngospo* refers to something that can perform a function or produce an effect. As the English word *thing*, it has both connotations of concrete and abstract. This word is also often translated as *entity*.

14. The root text can be interpreted to mean that one is small-minded, i.e., seeking only personal benefit as in the lesser vehicles.

15. The text here employs two technical terms: *rnams bched*, what is to be eliminated, and *yongs gchod*, what remains after the process of elimination. These terms apply to a process of negation where what remains at the end is a pure state, or pure qualities, devoid of what is not a part of their essential nature. This is called a *ma yin dgag*,

negation with remainder, as opposed to a *med dgag*, absolute negation, where the end result is complete absence or annihilation.

16. There are a vast number of samadhis (often translated as meditative absorptions), and here, inner samadhi refers to those that arise during a period of resting in meditation.

17. This discussion has been recast to fit an English language context. In Tibetan, syllables are usually called *letters* and instead of English-speakers, the text refers to Tibetans and people from other countries.

18. The environment refers in general to the world in which we live, i.e., this planet earth, and the objects of the senses relate more specifically to our present experience.

19. In the first chapter of this text, the dharmadhatu is defined in the following way: "[Emptiness] is given the name *dharmadhatu*, literally *the expanse of qualities*, because it is the expanse or the cause of all noble qualities; focusing on [the dharmadhatu or genuine reality] brings about the development of all the positive qualities of the path." (675.2)

20. In the previous verse, two meanings were given for the term *rang mtsen*: the *true character*, which is specific to this context, and *specific or concrete characteristics*, which is the usage relating to the direct perception of phenomena. In the same way, its corollary *spyi mtsen* has two usages: the *comprehensive character*, which is specific to this context, and the *general or abstract characteristics*, which is the standard meaning. This latter meaning refers to a mental construct, which is based on or abstracted from the previous perception of an object (hence *abstract*), and which combines similar instances into one concept (hence *general*).

21. In other words, when one realizes the true nature of obscuring states, one realizes their empty, pure nature, and therefore, there is no reason to reject or turn away from them. It is possible that there is a scribal error in the text here. Instead of *sdang*, *to hate*, *to have aversion for*, it could be *sngsng*, *to fear*. The two letters *da* and *nga* are easily confused and the meaning of being afraid would be more consistent with the rest of the explanation.

22. This section, based on Vasubandhu's commentary, is added in the form of a supplement to the explanation of the ten verses on superior insight. To clarify the structure here, the section has been divided into two parts based on Mipham Rinpoche's discussion of the subject and his rather long introductory heading.

23. In the following discussion, the word *point* refers to one of the ten verses on superior insight: the first point refers to the subject matter of the first verse, and so forth.

24. Especially in the Cittamatra and Shentong schools, one often finds reference to the theory of the three natures. 1. The completely imputed or imaginary nature relates to the operations of the mind, which falsify perception by taking dualistic appearances to truly exist whereas, in fact, they are mere appearances on a relative level. The completely imputed nature represents objects of perception, which are created by our concepts and ultimately non-existent. This is the way an ordinary person's mind usually functions. 2. The dependent nature points to the fact that what we perceive is only consciousness, which depends on the arising of mental tendencies from the ground consciousness. This dependent nature is the basis for the completely imputed nature, and it has two aspects, the impure and the pure. Due to mental tendencies arising out of the ground consciousness, the impure aspect takes a perceived object and a perceiving subject to exist substantially. The pure aspect is freed of these mental tendencies and manifests as primordial wisdom, the kayas, and the buddhafields. 3. The Cittamatra view defines the perfectly existent nature as empty of the completely imputed nature, which arises based on the dependent nature. From the point of view of the Rangtong Madhyamika school, the perfectly existent nature would be another name for genuine reality or the direct perception of emptiness, devoid of all mental fabrication. This definition does not contradict the Shentong Madhyamika view; however, the Shentong school further states that this perfectly existent nature is primordially present and becomes apparent once one has eliminated all temporary stains that obstruct the realization of things as they truly are, i.e., the inseparability of clarity and emptiness or awareness and space. Cf. Chapters 1 and 3

of this text for a detailed discussion and also Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*, trans. Shenpen Hookham, 2nd ed. 1988, Oxford, Chs. 2, 4, and 5, *passim*.

26. Reflecting the paradoxical nature of this discussion, Mipham Rinpoche plays on three Tibetan words, all of which contain the word *mtha'* meaning *end* or *limit*: *mtha' ma* means *the end, the last, the utmost*, and is here translated as *ultimate instance*; *mthar phyin pa* literally means *gone to the end*, hence *ultimate*, and *mthar thug pa* also means *ultimate* and is here translated literally as *encountering the limit*. A similar usage of *mtha'* with the connotation of *ultimate instance* appears in the first chapter of this text (674.6-675.1). Here, *yangdagpai mtha'* is given as a synonym for emptiness, because it points to "the perfection which is unmistakable about the mode of being of [all] things."

27. One of the four main disciples of the great Indian scholar Vasubandhu.

28. Found in the title of the treatise, the word *mtha'*, *the extreme, the limit, or the end*, is central to this text and to the view of the Madhyamika (Skt: *the Middle Way*). In the context of this treatise, *extreme* refers to a point of view, which covers the whole range from a sophisticated philosophical tenet to a semi- or unconscious assumption about how things are. In one sense, *mtha'* could be translated as *limiting view* since it restricts or prohibits seeing the actual nature of ultimate reality, i.e., emptiness, by narrowing one's range of vision or by shortening one's focus so that it falls short of the deeper levels of reality. Here, however, the term has been translated as *extreme* since this fits more closely into the following discussion where two pairs of incorrect views are set up as various kinds of polarities, either side of which is false. These polarities can be exact opposites, such as existence and non-existence, contradictory in their function, such as unfavorable conditions and their remedies, or simple opposites, such as a perceived object and a perceiving subject.

The view of a middle way between these polarities is what a beginner comes to understand, learning how to distinguish clearly what these extreme views entail. The next step, then, is to realize that

ultimately, the true nature or emptiness is beyond these extremes: it is empty of any limiting view whatsoever, including the position of the middle as well. Cf. footnote 26.

29. This statement should not be understood to mean that a self posited on the basis of the aggregates has an essence, but rather that the only self that can be found is one that is imputed on the basis of the aggregates. The traditional way of explaining this is through what is called "the view of the transitory collection," (*'jig tsogs kyi tawa* in Tibetan), which analyzes the twenty different ways a self can be posited in relation to the five aggregates.

30. A term used to refer to non-Buddhist traditions, especially those found in India. It was often in debate with these religious and philosophical traditions that Buddhist theories were elaborated.

31. The term *gompa* was previously translated as *meditate*, yet the word also has the sense of *becoming used to* or *becoming familiar with*. This interpretation points to the process of integrating, or blending into the mindstream, previous understanding or realization.

32. *Superimposition* translates the Tibetan term *sgro 'dogs*, which literally means *to attach feathers*. It means to assume as existent what is not (Tib: *med pa la yod pa*) and could also be translated as *conceptual overlay, exaggeration, or overestimation*.

33. *Denial* translates the Tibetan term *skur 'deps*, which literally means *to hurl abuse*. It means to assume as non-existent what is (Tib: *yod pa la med pa*) and could also be translated as *derogation or underestimation*.

34. Cf. footnote 28.

35. *Obscuring states* is *nyon mongs* in Tibetan and *klesha* in Sanskrit. This term covers the six root afflictions found within the fifty-one mental factors: desire, anger, pride, ignorance, doubt, and obscured view. The latter refers to mistaken conceptions, such as taking the aggregates as the basis for positing the existence of a self, and so forth. Cf. "The Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha: The First Jamgon Kongtrul's

Commentary on the *Mahayanottaratantrashastra*," by Maitreya through Asanga, trans. Kiki Ekselius and Constance Wilkinson, in *The Nalandakirti Journal*, No. 1, 1989, pp. 79-80.

36. Cf. footnote 10.

37. The realization of emptiness allows one to remain free of any mental fabrications, which would include concepts of virtue and non-virtue. At this point, one is able to act without conceptualizing actions as virtuous or non-virtuous: this is pure activity arising out of emptiness.

38. In the discussion here, annihilating emptiness relates to the latter view asserting non-existence, and the emptiness, empty of emptiness, relates to the former view asserting existence.

39. The order in the text is first falling on his face and then fainting.

40. The sravakas accomplish the realization of the absence of a self-entity in an individual, but not the realization of the absence of a self-entity in a phenomenon, and so they do not fully realize emptiness. Consequently, they see phenomena as having a separate existence, which emptiness, misunderstood as an agent of destruction, would annihilate. Since they still cling to the existence of phenomena, emptiness appears as something to be feared. In brief, the sravakas are hindered by a compounded misunderstanding: they cling to a phenomenon as existent and fear emptiness as destructive.

41 "Without a special focus" means, for example, that on the first bodhisattva level, the practice of generosity is performed in connection with, or through the agency of, the other five paramitas. The same would apply to all the other paramitas and the respective bodhisattva levels on which they are practiced.

42. A parallel is drawn here between the great variety of meaning, the apparent reality, and the vast aspect of the teachings, and further, between phenomena in their fundamental nature, genuine reality, and the profound aspect of the teachings.

43. In relation to any activity, these three refer to the absence of a focus on subject, object, or action as being separate.

44. Cf. footnote 12.

45. 1. Establishing phenomena as dependent, 2. considering their function, 3. the three kinds of valid cognition, direct, inferential, and scriptural, and 4. the true character of things. Cf. Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, *Shes bya mDzod, The Treasury of Knowledge*, vol. 3, p.11.

46. This activity is free of the mind involved in obscuring states and free of the activity of the mental factors.

47. 1. One has a pure view of the teachings, seeing them clearly. 2. One knows the meaning of words and 3. their extended definitions, etymology, etc. 4. One has the courage to pursue the path.

48. There are two basic kinds of obscurations or opaque screens, literally *veils*, that cover the true nature of the mind: that of the obscuring states or kleshas (cf. fn. 35) and that which obscures what is to be known, i.e., all outer and inner phenomena, and hence the translation *obscurations to omniscience*.

49. The pure levels are the eighth, ninth, and tenth.

50. The others are: living in a country hospitable to the teachings, having collected merit, and having made aspiration prayers.

51. The term *les su ring wa* means that the mind has become flexible, adaptable or pliant, perfectly open to performing whatever activity is appropriate.

52. This is the dedicatory verse for the whole treatise, which appears at the end.

## Glossary

actual nirvana བྱང་འདས་ཀྱི་དོན་

apparent reality ཀྱན་ཚྭ་

authentic meaning དོན་དེ་ཉིད་

authentic nature དོན་

basic constituent ཁམས་

basic potential རིགས་

becoming used to རྒྱུ་ལ་

bodhicitta ཆང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་

bodhisattva ཆང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔལ་

Buddha, the enlightened state སངས་བྱུང་

Buddhahood སངས་བྱུང་

completely imputed nature ཀྱན་བཏགས་

completely purified རྣམ་གྲང་

completely workable ལས་སྤྱ་རྒྱུ་བ་

comprehensive character གླིམ་མཚན་

conditioned བསྐྱེས་པ་

context གནས་སྐབས་

denial གྲུང་འདེབས་

dependent nature གཞན་དབང་

dharmadhatu ཆོས་དབྱིངས་

discriminating concepts སོ་སོར་རྟོག་པ་

dualistic appearance གཉིས་སྒྲུབ་བ་

essential character བདག་ཉིད་

essential nature རྩ་བ་

essential point གནད་

exceptional memory གཟུངས་

exist ཡོད་པ་ or ལྟུང་པ་

fall into the position རོགས་སྒྲུབ་བ་

fully comprehend ཁོང་དུ་རྒྱུད་པ་

fundamental mode of being གནས་རྒྱུ་ or གནས་ཆོད་

fundamental nature གནས་ལྷགས་

genuine དམ་པ་

genuine reality      དོན་དམ་

ground consciousness      ཀུན་གཞི་

habitual tendencies      བག་ཆགས་

implicit      དོན་ཁྱེས་

inherent character      བདག་ཉིད་

inherent characteristics      རང་བཞིན་

inherent nature      ཚེས་ཉིད་

intently listening      ཐོས་པ་

kaya      སྐུ་

meditation      སྒྲུབ་པ་

mindstream      རྒྱུད་

non-abiding, dynamic nirvana      མི་གནས་པའི་སྤང་འདས་

nondual self-awareness      སོ་སོར་རང་རིག་པ་

obscurations      རྒྱུལ་བ་

obscuring states      ཉོན་མོངས་

paramita, perfection      བར་ཕྱིན་

path of application གྱུར་ལམ་

perceived object གཟུང་བ་

perceiving subject འཛིན་པ་

perfectly accomplished ཡུལ་དུ་འབྱུང་བ་

perfectly existent nature ཡོངས་འབྲུག་

phenomena in their diversity ཇི་སྟེད་པ་

phenomena in their simplicity ཇི་ལྟ་བ་

point གནས་

quintessence དངོས་

reality རྟོན་

samadhi ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན་

specific or concrete characteristics རང་མཚན་

state of existence སྟོན་པ་

superimposition གློ་འདྲགས་

tainted ཟག་བཅས་

thorough reflection བསམ་པ་

three natures རོ་བོ་ཉིད་གསུམ་

three shperes of action འཁོར་གསུམ་

totally afflicted ཀྱན་ཉོན་

transformation      གནས་གླུ་ར་

true character      རང་མཚན་

true nature      རང་གཞིན་

very essence      རྩ་བོ་ཉིད་

## Appendix

### The Root Verses In Tibetan

3.2.2. ཐེག་ཆེན་ཐུན་མང་མིན་པ་ཁྱེ་ལམ་བཤད་པ།

3.2.2.1. མདོར་བསྟན། 746.6

སྤྱི་མཉམ་ཉིད་ནི་སྦྱུང་པ་དང་།  
དམིགས་པ་དང་ནི་ཡང་དག་འབྲུག།  
བསྟན་པ་ཡིན་པར་འདོད་པའོ།

3.2.2.2. ལྷུ་བ་བཤད།

3.2.2.2.1. ལྷུ་བ་སྤྱི་མཉམ་

3.2.2.2.1.1. མདོར་བསྟན།

སྦྱུང་པ་དག་ནི་རྣམ་དུག་སྟེ།  
ཡ་རྩལ་ཕྱིན་པ་དེ་དག་ལའོ།

དམ་པ་དང་ནི་ཡིད་བྱིད་དང་།

ཤེས་སུ་མ་ཐུན་ཆོས་མ་ཐུན་སྤངས་དང་།

ཁྱད་པར་ཅན་དང་ཁྱད་པར་མེད།

### 3.2.2.2.1.2. རྒྱལ་པོ་བཤད།

3.2.2.2.1.2.1. དམ་པའི་སྒྲུབ་པ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.1.1. སྒྲུབ་ཚུལ་དམ་པ་བཅུ་གཉིས། 747.5

དམ་པ་བཅུ་གཉིས་བདག་ཉིད་དེ།

རྒྱ་ཆེ་བ་དང་ཡུན་རིང་དང་།

ཆེད་དུ་བྱ་དང་མི་ཟད་དང་།

རྒྱན་མི་འཆད་དང་ཆོག་མེད་དང་།

དབང་འབྱོར་བ་དང་ཡོངས་གཟུང་དང་།

ཚུམ་དང་འཐོབ་དང་རྒྱ་མཐུན་དང་།

འགྲུབ་པ་དམ་པར་འདོད་པ་ཡིན།

3.2.2.2.1.2.1.2. བསྒྲུབ་བྱ་ཡར་བྱིན་བཟུ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. མདོར་བསྟན། 749.2

དེ་ཕྱིར་དམ་པའི་དོན་གྱིས་ནི།  
ཡ་རྩལ་ཕྱིན་པ་བཅུར་འདོད་དོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. ལྷ་ས་བཤད།

3.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.1. རོ་བོ། 749.4

སྤྱིན་དང་རྩལ་ཁྱིམ་ས་བཟོད་བཙོན་འགྲུས།  
བསམ་གཏན་དང་ནི་ཤེས་རབ་ཐབས།  
སྤྱིན་ལམ་སྤྱོད་ས་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དང་།  
འདི་དག་ཡ་རྩལ་ཕྱིན་བཅུའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.2. བྱེད་ལས། 750.2

ལས་ནི་རྗེས་སུ་འཛིན་བྱེད་དང་།  
གཞོད་མི་བྱེད་དང་དེ་ལ་བཟོད།  
ཡོན་ཏན་འཕེལ་དང་འཇུག་རྒྱས་དང་།  
རྒྱལ་པར་གྲོལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་དང་།  
མི་ཟད་པ་དང་རྟག་འཇུག་དང་།  
ངེས་པར་འོངས་སྤྱོད་སྤྱིན་པར་བྱེད།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2. ཡིད་བྱེད་སྒྲུབ་པ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.1. མདོར་བསྐྱུས་པ་གཤམ་རབ་གསུམ་གྱིས་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་ཚུལ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.1.1. དངོས། 751.2

ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོར་ཇི་ལྟར་བྱུང་།

ཆོས་རྒྱམས་བཏགས་པར་མཇེད་པ་དག

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཏྟག་པར་ཡང་།

གཤམ་རབ་གསུམ་གྱིས་ཡིད་བྱེད་པའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.1.2. དེའི་བྱེད་ལས། 751.6

ཁམས་བཏགས་བྱེད་དང་འབྲུག་བྱེད་དང་།

དེ་ནི་དོན་རྒྱམས་འབྲུག་པར་འབྱུང་།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2. རྒྱལ་པར་ཆོས་སྤྱོད་བཅུའི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་ཚུལ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2.1. མདོར་བསྐྱུས། 752.2

དེ་ནི་ཆོས་སྤྱོད་རྒྱམ་བཅུ་དང་།

ཡང་དག་ལྡན་པར་གཤམ་པར་བྱ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2.2. ལྷ་མ་འདྲེ་མཆོད་སྤྱིན་པ་དང་།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2.2.1. ཆོས་སྤྱོད་བཅུའི་ངོ་བོ་ཡན་ཡོན་བཅས་པ་བསྟན་པ། 752.4

ཡི་གེ་འདྲི་མཆོད་སྤྱིན་པ་དང་།

ཉན་དང་སྒྲིག་དང་ལེན་པ་དང་།

འཆད་དང་ཁ་དོན་བྱེད་པ་དང་།

དེ་སེམས་པ་དང་སྒྲུབ་པ་ལོ།

སྤྱོད་པ་དེ་བཅུའི་བདག་ཉིད་ནི།

བསོད་ནམས་ཕུང་པོ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད།

3.2.2.2.1.2.2.2.2.2. ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཆོས་སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་ཡན་ཡོན་ཁྱད་པར་དུ་བཤད་པ།

753.4

ཁྱད་པར་ཕྱིར་དང་མི་ཟད་ཕྱིར།

གཞན་ལ་ཡན་འདོགས་མ་ཞིའི་ཕྱིར།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3. རྗེས་སུ་མཐུན་ཆོས་སྒྲུབ་པ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.1. མདོར་བསྟན། 754.3

མི་གཡིང་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པར།  
གྲུར་པ་ཇིས་སུ་མཐུན་པའི་ཚོས།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2. ཕྱིན་པ་ཤད།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.1. མི་གཡིང་བ་ཞི་གནས། 755.1

ཁུང་དང་ཡུལ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་དང་།  
དེ་བཞིན་རོ་མུང་བྱིང་དང་ཤོད།  
ཡིད་ཆེས་པ་ཡི་བསམ་པ་དང་།  
ཡིད་ལ་བྱིད་པ་ངར་འཛིན་དང་།  
རྒྱུང་དུའི་སེམས་ནི་གཡིང་བ་སྟེ།  
སྟོ་ལྷན་ན་མས་ཀྱིས་ཤེས་པར་བྱ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2. ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ་ལྷག་མཐོང་།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1. མདོར་བསྟན། 756.2

ཡི་གེ་དོན་དང་ཡིད་བྱིད་དང་།  
མི་འཕྲོ་བ་དང་མཚན་ཉིད་གཉིས།  
མ་དག་དག་དང་སྟོ་བྱར་དང་།  
མི་སྣང་བ་དང་ཁེངས་པ་མེད།

### 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2. རྒྱལ་ཁབ་དང་།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.1. ཡི་གེ་ལ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 757.3

འབྲེལ་བའི་ཕྱིར་དང་འདྲིས་ཕྱིར་དང་།

མ་འབྲེལ་ཕྱིར་དང་མ་འདྲིས་ཕྱིར།

དོན་ཡོད་པ་དང་མེད་པ་སྟེ།

དེ་ནི་ཡི་གེ་མ་ལོག་པ་འོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.2. དོན་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 758.4

གཉིས་སྤྲོད་པར་གྱུར་པ་ནི།

དེ་ལྟར་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

དེ་ནི་དོན་ལ་མ་ལོག་པ།

ཡོད་དང་མེད་པ་རྣམ་པར་སྤངས།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.3. ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་ལ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 758.6

རྟོག་པ་དེ་ཡིས་བསྐྱོས་པ་ཡི།

རྟོག་པ་ཡིད་བྱེད་དེའི་གནས་ནི།

ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་མ་ལོག་པ།

གཉིས་སུ་སྒྲུང་བའི་བྱ་ལའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.4. མི་འཕྲོ་བ་ལ་བྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 759.3

དོན་གྱིས་མེད་དང་ཡོད་པ་སྟེ།

སྟེ་མ་ལ་སོགས་བཞིན་དུ་འདོད།

དེ་ནི་མི་འཕྲོ་མ་ལོག་སྟེ།

ཡོད་དང་མེད་པ་མི་འཕྲོ་བྱེད།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.5. རང་མཆན་ལ་བྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 759.5

རྟོག་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་མི་འདུག་བྱེད།

ཐམས་ཅད་མིང་ཙམ་ཁོ་ན་སྟེ།

རང་གི་མཆན་ཉིད་མ་ལོག་པའོ།

དོན་དམ་རང་གི་མཆན་ཉིད་ལའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.6. སྤྱི་འཇུག་ཉིད་ལ་བྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 760.4

ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་ནི་མ་གཏོགས་པས།

འདི་ལྟར་ཆོས་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

དེ་ཕྱིར་སྤྱི་ཡི་མཚན་ཉིད་དེས།

དེ་ནི་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.7. དག་མ་དག་ལ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 760.6

ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་གི་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད།

མ་སྤངས་པ་དང་སྤངས་པ་ལས།

དེ་ནི་མ་དག་ནམ་དག་གྱེ།

དེ་ཡང་དེ་ལ་མ་ལོག་པའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.8. སློ་བུར་བ་ལ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 761.2

ཚུལ་གྱི་དབྱིངས་ནི་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས།

ནམ་པར་དག་ཕྱིར་ནམ་མཁའ་བཞིན།

གཉིས་ནི་སློ་བུར་བ་ལ་བྱེད།

དེ་ཡང་དེ་ལ་མ་ལོག་པའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.9. མི་སྤང་བ་དང་ང་རྒྱལ་བ་མེད་པ་ལ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ། 761.4

ཚེས་རྒྱུ་མཐུ་དང་ནི་གང་ཟག་གི  
 ཀྱན་ནས་ཉིན་མོངས་རྒྱུ་དག་མེད།  
 མེད་ཕྱིར་དེ་བས་སྒྲག་དང་ང་།  
 མེད་དེ་དེ་འདིར་མ་ལོག་པའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.3. ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ་བཅུ་ལྔ་ལྟོས། 762.3  
 3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.3.1.

གང་ལ་གང་ཞིག་གང་ལས་འབྱུལ།  
 མ་འབྱུལ་གང་ཞིག་གང་ལ་དང་།  
 འབྱུལ་དང་མ་འབྱུལ་འབྲས་ཀྱི་ཉིད།  
 དེ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ནི་མཐའོ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.2.2.

ཡོད་མེད་ཕྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་དང་།  
 བནས་དང་སྒྱུ་མ་ལྟ་བུ་ཉིད།  
 མི་རྟོག་པ་དང་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས།  
 ཉམ་པར་འོད་གསལ་ཉིད་དང་ནི།

ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་རྣམ་པར་དང་།

དེ་བཞིན་རྣམ་མཁའ་ལྟ་བུ་ཉིད།

འགྲེལ་པ་མེད་དང་ལྟ་བུ་ཉིད།

འགྲེལ་པ་མེད་དང་ལྟ་བུ་མེད་པ།

དོ་མེད་ཆོག་ནི་བཅུ་ཞེས་བྲ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.4. མཐའ་གཉིས་སྒྲུང་ས་པའི་སྒྲུབ་པ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.4.1. བདུན་ཆན་དང་པོ། 767.3

ཐད་དང་པ་དང་གཅིག་མཐའ་དང་།

ཕྱ་སྒྲེགས་ཉན་ཐོས་གཉི་ག་དང་།

གང་ཟག་ཆས་ལ་སྒྲོ་འདྲིགས་དང་།

སྒྲུར་འདྲིབས་མཐའ་རྣམས་གཉིས་གཉིས་དང་།

མི་མཐུན་ཕྱོགས་དང་གཉིན་པོའི་མཐའ།

ཏྲག་དང་ཆད་པར་འདྲུ་ཤེས་དང་།

གཟུང་དང་འཛིན་དང་ཀུན་ཉོན་མོངས།

རྣམ་པར་བྱང་ལ་གཉིས་དང་གསུམ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.4.2. བདུན་ཆན་གཉིས་པ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.4.2.1. མདོར་བཟུང། 771.1

རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་མཐའ།

དེ་ནི་རྣམ་པ་བདུན་དུ་འདོད།

3.2.2.2.1.2.4.2.2. ཟུམ་བཤད། 771.2

དངོས་ཡོད་དངོས་མེད་ཞི་བྱ་དང།

ཞི་བྱེད་སྐྱབ་བྱ་དེ་ལ་འཛིག་ས།

གཟུང་དང་འཛིན་དང་ཡང་དག་ཉིད།

ལྷག་པ་ཉིད་དང་བྱེད་དང་མིན།

སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་དང་མཉམ་པའི་དུས།

དེ་ནི་རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་གཉིས་ཀྱི་མཐའ།

3.2.2.2.1.2.5. བྱད་པར་ཅན་དང་བྱད་པར་མེད་སྐྱབ་པ། 775.6

བྱད་པར་ཅན་དང་བྱད་མེད་ནི།

ས་བཅུ་དག་ཏུ་ཤེས་པར་བྱ།

## 3.2.2.2.2. དམིགས་པ་སྤྲོ་མེད། 776.3

རྣམ་པར་བཞག་དང་དེ་བཞིན་དབྱིངས།

བསྐྱབ་དང་སྐྱབ་དང་འཛིན་པ་དང་།

ངེས་པར་འཛིན་དང་རབ་བྱ་འཛིན།

རབ་བྱ་རྟོགས་དང་རབ་རྒྱས་དང་།

རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་དང་རྣལ་འབྱུག་དང་།

ཕུལ་བྱ་བྱུང་བའི་དམིགས་པར་འདོད།

## 3.2.2.2.3. ཡང་དག་འབྲུག་པ་སྤྲོ་མེད། 779.2

མ་ཚང་མེད་དང་མི་སྤྲོད་དང་།

མི་གཡིང་བ་དང་རབ་རྟོགས་དང་།

ཡང་དག་སྦྱིད་དང་འཕེལ་བ་དང་།

ལས་སྤྲུལ་དང་མི་གནས་དང་།

སྦྱིབ་པ་མེད་པ་ཉིད་དང་དེ།

རྒྱན་མི་གཙོད་པ་ཡང་དག་འབྲུག།

## 4. འཇུག་གི་དོན། 781.6

དབུས་རྣམ་འབྱེད་པའི་བསྐྱན་བཙུག་ཏེ།

རྟོགས་པར་དཀའ་དང་སྤྱང་པོའི་དོན།

དོན་ཆེན་དེ་བཞིན་ཀུན་གྱི་དོན།

དོན་མེད་ཐམས་ཅས་སེལ་བའོ།

