

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

STAGES OF MEDITATION: BUDDHISM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



Presented by Prajnopaya at MIT | October 16, 2012

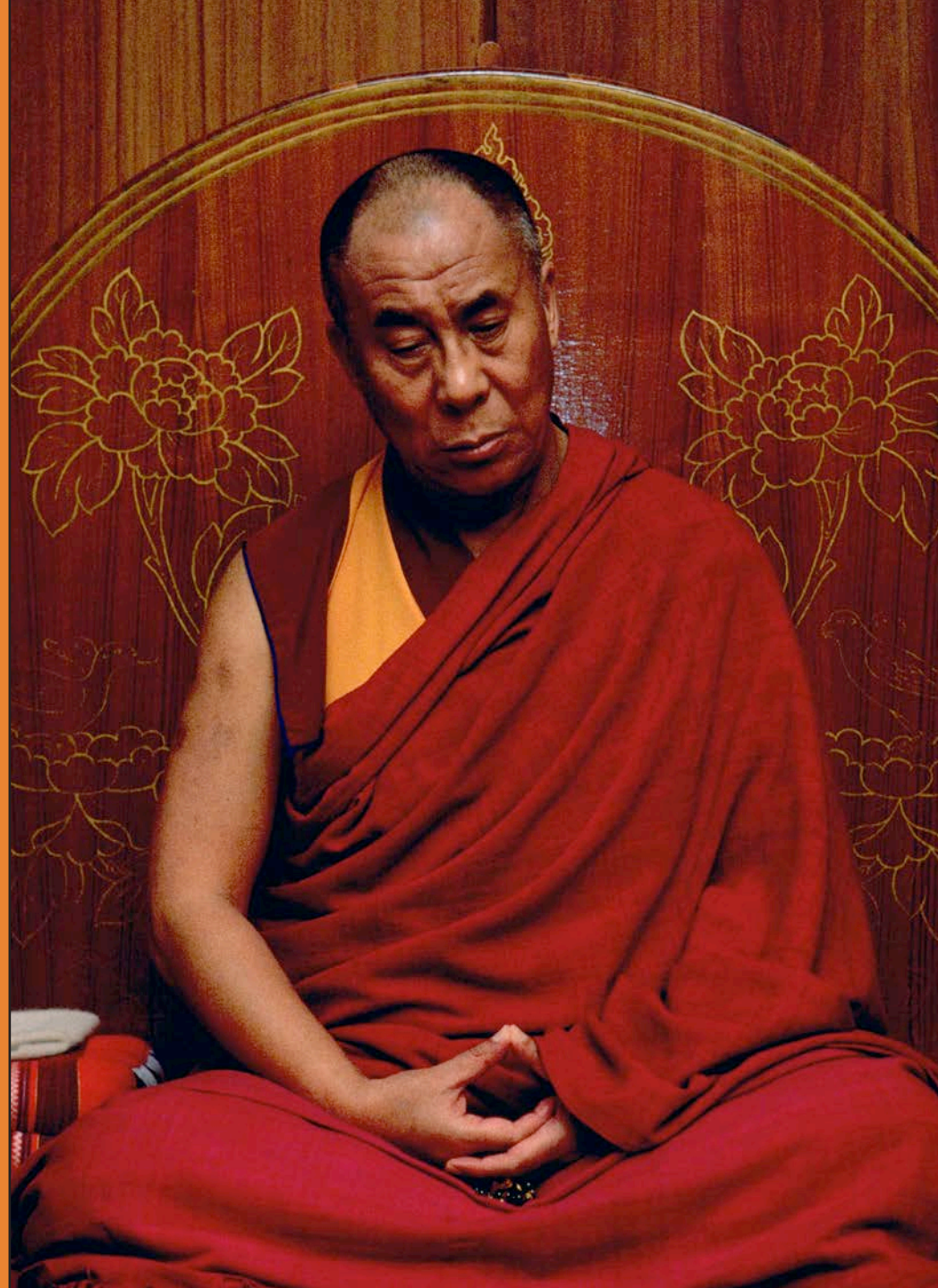


Photo by Don Farber

PRAYER FOR THE LONG LIFE
OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

In the sacred land surrounded by snow mountains,
You are the source of all benefit and happiness,
Oh powerful Chenrezig, Tenzin Gyatso.
Remain in the world until samsara ends.

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Cover photo by Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi. Detail of lotuses from the Stupa at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India. The lotus represents the Buddha - a beautiful flower growing out of the mud - just as the Buddha became enlightened in samsara.

October 2012

Dear Dharma Friends,

It is with a tremendous sense of joy and delight that I welcome you to this auspicious spiritual gathering. I am indebted to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his kind guidance and for agreeing to bestow this teaching on *Stages of Meditation: Buddhism for the 21st Century* to mark the 10th Anniversary of Prajnopaya at MIT.

Prajnopaya (Sanskrit. prajna + upaya = wisdom + compassion) began as a steadfast vision of bringing the most relevant teachings and ideas of Buddhadharma to the laboratories of MIT and into the lives of youth. It was the first effort of its kind to bring a non-denominational and non-sectarian approach to Buddhist study and practice into a college campus. We moved beyond the perception of Buddhism as an academic discipline struggling to establish itself in the hallways of religious studies, psychology, or South Asian studies. At MIT, Buddhism is about human flourishing. It is about problem solving and alleviating suffering, not only for ourselves but the world at large.

Encouraged by the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other lineage heads of Tibetan Buddhist Schools, our efforts experienced a metamorphosis and blossomed into “learning and service through wisdom and compassion.” Prajnopaya’s humanitarian endeavors bring together the best of contemplative skills with scientific rigor to manifest compassionate human innovation ranging from award-winning Tsunami Safe(r) housing designs in South Asia to tuberculosis

treatment and prevention projects and other health initiatives in the poorest regions of India. This past year Prajnopaya also undertook the operations of two girls’ high schools nurturing a thousand young women, as well as contributing to science programs for schools in the Himalayan region. We still operate from our humble “cave” at MIT, creating and sustaining a ripple effect in educational institutions across the globe.

I am grateful to all the students over the years who have become good spiritual friends to many. The challenges they have posed have helped me grow as a person, a monk, and a teacher. I am grateful to our many donors and patrons for their generosity over the years.

Above all, I am indebted to my most kind and precious guru, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, whose very life and teaching continues to inspire every breath of this imperfect disciple. Your Holiness, may your blessings continue to guide the vision of Prajnopaya, so it may adhere to the ideals of Vimalakirti, Atisha, Kamalashila, and Je Rinpoche. May we have the courage to integrate learning and service in our daily life and infuse this 21st Century with wisdom and compassion.

Your Holiness, May you be healthy! May you live long! May you continue to catalyze much good for all.

With Palms Together,



(Bhikshu) Tenzin Priyadarshi



Dear Friends:

I offer you a warm welcome on behalf of the Office of Religious Life at MIT. We represent a diversity of religious and spiritual traditions on campus offering a platform to the wider community to ask the important questions of meaning and happiness - questions that complement the scientific rigor of the Institute by nurturing the community in aspects of character development, compassion, and service.

Although the conversation between science and religion has been an integral part of life at MIT for decades, it took a new turn with my appointment as the first Chaplain to the Institute in 2007. James Killian, a former President of MIT, had long ago made the point as well when the MIT chapel was dedicated: "This building gives embodiment to the responsibility of MIT to maintain an atmosphere of religious freedom wherein students may deepen their understanding of their own spiritual heritage, freely pursue their own religious interests and worship God in their own way."

I congratulate Prajnopaya and Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi for his vision and dedication to MIT. It is our privilege to welcome

back His Holiness the Dalai Lama to MIT for the third time. Thank You for your presence and blessings, Your Holiness.

This is the tenth anniversary of Prajnopaya, the Buddhist Ministry here at MIT. It is a healthy, vibrant and warm community educating and supporting student life here at the Institute and the wider good through its practices and programs. The Office of Religious Life at MIT welcomes your support and encouragement.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert M. Randolph
Chaplain to the Institute

October 2012



PRAYERS



THE FOUR IMMEASURABLES

May all sentient beings enjoy happiness and the causes
of happiness;
May all be free from suffering and the causes of suffering;
May all never be separated from the sacred happiness devoid
of suffering;
May all dwell in the great equanimity, free from passion,
aggression, and prejudice.

GENERATING BODHICITTA

May the supreme jewel Bodhicitta arise
Where it has not arisen,
And may that which has arisen
Never diminish but increase more and more.

BODHISATTVA VOWS

With a wish to free all beings
I shall always go for refuge
To the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,
Until I reach full Enlightenment.
Enthused by wisdom and compassion,
today in the Buddhas' presence I generate
the Mind for Full Awakening
For the benefit of all sentient beings.
As long as space remains,
As long as sentient beings remain,
Until then, may I too remain
And dispel the miseries of the world.

(Adapted from Acharya Shantideva's *Guide to
Bodhisattva's Way of Life*)



INVOCATION OF THE SEVENTEEN GREAT LEARNED
NALANDA SCHOLARS

BY HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA





INVOCATION OF THE SEVENTEEN GREAT LEARNED NALANDA SCHOLARS

ILLUMINATING THE THREEFOLD FAITH—AN INVOCATION OF THE SEVENTEEN GREAT SCHOLARLY ADEPTS OF GLORIOUS NALANDA

I.

The god of gods, arisen from the compassionate wish
to benefit wandering beings,
Has attained transcendent protection, abandonment, and realization,
And liberates sentient beings
through the teaching of dependent arising,
I bow my head to you, the Victor, Sun among Teachers.

2.

I call to mind the esteemed Nagarjuna, who, as prophesied,
introduced the Madhyamika system, the excellent path,
and who was skilled in clarifying
The meaning of suchness, free of extremes, the intention
of the Mother of the Victors,
Through the profound logical presentation of dependent arising.

3.

I call to mind the Bodhisattva Aryadeva,
His principal spiritual son, peerlessly learned and accomplished,
Who traversed the ocean of Buddhist and other
philosophical systems,
Who is the glorious crowning jewel
amongst all the holders of Nagarjuna's teachings.

4.

I call to mind the esteemed Buddhapalita,
Who clarified the ultimate meaning of dependent arising,
the thought of the Superior,
The essential point of the profound,
(existence as) mere designation and name
And who has ascended to the utmost state of accomplishment.

5.

I call to mind Acharya Bhavaviveka,
Who introduced a philosophical system
That refuted such extremes as truly existent production
And accepted the shared perception of valid cognitions
and external objects.

6.

I call to mind Chandrakirti, who promulgated
the complete path of the Sutras and Tantras,
Who was skilled in expounding the profound
and the vast Middle Way system,
In which appearance and emptiness eliminate the two extremes
Through dependent arising
and the merely conditional (nature of things).

7.

I call to mind the Bodhisattva Shantideva,
Who was skilled in teaching the host of fortunate disciples
The truly marvelous path of great compassion
With the versatile means and reasons of the profound and the vast.

8.

I call to mind the great abbot Shantarakshita,
Who introduced the Middle Way
to suit the disciples' mental disposition,
Was well versed in expounding the rationale
of the Middle Way and valid cognition,
And disseminated the teaching of the Victor
in the Land of Snows.

9.

I call to mind the esteemed Kamalashila,
Who, thoroughly explained how to meditate systematically
on the Middle Way thought, free from extremes,
And the union of calm abiding and special insight
according to the Sutras and Tantras,
Flawlessly clarified the Victor's doctrine in the Land of Snows.

10.

I call to mind the esteemed Asanga,
Who Maitreya inspired and looked after,
Who was adept in disseminating all the Mahayana sets of discourses,
Who revealed the vast path and as prophesied blazed the trail
of the Mind Only system.

II.

I call to mind the esteemed Acharya Vasubhandu
Who, by maintaining the doubly empty system of the
Seven Treatises of Abhidharma,
Clarified the philosophical theories of the Vaibhashikas,
Sautrantikas and Vijnavadas,
The foremost scholar, renowned as a second Omniscient One.

12.

I call to mind the esteemed Dignaga,
The logician who gave us the discerning eye
of fine discrimination
By thoroughly opening a hundred epistemological doors
To reveal the system of Buddha's scriptures
through the power of natural logic.

13.

I call to mind the esteemed Dharmakirti,
Who fathomed the vital points of Buddhist
and others' systems of knowledge,
Granting conviction in the vast and profound paths
of the Sautrantika and Chittamatra,
And who was adept in expounding
the marvelous ways of the Dharma.

14.

I call to mind the esteemed Vimuktisena,
Who lit the lamp illuminating the meaning
of the Ornament (of Clear Realization)
In accordance with the Middle Way system,
free from the extremes of existence

and non-existence,

The meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom
as it came from the Asanga brothers.

15.

I call to mind the esteemed Haribhadra,
Who clarified the three Mothers,
the supreme Perfection of Wisdom scriptures,
In line with Maitreyanath's pith instructions,
And who the Victor prophesied would expound
the meaning of the Mother.

16.

I call to mind the esteemed Gunaprabha
excelling in stability and learning,
Who integrated the intentions
of a hundred thousand categories of Vinaya
And in accordance with the Mulasarvastivadin system
Thoroughly and unmistakably explained individual liberation.

17.

I call to mind the esteemed Shakyaprabha, the
ideal Vinaya holder,
Master of the treasure of the three precepts' qualities,
Who, in order to ensure the longevity
of the flawless Vinaya teaching,
Thoroughly explained what the vast scriptures meant.

18.

I call to mind Jowo Atisha,
The kind lord who caused the Victor's teaching

to flourish in the Land of Snows,
Who expounded in the paths of the three individuals
The doctrines of the vast and profound that
are the complete teaching of the Victor.

19.

Making such invocations with an unflinchingly pure mind
To these exceedingly fine scholars, who are ornaments
for the world
And the source of stupendous, elegant teachings,
May I be blessed that I may mature my mindstream
and achieve liberation!

20.

By understanding the meaning of the two truths,
the way things exist,
We ascertain through the four truths how we arrive in
and how we leave the cycle of existence.
Engendered by valid cognition our faith in
the three refuges will be firm—
May I be blessed to establish the root
of the path to liberation.

21.

May I be blessed to perfect an uncontrived awakening mind
Which is rooted in renunciation, the aspiration for liberation,
The total purification of suffering and its source
And that boundless compassion that wishes
to protect wandering beings.

22.

May I be blessed to be able to develop a quick and easy conviction
About the profound points of all the paths
of the perfection of wisdom and the Vajrayana
By listening to, contemplating, and meditating
On the meaning of the commentaries of the great pioneers.

23.

May I, in life after life, obtain the good basis (of a human life)
possessing the three precepts
And contribute to the doctrine as the great pioneers did,
With respect to upholding and propagating
The words and insights of the teachings
through explanation and practice.

24.

May all religious assemblies be filled
with noble scholars and practitioners
Passing their time in hearing, contemplation, and explanation
And having totally given up wrong livelihood,
May the ground of this great world be adorned in this way.

25.

By such power may all the grounds and paths
of the Sutras and Tantras be traversed
And by quickly achieving the state of an Omniscient Victor,
Spontaneously fulfilling the two purposes,
May I work for sentient beings as long as space remains.

Composed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Translated by Ven. Lhakdor and edited
by Jeremy Russell.



THE INTERMEDIATE STAGES OF MEDITATION
BY ACHARYA KAMALASHILA



ACHARYA KAMALASHILA

I call to mind the esteemed Kamalashila,
Who, thoroughly explained how to meditate systematically
on the Middle Way thought, free from extremes,
And the union of calm abiding and special insight
according to the Sutras and Tantras,
Flawlessly clarified the Victor's doctrine in the
Land of Snows.

Invocation of the Seventeen Great Nalanda Scholars
by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Verse 9

Kamalashila (Sanskrit. Kamalashila; Tibetan. Pemé Ngang Tsul) (c. 740-795) was one of the great masters of famed Nalanda University, and the main disciple of the Nalanda abbot Shantarakshita. He composed *Stages of Meditation* while living in Tibet, the first Indian yogi scholar to write a text on Buddhadharma while there.



ACHARYA KAMALASHILA

THE STAGES OF MEDITATION

BY ACHARYA KAMALASHILA

In the Indian language: *Bhavanakrama*

In the Tibetan language: *Gompai Rimpa*

HOMAGE TO THE YOUTHFUL MANJUSHRI.

I shall briefly explain the stages of meditation for those who follow the system of Mahayana Sutras. The intelligent who wish to actualize omniscience extremely quickly should make deliberate effort to fulfill its causes and conditions.

WHAT IS THE MIND?

It is not possible for omniscience to be produced without causes, because if it were everything could always be omniscient. If things were produced without reliance on something else, they could exist without constraint—there would be no reason why everything could not be omniscient. Therefore, since all functional things arise only occasionally, they depend strictly on their causes. Omniscience too is rare because it does not occur at all times and in all places, and everything cannot become omniscient. Therefore, it definitely depends on causes and conditions.

TRAINING THE MIND

Also from among these causes and conditions, you should cultivate correct and complete causes. If you put the wrong causes into practice, even if you work hard for a long time, the desired goal cannot be achieved. It will be like milking a [cow's] horn. Likewise, the result will not be produced when all the causes are not put into effect. For example, if the seed or any other cause is missing, then the result, a

sprout, and so forth, will not be produced. Therefore, those who desire a particular result should cultivate its complete and unmistakable causes and conditions.

If you ask, “What are the causes and conditions of the final fruit of omniscience?” I, who am like a blind man, may not be in a position to explain [by myself], but I shall employ the Buddha’s own words just as he spoke them to his disciples after his enlightenment. He said, “Vajrapani, Lord of Secrets, the transcendental wisdom (jñāna) of omniscience has its root in compassion, and arises from a cause—the altruistic thought, the awakening mind of bodhichitta, and the perfection of skillful means (upaya).” Therefore, if you are interested in achieving omniscience, you need to practice these three: compassion, the awakening mind of bodhichitta, and skillful means.

COMPASSION

Moved by compassion, bodhisattvas take the vow to liberate all sentient beings.

Then by overcoming their self-centered outlook, they engage eagerly and continuously in the very difficult practices of accumulating merit and insight.

Having entered into this practice, they will certainly complete the collection of merit and insight. Accomplishing the accumulation of merit and insight is like having omniscience itself in the palm of your hand. Therefore, since compassion is the only root of omniscience, you should become familiar with this practice from the very beginning. *The Compendium of Perfect Dharma* reads, “O Buddha, a bodhisattva should not train in many practices. If a bodhisattva properly holds to one dharma and learns it perfectly, he has all the Buddha’s qualities in the palm of his hand. And, if you ask what that one dharma is, it is great compassion (mahakaruna).”

The buddhas have already achieved all their own goals, but remain in the cycle of existence for as long as there are sentient beings. This is because they possess great compassion. They also do not enter the immensely blissful abode of nirvana like the disciples. Considering the interests of sentient beings first, they abandon the peaceful abode of nirvana as if it were a burning iron house. Therefore, great compassion alone is the unavoidable cause of the non-abiding nirvana of the Buddha.

DEVELOPING EQUANIMITY, THE ROOT OF LOVING-KINDNESS

The way to meditate on compassion will be taught from the outset. Begin the practice by meditating on equanimity. Try to actualize impartiality toward all sentient beings by eliminating attachment and hatred. All sentient beings desire happiness and do not desire misery. Think deeply about how, in this beginningless cycle of existence, there is not one sentient being who has not been my friend and relative hundreds of times. Therefore, since there is no ground for being attached to some and hating others, I shall develop a mind of equanimity toward all sentient beings. Begin the meditation on equanimity by thinking of a neutral person, and then consider people who are friends and foes.

After the mind has developed equanimity toward all sentient beings, meditate on loving-kindness. Moisten the mental continuum with the water of loving-kindness and prepare it as you would apiece of fertile ground. When the seed of compassion is planted in such a mind, germination will be swift, proper, and complete. Once you have irrigated the mindstream with loving-kindness, meditate on compassion.

IDENTIFYING THE NATURE OF SUFFERING

The compassionate mind has the nature of wishing all suffering beings to be free from suffering. Meditate on compassion for all sentient beings, because the beings in the three realms of existence are intensely tortured by the three types of sufferings in various forms. The Buddha has said that heat and other types of pain constantly torture beings in the hells for a very long time. He has also said that hungry ghosts are scorched by hunger and thirst and experience immense physical suffering. We can also see animals suffering in many miserable ways: they eat each other, become angry, and are hurt and killed. We can see that human beings, too, experience various acute kinds of pain. Not able to find what they want, they are resentful and harm each other. They suffer the pain of losing the beautiful things they want and confronting the ugly things they do not want, as well as the pain of poverty.

There are those whose minds are bound by various fetters of disturbing emotions like craving desire. Others are in turmoil with different types of wrong views. These are all causes of misery; therefore they are always painful, like being on a precipice.

Gods suffer the misery of change. For example, signs of impending death and their fall to unfortunate states constantly oppress the minds of gods of the desire realm. How can they live in peace?

Pervasive misery is what arises under the power of causes characterized by actions and disturbing emotions. It has the nature and characteristics of momentary disintegration and pervades all wandering beings.

Therefore, see all wandering beings as immersed in a great fire of misery. Think that they are all like you in not desiring misery at all: “Alas! All my beloved sentient beings are in such pain. What can I do to set them free?” and make their sufferings your own. Whether you are engaged in one-pointed meditation or pursuing your ordinary

activities, meditate on compassion at all times, focusing on all sentient beings and wishing that they all be free from suffering.

Begin by meditating on your friends and relatives. Recognize how they experience the various sufferings that have been explained.

Then having seen all sentient beings as equal, with no difference between them, you should meditate on sentient beings to whom you are indifferent. When the compassion you feel toward them is the same as the compassion you feel toward your friends and relatives, meditate on compassion for all sentient beings throughout the ten directions of the universe. Just as a mother responds to her small, beloved, and suffering child, when you develop a spontaneous and equal sense of compassion toward all sentient beings, you have perfected the practice of compassion. And this is known as great compassion.

Meditation on loving-kindness begins with friends and people you are fond of. It has the nature of wishing that they meet with happiness. Gradually extend the meditation to include strangers and even your enemies. Habituating yourself to compassion, you will gradually generate a spontaneous wish to liberate all sentient beings. Therefore, having familiarized yourself with compassion as the basis, meditate on the awakening mind of bodhichitta.

Bodhichitta is of two types: conventional and ultimate. Conventional bodhichitta is the cultivation of the initial thought that aspires to attain unsurpassable and perfectly consummated buddhahood in order to benefit all wandering sentient beings, after having taken the vow out of compassion to release all of them from suffering. That conventional bodhichitta should be cultivated in a process similar to that described in the chapter on moral ethics in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, generating this mind by taking the bodhisattva vow before a master who abides by the bodhisattva precepts.

After generating the conventional awakening mind of bodhichitta, endeavor to cultivate the ultimate awakening mind of bodhichitta.

The ultimate bodhichitta is transcendental and free from all elaborations. It is extremely clear, the object of the ultimate, stainless, unwavering, like a butter lamp undisturbed by the wind.

This is achieved through constant and respectful familiarity with the yoga of calm abiding meditation (shamatha) and special insight (vipashyana) over a long period of time. The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* (Samdhinirmochana Sutra) says: “O Maitreya, you must know that all the virtuous dharmas of disciples (shravakas), bodhisattvas, or tathagatas, whether worldly or transcendental, are the fruits of calm abiding meditation and special insight.”

Since all kinds of concentrations (samadhi) can be included in these two, all yogis must at all times seek calm abiding meditation and special insight. Again the *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* says: “The Buddha has said it must be known that the teachings of various types of concentrations sought by his disciples, bodhisattvas, and tathagatas are all contained in calm abiding meditation and special insight.”

Yogis cannot eliminate mental obscurations merely by familiarizing themselves with calm abiding meditation alone. It will only suppress the disturbing emotions (klesha) and delusions temporarily. Without the light of wisdom (prajna), the latent potential of the disturbing emotions cannot be thoroughly destroyed, and therefore their complete destruction will not be possible. For this reason the *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* says, “Concentration (dhyana) can suppress the disturbing emotions properly, and wisdom can thoroughly destroy their latent potential.”

The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* also says:

Even if you meditate with single-pointed concentration you will not destroy the misconception of the self and your disturbing emotions will disturb you again; this is like Udrak’s single-pointed meditation.

When the selflessness of phenomena is examined specifically, and meditations are performed on the basis of that analysis, that is the cause of the resultant liberation (nirvana); no other cause can bring peace (shanti).

Also the *Bodhisattva Section (Bodhisattva-pitaka)* says:

Those who haven't heard these various teachings of the *Bodhisattva Collection* and have also not heard the implemented teaching on Monastic Discipline (vinaya), who think that single-pointed concentration alone is enough, will fall into the pit of arrogance due to pride. As such, they cannot gain complete release from rebirth, old age, sickness, death, misery, lamentation, suffering, mental unhappiness, and disturbances. Neither do they gain complete liberation from the cycle of the six states of existence, nor from the heaps of suffering mental and physical aggregates. Keeping this in mind, the Tathagata has said that hearing the teachings will help you gain liberation from old age and death.

For these reasons, those who wish to attain the thoroughly purified transcendent wisdom by eliminating all obscurations should meditate on wisdom while remaining in calm abiding meditation.

WISDOM

The *Heap of Jewels Sutra (Ratnakuta Sutra)* says:

Single-pointed concentration is achieved by adhering to moral ethics (shila). With the achievement of single-pointed concentration, you meditate on wisdom. Wisdom helps you to attain a pure pristine awareness (jñāna). Through pure pristine awareness your moral conduct is perfected.

The *Meditation on Faith in the Mahayana Sutra (Mahayana-shradabhavana Sutra)* says:

O child of noble family, if you do not abide by wisdom, I cannot say how you will have faith in the Mahayana of the

Bodhisattvas, or how you will set forth in the Mahayana.

O child of noble family, you should know that this is because bodhisattvas' faith in the Mahayana and setting forth in the Mahayana occurs as a result of contemplating the perfect Dharma and reality with a mind free of distraction.

A yogi's mind will be distracted to various objects if he cultivates only special insight without developing a calmly abiding mind. It will be unstable, like a butter lamp in wind. Since clarity of pristine awareness will be absent, these two [special insight and a calmly abiding mind] should be cultivated equally. Therefore, the *Sutra of the Great and Complete Transcendence of Suffering* says:

Disciples cannot see buddha-nature because their single-pointed absorption is stronger and wisdom is weaker. Bodhisattvas can see it, but not clearly, because their wisdom is stronger and their single-pointed concentration is weaker. Tathagatas though, can see all, because they possess a calmly abiding mind and special insight to an equal degree.

Due to the power of calm abiding meditation, the mind will not be disturbed by the wind of conceptual thoughts, like a butter lamp undisturbed by the breeze. Special insight eliminates every stain of wrong views, thus you will not be affected by [the views of] others. The *Moon Lamp Sutra* says: "By the force of calm abiding meditation, the mind will become unwavering, and with special insight it will become like a mountain." Therefore, maintain a yogic practice of them both.

COMMON PREREQUISITES FOR MEDITATING ON CALM ABIDING AND SPECIAL INSIGHT

Initially the yogi should seek the prerequisites that can assist him in actualizing calm abiding meditation and special insight quickly and easily. The prerequisites necessary for the development of calm

abiding meditation are: to live in a conducive environment; to limit your desires and practice contentment; to not be involved in too many activities; to maintain pure moral ethics; and to fully eliminate attachment and all other kinds of conceptual thoughts.

A conducive environment should be known by five characteristics: providing easy access to food and clothes, being free of evil beings and enemies, being free from disease, containing good friends who maintain moral ethics and who share similar views, and being visited by few people in the daytime and with little noise at night.

Limiting your desires refers to not being excessively attached to many or good clothes, such as religious robes, and so forth. The practice of contentment means always being satisfied with any little thing, like inferior religious robes, and so forth.

Not being involved in many activities refers to giving up ordinary activities like business, avoiding too close association with householders and monks, and totally abandoning the practice of medicine and astrology.

Even in the case of the statement that a transgression of the disciples' vows cannot be restored, if there is regret and an awareness of the intention not to repeat it, and an awareness of the lack of a true identity of the mind that performed the action, or familiarity with the lack of a true identity of all phenomena, that person's morality can be said to be pure. This should be understood from the *Sutra on the Elimination of Ajatashatru's Regret*. You should overcome your regret and make special effort in meditation (bhavana).

Being mindful of the various defects of attachment in this life and future lives helps eliminate misconceptions in this regard. Some common features of both beautiful and ugly things in the cycle of existence are that they are all unstable and subject to disintegration. It is beyond doubt that you will be separated from all of these things without delay. So, meditate on why you should be so excessively attached

to these things and then discard all misconceptions.

What are the prerequisites of special insight? They are: to rely on holy persons; to seek seriously extensive instruction; and to contemplate properly.

What type of holy person should you rely upon? One who has heard many [teachings], who expresses himself clearly, who is endowed with compassion, and able to withstand hardship.

What is meant by seriously seeking extensive instruction? This is to listen seriously with respect to the definitive and interpretable meaning of the twelve branches of the Buddha's teachings. The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* says: "Not listening to superior beings' teachings as you wish is an obstacle to special insight." The same sutra says, "Special insight arises from its cause, correct view, which in turn arises from listening and contemplation." The *Questions of Narayana Sutra* says, "Through the experience of listening [to teachings] you gain wisdom, and with wisdom disturbing emotions are thoroughly pacified."

What is meant by proper contemplation? It is properly establishing the definitive and interpretable Sutras. When bodhisattvas are free of doubt, they can meditate single-pointedly. Otherwise, if doubt and indecision beset them, they will be like a man at a crossroads uncertain of which path to follow.

Yogis should at all times avoid fish, meat, and so forth, should eat with moderation, and avoid foods that are not conducive to health. Thus, bodhisattvas who have assembled all the prerequisites for calm abiding meditation and special insight should enter into meditation.

When meditating, the yogi should first complete all the preparatory practices. He should go to the toilet and in a pleasant location free of disturbing noise he should think, "I will deliver all sentient beings to the state of enlightenment." Then he should manifest great compassion,

the thought wishing to liberate all sentient beings, and pay homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas in the ten directions by touching the five limbs of his body to the ground.

He should place an image of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, such as a painting, in front of him or in some other place. He should make as many offerings and praises as he can. He should confess his misdeeds and rejoice in the merit of all other beings.

Then, he should sit in the full lotus posture of Vairochana, or the half lotus posture, on a comfortable cushion. The eyes should not be too widely opened or too tightly closed. Let them focus on the tip of the nose. The body should not be bent forward or backward. Keep it straight and turn the attention inwards. The shoulders should rest in their natural position and the head should not lean back, forward, or to either side. The nose should be in line with the navel. The teeth and lips should rest in their natural state with the tongue touching the upper palate. Breathe very gently and softly without causing any noise, without laboring, and without unevenness. Inhale and exhale naturally, slowly, and unnoticeably.

THE PRACTICE OF CALM ABIDING

Calm abiding meditation should be achieved first. Calm abiding is that mind which has overcome distraction to external objects, and which spontaneously and continuously turns toward the object of meditation with bliss and pliancy.

That which properly examines suchness from within a state of calm abiding is special insight. The *Cloud of Jewels Sutra* reads, “Calm abiding meditation is a single-pointed mind; special insight makes specific analysis of the ultimate.”

Also, from the *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra*:

Maitreya asked, “O Buddha, how should [people] thoroughly

search for calm abiding meditation and gain expertise in special insight?”

The Buddha answered, “Maitreya, I have given the following teachings to bodhisattvas: sutras, melodious praises, prophetic teachings, verses, specific instructions, advice from specific experiences, expressions of realization, legends, birth tales, extensive teachings, established doctrine, and instructions.

“Bodhisattvas should properly listen to these teachings, remember their contents, train in verbal recitation, and thoroughly examine them mentally. With perfect comprehension, they should go alone to remote areas and reflect on these teachings and continue to focus their minds upon them. They should focus mentally only on those topics that they have reflected about and maintain this continuously. That is called mental engagement.

“When the mind has been repeatedly engaged in this way and physical and mental pliancy have been achieved, that mind is called calm abiding. This is how bodhisattvas properly seek the calmly abiding mind.

“When the bodhisattva has achieved physical and mental pliancy and abides only in them, he eliminates mental distraction. The phenomenon that has been contemplated as the object of inner single-pointed concentration should be analyzed and regarded as like a reflection. This reflection or image, which is the object of single-pointed concentration, should be thoroughly discerned as an object of knowledge. It should be completely investigated and thoroughly examined. Practice patience and take delight in it. With proper analysis, observe and understand it. This is what is known as special insight. Thus, bodhisattvas are skilled in the ways of special insight.”

The yogis who are interested in actualizing a calmly abiding mind should initially concentrate closely on the fact that the twelve sets of

scriptures—with sections for sutras, melodious praises, and so forth — can be summarized as all leading to suchness (tathata), that they will lead to suchness, and that they have led to suchness. One way of doing this meditation is to set the mind closely on the mental and physical aggregates (skandhas), as an object that includes all phenomena (dharma-s). Another way is to place the mind on an image of the Buddha. The *King of Meditative Stabilization Sutra* says:

With his body gold in color, The lord of the universe is extremely beautiful. The bodhisattva who places his mind on this object is referred to as one in meditative absorption.

In this way place the mind on the object of your choice and, having done so, repeatedly and continuously place the mind. Having placed the mind in this way, examine it and check whether it is properly focused on the object. Also check for dullness and see whether the mind is being distracted to external objects.

If the mind is found to be dull due to sleepiness and mental torpor or if you fear that dullness is approaching, then the mind should attend to a supremely delightful object such as an image of the Buddha, or a notion of light. In this process, having dispelled dullness the mind should try to see the object very clearly. You should recognize the presence of dullness when the mind cannot see the object very clearly, when you feel as if you are blind or in a dark place or that you have closed your eyes.

If, while you are in meditation, your mind chases after qualities of external objects such as form, or turns its attention to other phenomena, or is distracted by desire for an object you have previously experienced, or if you suspect distraction is approaching, reflect that all composite phenomena are impermanent. Think about suffering and so forth, topics that will temper the mind.

In this process, distraction should be eliminated and with the rope of mindfulness and alertness the elephant-like mind should be

fastened to the tree of the object of meditation. When you find that the mind is free of dullness and excitement and that it naturally abides on the object, you should relax your effort and remain neutral as long as it continues thus.

You should understand that calm abiding is actualized when you enjoy physical and mental pliancy through prolonged familiarity with the meditation, and the mind gains the power to engage the object as it chooses.

ACTUALIZING SPECIAL INSIGHT

After realizing calm abiding, meditate on special insight, thinking as follows: ‘All the teachings of the Buddha are perfect teachings, and they directly or indirectly reveal and lead to suchness with utmost clarity. If you understand suchness, you will be free of all the nets of wrong views, just as darkness is dispelled when light appears. Mere calm abiding meditation cannot purify pristine awareness, nor can it eliminate the darkness of obscurations. When I meditate properly on suchness with wisdom, pristine awareness will be purified. Only with wisdom can I realize suchness. Only with wisdom can I effectively eradicate obscurations. Therefore, engaging in calm abiding meditation I shall search for suchness with wisdom. And I shall not remain content with calm abiding alone.’

What is suchness (tattva; tathata) like? It is the nature of all phenomena that ultimately they are empty of the self of persons and the self of phenomena. This is realized through the perfection of wisdom (prajnaparamita) and not otherwise. The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* reads, “ ‘O Tathagata, by which perfection do Bodhisattvas apprehend the identitylessness of phenomena?’ ‘Avalokiteshvara, it is apprehended by the perfection of wisdom.’ ” Therefore, meditate on wisdom while engaging in calm abiding.

SELFLESSNESS OF PERSONS

Yogis should analyze in the following manner: a person is not observed as separate from the mental and physical aggregates, the elements (dhatu) and sense powers. Nor is a person of the nature of the aggregates and so forth, because the aggregates and so forth have the entity of being many and impermanent. Others have imputed the person as permanent and single. The person as a phenomenon cannot exist except as one or many, because there is no other way of existing. Therefore, we must conclude that the assertion of the worldly 'I' and 'mine' is wholly mistaken.

SELFLESSNESS OF PHENOMENA

Meditation on the selflessness of phenomena should also be done in the following manner: phenomena, in short, are included under the five aggregates, the twelve sources of perception, and the eighteen elements. The physical aspects of the aggregates, sources of perception, and elements are, in the ultimate sense, nothing other than aspects of the mind. This is because when they are broken into subtle particles and the nature of the parts of these subtle particles is individually examined, no definite identity (svabhava) can be found. In the ultimate sense, the mind too cannot be real. How can the mind that apprehends only the false nature of physical form and so forth, and appears in various aspects, be real? Just as physical forms and so forth are false, since the mind does not exist separately from physical forms and so forth, which are false, it too is false. Just as physical forms and so forth possess various aspects, and their identities are neither one nor many, similarly, since the mind is not different from them, its identity too is neither one nor many. Therefore, the mind by nature is like an illusion (maya).

Analyze that, just like the mind, the nature of all phenomena, too, is like an illusion. In this way, when the identity of the mind is specifi-

cally examined by wisdom, in the ultimate sense it is perceived neither within nor without. It is also not perceived in the absence of both. Neither the mind of the past, nor that of the future, nor that of the present, is perceived. When the mind is born, it comes from nowhere, and when it ceases it goes nowhere because it is inapprehensible, undemonstrable, and non-physical. If you ask, "What is the entity of that which is inapprehensible, undemonstrable, and non-physical?" The *Heap of Jewels (Ratnakuta Sutra)* states: "O Kashyapa, when the mind is thoroughly sought, it cannot be found. What is not found cannot be perceived. And what is not perceived is neither past nor future nor present." Through such analysis, the beginning of the mind is ultimately not seen, the end of the mind is ultimately not seen, and the middle of the mind is ultimately not seen.

All phenomena should be understood as lacking an end and a middle, just as the mind does not have an end or a middle. With the knowledge that the mind is without an end or a middle, no identity of the mind is perceived. What is thoroughly realized by the mind, too, is realized as being empty. By realizing that, the very identity, which is established as the aspect of the mind, like the identity of physical form, and so forth, is also ultimately not perceived. In this way, when the person does not ultimately see the identity of all phenomena through wisdom, he will not analyze whether physical form (rupa) is permanent or impermanent, empty or not empty, contaminated or not contaminated, produced or non-produced, and existent or non-existent. Just as physical form is not examined, similarly feeling, recognition, compositional factors, and consciousness are not examined. When the object does not exist, its characteristics also cannot exist. So how can they be examined?

In this way, when the person does not firmly apprehend the entity of a thing as ultimately existing, having investigated it with wisdom, the practitioner engages in non-conceptual single-pointed concentration. And thus the identitylessness of all phenomena is realized.

Those who do not meditate with wisdom by analyzing the entity of things specifically, but merely meditate on the elimination of mental activity, cannot avert conceptual thoughts and also cannot realize identitylessness because they lack the light of wisdom. If the fire of consciousness knowing phenomena as they are is produced from individual analysis of suchness, then like the fire produced by rubbing wood it will burn the wood of conceptual thought. The Buddha has spoken in this way.

The *Cloud of Jewels (Ratnamegha)* also states:

One skilled in discerning the faults engages in the yoga of meditation on emptiness in order to get rid of all conceptual elaborations. Such a person, due to his repeated meditation on emptiness (*shunyata*), when he thoroughly searches for the object and the identity of the object, which delights the mind and distracts it, realizes them to be empty. When that very mind is also examined, it is realized to be empty. When the identity of what is realized by this mind is thoroughly sought, this too is realized as empty. Realizing in this way one enters into the yoga of signlessness.

This shows that only those who have engaged in complete analysis can enter into the yoga of signlessness. It has been explained very clearly that through mere elimination of mental activity, without examining the identity of things with wisdom, it is not possible to engage in non-conceptual meditation. Thus, concentration is done after the actual identity of things like physical form and so forth has been perfectly analyzed with wisdom, and not by concentrating on physical form and so forth. Concentration is also not done by abiding between this world and the world beyond, because physical forms and so forth are not perceived. It is thus called the non-abiding concentration.

[Such a practitioner] is then called a meditator of supreme wisdom, because by specifically examining the identity of all things with wisdom he has perceived nothing. This is as stated in the *Space Treasure Sutra* and

the *Jewel in the Crown Sutra*, and so forth.

In this way, by entering into the suchness of the selflessness of persons and phenomena, you are free from concepts and analysis because there is nothing to be thoroughly examined and observed. You are free from expression, and with single-pointed mental engagement you automatically enter into meditation without exertion. Thus, you very clearly meditate on suchness and abide in it. While abiding in that meditation, the continuity of the mind should not be distracted. When the mind is distracted to external objects due to attachment, and so forth, such distraction should be noted. Quickly pacify the distraction by meditating on the repulsive aspect of such objects and swiftly replace the mind on suchness.

If the mind appears to be disinclined to do that, reflecting on the advantages of single-pointed concentration, meditate with delight. The disinclination should be pacified by also seeing the defects of distraction.

If the function of the mind becomes unclear and starts sinking, or when there is a risk of it sinking due to being overpowered by mental torpor or sleep, then as before quickly attempt to overcome such dullness by focusing the mind on supremely delightful things. Then the object suchness should be held in very tight focus. At times when the mind is observed to be excited or tempted to become distracted by the memory of past events of laughter and play, then as in the earlier cases, pacify the distraction by reflecting on such things as impermanence, and so forth, which will help subdue the mind. Then, again endeavor to engage the mind on suchness without applying counter forces.

If and when the mind spontaneously engages in meditation on suchness, free of sinking and mental agitation, it should be left naturally and your efforts should be relaxed. If effort is applied when the mind is in meditative equipoise, it will distract the mind. But if effort is not applied when the mind becomes dull, it will become

like a blind man due to extreme dullness and you will not achieve special insight. So, when the mind becomes dull, apply effort, and when in absorption, effort should be relaxed. When, by meditating on special insight, excessive wisdom is generated and calm abiding is weak, the mind will waver like a butter lamp in the wind and you will not perceive suchness very clearly. Therefore, at that time meditate on calm abiding. When calm abiding meditation becomes excessive, meditate on wisdom.

UNIFYING METHOD AND WISDOM

When both are equally engaged, keep still, effortlessly, so long as there is no physical or mental discomfort. If physical or mental discomfort arises, see the whole world like an illusion, a mirage, a dream, a reflection of the moon in water, and an apparition. And think: “These sentient beings are very troubled in the cycle of existence due to their not understanding such profound knowledge.” Then generate great compassion and the awakening mind of bodhichitta, thinking: “I shall earnestly endeavor to help them understand suchness.” Take rest. Again, in the same way, engage in a single-pointed concentration on the non-appearance of all phenomena. If the mind is discouraged, then similarly take rest. This is the path of engaging in a union of calm abiding meditation and special insight. It focuses on the image conceptually and non-conceptually.

Thus, through this progress, a yogi should meditate on suchness for an hour, or half a session in the night, or one full session, or for as long as is comfortable. This is the meditative stabilization thoroughly discerning the ultimate as taught in the *Descent into Lanka Sutra*.

Then, if you wish to arise from the concentration, while your legs are still crossed think as follows: “Although ultimately all these phenomena lack identity, conventionally they definitely exist. If this were not the case, how would the relationship between cause and

effect, and so forth, prevail?” The Buddha has also said, “Things are produced conventionally, but ultimately they lack intrinsic identity.”

[Then you should think:] “Sentient beings with a childish attitude exaggerate phenomena, thinking of them as having an intrinsic identity when they lack it. Thus attributing intrinsic existence to those things that lack it confuses their minds, and they wander in the cycle of existence for a long time. For these reasons, I shall endeavor without fail to achieve the omniscient state by accomplishing the unsurpassable accumulations of merit and insight in order to help them realize suchness.”

Then slowly arise from the cross-legged position and make prostrations to the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions. Make them offerings and sing their praises. And make vast prayers by reciting the *Prayer of Noble Conduct*, and so forth. Thereafter, engage in conscious efforts to actualize the accumulations of merit and insight by practicing generosity and so forth, which are endowed with the essence of emptiness and great compassion.

If you act thus, your meditative stabilization will actualize that emptiness that possesses the best of all qualities. The *Jewel in the Crown Sutra* states, “Donning the armor of loving-kindness, while abiding in the state of great compassion, practice meditative stabilization that actualizes the emptiness possessing the best of all qualities. What is the emptiness possessing the best of all qualities? It is that which is not divorced from generosity, from ethics, from patience, from effort, from meditative stabilization, from wisdom, nor divorced from skillful means.” Bodhisattvas must rely on virtuous practices like generosity as means to thoroughly ripen all sentient beings and in order to perfect the place, body, and manifold retinue.

If it were not so, what would be the causes of these fields, the field of buddhas and so forth that the Buddha spoke about? The omniscient wisdom possessing the best of all qualities can be accomplished through

generosity and other skillful means. Therefore, the Buddha has said that omniscient wisdom is perfected by skillful means. Therefore, bodhisattvas should also cultivate generosity and other skillful means and not only emptiness.

The *Extensive Collection of All Qualities Sutra* also says:

[The Buddha said:] “O Maitreya, bodhisattvas thoroughly accomplish the six perfections in order to attain the final fruit of Buddhahood. But to this the foolish respond: ‘Bodhisattvas should train only in the perfection of wisdom. What is the need for the rest of the perfections?’ They repudiate the other perfections. Maitreya, what do you think of this: when the king of Kashi offered his flesh to the hawk for the sake of a pigeon was it a corruption of wisdom?”

Maitreya replied, “This is not so.” The Buddha said, “Maitreya, bodhisattvas accumulated roots of merit through their deeds in conjunction with the six perfections. Are these roots of merit harmful?” Maitreya replied, “O Buddha, this is not so.”

The Buddha further spoke, “Maitreya, you have also correctly practiced the perfection of generosity for sixty aeons, the perfection of ethics for sixty aeons, the perfection of patience for sixty aeons, the perfection of enthusiastic perseverance for sixty aeons, the perfection of meditative stabilization for sixty aeons, and the perfection of wisdom for sixty aeons.” To this the foolish respond: ‘There is only one way to attain Buddhahood, and that is the way of emptiness.’ Their practice is completely mistaken.”

A bodhisattva possessing wisdom but not skillful means would be like the disciples, who are unable to engage in the deeds of buddhas. But they can do so when supported by skillful means. As the *Heap of Jewels* says, “Kashyapa, it is like this. For instance, kings who are supported

by ministers can accomplish all their purposes. Similarly, [when] the wisdom of a bodhisattva is thoroughly supported by skillful means, such a bodhisattva also performs all the activities of a buddha.” The philosophical view of the path of bodhisattvas is different from the philosophical paths of the non-Buddhists and disciples. For example, since the philosophical view of the path of non-Buddhists perversely observes a [truly existent] self, and so forth, such a path is completely and always divorced from wisdom. Therefore, they cannot attain liberation.

The disciples are separated from great compassion and devoid of skillful means. Therefore, they single-mindedly endeavor to achieve nirvana. In their path, bodhisattvas enshrine wisdom and skillful means, so they endeavor to achieve the non-abiding nirvana. The bodhisattva path consists of wisdom and skillful means and, therefore, [they] attain the non-abiding nirvana. Because of the power of wisdom, [they] do not fall into the cycle of existence; due to the power of skillful means, [they] do not fall to nirvana.

The *Hill of Gaya Head Sutra* says,

The bodhisattva path, in short, is two-fold. The two are skillful means and wisdom.” The *First Among the Supreme and Glorious* also says, “The perfection of wisdom is the mother and expertise in skillful means is the father.” The *Teaching of Vimalakirti* also says, “What is bondage for bodhisattvas and what is liberation? Upholding a life in the cycle of existence devoid of skillful means is bondage for bodhisattvas. [But] to lead a life in the cycle of existence with skillful means is liberation. Upholding a life in the cycle of existence devoid of wisdom is bondage for bodhisattvas. [But] to lead a life in the cycle of existence with wisdom is liberation. Wisdom not conjoined with skillful means is bondage, [but] wisdom conjoined with skillful means is liberation. The skillful means not conjoined

with wisdom is bondage, [but] skillful means conjoined with wisdom is liberation.”

If bodhisattvas cultivate mere wisdom, [they] fall to the nirvana desired by disciples. Thus, it is like bondage. And [they] cannot achieve non-abiding nirvana. So wisdom separated from skillful means is bondage for bodhisattvas. Therefore, just as a person chilled by the wind seeks the comfort of fire, so bodhisattvas cultivate the wisdom of emptiness along with skillful means to eliminate the wind of wrong view. [But they] do not [endeavor] to actualize it as the disciples do. The *Ten Qualities Sutra* says,

“O child of good family, it is like this. For instance, a person who is thoroughly devoted to fire, who respects it and regards it as guru, will not think: ‘Because I respect, honor, and venerate fire, I should hold it in both hands.’ This is because he realizes that to do so would give him physical pain and cause mental discomfort. Similarly, bodhisattvas also are aware of nirvana, but also do not try to actualize it. This is because [bodhisattvas] realize that by doing so one would be turning away from enlightenment.”

If they rely merely on skillful means, bodhisattvas will not transcend the ordinary level and thus there will only be bondage. Therefore, [they] cultivate skillful means along with wisdom. By the power of wisdom, Bodhisattvas can transform even the disturbing emotions into nectar, like poison under a tantric spell. There is no need to express [the goodness] of generosity, and so forth, which leads to naturally elevated states of existence.

The *Heap of Jewels* states:

Kashyapa, it is like this. Due to the power of Tantra and medicine, a poison may not cause death. Similarly, since the disturbing emotions of bodhisattvas are under the power of wisdom, they cannot cause them downfalls. Therefore, due

to the power of skillful means bodhisattvas do not abandon the cycle of existence; they do not fall to nirvana. Due to the power of wisdom, [they] eliminate all objects [misconceived as truly existent] and therefore [they] do not fall into the cycle of existence. Thus, they attain the non-abiding nirvana of buddhahood alone.

The *Space Treasure Sutra* also says, “Because of the knowledge of wisdom, bodhisattvas eliminate all disturbing emotions, and due to their knowledge of skillful means they do not abandon sentient beings.”

The *Unraveling of the Thought Sutra* also says, “I have not taught that someone who is not concerned for the welfare of sentient beings and who is not inclined to realize the nature of all composite phenomena will achieve unsurpassable and perfectly accomplished buddhahood.”

Therefore, those interested in buddhahood must cultivate both wisdom and skillful means. While you are meditating on transcendental wisdom or while you are in a deep meditative absorption, you cannot engage in skillful means such as practicing generosity. But skillful means can be cultivated along with wisdom during the preparatory and post-meditative periods. That is the way to engage in wisdom and skillful means simultaneously. Moreover, this is the path of bodhisattvas in which they engage in an integrated practice of wisdom and skillful means. This is cultivating the transcendental path that is thoroughly imbued with great compassion focusing on all sentient beings. And while practicing skillful means, after arising from meditative absorption, you practice generosity and other skillful means without misconception, like a magician. The *Teaching of Akshayamati Sutra* says:

What are a bodhisattva’s skillful means and what wisdom is actualized? The bodhisattva’s skillful means are thinking and placing the mind closely on sentient beings with great compassion while in meditative absorption. And engaging in meditative equipoise with peace and extreme peace is wisdom.

There are many more such references. The *Chapter on Controlling Evil Forces* also says:

Furthermore, the perfect activities of bodhisattvas refer to conscious efforts by the mind of wisdom and the collection of all meritorious dharma by the mind of skillful means. The mind of wisdom also leads to selflessness, the non-existence of [inherently existent] sentient beings, and of life, sustenance, and the person. And the mind of skillful means leads to thoroughly ripening all sentient beings.

The *Extensive Collection of All Qualities Sutra* also states:

Just as a magician endeavors
To let his creation go
Since he already knows the [nature of his] creation,
He has no attachment to it.
Similarly, the three worlds are like an illusion
Which the wise Buddha knew about
Long before he knew the sentient beings in these worlds
And had undertaken efforts to help them.

It is because of the bodhisattva's practice of wisdom and skillful means that it is said: In their activities they remain in the cycle of existence, but in their thoughts they abide in nirvana.

In this way, become familiar with generosity and other skillful means that are dedicated to unsurpassable and perfectly accomplished enlightenment, having the essence of emptiness and great compassion. In order to generate the ultimate awakening mind of bodhichitta, as was done earlier, practice calm abiding meditation and special insight as much as you can in regular sessions. As it was taught in the *Pure Field of Engagement Sutra*, always familiarize yourself with skillful means by closely placing mindfulness on the good qualities of bodhisattvas who

work for the welfare of sentient beings at all times.

Those who become familiar with compassion, skillful means, and the awakening mind of bodhichitta in this way will undoubtedly excel in this life. Buddhas and bodhisattvas will always be seen in dreams, and other pleasant dreams will also occur, and appreciative gods will protect you. There will be immense accumulation of merit and insight at every moment. Disturbing emotions and other bad states of existence will be purified. You will enjoy much happiness and mental peace at all times and a great many beings will cherish you. Physically, too, you will be free of disease. You will attain supreme mental facility, and thus you will achieve special qualities like clairvoyance.

Then you will travel by miraculous power to innumerable worlds, make offerings to the buddhas and listen to teachings from them. At the time of death, too, you will undoubtedly see buddhas and bodhisattvas. In future lives you will be reborn in special families and places, where you will not be separated from buddhas and bodhisattvas. Thus, you will effortlessly accomplish all accumulations of merit and insight. You will have great wealth, a large following, and many attendants. Possessing a sharp intelligence, you will be able to ripen the mindstreams of many beings. In all lives such a person will be able to recall past lives. Try to understand such immeasurable advantages that are also described in other sutras.

In this way, if you meditate on compassion, skillful means, and the awakening mind of bodhichitta for a long time with great admiration, the mindstream will gradually become thoroughly purified and ripened. Then, like producing fire by rubbing together pieces of wood, you will accomplish your meditation on the perfect reality. You will thus achieve an extremely clear knowledge of the sphere of phenomena (dharmadhatu) free from conceptual elaborations, the transcendental wisdom free of the impeding nets of conceptual thought. This wisdom of ultimate bodhichitta is stainless like an unwavering butter lamp

undisturbed by the wind. Thus, such a mind in the entity of ultimate bodhichitta is included within the path of seeing, which apprehends the selfless nature of all phenomena. Through this achievement you enter into the path focusing on the reality of things and you are then born in the family of tathagatas; you enter the stainless state of a bodhisattva, turn away from all wandering births, abide in the suchness of bodhisattvas, and attain the first bodhisattva level. You can find more details of these advantages in other texts such as the *Ten Spiritual Levels*. This is how meditative stabilization focusing on suchness is taught in the *Descent into Lanka Sutra*. This is how bodhisattvas enter into the non-conceptual meditation free from elaborations.

In this way, a person who has entered the first level, later, in the path of meditation, familiarizes himself with the two wisdoms of the transcendental state and the subsequent wisdom and skillful means. In this way he gradually purifies the subtlest accumulation of obscurations that are the object of purification of the path of meditation. And in order to achieve higher qualities he thoroughly purifies the lower spiritual levels. All purposes and objectives are completely fulfilled by entering the transcendental wisdom of the tathagatas and by entering the ocean of omniscience. In this way, by gradual practice, the mind-stream is thoroughly purified. The *Descent into Lanka* explains this. The *Unraveling of the Thought* too reads, “In order to achieve those higher levels, the mind should be purified just as you refine gold, until you realize the unsurpassable and perfectly consummated Buddhahood.”

Entering the ocean of omniscience, you possess impeccable jewel-like qualities to sustain sentient beings, and these fulfill your previous positive prayers. The individual then becomes the embodiment of compassion, possessing various skillful means that function spontaneously and work in various emanations in the interest of all wandering beings. In addition, all marvelous attributes are perfected. With total elimination of all defilements and their latent potential, all

buddhas abide to help every sentient being. Through such realization, generate faith in the buddhas, the source of all wonderful knowledge and qualities. Everyone should endeavor to actualize these qualities.

The Buddha thus said, “The omniscient transcendental wisdom is produced with compassion as its root, the awakening mind of bodhichitta as its cause, and is perfected by skillful means.”

The wise distance themselves from jealousy and other stains;
Their thirst for knowledge is unquenchable
Like an ocean.
They retain only what is proper through discrimination,
Just like swans extracting milk from water.
Thus, scholars should distance themselves
From divisive attitudes and bigotry.
Even from a child
Good words are received.
Whatever merit I derive
From the exposition of this Middle Path,
I dedicate for all beings
To actualize the Middle Path.

The Second Part of *The Stages of Meditation* by Acharya Kamalashila is here completed. Translated and edited into Tibetan [from Sanskrit] by the Indian abbot Prajna Verma and the monk Yeshe De. Translated by Ven. Lhaktor and Lobsang Chophell



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HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the spiritual leader of Tibet. He was born in 1935, to a farming family in a small hamlet located in Amdo, Tibet. At the age of two he was recognized as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lamas are believed to be manifestations of Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and patron saint of Tibet. Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who have postponed their own nirvana and chosen to take rebirth in order to serve humanity.

In 1989 His Holiness the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent struggle for the liberation of Tibet. He has consistently advocated non-violence even in the face of extreme aggression. His Holiness has held dialogues with many heads of state, religious leaders and well-known scientists. His Holiness has received numerous awards, honorary doctorates, and prizes in recognition of his message of peace, non-violence, inter-religious understanding, universal responsibility, and compassion. In recent years, His Holiness was awarded the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal, the Mahatma Gandhi Prize, and the Templeton Prize for Science and Religion. He has also authored several life-changing books. His Holiness describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk.

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the 37th Drikung Kyabgon

His Eminence Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche

His Eminence Lopon Tenzin Namdak

The Most Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche

VENERABLE TENZIN PRIYADARSHI

The Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi is the Founding Director of the Prajnopaya Foundation, a worldwide humanitarian organization developing innovative health, education, and social welfare programs. He serves on the board of several academic, humanitarian, and religious organizations and teaches Buddhist philosophy and practice through the Prajnopaya Institute.

Born into a Hindu Brahmin family in Vaishali, India, Venerable Tenzin chose his own path at the age of ten, entering a Buddhist monastery at Vulture Peak in Rajgir. His unique upbringing combined a modern secular education with traditional Buddhist training and ordination by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He earned his bachelor's degree *summa cum laude* as an Integral Honors scholar and completed his graduate studies in Comparative Philosophy of Religion at Harvard University in 2003.

Venerable Tenzin is also the Founding Director of The Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values at MIT, and serves as the Spiritual Director of Prajnopaya at MIT, the Buddhist Ministry & Community at the Institute.



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*List indicates names available at the time of printing.



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