

Add the translation of Geshe Losang Jinpa's commentary

Letter to a Friend

by Arya Nagarjuna

Outlines and Initial Homage and Encouragement to Listen

by Geshe Losang Jinpa

Commentary by Geshe Jampa Gyatso

Thursday evening, 26 December 2002

Try to develop love and compassion for all sentient beings. The main cause of the mind of enlightenment or bodhichitta is great compassion. Develop from the depths of one's heart the compassion that wishes all sentient beings to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. Then develop the wish that all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness. Happiness does not arise without causes and conditions, therefore we need to cultivate its cause. Think that oneself wishes to have happiness and does not wish to have suffering. It is the same for all beings. Therefore, try to develop compassion and love toward all beings, all human beings.

This text, *A Letter to a Friend*, was written by Arya Nagarjuna to his friend who was a king. I will explain it and you should also try to read it. There is no need to talk about Nagarjuna's biography. I will read the translation of the root text and outlines.

The explanation of *A Letter to a Friend*, which unmistakably teaches the methods for attaining high status and definite goodness, has four divisions:

1. Meaning of the title
2. Translator's homage
3. Meaning of the text
4. Meaning of the conclusion

1. Meaning of the title

- A. Translation of the title
- B. Explanation of the title

1A. Translation of the title

In Sanskrit: *Suhrllekha*

In Tibetan: *bShes pa'i springs yig*

In English: *Letter to a Friend*

Here the title of the text is set out in Sanskrit and Tibetan, along with the English translation.

The Sanskrit word *Suhr* means intimate friend, whereas *llekha* refers to a something that is written and then sent, that is, a letter. Nagarjuna wrote this to King Decho Sangpo (Good Happy Conduct) urging him to take very good care of the subjects of his kingdom. Nagarjuna wrote what actions he should not do and what actions he should do. He explained to the king which actions are non-virtuous and will bring different levels of suffering, whereas good or virtuous actions would bring the good result of happiness.

2. Translator's homage

Prostration to youthful Manjushri.

Why does the translator of this text take Manjushri as the object of his homage for the purpose of achieving success? Because this text, among the three baskets, is included in the Abhidharmapitaka for this reason the translator takes Manjushri. One takes Manjushri as the object of one's prostrations for the purpose of developing wisdom. Manjushri is *Jam dpal* in Tibetan. The term *man* or *jam* means soft, indicating that his mind is soft in the sense that all coarse mental afflictions have been completely abandoned. *Shri* or *dpal* refers to the qualities of the body, that is, that it is endowed with the major and minor marks. The Tibetan for homage or prostration is *phyag 'tsal lo*: *phyag* means "you possess qualities" while *'tsal* is a request for the blessings to be able to achieve these qualities oneself.

3. Meaning of the text

- A. Generating respect for the advice and an exhortation to listen well
- B. Actual instruction
- C. The way to actualize the results of practice

3A. Generating respect for the advice and an exhortation to listen well

- 1. Exhortation to listen
- 2. Teaching "Although the words are not beautiful, it is not suitable to scorn them" together with examples
- 3. In order to remember that already realized, again teaching "It is suitable to listen" together with examples

First Nagarjuna sets out an exhortation to listen to his words, and then says that although the words of his text are not beautiful they should not be scorned.

3A1. Exhortation to listen

For you who are worthy of the virtues that are the nature of good qualities
I have arranged this "poem of the aryas" in a short piece
That you may come to aspire for the merit that
Arises from the Sugata's speech; it is proper to listen to it. [1]

Arya Nagarjuna wrote this poem based on the teachings of the Sugata, that is, the Buddha in order to achieve high status and definite goodness. One should listen to these teachings, reflect upon them, and then put them into meditation practice, in this way one will be able to attain the temporal result of a rebirth of high status as a god or human being. It is also possible to attain definite goodness by means of the methods mentioned in the Sugata's teachings or texts. If we put the methods shown in these teachings into practice we will achieve this result. In order to achieve this, the two qualities of method and wisdom are necessary. Only the Buddha's teachings show these two causes of method and wisdom, they are not taught in the teachings of non-Buddhists. For this reason Nagarjuna tells his friend the king that he must put effort into unmistakably understanding method and wisdom. He tells him to try to abandon that which is to be abandoned such as the ten non-virtuous actions and put into practice the ten virtuous actions. In short, he should abandon the phenomena of the thoroughly afflicted class and adopt the phenomena of the completely pure class. This is Nagarjuna's message in short.

3A2. Teaching "Although the words are not beautiful, it is not suitable to scorn them" together with examples

Just as the wise venerate statues of the sugatas whatever they are like,
Even those made from wood,
Similarly, though this poetry of mine be poor,

Scorn it not, for it is based upon the sayings of the holy Dharma.

[2]

Whether statues are made of wood or stone or any material whatsoever they are to be respected as though they were an actual buddha. This means that one should not look at an image thinking “It is not made very nicely,” but look at it thinking that it is the image of a holy being, of a buddha, and therefore generate respect for it. Wise beings prostrate to these images no matter what they are like, thus, Nagarjuna tells the king that he must do likewise.

Nagarjuna also says that although the words of his text are not so nice the subject matter is method for achieving higher rebirth and definite goodness therefore it is the teaching of the Buddha and must therefore be respected. The wise must praise it, not scorn or disparage it. Later the actual subject will be set out.

3A3. In order to remember that already realized, again teaching “It is suitable to listen” together with examples

Though you may even have taken to heart
All the eloquent advice of the Great Subduer,
Does not that which is made of plaster become
Still whiter in the light of the winter moon?

[3]

The king has already listened to the teachings of the Buddha, reflected upon them, and meditated on them, therefore he knows them well, that is, has taken them to heart. However, Nagarjuna says that he wrote this text so that he would come to understand them even better. Therefore, he says it is proper for the king to listen to this text. For example, when we paint our house with whitewash and the moon shines on it, it becomes even more brilliantly white. Similarly, Nagarjuna says to the king that if he listens to or reads this text, the teachings of the Buddha will become more clear to him and easier to understand. Therefore, he tells the king that it is appropriate to listen to his letter and for this reason he wrote this letter to him.

3B. Actual instruction

1. Brief presentation of the paths of the three beings
2. Extensive explanation
3. Summarized meaning: the way to practice

3B1. Brief presentation of the paths of the three beings

- A. The way to practice the path shared with lower beings
- B. The way to practice the path shared with middling beings
- C. The way to practice the path of great beings

The three beings are the beings of small scope, middling scope, and great scope. They are often mentioned in the teachings on the Stages of the Path (lam-rim) as lower beings, middling beings, and great beings.

3B1A. The way to practice the path shared with lower beings

1. At the beginning, turning the Dharma of high status which is mainly done by going for refuge, the way to practice the six perfect recollections
2. In particular, the way to practice actions and results

3B1A-1. At the beginning, turning the Dharma of high status which is mainly done by going for refuge, the way to practice the six perfect recollections

The Conqueror thoroughly proclaimed

The six recollections – Buddha, Dharma, Sangha,
Giving, morality, and the gods; recall them by means of
The collection of their individual good qualities.

[4]

The outlines says “mainly done by going for refuge” referring to going for refuge to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. The Buddha shows or teaches how to protect oneself, the Dharma is the real protection, and the Sangha is those who practice or follow it. For example, the Buddha can be likened to a doctor, the Dharma to the medicine or treatment, and the Sangha to the nurse, while we are likened to patients in the hospital of cyclic existence. If the Buddha teaches how to practice and we practice the Dharma together with the help of the Sangha we will be able to leave cyclic existence. Similarly, when we are sick and go to a hospital the doctor tells us what treatment we need and if we follow it with the help of the nurses one day we will be able to leave the hospital. The Tibetan word for Buddha is composed of two syllables, sang and gye. Sang means that all the mental afflictions or afflictive obscurations have been completely removed, that is, the veils have been removed, just as when we wake up and clear our eyes we can see everything very clearly. All the obscurations that were previously there have been removed. Gye refers to the increase of knowledge or wisdom in that all phenomena are seen directly. Therefore, a buddha is one who has abandoned all obscurations.

The actual Dharma is true paths and true cessations. Also the texts or scriptures are called Dharma because if one studies them and puts them into practice one will attain actual true paths and true cessations. In this context, the Sangha is beings with higher realizations, that is, the great bodhisattvas who have the realizations of true paths, the path of seeing and path of meditation. In general the word “sangha” refers to the beings, men or women, who have achieved true paths. In addition, monks and nuns are called ordinary or conventional sangha.

The six recollections are the recollection of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. In addition, there is the recollection of giving which refers to the practice of generosity. It means to abandon miserliness and to give whatever one has to others. This is called giving or generosity. Then there is the recollection of morality, morality referring to the practice or safeguarding of the ten virtuous actions. Morality also means to keep one’s vows perfectly which brings the result of higher rebirth as a human being, god of the desire realm, and god of the form and formless realms.

Then, there is the recollections of the gods. This is mentioned in the seventh chapter of the *Ornament for Clear Realizations* in the context of the thirteen serial trainings or applications: the six perfections, the six subsequent recollections, and ???. An example of this is to keep one’s morality well thinking “I can be reborn as a desire realm god like Indra,” or “I can be reborn as a form realm god like Brahma.” Therefore, one keeps one’s morality well thinking that in the next life one will attain a good rebirth.

In short, one needs to remember Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, giving, to safeguard one’s morality, and the attainment of rebirth as a god. The text says that “recall them by means of the collection of their individual good qualities.” Each of these objects of recollection – Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, giving, morality, and the gods – have their specific good qualities. For example, the gods such as Indra and Brahma were the first to request Buddha Shakyamuni to give teachings in Sarnath. Although there were others that made this request they were the main one’s, due to their request the Buddha taught the four noble truths.

Brahma is of two types, the Brahma who is a mundane god of the first concentration and great Brahma who is the Buddha. One can ask Brahma, who is the head of the first concentration, for help without taking refuge in him, just as we ask our parents for help, or just as we take refuge from someone frightening in a dark woods. Brahma is a powerful being who has qualities such as calm abiding and special insight whereby he has achieved an actual concentration, he also has clairvoyance and therefore can help us by, for example, manifesting in the aspect of a human being. Likewise, we can ask one of the ministers of Berlusconi’s government for help without taking refuge in him but with a pleasant expression and showing complete confidence in him due to which

he will definitely help us. Or we can go to the immigration office and ask for help to get a visa and promising not to do negative actions or to break the Italian law, by making such a request they might give on a visa. Brahma actually received blessings from the Buddha himself, therefore he can definitely help us.

3B1A-2. In particular, the way to practice actions and results

Always rely on the ten virtuous paths of actions
With body, speech, and mind, and
Abstain from intoxicants; likewise,
Also strongly delight in a virtuous livelihood. [5]

This means that we need to abandon the ten non-virtuous actions. The three of body to be abandoned are killing or taking others' beings lives, stealing or taking other beings' things that have not been given, and sexual misconduct. The four of speech to be abandoned are lying, divisive speech, harsh words, and idle talk. The three of mind to be abandoned are covetousness, malice, and wrong views. We need to take care of our body by abandoning creating negative actions, take care of our speech by not speaking bad or non-virtuous words, and take care of our mind by abandoning these three negative mental activities.

In addition, one should abandon drinking alcohol, which naturally intoxicates. If one drinks alcohol one's mind becomes intoxicated and one is unable to remember whereby one engages in negative actions. These days people drink while driving leading to many bad car accidents. One loses control of one's body and this lead to a crash. Therefore, we also need to abandon this.

The text also says that one must abandon eating or drinking that comports harm to other beings or oneself. If one eats whatever one sees it may make us sick and even take our life. Maybe for this reason the text says that one should abandon eating or drinking that which causes harm to others.

Friday morning, 27 December 2002

Try to develop the mind cherishing others and to give up the mind cherishing oneself. The attitude of cherishing oneself is the root of all the problems and unhappiness in our daily life, therefore we need to strive to abandon it.

3B1B. The way to practice the path shared with middling beings

1. The way to train in generosity unattached to the perfections of cyclic existence
2. In particular, the way to train in morality, the root of the path to liberation

3B1B-1. The way to train in generosity unattached to the perfections of cyclic existence

Understanding resources to be fluctuating and essenceless,
Strive to give properly to monks, brahmins,
The destitute, and your friends. For one's future lives
There is no better friend than generosity. [6]

We need to try not to be attached to the excellences or qualities of cyclic existence, to not be attached to our belongings, wealth, our body, our relatives, and so forth. Since attachment to them is no good, we need to strive to give up this attitude. They, our body, wealth, life, friends, and relatives, all things, are impermanent in that they change momentarily or fluctuate. Therefore, they are essenceless and there is no purpose in being attached to them. By understanding this, offer

whatever material things one has to the ordained, to brahmins, and so forth. One can also offer one's material things to those who are very poor or to the sick who lack in wealth.

The practice of generosity is one of the main practices. One can also make offerings to one's teacher, parents, grandparents, and so forth, thinking that one offers to all sentient beings who are like one's relatives. By helping the suffering by giving them wealth, our belongings, medicines, and so forth, we are practicing generosity. We can help the sick and the poor, for example, if someone cannot move to help him or her go to another place.

The text says that the best of friends is generosity. This is because generosity, the mind of giving, never cheats or deceives us. Other friends may at times cheat us, although they look like good friends it may happen that they deceive us. We know this very well, our mundane life is like this. We too try to cheat other people. Therefore, we should try not to do this but rather to help others by giving others. Here the text talks specifically about the generosity of giving material things but we can also give by teaching others the Dharma, by protecting them from harm, and by giving them love.

3B1B-2. In particular, the way to train in morality, the root of the path to liberation

You should rely on a morality without degeneration, undebased,
Uncorrupted, and untainted.
Morality is taught to be the foundation of all good qualities,
Like the earth for all that is animate and inanimate.

[7]

To keep morality means in general to safeguard the ten virtuous actions: not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct, not lying, not using divisive speech, not using harsh words, not engaging in idle talk, not having a mind of covetousness, not cultivating malice, and not holding wrong views. Morality is the basis or foundation of all qualities, both the mundane and supramundane. Morality is the basis for developing concentration and wisdom. Therefore, morality is like the earth in that when the earth is good then it supports the growth of both the animate and the inanimate, plants and so forth. Everything depends on something else, for example, the food we eat. The main resource is this earth or soil. Similarly, morality is the base of all good qualities.

Morality is not an external thing, it is an inner mental attitude that wishes to abandon bad behavior, bad thoughts, and bad actions. We need to try to take care of ourselves by examining our own minds, our own behaviors, and our own actions. Morality is the main cause of achieving nirvana. Morality is to not be influenced by negative minds or negative actions. For example, sometimes we have attachment thinking "It is very nice, so beautiful," whereby the attachment becomes very strong and disturbs our mind. If one obtains the object, one experiences some pleasure but over time one comes to experience suffering. If one is unable to obtain the object, one is sad thinking "I want it, I want it." Due to this attachment, we can lose our morality. For example, someone who has taken the vows of monks or nuns or the lay vows but then falls in love, that is, develops attachment, and becomes as though intoxicated and loses his or her vows. This happens, therefore we try to give up this kind of attitude.

This is a short explanation, you can find more extensive explanations in the teachings on the Stages of the Path.

3B1C. The way to practice the path of great beings

Generosity, morality, patience, effort, concentration, and,
Likewise, wisdom; develop these unfathomable perfections.
Having reached the far shore of the ocean
Of existence, become a lord of the conquerors.

[8]

The great beings need, as the text says, to practice generosity. This is the generosity that is conjoined with method and wisdom, that is, the special method that is love, compassion, and the mind of enlightenment, and the special wisdom that is the wisdom realizing selflessness or emptiness. With this kind of mind one should give away one's belongings, body, virtues, whatever one has. This mind of giving is what is called "generosity."

Morality means to strive to give up or refrain from harming others together with the basis, the minds of covetousness, malice, and wrong views. On this basis, one engages in physical and verbal actions such as taking others lives, stealing others belongings, engaging in sexual misconduct, lying, using divisive speech and harsh words that injure others' minds, or engaging in meaningless or idle talk that wastes time. These are actions that harm others, we should try to abandon the basis that is these seven physical and verbal actions. This refraining from harming others is what is called "morality."

Patience means being able to bear difficulties. For example, if one's body is sick or one experiences problems one should try to develop patience, try to have an undisturbed mind. Also if there are problems with one's friends one should try to be patient, to be undisturbed and to not revenge oneself or retaliate. Therefore, we need very strong patience, in fact in society we mainly need patience. Whatever problems and difficulties there are in our surroundings we need to strive to keep our mind undisturbed. If someone is against us and makes problems for us, we need to think "This person is my teacher who is teaching me patience." We need to try this rather than immediately getting anger, letting a fire burn inside us, which is no good. We need to try not to do this.

Then there is the practice of effort which means to delight in doing virtuous actions such as listening to teachings, reflecting, and meditating. Whatever virtuous actions one does one should develop joy in one's mind; this is what is called "effort." Developing such effort is what brings about the development of inner qualities. We may undergo great hardships in order to make money by working sixty or seventy hours a week, however, from the point of view of Dharma this is not considered to be effort. Instead it is called "laziness," as it eliminates our virtuous actions. This kind of attitude does not create virtues.

Then, there is concentration which is a single-pointed mind on virtue. It is also possible to concentrate on such things as bombing others, however, this is not the perfection of concentration because it does not bring a good result but brings destruction, the harming of others. Therefore, it is not the perfection of concentration. The perfection of concentration is to do virtuous actions and to develop a single-pointed mind.

The perfection of wisdom is to individually investigate the perfect meaning, that is, to check whether all phenomena exist inherently, thinking "They do not exist inherently because they are dependent-relations."

In this way by practicing the six perfections perfectly we can cross the ocean of cyclic existence, that is, leave cyclic existence. In this way one becomes a lord of the conquerors, that is, one achieves enlightenment. In order to do so one must practice the six perfections with a mind conjoined with method and wisdom: love, compassion, and the mind of enlightenment, the attitude wishing to benefit all sentient beings, as well as the wisdom understanding the lack of inherent existence. Thereby, one can achieve the final result of buddhahood or enlightenment. In this way oneself will leave cyclic existence and will also be able to lead other sentient beings to nirvana and enlightenment whereby they too will leave cyclic existence. Nagarjuna taught this to the king Decho Sangpo.

3B2. Extensive explanation

- A. Extensive explanation of the path shared with lower beings
- B. Extensive explanation of the path shared with middling beings
- C. Extensive explanation of the path of great beings

3B2A. Extensive explanation of the path shared with lower beings

1. Cultivate respect for one's parents
2. Strive in the one-day precepts
3. View the afflictions as one's enemies
4. Cultivate conscientiousness
5. Cultivate patience
6. The way of behaving with the three doors
7. Having understood the class of human beings in general, the need to investigate and analyze one's companions in general
8. The way to cultivate the antidotes to manifest afflictions
9. The way to cultivate striving in the antidotes to the seeds
10. Cultivate the good qualities that are the antidotes to the seeds
11. The way to be indifferent to the eight worldly concerns
12. In particular, think about the need to abandon negativities
13. Strive in the arya riches
14. Abandon unfavorable conditions to [the arya riches]
15. Be satisfied with one's worldly wealth
16. In particular, think about abandoning and adopting the lay friends with whom one associates

3B2A-1. Cultivate respect for one's parents

Whoever is of the class that venerates father and mother
 Will be together with Brahma and together with spiritual masters.
 They will be renowned for venerating them,
 And henceforth will also go to high states.

[9]

We need to mainly respect our parents. Our father and mother gave us this precious body. Therefore, they we need to think that they are objects of veneration and try to help them. Also if someone were to harm them, whether human or non-human, we need to strive to protect them by, for example, praying that they be freed from this harm.

The text says "together with Brahma and together with spiritual masters." "Brahma" refers to practitioners. Alternatively Brahma is also a protector like Buddha Shakyamuni and our teachers who blesses us to eliminate interferences. For example, if non-human beings are harming us we can pray to Brahma or our teacher that this harm come to a stop. If one tries to respect and venerate one's parents, grandparents, and so forth this will bring the benefit in this very life that will be renowned as a good man or woman who takes care of his or her parents. Having taken care of and venerated one's parents also in one's future lives one will take a higher worldly rebirth, for example, as a human being of high status and as a god. Therefore, one should now strive to respect one's parents by way of one's body, speech, and mind.

3B2A-2. Strive in the one-day precepts

When one abandons the particulars of harm, thievery,
 Sexual intercourse, lying, intoxicants,
 Attachment to untimely food, liking for high beds and seats,
 Singing, dancing, and garlands,

[10]

And possesses the eight branches
 That emulate the morality of foe-destroyers,
 It restores and purifies, and confers upon men and women
 The captivating body of the gods who enjoy the desire realm.

[11]

These are vows that are taken for one day, a period of twenty-four hours. These one day precepts when taken by lay vow-holders, both men and women, purify the vows that they have transgressed. "Harm" refers to the harmful action of taking others' lives, this is one action that is to be abandoned. In addition, one should refrain from taking others' belongings, that is, from stealing.

One also abandons sexual activity for one day. One also refrains from lying. The fifth precept is to not take intoxicants, alcohol. One should not eat food at the wrong time. One should not sit on high or large beds and seats. Also one should abandon singing, dancing, and wearing new garlands, and so forth. One should try to abandon these eight for a period of twenty-four hours. These one-day precepts need to be taken from someone who has all five lay precepts, or from novice monks and nuns, or from fully ordained monks and nuns. One can request such people to confer the one-day precepts upon oneself. They must be taken from an ordained person, that is, they cannot be taken in front of a statue or image. On the other hand, the Eight Mahayana Precepts can be taken for the second time onward in front of an image. At the time of Buddha Shakyamuni there were many people who took the one-day precepts on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirtieth day of the lunar calendar. These vows cannot be taken by ordained monks and nuns who have taken vows for a life time, as if they were to take them the vows of a monk or nun would be lost. This is because monks and nuns have promised to refrain from sexual conduct for their entire life, whereas lay vow-holders have only taken a vow to refrain from sexual misconduct, they have not taken a vow to give up sexual intercourse.

3B2A-3. View the afflictions as one's enemies

View as enemies miserliness, dissimulation, deceit, desire,
Idleness, the pride of conceit, attachment, hatred, and
Haughtiness due to the greatness of
One's family, body, learning, youth, and authority.

[12]

Miserliness is one of our enemies, it is the inability to give one's belongings or wealth to others. Dissimulation means to hide one's faults, to cover them up so that they will not be seen by others. This attitude is very bad. Deceit, on the other hand, is to pretend to have qualities that one does not have, for example, to say "I have clairvoyance, I have many qualities" whereas one does not have them, or to exaggerate the qualities that one has. One shows oneself to be learned while one is not, or to have qualities that one does not have.

Desire is craving for one's body and resources. Idleness, or laziness, is to not delight in practicing Dharma. For example, if one promised to do some practice daily but then comes to think "I cannot do this. Why did I promise to do this?" and one does not delight in having taken this commitment, this is laziness or idleness.

Pride is to not have a specific quality but to show that one has it. Attachment is craving for sexual intercourse. Hatred is thinking "This is my enemy" to mentally wish to harm this person. Haughtiness is similar but is related to qualities that one has. Haughtiness is of many kinds, for example, thinking, "I am of high caste," "I have a beautiful body," "I am very learned," "I am very youthful," or "I am very powerful." We need to abandon such thoughts.

All these mental afflictions that have been mentioned need to be recognized as our enemies and then we need to try to destroy these enemies. We should not think that beings or people are our enemies, they instead are our friends and have been our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends. Therefore, we should not think that they are our enemies but recognize that the real enemy abides in our own minds and then try to destroy these enemies.

Friday afternoon, 27 December 2002

Try to develop the mind that cherishes others and to give the selfish mind that cherishes oneself.

The real enemy is the inner mental afflictions. We need to understand that if we do not subdue our minds, even if all the external conditions are good we will not be happy but will always think that something is not good, we will always be dissatisfied. Therefore, check one's own mind and if a negative emotion such as miserliness and so forth arises, apply its antidote. Try to understand the nature of one's own mind, this is important. We should try not to think that other human beings are our enemies as in reality they are our friends. Below it is explained how all sentient beings have been our friends and relatives.

3B2A-4. Cultivate conscientiousness

The Subduer declared conscientiousness to be the source
Of the nectar of immortality and non-conscientiousness to be the source of death.
Hence, you should always act conscientiously, with respect,
In order to develop your virtuous qualities. [13]

Those who were formerly non-conscientious
But later come to possess conscientiousness
Are as beautiful as the moon free from clouds –
Like Nanda, Angulimala, Ajatashatru, and Udayana. [14]

We need to develop conscientiousness, mindfulness, and introspection. In addition, we need shame and embarrassment. For one's own purpose we need to develop shame and for others' purpose we need to develop embarrassment. The first is to think regarding oneself that "If I do this it is not good," in the sense that bad behavior harms oneself, whereas embarrassment is to think regarding others that it is not good to act badly. One needs to remember oneself and others, as well as to develop introspection. We also need to develop conscientiousness as without this one will become forgetful and also develop non-shame, non-embarrassment, and non-introspection. Conscientiousness and non-conscientious are opposite to each other. In order to develop these we need to try to abandon non-virtuous minds and to safeguard and develop virtuous minds. In this way one will achieve immortality, the path of liberation. If one achieves the path of liberation one will achieve the state of liberation, nirvana. On the other hand, without conscientiousness one will create negative actions due to which one will continue to take rebirth in cyclic existence, mainly in the lower realms. We will continue, like a circling wheel, to die and to take rebirth. Therefore, we need to strive to develop conscientiousness, shame and embarrassment, and mindfulness and introspection in our daily life. Previously we were born in cyclic existence and due to lacking conscientiousness have continued to take life after life. At this time we have a good rebirth as a human being endowed with the eighteen qualities and by developing conscientiousness we can purify our negative actions, which are like dense clouds, whereby our mind becomes as clear as the moon in a cloudless sky. Presently we have taken a human rebirth and have met the teachings of the Buddha and a virtuous spiritual friend due to which we can follow the mahayana path which purifies even strong attachment, for example, Nanda who has strong attachment but later abandoned this attachment and was able to achieve nirvana. Also Angulimala who killed 999 people but then met the Buddha and purified this negative karma whereby he achieved the arya path. Ajatashatru jailed his father, the king, in order to kill him and replace him and plotted together with Devadatta who wanted to kill Buddha Shakyamuni and replace him. However, he later came to regret having put his father in jail and promised to give half his kingdom to the person who could tell him that his father was still alive. This caused a crowd of people to stampede toward the prison, whereby the father died from fright.

Angulimala was a very good brahmin boy whose teacher had a wife who wanted to have sexual intercourse with Angulimala, however, Angulimala did not want to do so. Out of her desperation one day she tore her face with her nails. When the teacher saw her and asked what had happened, she told him that Angulimala had wanted to rape her and in trying to subdue her had done this to

her. The teacher told Angulimala that in order to make up for this action, he had to kill 1000 people, cut a finger from each of these people as proof and form a garland with them which he was to bring back to the teacher, only after which the teacher would once again give him teachings. When Angulimala had killed 999 he could not find anyone else to kill as everyone escaped upon seeing him and considered killing his own mother who had been feeding him. While thinking this, Buddha Shakyamuni appeared as a man walking in front of him. Angulimala decided to try to kill this man as in this way he would not have to kill his mother. However, although the man seemed to be walking slowly Angulimala was unable to catch up to him. He called out "Please wait for me." Then the man said "I am always waiting, whereas it is you who are walking very quickly." This response made Angulimala think about what the man meant. Buddha Shakyamuni understood that the time had arrived to subdue Angulimala whereby he showed his body in the aspect of a monk wearing the three saffron-colored robes and told Angulimala to come with him back to his monastery. There he ordained Angulimala and gave him a house in which he experienced the hell-like suffering of his body being burned by fire due to the ripening of the negative result of his previous actions. In this way Angulimala purified his negative actions of having killed 999 people and became as resplendent as the autumn moon free from clouds.

Nanda was Buddha Shakyamuni's nephew who had strong attachment for his wife. He would always embrace and kiss her, he would not even leave the house but always wanted to remain near her. One day Buddha Shakyamuni went begging for alms at Nanda's house. Nanda brought his alms bowl into the house and filled it with rice and vegetables but when he brought it back to Buddha Shakyamuni, the Buddha did not take it but started to walk back to his monastery. Nanda was worried but was forced to follow the Buddha holding the alms bowl. They arrived at the monastery where the Buddha ordained him and gave him Shariputra as his teacher. Nanda remained in the monastery but continued to think of his beautiful wife. Then one day the teacher went out and Nanda tried to escape from the monastery to go back to his wife. However, while on the road Buddha Shakyamuni arrived in front of him and shame-faced he had to return to the monastery. Then, one day Shariputra took him for a walk. They came across a garden in which there was a huge cauldron filled with melted iron. Nanda asked the people there what they were doing. They responded that there was a certain nephew of the Buddha named Nanda who was ordained but that if he gave up his ordination in his next life he would be reborn in the cauldron where he would be cooked alive. This made Nanda very worried and when they returned to the monastery he tried to study. Then, another day the teacher once again took him for a walk. This time they came to a garden filled with a great number of beautiful young girls. He asked someone what the young girls were doing. He was told that they were waiting for the Buddha's nephew Nanda who if he kept pure morality would be reborn in this garden where he would enjoy himself with these beautiful girls. Nanda returned to the monastery very happy and determined to keep his vows as the girls were much more beautiful than his wife.

Udayana was a king who had killed his mother, an action of immediate retribution, but then purified this negativity after developing confident faith in the Buddha and striving to follow the Buddha's advice whereby he eventually achieved the state of liberation. These are the stories to which the text refers. Just as in these examples, even though we have created negative actions we too can purify them. Because negative actions do not exist inherently they can be purified by causes and conditions. Therefore, if we have done negative actions we can purify them. therefore, we need to listen to and study the Buddha's teachings, reflect upon them, and meditate upon them whereby we too will become as resplendent as the autumn moon in a cloudless sky by purifying our negative actions and achieving nirvana.

3B2A-5. Cultivate patience

Since there is no hardship like patience
You should not afford an opportunity to anger.

The Buddha asserted that by abandoning anger
One will acquire the state of non-returner. [15]

Thinking “He scolded me harshly,” “He tied me up,”
“He beat me,” and “He stole my wealth,”
Such resentment generates conflicts.
Thoroughly abandoning resentment, one will sleep comfortably. [16]

If someone has harmed us or is harming us, we should not get angry but instead should practice patience. “There is no hardship like patience” means that, although difficult, the practice of patience enables us to cut the root of cyclic existence and achieve the state of liberation. When someone bears the hardship of such practices as burning oneself in fire or impaling themselves on a trident, this does not bring about liberation, it does not bring about even a high rebirth. In addition, even if one bears the difficulty of lighting one’s fingertips on fire by binding them in cotton soaked with oil this will not bring about liberation or high rebirth but instead will bring rebirth in the lower realms. The Buddha said that by practicing genuine real patience one will not return again to the desire realm. By abandoning anger one will leave cyclic existence and achieve nirvana. Therefore, one should try to do this.

“He scolded me harshly” refers to someone speaking to oneself badly by using harsh words, “He tied me up” refers to someone binding one with a rope to a post so that one could not escape, “He beat me” refers to someone who strikes one. In all these cases generating resentment, thinking to return the harm, is of no good to anyone in that it generates conflict and does not resolve anything but only brings more suffering. Therefore, it is better to strive to abandon resentment, to not think thoughts of revenge, and to be patient, abandoning resentment and remaining relaxed so that one can sleep well. On the other hand, if one is filled with resentment one will not be able to sleep since when one lies down one will only contemplate more clearly how that person harmed one and how one can repay that harm. One will think about how to harm that person. If one cannot harm the person directly, one may think to damage the person’s car! Or one may think to harm the person’s wife, children, and so forth. Some people do like this out of resentment. Therefore, we need to strive to abandon resentment as in this way when we go to bed we will sleep happily and comfortably.

In short, we need to develop patience in our daily life with our community, family, friends, and even with the animals such as dogs and cats that are around us. Therefore, try to develop patience and to be more relaxed with an undisturbed mind. This is short explanation of the practice of patience.

3B2A-6. The way of behaving with the three doors

Understand minds to be like designs
Drawn in water, earth, and stone;
For those with afflictions in them the first is best;
For those desiring the Dharma, the last. [17]

Our mental afflictions should be like designs drawn in water that are unstable and soon disappear. On the other hand, our virtuous minds should be stable like designs drawn in stone. The mind with mental afflictions is not stable and fluctuates like a design drawn on water which immediately disappears. We have virtuous minds and non-virtuous minds, or afflicted minds and virtuous minds. The afflicted mind should be like a design drawn in water that is not stable. The mental afflictions do not bring good results, but due to change bring the result of suffering and difficulties. We need a stable virtuous mind that does not change, like a design drawn in stone. Therefore, we need to understand that the Dharma is the best for our mind. Try to understand this clearly. What can we

do? We need to abandon or give up negative minds and put effort into developing our positive or virtuous minds. Among the three doors, this verse is related to that of the mind.

The Conqueror declared the words of beings
To be of three types – heartfelt, truthful,
And false; like honey, flowers, and filth.
Among them, the last is to be abandoned. [18]

There are three types of words, the first being very nice and sweet words which come from this heart, these being likened to honey. When one hears these words one is comfortable. Another type of words are truthful words which are pleasant and worthy of praise. They are likened to flowers in that the mind is made happy by seeing beautiful flowers. Another type of words are those that are false. These words are harsh and untruthful or lying words, these being likened to filth or dirt which no one likes, such as place that is dirty and smells bad. We need to abandon such bad or unpleasant words. Instead we should talk sweetly and truthfully, abandoning bad and harsh words. The latter are to be abandoned.

Those who from light reach the end of light, from darkness
Reach the end of darkness, from light reach the end of darkness, and
From darkness reach the end of light are
The four persons; be like the first of them. [19]

When people who are very honest and behave well, who are truthful and do not deceive others, die, they are said to go from the light to light in the sense that they go from this life to take another high rebirth. Those who from a bad rebirth take another rebirth are those who come from darkness and go to darkness. This means that because of having created negative actions and not having purified them, they die from the lower realms and once again are reborn in the lower realms. Those who from light reach the end of darkness are those who in this life are of a high position or wealthy but do bad actions, because although in this life they are in a state of light in the next life they will be reborn in the lower realms, the state of darkness. Those who from darkness reach the end of light are those who from the lower realms or from being a poor human being die and in the next life take a high rebirth as, for example, a human being of high status or with a position of power. These are the four types of persons who take rebirth. One should be like the first of them, in that one in this life should abide in a state of light and in the next life go on to another state of light. This means that with our three doors of body, speech, and mind we should create virtuous actions and abandon the three types of non-virtuous actions. We should never allow our three doors to be separate from virtuous actions. If we try, we might be able to do something whereas if we do not try there will be no result. We will only become more and more lazy and will not achieve anything. Thinking “I will do it tomorrow” we will pass our life until we die in laziness. One day the famous death will arrive and we will no longer be able to do anything. Therefore, we need to put effort right now into doing virtuous actions.

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3B2A-7. Having understood the class of human beings in general, the need to investigate and analyze one’s companions in general

Realize that human beings are like mango fruit:
There are “the unripe who seem to be ripe,
The ripe who seem to be unripe, the unripe
Who appear as unripe, and the ripe who appear as ripe.” [20]

Like mango fruit, human beings are also of four types. The first type is like a mango fruit that externally seems to be unripe but inside is unripe. Such human beings externally show good activities and seem to be nice people but inside their mind is not so good. Another type of mango fruit is ripe internally but externally seems to be unripe. Such human beings inside have a good mind but externally show bad actions. Another type of mango fruit is that which both externally and internally is not ripe. Such human beings internally have a bad mind and also externally behave badly. The fourth type of mango fruit is both externally and internally ripe. Such human beings are those who internally have a good mind, good heart, and good thoughts and also externally do good actions and behave well.

In this way, there are four types of human beings. We need to investigate and analyze whether others externally behave well but inside have a bad or negative actions, whether externally they have bad actions but internally have a good mind, whether externally they have bad behavior and internally also have a bad mind and bad thoughts, or whether internally they have a good mind of love, compassion, and the mind of enlightenment and externally also do good actions that produce happiness. We also need to examine ourselves to see which one of these we are. We need to try to be the last one, the best one, to internally have a loving and compassionate mind, a good heart, and also externally to do good and virtuous actions.

3B2A-8. The way to cultivate the antidotes to manifest afflictions

- A. In general, restrain the doors of the faculties and rely on the antidotes
- B. In particular, guard the mental faculty
- C. The way to meditate on the shortcomings of the desire realm
- D. The way to meditate on the beneficial qualities of restraining the doors of the faculties
- E. In particular, the way to meditate on the antidote to attachment to appearances

3B2A-8A. In general, restrain the doors of the faculties and rely on the antidotes

Do not look at another's wife. However, if you see one
Generate the discrimination of mother, daughter, or
Sister according to her age. If attachment arises,
Perfectly reflect upon her as just impure.

[21]

Nagarjuna is writing to a king who is a man and therefore looks at women. When men see the beautiful wives of others attachment arises, therefore Nagarjuna says that it is better not to look at them. This is because if one looks at the beautiful wife of another and thinks "Oh, she is beautiful," one's mind becomes as though intoxicated and lacking in shame and embarrassment. Also one is unable to sleep well at night as one continually thinks "She is such a beautiful woman." In this way, attachment makes human beings crazy. For this reason it is better to not look at others' wives. However, if one sees one, if she is older one should think "She is my mother," if she is much younger one should think "She is my daughter," and if she is of similar age to oneself one should think "She is my sister." In this way, one should strive to eliminate attachment to this woman. However, if one is still unable to eliminate this attachment, one should meditate on ugliness, on the impurity of her body. The text says "Perfectly reflect upon her as just impure." This body is composed of a collection of thirty-six substances enclosed in the bag formed by the skin. It smells bad and from its nine orifices – the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, and two lower orifices – come various dirty substances. Thinking about this, how can we be attached to the body?

3B2A-8B. In particular, guard the mental faculty

Guard the wandering mind as though it were learning,
Like a son, similar to a treasure, and like your life force.

Mentally recoil from the pleasures of the desire realm
For they are like snakes, poison, weapons, enemies, and fire.

[22]

Our mind moves to objects that generate afflictions, for example, we listen to all sorts of things as our mind moves from one thing to another. Our mind also constantly moves to one's beautiful son or daughter, or to a precious treasure that one owns, and we also need to guard our mind as we do our cherished life. Thinking in this way, look at objects of our attachment as though they were poisonous snakes. We are attached to objects that appear to bring us happiness but in reality they are like snakes. They are also like a poison which ingested even in small quantities can take our life. They are also like weapons which cause suffering when they touch our body and do not bring happiness. They are also like enemies that constantly strive to harm us and do not bring us happiness but instead bring us suffering. They are also to be seen as fire which when touched burns us and causes suffering. Attachment is the main cause of our problems, for this reason the objects of our attachment are likened to snakes, poison, weapons, enemies, and fire. Thinking in this way, strive to reduce one's attachment. Attachment makes problems, for example, if we are unable to obtain an object of attachment and trying and trying do not succeed our mind becomes frustrated and unhappy and we are unable even to work.

3B2A-8C. The way to meditate on the shortcomings of the desire realm

The desirable produce privation; the Lord of the Conquerors
Taught them to be like the *kimpa* fruit. Hence,
They are to be abandoned. By their chains the
Worldly are bound in the prison of cyclic existence.

[23]

When we enjoy desirable objects, initially they appear to bring pleasure but if one continues to use them they eventually bring suffering and many problems. For example, smoking initially appears to bring pleasure however slowly it brings many unpleasant consequences physically such as sickness. Another example is the drinking of alcohol which at the beginning appears to bring happiness but if one uses much one becomes drunk and this brings suffering. Another example is those who play cards, initially there may be the pleasure of winning money but by playing more and more one can come to lose everything including one's home, one's wife, and so forth. There was a Tibetan called Nagpo Ngawang Jigme who playing cards bet his house, wife, daughter, and everything he owned. He lost everything but because he was playing against his friend, he lost only his house and daughter. This man is now a minister in China. Other people lose their salary to gambling and return home the same day penniless. A *kimpa* fruit appears externally to be very attractive and tasty but inside is actually very bitter and unpleasant. Similarly is desire, therefore it is better to give it up. The attachment to desirable objects is like a chain that binds us in cyclic existence and does not let us escape. We see on television prisoners who bound by chains are looked in a prison and unable to escape. We are similar in that we cannot leave cyclic existence due to being bound by the chains of desire. Therefore, we need to try not to be so attached to desirable objects, to try to have less attachment. We know this very well.

3B2A-8D. The way to meditate on the beneficial qualities of restraining the doors of the faculties

Of those who conquer the six faculties,
Ever unstable and moving to objects, and
Those who conquer a horde of enemies on the battlefield,
The wise consider the first to be the greater heroes.

[24]

We need to meditate so as to restrain the doors of the faculties with respect to their objects. The object of the eye faculty is beautiful forms, the object of the ear faculty is pleasant sounds, the object of the nose faculty is attractive perfumes, the object of the tongue faculty is tasty food, the object of the body faculty is soft tangible objects, and the object of the mental faculty is all five desirable objects. We need to control these faculties. Our faculties are not stable but constantly wander to objects, for example, we may think “Tonight I will go to the cinema to see a good movie,” whereby stronger and stronger desire or attachment arise. Due to this, we are unable to control our faculties. Therefore, we need to strive to control our faculties as did the conquerors. In short, we need to meditate, this being the antidote to attachment, the thought “I want to listen to good music,” “I want to eat good food,” and so forth. There are different types of meditation; for example, when we think that something is beautiful we need to meditate on ugliness. We need to examine the many faults and imperfections of the object. For example, with respect to the beautiful face of a woman we should check whether every part of it is perfect, perhaps we will find that she is only beautiful because of wearing a lot of make-up but in actuality she has wrinkles, or one eye is smaller than the other, and so forth.

When animals fight, one is the victor and one is the loser. For example, among animals the lion is the most powerful. However, there is a story in sutra about a rabbit who killed a lion. There was a lion relaxing in a forest when there arrived a rabbit who asked “Why are you so relaxed?” to which the lion replied that it was because there was no one who was stronger than himself. The rabbit then said that it had seen a creature more powerful than him and offered to show the lion this creature on the night of the full moon. The lion agreed to come, and the rabbit took him to a house where there was big well. The rabbit told the lion to look inside where he saw the reflection of himself. As the lion moved, also the reflection did likewise whereby the lion jumped into the well and died. In this way a small rabbit killed a strong lion. Similarly, those of low position can sometimes kill those of power.

In short, we need to control our six objects and not allow them to move to desirable objects.

3B2A-8E. In particular, the way to meditate on the antidote to attachment to appearances

A young woman’s body – foul in odor,
Formed of nine orifices, like a container of
Every filth, difficult to satiate, and covered in skin –
Should be viewed apart from its adornments. [25]

Understand attachment to desirable objects
To be like a leper tormented by maggots who,
For the sake of pleasure, totally depends on fire,
But is not soothed. [26]

This was already explained above. Men are attached to the beautiful body of young women, that is, thinking that it is beautiful they are attached to it. However, in fact it is formed of nine orifices but due to being covered in nice skin, beautiful clothing, and ornaments it appears to be beautiful. But in reality the body is impure, therefore try to think that for this reason it is not suitable to be attached to it. If one thinks like this, yet attachment still becomes stronger what should one do? One should strip the body of its clothing and ornaments, and think that from the nine orifices come many repulsive substances. It also has a foul odor. When we put even good food into the body it becomes excrement. In this way, our body is like a sewer. Thinking like this will reduce our attachment as we are not attached to a sewer! Also we can imagine the attractive body without its skin, in this way we will no longer feel attachment to that body. In this way we should understand that in reality the body is not beautiful. For example, when someone has leprosy the body degenerates and eaten by maggots the person experiences much suffering. When a leper tries to relieve his suffering by

approaching a fire, at first the heat of the fire appears to soothe his suffering but in reality it brings more suffering. Similarly, when ordinary beings initially enjoy an object of attachment at first it appears to bring happiness but gradually the happiness disappears and the actually suffering increases. Instead they become more dissatisfied and their mental suffering increases. Whatever one has, one is not satisfied. This lack of satisfaction brings suffering. If the mind is not happy, it can bring related physical suffering and sickness. Therefore, we need to try to control and reduce our attachment. We need to meditate on the antidote to attachment. There are different way of meditating, such as the meditation on ugliness in which one imagines an attractive object to be repulsive which reduces attachment as we are not attached to ugly objects. In this way there will be some result.

From the point of view of tantra, if we are able to carry attachment into the path then attachment is not a problem as we will be able to transform it into the path whereby it becomes a means to achieve more bliss. However, since we are not presently capable of this we need to imagine the object of our attachment to be ugly and in this way strive to reduce our attachment.

3B2A-9. The way to cultivate striving in the antidotes to the seeds

In order to see the ultimate,
Mentally attend to things properly and meditate.
No other phenomenon exists that possesses
As good qualities as does this.

[27]

The seed of the mental afflictions refers to the energy that can produce a later affliction.

The Buddha taught that all phenomena do not exist inherently, that is, all phenomena are empty of inherent existence. Therefore, we need to strive to realize the suchness or thusness of phenomena, this is called “realizing the ultimate nature unmistakably.” This is to perfectly see or realize the thusness of phenomena. In order to develop this kind of wisdom we must put effort. First we need to examine whether external and internal phenomena exist inherently or not. External phenomena are forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tangible objects, and other external phenomena, whereas internal phenomena are the various consciousnesses, the eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and mental consciousness. All of these do not have even the slightest inherent existence. We need to strive to understand this perfectly and then familiarize with it by meditating. In this way, one day one will come to realize selflessness by means of a direct perceiver. If one gains this kind of realization it will destroy all contaminated actions and afflictions. In this way one obtain genuine or ultimate happiness, the happiness that is undecieving. On the other hand, other happiness deceive us in that they appear to be happiness but when enjoyed only bring more suffering and unhappiness.

For example, this table does not exist inherently because it is a dependent-arising. Therefore, it does not exist independently or concretely, and is therefore empty of inherent existence. For this reason it can be used for various purposes. On the other hand, if it were inherent existent it could not be used as it would be unchanging. Likewise, oneself does not exist inherently because one depends on many things. For example, initially we depend on our parents for our existence. If our body were independently or inherently existent it could not change. However, our body changes. First it is that of a very small child and then it becomes bigger and bigger. Then, the youthful body ages, the faculties, channels, and so forth degenerate and lose their energy. Thinking in this way we will come to some understanding. We should meditate in this way on emptiness. If one meditates on emptiness this can destroy our contaminated actions and afflictions, whereby we can become foe-destroyers.

3B2A-10. Cultivate the good qualities that are the antidotes to the seeds

Though a being possesses family, body, and learning,
Lacking in knowledge and morality he is not honored.
Thus, one who possesses these two qualities,
Though lacking in others, is venerated.

[28]

The afflictions are consciousnesses, whereas the seeds are imprints or potentials left on the mind that produce later afflictions. If someone has a beautiful body but is lacking in the qualities of having much hearing, does not have the realization of emptiness or the ultimate, and does not have good morality, he or she is not an object of veneration. Even if someone has a beautiful body and is of high class but is lacking in these qualities, he is not beautiful from the point of view of qualities. If one does not have the knowledge arisen from hearing much teachings or the wisdom arisen from understanding emptiness, one is not worthy of being honored. On the other hand, if someone has the wisdom realizing emptiness and has perfect morality, even if his or her body is not so beautiful and he or she is not of high class, that person is an object worthy of veneration. This is because he or she is a holy being. Holy beings are the objects of veneration of everyone. The two main qualities are morality on the side of method and the wisdom realizing emptiness or ultimate truth on the side of wisdom. These bring a happy rebirth in the next life. Even if one does not achieve nirvana or enlightenment in this life, the next life will be very good and in that life one will continue to study and meditate and will achieve higher realizations or buddhahood. Therefore, we need to try to develop morality. Morality is of two types, natural morality and morality which is achieved by means of a particular ritual. We need to keep natural morality by trying not to cheat others and by trying to be honest, this is good morality. This is called natural morality, we need to try to develop it. Try not to kill even small insects because they are also beings who wish happiness and do not want to suffer. We need to engage in good actions, in this way we practice morality.

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3B2A-11. The way to remain equanimous regarding the eight worldly concerns

Knower of the world, "Gain and non-gain,
Happiness and unhappiness, a good and bad reputation,
Praise and criticism" are the eight worldly concerns.
Remain equanimous, not making them objects of your mind.

[29]

Here Nagarjuna says to the king that one needs to equalize the four happy feelings and the four unhappy feelings. Having equalized them, one will not be at times happy and at other times worried when one is unhappy. Having found wealth one is mentally happy, if one experiences happy feeling one is happy, if one has a good reputation one is happy, and if someone praises you and your friends and family one is happy, this is on the side [of the worldly concerns that make one happy]. On the side [of the worldly concerns that make one unhappy], if one does not find wealth one is mentally unhappy or sad, if one has suffering or painful feeling one experiences unhappiness, if one has a bad reputation one does not like this and is unhappy, and if someone criticizes oneself or one's family and friends one becomes mentally unhappy. However, one should not be like this, whatever one hears and whatever happens one should equalize this thinking that, for example, whether one gains something or not it does not matter. Although Nagarjuna says this to the king, this is also advice meant for us in that we need to do the same. We are happy when we find wealth and unhappy when we do not, we need to remain equanimous whichever one happens. If one obtains the four desirable ones one should not become happy and if one meets the four undesirable ones one should not become unhappy, but remain equanimous.

3B2A-12. In particular, thinking about the need to abandon negativities

Do not commit negativities even for the sake of
Brahmins, monks, the gods, guests, father, and mother,
Son, queen, or retinue. They will not share
In their fruition in hell.

[30]

Though the committing of any negative action
Does not at that very moment cut like a blade,
The result of negative actions becomes evident
When the time of death arrives.

[31]

Nagarjuna tells the king not to commit negative actions for the sake of brahmins, monks, the gods, guests, father, mother, son, queen, or the surrounding beings. If one does create a negative action, the result will be experienced only by oneself, it will not be shared with any of these beings. Oneself alone experiences the fruition of one's negative actions of being reborn in the hells, whether the hot hells or the cold hells. For example, in the hot hells one will experience that one's body transforms into the very entity of fire, like the lava from a volcano. On the other hand, in the cold hells one will experience the cold of freezing like ice. However, even though one experiences such suffering one does not die, the body continues to experience this suffering due to the negative actions that one created, its result being experienced as long as this karma is not exhausted. The Christians say that once one goes to hell due to having transgressed any of the ten commandments one never leaves it, this is because the lifespan in hell is so incredibly long that it seems that this suffering never ends. I think that this is the reason why they say this.

If one creates a negative action, the experience of suffering that it brings will not be shared with others but will be experienced by oneself alone. One cannot ask others "Please share this suffering with me," instead one must experience it alone. A sutra says that a fruition result cannot ripen upon earth, water, fire, or stone, it only ripens upon oneself, one's own body.

Someone may ask "If one creates a non-virtuous action directly can one remain comfortable and happy without the result being experienced?" It may seem like this because a negative action does not ripen immediately like the cutting of a knife, but it will ripen eventually. Our present body might not experience the suffering of, for example, being cut but later, having been reborn in the hells, one will experience the suffering result [of one's negative actions]. At that time, when the hell guardians burn one's body one will regret one's previous negative actions but at that time it is too late as one is already reborn in that realm. Just as when wood is burned by fire there is a the sound of crackling, likewise our body will make such a noise. At this time, our mind will be completely unhappy as we also hear this unpleasant sound. We will experience great fear and the negative results will gradually become evident. Sutra says that even if one creates a definite action even though someone is there with a knife it will not cut one but when one goes on to the next life one will experience that suffering. This means that having died we will experience the suffering whether in the next life or another, the result of the will not be dispersed. For this reason, we need to avoid creating non-virtuous actions as once they have been created they only bring the result of suffering and do not bring happiness or pleasure. Therefore, we need to diminish the committing of non-virtuous actions and increase the creation of virtuous actions. This is because virtuous actions bring the fruition result of a good rebirth as a god or human being. Everyone want happiness, no one wants unhappiness, but in order to experience happiness we need to create its causes and conditions. In this way we will experience a good result. We need to constantly check our own mind and to develop a compassionate mind, a loving mind, and the mind of enlightenment.

3B2A-13. Strive in the arya riches

Faith, morality, giving, and hearing,

Unstained shame and embarrassment, as well as wisdom,
Were taught by the Subduer to be the seven riches.
Realize other riches to be ordinary and meaningless. [32]

These are the seven riches of arya beings. Faith means that through understanding the qualities of the Three Jewels one generates confident faith in them. It also refers to confidence in the law of cause and result. This faith is the first wealth of the aryas.

The second is morality which refers to taking vows such as the vows of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vows, and tantra vows and then to maintain them. Giving is to give one's material belongings to others without attachment to them. Hearing is to listen to the Buddha's doctrine, through hearing or listening there arises knowledge. Having done much listening to the scriptures of the Buddha one acquires learning. This is the fourth of the riches. The fifth is unstained or pure shame which means that in reference to oneself one avoids creating non-virtuous actions, that is, thinking that it is not good for oneself to do such. Then, the sixth is in reference to others, being embarrassed, to also refrain from creating negative actions. The seventh is wisdom that discriminates the good and the bad and abandons the bad actions, bad ideas, and bad behavior and adopts that which is good.

These seven are called the riches of aryas. Aryas are those beings who have directly realized emptiness or selflessness by means of a direct perceiver. Mundane things like precious jewels and diamonds are inferior, they only cause problems such as arguing and fighting. They do not bring inner realizations. For example, petrol is the cause even of war. There is much fighting over wealth, however, they are not real riches in that they do not bring inner happiness. Such ordinary things are meaningless in that they bring suffering and do not bring happiness.

3B2A-14. Abandon unfavorable conditions to [the arya riches]

Gambling, watching crowds, laziness,
Relying on negative companions, liquor, and
Wandering about at night lead to the bad migrations
And loss of one's reputation: these six are to be abandoned. [33]

Gambling includes playing cards and so forth in order to gain money. Watching crowds is to observe gatherings of many people who are talking meaninglessly, for example, about their belongings, and so forth which is an action that is of no use and bad. One should not stay there watching such activities. Laziness is a lack of delight in virtuous actions such as meditating, reciting prayers, and so forth, instead they make one's mind unhappy. One should also abandon negative companions, for example, persons who are thieves or who go around beating others. For example, some men due to having bad friends even rape, beat, and kill women. Such persons are negative companions or friends. Liquor refers to drinking alcohol such as beer, whiskey, and so forth. Wandering about at night refers to walking around at night. Such actions bring the result in the next life of rebirth in the hell realm and in this life they cause the ruin of one's reputation and cause others to criticize one. One must abandon these six: gambling, watching crowds, laziness, relying on negative companions, liquor, and wandering about at night. Although the king might not himself do these actions, Nagarjuna also meant that we should not do them.

3B2A-15. Be satisfied with one's worldly wealth

The Teacher of Gods and Humans taught that,
Among all riches, satisfaction is the very best.
Always be satisfied, for if one knows satisfaction
One is truly wealthy even without possessing riches. [34]

Noble one, those who have little desire
Lack the suffering of those with many possessions;
However many heads the foremost of nagas has,
Just so is the suffering that arises from them. [35]

The best among riches is satisfaction. Understanding this, whatever one has one should think that it is enough and be mentally satisfied. One should also not think “I want more in the future” but instead have little desire and more satisfaction as this is the best of wealth. Buddha Shakyamuni, the Teacher of Gods and Humans, taught this. Therefore, at all times one should be satisfied, for this reason this is the best of riches. On the other hand, if one is not satisfied there are many shortcomings or disadvantages. Therefore, Nagarjuna tells the king not to collect gold, silver, and jewels but to collect that which protects oneself from suffering. Therefore, he tells him not to collect that which brings suffering. Instead if one has less desire one will also have less mental suffering. The king of the nagas has many heads, each of which has an ornament of jewels, which causes much suffering. Due to having many heads, he experiences much suffering. Likewise, the more the collection of wealth, money, gold, silver, diamonds, and so forth that one has the more that one needs to protect it. This produces unhappiness in the mind, worry that one will not be able to protect it. Also one will think “Maybe I will lose this wealth” which causes much mental suffering. If one is attached to wealth there is no occasion for becoming free from the ocean of suffering. This means that one will always be in the midst of suffering. In this way there will only be more problems. Therefore, we need to try to be more satisfied.

3B2A-16. In particular, think about abandoning and adopting the partner who accompanies one

Thoroughly shun the three kinds of wives:
Those who, like executioners, naturally associate with your enemies,
Those who, like queens, are scornful of their husbands, and
Those who, like thieves, steal even small articles. [36]

One who is as compliant as a sister,
As dear to the heart as a woman friend,
Who wishes to help like a mother, and is as obedient
As a servant should be venerated like the family deity. [37]

There are three types of wives that are to be abandoned. Those that are like executioners are those who associate with enemies and try to harm their husbands, thinking to kill them. Another type of wife to be abandoned is those who do not respect their husbands but instead scorn or disparage them, like a queen who gives orders to her husband. Another type of wife to be abandoned are those who steal even small things. These three types of women are to be abandoned, one should not marry them. However, the same is true of men who do similarly, they should be abandoned as husbands. Upon what kind of partner should one rely? One should rely upon a woman who is like a sister who agrees with whatever one does, one who is a dear friend who serves and helps one, one who desires to help oneself like a mother constantly desires to benefit her child, and one who is like a servant who humbly does whatever one asks. One should take a woman with any of these qualities as one’s wife. This is what Nagarjuna says to the king. In the past the kings of India had as many as 500 wives or queens.

3B2B. Extensive explanation of the path shared with middling beings

1. The way to enjoy food and drink appropriately in the right measure

2. Mentally recoil from cyclic existence and, due to seeking liberation, make effort at all times day and night, and even make falling asleep meaningful so that it does not become meaningless

3B2B-1. The way to enjoy food and drink appropriately in the right measure

Food should be relied upon properly,
As though it were medicine, without attachment or hatred,
Not out of conceit, not out of arrogance,
Nor for the sake of firm flesh, but only to maintain the body. [38]

Food should be considered to be a medicine, an antidote to illness, mainly to the pain of hunger. One should try not to eat too much nor too little, but to each just the right amount. At the time of eating, one should not be motivated by either attachment or hatred. One should also not eat out of haughtiness or arrogance. Nor should one eat in order that to have firm flesh free from wrinkles and out of vanity to become more beautiful. Therefore, with what motivation should one eat? One should eat in order to have a healthy body so as to be able to practice the Dharma. One should try to eat with this motivation.

According to Buddhism there are 84,000 organisms that live in our bodies who need to be nourished, therefore we should eat motivated by generosity to feed these organisms. One should dedicate that by giving them food in this life, in their next life, having taken human rebirth, that one may teach them Dharma so that they too can gain knowledge. Our human body is precious, therefore we need a healthy body. For this reason we need to eat food like taking medicine.

3B2B-2. Mentally recoil from cyclic existence and, due to seeking liberation, make effort at all times day and night, and even make falling asleep meaningful so that it does not become meaningless

Learned one, the entire day and the first and
Last periods of the night having passed,
That even the time of sleep not be fruitless,
Sleep mindfully between them. [39]

Nagarjuna calls the king “learned one” and says that he should pass the entire day and the first and last parts of the night in performing virtuous actions. He should try all day long to do virtuous actions. Also while he sleeps during the middle part of the night he should sleep with mindfulness. This is because sleep can be changed into virtue, non-virtue, or the neutral in dependence on the motivation with which one falls a sleep. Nagarjuna says that he should always be mindful of doing virtue, and never degenerate mindfulness. Likewise, we should do the same. Although Nagarjuna sent this letter to the king, we too need to follow this advice as it is also useful for our life. Although this letter was sent a great many number of years ago, if it is read now it seems that it has just arrived from a friend.

3B2C. Extensive explanation of the path of great beings

1. The way to generate the mahayana path of accumulation in one's continuum
2. The way to generate the path of preparation in one's continuum
3. The way to generate the path of seeing in one's continuum
4. The way to generate the path of meditation in one's continuum

3B2C-1. The way to generate the mahayana path of accumulation in one's continuum

- A. The way to generate the small path of accumulation in one's continuum by cultivating the mind of enlightenment which is illustrated by the four immeasurables
- B. The way to generate the middling and great paths of accumulation in one's continuum by cultivating the concentrations

- C. Presenting actions and results in general and the abandonment of the great negativities and the adoption of the great virtues in particular
- D. In particular, presenting the way to abandon the five obscurations

3B2C-1A. The way to generate the small path of accumulation in one's continuum by cultivating the mind of enlightenment which is illustrated by the four immeasurables

Constantly and perfectly meditate upon love,
Compassion, joy, and equanimity.
Even if you do not attain the highest state in this life,
You will acquire the happiness of the world of Brahma. [40]

One should generate the small path of accumulation through generating the four immeasurables. Immeasurable love is the mental attitude wishing that all sentient beings have happiness. The second, immeasurable compassion, observes all sentient beings and wishes them to be free from suffering. The third, immeasurable joy, wishes those who have happiness never be separated from this joy. Immeasurable equanimity observes all sentient beings and wishes them to be free from holding others close out of attachment and holding others to be distant out of hatred. They are called "immeasurable" because their observed object, sentient beings, is immeasurable. Also because by meditating on them one can acquire immeasurable merit. For example, when one meditates observing all sentient beings and generates love wishing them to have happiness and the causes of happiness, and then when one loses this to regenerate this thought one can accumulate immeasurable merit. One should also meditate on immeasurable compassion taking all sentient beings as one's object and thinking "How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were to be free from suffering and the cause of suffering." In the same way one meditates on joy taking all sentient beings as one's observed object and wishing "How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were never separated from happiness and the causes of happiness." Then generate the thought "How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were free from attachment and hatred," in this way one meditates on immeasurable equanimity. One should try to do this in daily life. One can even do this type of meditation even on the way to work by mentally generating this kind of attitude. Also when one lies down before going to sleep in the evening one can generate these immeasurable thoughts of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity, and in this way maintain these attitudes throughout the night.

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3B2C-1B. The way to generate the middling and great paths of accumulation in one's continuum by cultivating the concentrations

The four concentrations that completely abandon
Desirable objects, joy, happiness, and suffering
Enable one to attain fortune equal to the gods of
Brahma, Clear Light, Vast Virtue, and Great Result. [41]

By meditating the concentrations and attaining an actual concentration one abandons the attachment to desirable objects, that is, the attachment to the desire realm. The four concentrations are the first, second, third, and fourth concentrations. The special actual first concentration has four branches: analysis, joy, bliss, and meditative stabilization. The actual second concentration has abandoned investigation and analysis, and has the branches of inner clarity, joy, bliss, and meditative stabilization. The third concentration has abandoned the branch of the joy of inner clarity and has the branches of mindfulness, introspection, equanimity, happiness of mind, and meditative stabilization.

The fourth concentration has completely abandoned happiness of mind and all suffering and has the four branches of mindfulness, equanimity that is a compositional factor, equanimity feeling, and meditative stabilization. By means of cultivating an actual first concentration one takes rebirth in Great Brahma, by means of cultivating an actual second concentration one takes rebirth in Clear Light of the second concentration, by means of cultivating an actual third concentration one takes rebirth in Vast Virtue of the third concentration, and by means of means of cultivating an actual fourth concentration one takes rebirth in Great Result of the fourth concentration. The four concentrations are divided into different levels: the first has three levels, the second has three levels, the third concentration has three levels, and the fourth has eight levels for a total of 17 levels. A more detailed explanation of these can be found in the *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge*.

3B2C-1C. Presenting actions and results in general and the abandonment of the great negativities and the adoption of the great virtues in particular

The five types of great virtuous and non-virtuous actions are
Those that are done constantly, with strong adherence, without an antidote,
And those that arise from the main bases possessing good qualities;
Thus, put effort into creating virtue. [42]

Just as a few grains of salt change the taste of
A small amount of water but not that of the Ganges River,
Similarly, understand that even a small negative action
Does that to light roots of virtue. [43]

There are five types of great virtues and five types of great non-virtues. An example of a great non-virtuous action is one done with strong hatred. Also a great non-virtue is one that is done constantly. Also an action that harms one's parents or one's teachers, or the Three Jewels is a great non-virtue. On the other hand, a great virtuous action is one that is done constantly and with application. Also an action done with a strong mind of enlightenment, love, or compassion is a great virtuous action. If a non-virtuous action is done and an antidote is not applied it becomes a great non-virtuous action. When a non-virtuous action is done one should apply the four opponent forces. If with respect to one's parents, one's teachers and so forth one does an action that is beneficial it becomes a great virtuous action. Also if one venerates and makes offerings to the Three Jewels this is a great virtuous action. The five great virtuous actions and five great non-virtuous actions definitely bring many results respectively of happiness and suffering. Understanding their results, one should strive to abandon the great non-virtuous actions and cultivate the great virtuous actions.

The text says that if one puts a small amount of salt into a small amount of water it changes the taste of that water, but if one puts a small amount of water into the Ganges River it does not change the taste of the water. Likewise, if one creates even a tiny non-virtuous action it blocks small roots of virtue from bringing a result. For example, even small harm done to one's parents, teacher, or Three Jewels brings great and many results of suffering. Since ordinary beings out of heavy ignorance and confusion create non-virtuous actions, one must remember and apply the antidotes: generate the mind of enlightenment and go for refuge to the Three Jewels, regret the non-virtuous action one has done, promise to refrain from doing it again, and recite mantras, the names of holy beings, or meditate on emptiness. The holy beings can be Saint Francis or Mother Mary or Jesus, they are all saints. One should recite the names or mantras of holy beings in order to purify one's negative actions.

3B2C-1D. In particular, presenting the way to abandon the five obscurations

Excitement and regret, malice, lethargy and

Sleep, aspiration for the desire realm, and doubt:
These five obscurations are to be well understood
As being thieves who steal the riches of virtue.

[44]

Excitement is a mind that goes to objects of attachment or previous enjoyments wishing to enjoy them again. There are five desirable objects to which the mind is distracted, we need to abandon these pleasures. Regret is to remember one's previous actions and to become unhappy for having done them. Malice is, with anger in one's mind, to wish to torment other sentient beings and to make them suffer. Lethargy is included in ignorance; it makes body and mind heavy and unserviceable. It makes the mind dark and unclear, therefore it must be abandoned. Sleep gathers the five sense consciousnesses inward whereby one cannot see the objects of the eye consciousness, colors and shapes; one cannot hear the objects of ear consciousness, sounds, and so forth. Therefore, we need to also abandon sleep. Aspiration for the desire realm refers to wanting food, sexual intercourse, and so forth. Doubt is with respect to the actual nature of phenomena, doubt with respect to something that is true, doubt with respect to which road to take. It interferes with completing an action.

These obscurations prevent us from developing the three trainings of the path: the higher training in morality, the higher training in concentration, and the higher training in wisdom. For this reason they are to be eliminated. They are like thieves in that they steal our riches of virtues.

Although there appear to be seven obscurations, excitement and regret are counted together and lethargy and sleep are counted together whereby there are five. By abandoning them one can attain roots of virtue.

3B2C-2. The way to generate the path of preparation in your continuum

- A. Actual meaning
- B. Presenting the practices common to all paths

3B2C-2A. Actual meaning

Earnestly strive in the five supreme qualities –
Faith, effort, mindfulness,
Meditative stabilization, and wisdom. They are
Called strengths and powers; they also become the peak.

[45]

Faith is conviction in the truths – the two truths or four truths. For example, among the four truths the cause that is true origins brings the result of the true sufferings, and the cause that is true paths brings the result of true cessations. True origins are afflictions and contaminated actions. Due to the afflictions one creates negative actions which bring suffering. If one wishes to eliminate the result one must eradicate or abandon its cause. In order to do this one must cultivate true paths which bring about the cessation of true sufferings and true origins whereby one achieves the cessation that is nirvana.

Effort is delight in abandoning the two truths of the thoroughly afflicted class and to cultivate the two truths of the completely pure class. This delight is called effort. Mindfulness is to not forget the truths and their attributes. For example to not forget the four noble truths and their sixteen attributes. Instead one should remember them. meditative stabilization is to concentrate on these. For example, the first attribute is impermanence, one should concentrate on the fact that all compounded phenomena change momentarily. The thorough discrimination of these attributes is wisdom. One should become familiar with these five strengths and powers whereby they will become the peak. The path of preparation has four divisions: heat, peak, tolerance, and supreme mundane quality.

3B2C-2B. Presenting the practices common to all paths

1. Even though the objects of abandonment have been abandoned and the antidotes have been generated in your continuum, analytical meditation is presented as the profound point
2. Strive in mundane correct view
3. Strive in supramundane view
4. How to cultivate supramundane correct view
5. Abandoning the thorough-entanglers
6. The need for oneself to strive in the main path to liberation
7. Strive in the three trainings of the path
8. Strive in the way to protect mindfulness, the root of cultivating paths
9. The cause of mindfulness – death-impermanence
10. The greatly meaningful freedoms and endowments that are difficult to find
11. The instructions of the four wheels
12. The instructions of guru yoga
13. The suitability of striving at the times of lacking unfavorable conditions and the destruction of favorable conditions
14. Meditate in general on the shortcomings of cyclic existence
15. Meditate individually on the shortcomings of cyclic existence
16. Reflect on the way to exert strong effort for the purpose of abandoning cyclic existence and attaining nirvana

3B2C-2B1. Even though the objects of abandonment have been abandoned and the antidotes have been generated in your continuum, analytical meditation is presented as the profound point

“I have not passed beyond sickness, aging, and death,
Separating from the attractive, and likewise the actions that I have done”;
Thinking like this again and again
One does not become haughty since this is its antidote. [46]

Think “I am not free from sickness,” “I am not free from aging,” “I am not free from death,” and “I am not free from separating from objects of attachment.” Instead we experience sickness, aging, and death, as well as separation from the objects of our attachment. We have not passed beyond such problems. We also need to experience the result of the actions that we have done, having created actions we cannot say that they do not belong to us. We are without freedom in that we are controlled or dominated by the virtuous and non-virtuous actions that we have done. Therefore, we need to think again and again in this way, that is, repeatedly analyze in this way. This kind of analytical meditation is the actual antidote to the haughtiness that thinks “I am of a high caste,” “I am learned,” “I am rich,” “I have a magnificent body.” By thinking about the fact that one has sickness, is aging, and will die, one’s haughtiness diminishes.

3B2C-2B2. Strive in mundane correct view

If you strongly wish for high states and liberation,
Meditate upon correct view.
Even good conduct by a person with wrong view,
All possess a dreadful fruition. [47]

Mundane correct view is the view that negative actions bring suffering while positive actions bring happiness. The perfect understanding that this fact is non-deceptive is mundane correct view. Temporally one can achieve high states, that of a human being with the eighteen qualities or that of the gods, and ultimately one can achieve enlightenment. The main cause is to perfectly understand the law of cause and effect. This is the root of white or virtuous actions. Having familiarized with mundane correct view, one should also cultivate supramundane correct view which is meditation on the emptiness of inherent existence of all phenomena. If one does not meditate on this kind of emptiness, one will be unable to give up views. First one meditates on mundane correct view, the

law of cause and effect, and then on the supramundane correct view, whereby one will abandon wrong views. If one does not eliminate wrong view, even if one creates virtuous actions they will be destroyed by wrong view. Therefore, one must eliminate wrong views as in this way we will be able to eradicate the root of cyclic existence. Instead if one has wrong views one will create strong non-virtuous actions which have dreadful fruitional results in cyclic existence.

3B2C-2B3. Strive in supramundane view

Understand humans as being, in actuality, unhappy,
Impermanent, selfless, and impure.
Those without the close placements of mindfulness
View these four mistakenly – the source of ruination. [48]

If we examine by means of wisdom we will see that human beings are tormented by suffering and therefore are unhappy and uncomfortable. They are also impermanent in that they change momentarily or disintegrate momentarily. Also they are selfless, that is, lacking a self that is self-sufficient substantially existent or lacking a self that is permanent, independent, and partless. These kinds of self do not exist, whereby they are selfless. In this way one should strive to meditate on impermanence and selflessness. There also does not exist a being who is creator of the world. Some Indian schools of thought hold that the world was created by Ishvara, however, Buddhists do not accept the existence of such a creator.

Our bodies are also the nature of impurity in that it is a collection of thirty-six impure substances. Thinking in this way meditate on the four close placements of mindfulness on bodies, feelings, minds, and phenomena. These four close placements of mindfulness are the antidotes to the four mistaken conceptions. One mistaken conception is to think that the body, which is impure, is pure; another is to think that which is suffering is happiness; another is to think that the impermanent, such as the mind, is permanent; and another is to think that which is selfless to have a self that is self-sufficient substantially existent or a self that is permanent, independent, and partless.

These mistaken conceptions bring rebirth in cyclic existence, but mainly they bring rebirth in the lower realms.

3B2C-2B4. How to cultivate supramundane correct view

It was taught “Form is not the self”; the self does not
Possess form, the self does not abide in form, and
Form does not abide in the self. Similarly,
Realize that the four remaining aggregates are empty. [49]

The aggregates do not arise from imagination, nor from time,
Nor from nature, nor from entity,
Nor from Ishvara, nor without a cause.
Understand that they arise from unknowing, actions, and craving. [50]

There are twenty types of view of the transitory collection, four with respect to each of the five aggregates. “Form is not the self” means that the form aggregate, the body, is not the self or the person. In other words, the self and the aggregates are not inherently one. If it were so, it would follow that just as the aggregates are many, being five, so too would there be many persons. Or it would follow that the aggregates are just one, because the self or the person is just one.

Also the self does not inherently possess the form aggregate, the body. Nor does the self inherently abide in the form aggregate, the body. The aggregates do not inherently abide in the person. If they do not exist like this, what is the actual relationship between the person or the self and the

aggregates? They are one entity, but different isolates. This means that they are the same entity but are not one. The body and the person are not one. That they are one entity means that if, for example, one sees Raffaello one sees the body, because if one sees Raffaello's head one says "I have seen Raffaello." Although they appear together, they are not one. Because of this they are said to be one entity but different isolates.

Also the feeling aggregate, discrimination aggregate, compositional factors aggregate, and consciousness aggregate are to be considered in the same way as the form aggregate whereby there are twenty views of the transitory collection. The text says "Realize that the four remaining aggregates are empty."

The person does not fall from the sky, it does not arise at all times, it does not arise from a permanent nature, it does not arise from its own entity, it is not created by a permanent Ishvara, it does not arise from discordant causes, it does not arise without cause. If it were like this either it would always exist or never exist. Where does the self or the aggregates come from? They come from ignorance and actions. They arise from strong actions moistened by craving. In short, we are born in cyclic existence due to ignorance and actions.

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3B2C-2B5. Abandoning the thorough-entanglers

Holding morality and asceticism to be supreme,
The mistaken view regarding one's own body, and doubt;
Know that these three thorough-entanglers block
The door to the city of liberation.

[51]

For example, there can be someone who does not want to go on a path, someone who relies on a wrong path, and someone who goes but on the way doubts the path. For example, with respect to going to Milan someone who needs to go to Milan but does not want to go, someone who wants to go to Milan but takes the wrong road and heads toward Rome, and someone who doubts thinking "Perhaps it is this road, perhaps it is that," and so does not make progress. Similarly, the view holding bad behavior and bad morality as supreme is a mistaken path, the mistaken view regarding one's own body, that is, the view of the transitory collection which holds to an inherently existent I and mine, like someone who needs to go to Milan but does not want to go, does not allow one to go to the city of liberation. Doubt is a two pointed mind due to one thinks "Maybe it is this road, maybe it is that, and is unable to make a decision to go whereby he does not progress, likewise, if one doubts the path to liberation one is unable to reach the city of liberation.

Thinking that bad behavior and morality is supreme blocks the attainment of any realization, it only brings more problems, that is, more suffering, because it is a mistaken view. Then, there is the view that these aggregates are "I," this is a mistaken view that as the body aggregate is I, and that I and mine exist inherently. We say "my head," and do not say "I head." The view of the transitory collection is a mistaken view that leads to the sufferings of cyclic existence. Doubt does not lead to liberation because due to it one doubts which path is the path to liberation. These three thorough-entanglers are bad views. The view that the I exists inherently and that "my body," "my belongings," and so forth exist inherently is the view of the transitory collection, whereas the view of a self-sufficient substantially existent I and mine is a coarse view of the transitory collection. These three thorough-entanglers block the door to the city of liberation, that is, they do not allow us to go to the city of the state of liberation.

3B2C-2B6. The need for oneself to strive mainly in the path to liberation

Liberation depends upon oneself. With regard to it,
There is no need whatsoever to be accompanied by others.
Thus, through possessing listening, morality, and concentration,
Exert yourself in the four attributes of the truths.

[52]

If one wishes to attain liberation one needs to abandon the afflictions. In order to do so, one needs to strive in and familiarize with the methods for attaining liberation. This depends on oneself alone. No one else can hold our hand and lead us to liberation, whereas they can help us to find word, for example, by leading us to a certain place. Even Buddha Shakyamuni who himself became enlightened and has the compassion that looks upon us day and night to see whether we are ready to be ripened cannot take us to liberation. One needs to do this. The base for this is the mind of definite emergence or renunciation. This is in turn based on maintaining pure morality. In addition, what is needed? On the basis of morality one needs to listen to and study the scriptures of the Buddha to gain an understanding, then think about the meaning, and then single-pointedly meditate on the meaning.

In addition, one needs to understand the four noble truths. On the thoroughly afflicted side there are two: true sufferings and true origins. On the completely pure or enlightened side there the two: true cessations and true paths. These are the four noble truths. Each of the four truths in turn has four attributes, each of which we have to understand thoroughly. The basis that is the four noble truths and their sixteen attributes are free from being truly or inherently existent. They are empty of inherent existence, this is the ultimate truth. We need to meditate on ultimate truth or emptiness. In this way we can attain the state of liberation.

The four noble truths are explained in detail in various texts. An illustration of true sufferings is our body. Our body is impermanent because it changes momentarily. This body is the nature of suffering because it is tormented by suffering: the suffering of suffering, suffering of change, and pervasive suffering. Also this body is empty of being an object of use of a permanent, partless, and independent self. This body is also selfless because it is not self-sufficient substantially existent and is not inherently existent. In this way the body is an illustration of true suffering. An illustration of true origins is attachment because it has the four attributes of cause and so forth. Attachment is cause because it is a cause that produces the result of suffering. Attachment causes us to experience many sufferings in our daily life, we know this. Likewise, there is anger and so forth. True cessation refers to the cessation of such sufferings and their causes, attachment, hatred, and so forth. The method that brings about this cessation is meditation on emptiness. Emptiness is an illustration of true paths.

3B2C-2B7. Strive in the three trainings of the path

Train yourself always in higher morality,
Higher wisdom, and higher mind.
The more than one hundred and fifty trainings
Are perfectly subsumed in these three.

[53]

The higher training in morality is the seven abandonments of the three non-virtues of body and the four non-virtues of speech. The three non-virtues of body are killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct, while the four non-virtues of speech are lying, divisive speech, harsh words, and idle talk. The abandonment of these seven is the higher training in morality. One should try to keep this morality, which is natural morality. Mentally we should also try to give up covetousness, malice, and wrong view. We should keep this morality perfectly.

The higher training in wisdom is the realization of the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of persons. The selflessness of persons means that oneself, the person, does not exist

inherently, whereas the selflessness of phenomena means that the basis of designation such as the form aggregate, feeling aggregate, discrimination aggregate, compositional factors aggregate, and the consciousness aggregate do not exist inherently.

The higher training in concentration is a mind single-pointedly placed on the perfect meaning, for example, to meditate on selflessness or emptiness single-pointedly.

By putting effort into the higher training in morality, higher training in concentration, and higher training in wisdom one can achieve the state of liberation.

“The more than 150 trainings” refers to a fully-ordained monk who has 253 moralities which are to be safeguarded or a fully-ordained nun who has 364 trainings which are to be safeguarded. Novice monks and nuns have 36 vows or moralities in which they need to train. Male and female lay vow-holders who have complete ordination have five moralities or five trainings which they need to maintain. In this way one can achieve good qualities. If one wishes to achieve a good human rebirth in the next life, for example, the main cause is morality. Morality brings rebirth as a human being as well as that of even higher states. On the other hand, if one wishes also to be rich one needs to practice generosity. If one wishes to be attractive, to have a good-looking body, one needs to practice patience. If one wishes to have a strong and powerful body in the next life as a human being one needs to practice effort. If one want to have an extremely stable mind one must cultivate concentration. If one wishes to be an intelligent human being who can understand whatever one wants to know and is able to discriminate good from bad one needs to develop one’s wisdom.

3B2C-2B8. Strive in the way to protect mindfulness, the root of cultivating paths

Powerful lord, the Sugata taught that the mindfulness

Realizing the body is the single path to be traveled.

Through endeavoring in it, strongly protect it.

By degenerating one’s mindfulness, all qualities are destroyed.

[54]

Nagarjuna calls the king “powerful lord,” whereas “the Sugata” is Buddha Shakyamuni. Nagarjuna tells the king that he must realize his body correctly by trying in all behaviors of the body – walking, standing, sitting, and lying down – to be mindful of what the body is doing. Mindfulness is the single path to enlightenment. Therefore, one needs to put effort into being mindful. If one’s mindfulness degenerates, also the three trainings will degenerate. For example, if one forgets to keep pure morality one will engage in many negative activities whereby one’s morality will degenerate. Also if one’s mindfulness degenerates, also one’s concentration and wisdom will degenerate. In this way, the degeneration of one’s mindfulness brings about the degeneration of all one’s virtuous qualities. Therefore, never allow one’s mindfulness to degenerate but put strong effort into keeping one’s mindfulness. If mindfulness is always present, our virtuous actions will increase like we easily do actions with our hands. We need to bind our crazy mind to its object with mindfulness. For example, a crazy elephant when bound by chains to a post cannot cause harm.

3B2C-2B9. The cause of mindfulness, reflecting on death-impermanence

A. The unsuitability of attachment since life is impermanent and the body without essence

B. If even that which is solid and stable is ascertained to be destroyed, what need is there to mention that the body will be destroyed?

C. Mentally recoil from cyclic existence

3B2C-2B9A. The unsuitability of attachment since life is impermanent and the body without essence

Since life is impermanent due to there being many harms,

Like a water bubble blown by the wind,

It is most amazing that there is the leisure of awakening from sleep

By means of inhaling and exhaling the breath.

[55]

The body becomes dust in the end, dries up in the end, rots in the end,
And becomes filth in the end. Understand that, lacking essence,
It is a substratum that thoroughly disintegrates,
Is dispersed, decomposes, and is dissected.

[56]

Our human life or human body is important because there are many conditions that take our life. An example of external conditions is a weapon that kills, poison put in food or drink that kills, spirits, the hell guardians, and so forth that take our lives. There are also internal conditions such as the inner four elements which when unbalanced cause sickness which can take our life. Although our body may appear to be strong, in reality it is not; it is like a water bubble that disappears when blown by the wind. Therefore, there are many conditions that can take our life. Presently one is inhaling and exhaling but this can suddenly come to a stop in that if one exhales and does not inhale one dies. It can happen that in the evening one lies down to sleep and in the morning does not awaken due to having died. This happens, therefore our life is like the flame of a candle which can be extinguished by the wind.

Having died, our body is cremated and all that remains is ashes which are dispersed by the wind. The body can be well dressed and put in a beautiful coffin in the cemetery but if it is opened after a few years the body will be seen to have completely dried up, it disintegrates at a touch. In some places corpses are thrown into a river as happens in the Ganges River in India whereupon it is eaten by the various types of fish that live there. All that remains in the end is some bones. In the Tibetan tradition there are certain people who chop up the body, crush the bones, and mix the brain with flour and set it aside and give the rest to vultures. At the end the brain is given to them to eat, nothing remains. The body can also be thrown in a forest where it slowly rots and is eaten by animals and insects. In short, the body is without essence. Therefore, Nagarjuna told the king not be too attached to his body. We should also do likewise. Even due to some sicknesses the flesh rots and falls away exposing the bones beneath. Therefore, we should try to understand the situation of our body.

3B2C-2B9B. If even that which is solid and stable is ascertained to be destroyed, what need is there to mention that the body will be destroyed?

Since the ground, Meru, and the oceans are burnt up
By the seven blazing suns, whereby so too are the embodied,
Not even mere dust remaining, what need is there
To speak of human beings who are extremely frail?

[57]

Since even that which is stable and strong, like the ground mandala, Mount Meru, also the external and internal oceans, is burnt by the heat of the seven suns of the eon of destruction, there is no need to mention that our bodies are easily destroyed. The earth, water, and so forth of the world are destroyed, such that not even mere dust remains. Our bodies are small and fragile, therefore they easily disintegrate. Even the prick of a small thorn or the sting of a bee can cause our death. Therefore, we should think that our body is not strong. That our body is quickly destroyed means that our life quickly finishes. Therefore, in this life take the essence of this human body that has an intelligent mind able to know and learn many things by developing one's inner qualities such as calm abiding and special insight. We cannot escape death whether we hide ourselves under the ground or fly up into space. Death arrives, one cannot remain alive. Because our body will disintegrate, we should think "Right now I will take the essence of this body in order to develop inner realizations and qualities that will bring me good rebirths in the future."

3B2C-2B9C. Mentally recoil from cyclic existence

Thus, all of them are impermanent and selfless,
Lacking refuge, protectorless, and without an abode.
Best of humans, henceforth mentally recoil
From cyclic existence, as essenceless as the plantain tree. [58]

Sentient beings are born in cyclic existence by the force of actions and affliction, therefore all of them are impermanent due to disintegrating momentarily, and selfless. We have experienced many sufferings but they cannot give us refuge or protect us. Also our life does not depend on one body, that is, one rebirth, it changes in that at times there is higher rebirth, at times lower rebirth, we constantly change bodies. We constantly change rebirth, at times higher, at times lower, at times human being, at times dogs or cats, at times as kings and at times as toilet-cleaners. Therefore, in cyclic existence, places, bodies, wealth, and belongings do not have a stable essence like a plantain or banana tree. When the layers of bark of a plantain tree are removed it is found to be without essence. Since our bodies, places, wealth, and so forth are like this, Nagarjuna tells the king to renounce them. It is said that whether king or beggar at the time of death we are all the same in that one dies alone without a companion. Even though many people mill around the dead body of a king crying and many people accompany the flag-covered coffin to the cemetery, none of them can do anything. It is the same for a beggar who dies on the street whose body is perhaps thrown amongst the trash. Although their funerals are different, they are in the same state in that they must travel on alone unaccompanied. Therefore, one must put effort into practice.

3B2C-2B10. The greatly meaningful freedoms and endowments that are difficult to find

Since it is more difficult to acquire a human life after that of an animal
Than is it for the hole in a yoke and a turtle to meet,
By means of the power of a human being
Make it fruitful by practicing the holy Dharma. [59]

Even more foolish than one who cleans with vomit
A gold vessel adorned with jewels,
Is he who, having been born
A human being, commits negativities. [60]

A precious human rebirth with the eighteen qualities is difficult to find. The text mentions an example of the difficulty of finding it. If there is a yoke floating on the ocean and a blind turtle who rises to the surface once every hundred years it is very unlikely that the turtle happen to poke its head through the hole in the yoke. Taking a human rebirth after being born in the lower realms is as unlikely as this. Therefore, Nagarjuna pleads with the king not to waste his precious human body but to take its essence by using it to achieve higher rebirth and liberation through familiarizing himself with the creation of virtuous actions. Having achieved this human rebirth with the eighteen qualities, one must take its essence. If having achieved this body, one does not put effort but instead wastes it one is extremely foolish. It is like someone with a gold vase adorned with jewels who fills it with filth. Others seeing this would consider this person to be stupid. Similarly, someone who having taken rebirth as a human being constantly creates negative actions misuses his or her wisdom and is very foolish. Now that we have this human rebirth with the eighteen qualities we must abandon non-virtuous actions and engage in creating virtuous actions as if we do not do this we only cheat ourselves. We need to try to understand this advice given to us by Nagarjuna and to put effort into practice.

3B2C-2B11. The instructions of the four wheels

By dwelling in a favorable place,
Relying upon holy beings, naturally making good prayers,
And also having previously created merit,
You will possess the four great wheels.

[61]

The first is, having taken this rebirth, to abide in a place that enables one to generate a higher path or higher realizations and has conducive conditions. In addition, one should rely on holy beings who enable us to eliminate faults and develop our qualities. One should also make good prayers to achieve the good qualities or higher realizations of the path by applying oneself. In the past one also created vast merit. In this way one possesses the four wheels of the mahayana. Therefore, Nagarjuna tells the king that he must now put effort into achieving the path or realizations, that is, to achieve buddhahood. We too should strive to attain the state of a buddha.

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3B2C-2B12. The instructions of guru yoga

The Subduer taught reliance upon a virtuous spiritual friend
As thoroughly completing pure conduct;
Therefore, rely upon the holy beings. Through relying
On the Conqueror a great many attained peace.

[62]

In order to practice the Dharma well one needs to rely upon a virtuous spiritual friend. Initially, wishing from one's heart to practice the Dharma or a spiritual path, one needs to rely upon a spiritual teacher. This virtuous spiritual friend should know the complete causes of liberation or enlightenment, that is, how one needs to practice in order to achieve them. One should then listen to such a teacher. In addition to a teacher we also need pure conduct, that is, oneself has to put effort into pure conduct. We need to follow the path to liberation, in order to do this we need to rely on the holy beings. A holy being is one who properly engages in virtuous actions or pure conduct and does not engage in faulty conduct or mistaken practices. In short, a holy being is one who engages in virtuous actions and does not engage in non-virtuous actions. Those who wish to attain the state of liberation should depend on the Conqueror, the Buddha. For example, Buddha Shakyamuni taught many different levels of teachings, if we put effort into practicing them appropriately we too will attain the state of liberation. Many achieved peace, the state of nirvana, by doing so. Also there are many buddhas and foe-destroyers – the holy beings – all of whom relied upon another teacher such as Buddha Shakyamuni. It is said that the buddhas come from bodhisattvas, in one way this means that by generating the mind of enlightenment in one's own continuum and then by gradually achieving the path of accumulation, path of preparation, path of seeing, path of meditation one achieves the path of no-more-learning whereby those who have followed the mahayana path become buddhas. In another way this means that through depending on a teacher one generates the mind of enlightenment and so forth in one's continuum whereby one becomes a buddha; this is another way in which the buddhas depend on bodhisattvas in the sense of the bodhisattvas having been their teachers. Bodhisattvas do not arise without causes and conditions, in fact there are three main causes: great compassion, the mind of enlightenment, and correct view or the realization of emptiness. By practicing these three one becomes a higher and higher bodhisattva.

3B2C-2B13. The suitability of striving at the time of ??lacking unfavorable conditions and the destruction of favorable conditions

“To be born holding wrong views, as an animal,
Hungry ghost, or hell being, to be born where
The Conqueror’s speech is lacking, as a barbarian in a
Remote area, to be born stupid and foolish, [63]

Or as a long-life deity” are
The eight faulty and leisureless states.
Having found the leisure free from them,
Strive for the sake of averting rebirth. [64]

If one is born as any of these kinds of beings one will not be able to practice the Dharma as one will be without conducive conditions. One who holds wrong views is one who thinks that there are no past and future rebirths, that there is no law of cause and effect, or that the Three Jewels do not exist. Also if one is born as an animal, hungry ghost, or a being in hell one will not be able to practice the Dharma. Also if one is born where the teachings of the Buddha do not exist, a barbarian land, one will not be able to practice. To be born in a dark eon during which a buddha has not come or to be born when even the name of the Three Jewels is not heard one will not be able to practice the Dharma. On the other hand, even if one is born in a place surrounded by practitioners where the teachings of the Buddha exist but one is stupid and foolish one will not be able to understand the teachings. If one is born as a long-life god, a rebirth in the level of Without Discrimination of the fourth concentration, one will also be unable to practice the Dharma. To be born in the place, initially as a human being one develops the absorption without discrimination, whereby due to this cause one is later reborn as a god without discrimination. If one is without discrimination, it is not possible to practice. One is like a statue, although one is aware that one is born, afterward one remains unmoving even for a hundred eons and only at the time of death does one once again become aware that one will die. These are the eight states of non-leisure. Now that we are free from them we need to put effort into developing our inner qualities. We need to strive to avoid further rebirth in cyclic existence under the control of afflictions and actions. If we examine well, we will have that we have all of these eight qualities complete. Therefore, we need to put effort into practice in order to generate the path.

3B2C-2B14. Meditate in general on the shortcomings of cyclic existence

- A. The advice to meditate on the shortcomings of cyclic existence in general
- B. The fault of lacking certainty
- C. The fault of lacking satisfaction
- D. The fault of dying countless times
- E. The fault of being reborn countless times
- F. The fault in all ways of the high becoming low and prosperity becoming decline
- G. Reflect on the need to travel onward and to stay alone without a companion

3B2C-2B14A. The advice to meditate on the shortcomings of cyclic existence in general

Noble one, generate despair in regard to cyclic existence,
Source of many sufferings: being deprived of desired objects,
Death, sickness, aging, and the like.
Listen to but a few of its faults. [65]

Here Nagarjuna calls the king “noble one.” Although one desires to have something one is unable to obtain it, for example, someone wants a boyfriend or a girlfriend who is nice and kind but is unable to find such a partner. Perhaps one dies without finding it, or becomes sick, or gets old. There is the suffering of birth, the suffering of aging, the suffering of sickness, the suffering of death, the suffering of not obtaining a desired object, the suffering of losing a desired object that has been

obtained, the suffering of constantly encountering undesired objects, for example, meeting someone again and again whom we do not like; and the suffering of having contaminated appropriated aggregates, this body which is in the nature of suffering. For example, in dependence on this body we experience the suffering of heat, the suffering of cold, the suffering of hunger, and the suffering of thirst. This body brings us many types of suffering. This is because it is of the nature of suffering. Therefore, we need to try to generate renunciation of cyclic existence. Cyclic existence is the source of suffering, therefore we need to abandon it. How? By putting effort into practicing the path, meditating in order to develop love and the wisdom realizing selflessness or emptiness. More detail can be found in other texts.

3B2C-2B14B. The fault of lacking certainty

A father himself becomes a son, a mother herself becomes a wife.
Beings that were enemies become friends,
And vice versa; therefore, in cyclic existence
There is no certainty whatsoever.

[66]

Oneself can become a father or son, a mother or daughter, this changes in the cycle of rebirth. In this life, the person who is our father can become our son, that is, our father having died he can be reborn as one's son, even in the same life. In this way, there is no certainty, a person can be our father, then our son, our mother and then our daughter. Also someone who is an enemy can transform into a friend. Or a very close friend can later transform into an enemy. Therefore, friends and enemies are uncertain.

Towards our friends we generate attachment and for enemies hatred due to which we create negative actions that bring the result of suffering. Therefore, we need to first generate equanimity, to develop the same feeling toward all sentient beings, and then upon this base develop the thought that they are all our good friends. The Tibetan nomads say "Even one enemy is too many, even a hundred friends is too few." This means that we should not have even one enemy, but try to consider all beings as one's friends.

Since beginningless time we have been taking rebirth in cyclic existence, in each life we needed a mother, therefore there is no sentient being whom we can point to and say that he or she has not been our mother. Therefore, all sentient beings have been our mother and in this way they have all been our friends.

3B2C-2B14C. The fault of lacking satisfaction

Each one of us has drunk more milk
Than the four oceans, yet
In the cyclic existences of ordinary beings to follow
Much more than that is still to be drunk.

[67]

In the many rebirths we have taken we have drunk more milk than the water in the four oceans, these being the four great oceans that are located to each side of Mount Meru. Or to make the example more simple we can say that in Italy there are many rivers, many of the main cities being located on the shores of a river, and that we have drunk more milk than the water in these rivers. In spite of this, we are still not satisfied, we still want to drink more. For example, those who drink alcohol are never satisfied but want always to drink more. We need to strive to be satisfied by abandoning dissatisfaction and being satisfied with what we have. Until now we have drunk from our many mothers milk equaling the four oceans, and as long as we do not leave cyclic existence and achieve liberation we will continue to drink more. Therefore, now we should try to become free from cyclic existence and achieve the state of liberation. If we can do this, it would be the very best.

If we try, we will achieve some result. If we do not try, nothing will happen. Therefore, we need to change our mental attitude and put more emphasis on gaining the qualities of a spiritual path. It is said that if in regard to one's practice one is dissatisfied, this is good. Being dissatisfied with respect to our practice and having the desire to do more is excellent.

3B2C-2B14D. The fault of dying countless times

Each of our heaps of bones
Equals or even surpasses Meru. [68ab]

We have taken many rebirths and have then died. We have taken rebirth since beginningless time, however, our rebirths are not yet finished. If one were to heap up all the bones of these rebirths, the pile of our bones would be higher than Mount Meru. If our rebirths do not leave cyclic existence but continue to be born and die, the bones we leave behind will come to surpass the height of Mount Meru. We can see that there is constant need here in the West to enlarge cemeteries, to take over more space. Here in Italy the bones are removed from the large coffins and put in a smaller urn in order to make more space for others. In short, as long as we do not become free from cyclic existence our bones will continue to pile up.

3B2C-2B14E. The fault of being reborn countless times

Also, when counting the limit of one's mother with pellets
The size of juniper berries, the earth does not suffice. [68cd]

There are different types of birth sources: miraculous rebirth which does not require a mother, rebirth from a womb which necessitates a mother, rebirth from an egg which requires a mother, and rebirth from heat and moisture. We have taken rebirth infinite times from a womb, and in each of these rebirths we had a mother. Even if we were to make small pellets, the size of juniper berries, from the soil of the entire earth, the number of pellets would not equal that of our mothers. If we do not strive to abandon cyclic existence, also in the future we will continue to need countless mothers. In every rebirth we need a mother, in this way our mothers are countless on into the future. Therefore, we need to put effort into practicing Dharma in order to put an end to cyclic existence. In short, the number of mothers we have had is countless; likewise, the number of rebirths we have taken in cyclic existence is countless.

3B2C-2B14F. The fault in all ways of the high becoming low and prosperity becoming decline

1. The fault of the high becoming low again and again
2. Presenting the happiness of the desire realm as unreliable
3. Presenting the happiness that arises from an abode as unreliable
4. Presenting the happiness of playing in pleasant parks as what is to be mentally recoiled from
5. Presenting even the happiness of the higher realms as unreliable

3B2C-2B14F-1. The fault of the high becoming low again and again

Having been Shakra, worthy of the veneration of worldly beings,
Once again one falls to the earth by the force of actions.
Also having been a wheel-turning king,
Again in the cycle of existence one becomes a servant. [69]

We have been born at times as the lord of the gods of the realm of the Thirty-Three as Shakra or Indra. At that time we were worth of the veneration of all beings, but now once again we have fallen back to being human beings and perhaps in the next life we will fall even lower. Therefore, at

times we have taken rebirth as a being worthy of the veneration of all beings by the power of actions to be experienced in another life. There are different kinds of projecting actions: that which is to be experienced in this life, that which is to be experienced in the next life, and that which is to be experienced in a future life other than the next. By the power of projecting actions to be experienced in a future life one can be reborn either as a human being or as a being in the lower realms.

At other times we were born as a wheel-turning king, rich and powerful, but then once again one fell down to rebirth on the earth or even to a rebirth as an animal, hungry ghost, or hell being. In this way one goes up to high states but then falls down to lower states. This is one of the sufferings of cyclic existence.

Even in the world of human beings there are some who achieve higher political positions but later fall down and are even put in prison. Some perhaps even get out of jail and once again obtain a higher position, and then later fall down once again. We can see this with our eyes and hear about this with our ears.

3B2C-2B14F-2. Presenting the happiness of the desire realm as unreliable

Having long experienced the happiness of fondling
The breasts and waists of the daughters of high states,
Again one undergoes the unbearable contact in the hells
With instruments that have the power to grind and cut. [70]

For long periods of time one was reborn in the higher states of the desire realm, for example, among the Thirty-Three gods, the Four Great Kings, and so forth, where, fondling the breasts and waists of the goddesses, one experienced great bliss. However, after that one once again fell into the hells. By the power of previous actions, one takes rebirth in different levels. For example, one has taken rebirth in the hell where one's body is crushed and ground to powder between iron mountains. In another hell, black lines are drawn on one's body and it is cut into pieces with knives. In another hell one is torn to pieces by the sharp beaks of iron birds. We have already experienced all of these unbearable sufferings in previous lives. If we do not eliminate our contaminated actions and afflictions we will continue to experience such suffering. Therefore, even if we are unable to leave cyclic existence we need to create the causes for a good rebirth in the future.

3B2C-2B14F-3. Presenting the happiness that arises from an abode as unreliable

Think that having dwelled for a long time on the heights of Meru
Experiencing the pleasure of the ground giving way at the touch of your feet,
Once again the unbearable suffering of wandering
In Burning Ashes and Decomposed Corpses will strike. [71]

At times we have been born in beautiful places, where the soft and smooth ground gives way at the touch of our feet, experiencing great happiness. On the heights of Mount Meru which is made of four types of jewels one experienced happiness. Although it appears to be stable, it is unreliable as afterward one falls down. Where? Down to the hells where there are burning ashes into which we sink up to our knees burning our body. Or into a hell where we find ourselves buried in mud in which there are insects that sting our body. In these hells, from which there is no escape, the flesh completely separates from the bones. We experienced these hells in many previous lives and if we do not become free from cyclic existence we will have to experience them again. Therefore, we need to understand that although at times we are very happy, even in this human life, afterward there can come great suffering. Sometimes we may think "Now I am so happy, so very happy," but

then due to the arisal of conditions we come to think “I am so unhappy, I have so much suffering.” In this way we experience different levels of happiness and suffering.

3B2C-2B14F-4. Presenting the happiness of playing in pleasant parks as what is to be mentally recoiled from

Having played in beautiful gardens, chased by
The daughters of high states and delighting in them,
Again one’s legs, arms, ears, and nose will be cut
By the Grove of Sword-like Leaves. [72]

After resting in the gently flowing stream with golden lotuses
And the god’s daughters of beautiful complexion,
Once again one will enter the unbearably caustic,
Boiling water of the Extremely Hot River. [73]

In the high states of the gods there are beautiful gardens in which one sported with and delighted in the beautiful daughters of the gods. However, after some time once again one fell into the hell realm where there are many unfavorable conditions, for example, trees with leaves like swords that cut one’s legs, arms, eyes, tongue, and so forth due to which one experiences intense suffering. First one is in the extremely pleasant garden of the gods, then later one falls to the garden of the hells where the leaves of the trees cut one into pieces and one experiences unbearable suffering. Or perhaps one was first born in the beautiful river of the gods with water endowed with eight qualities, coolness that brings happiness and so forth, swimming happily, but later were born in a river of hell with boiling water like incandescent iron in which our body was burned and we experienced unbearable suffering. We have experienced this in the past and if we do not presently put effort into practicing perfectly due to the many non-virtuous actions we have accumulated we will once again experience such suffering in our future lives. Therefore, we need to think that actions are infallible, their result will be experienced. For this reason, we need to try in daily life, with mindfulness and introspection, to create good actions with our body, speech, and mind and to strive to make them even better.

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3B2C-2B14F-5. Presenting even the happiness of the higher realms as unreliable

Having attained the extremely great happiness of
The gods of the desire realm and the bliss, free from attachment, of Brahma,
Again one will undergo the interminable suffering
Of being fuel for the fires of Unrelenting Torment. [74]

Upon attaining the state of sun and moon,
The light of one’s body illuminates the entire world.
Yet having returned once again to thick darkness,
One will not be able to see even one’s own outstretched hand. [75]

The six levels of the desire realm gods are the Four Great Kings, the Thirty-Three, Free from Combat, Joyous, Enjoying Emanations, and Controlling Others’ Emanations. We have been born in, for example, Free From Combat where we experienced great happiness, although now perhaps we have forgotten it! We have also been in the Brahma realm free from the attachment to lower levels,

that is, to the six levels of the desire realm: the three unhappy migrations and three happy migrations. There we were even happier and experienced more bliss than that of the desire realm due to having separated from attachment to the desire realm. Yet afterwards we fell once again to hell where our bodies were burned. Having fallen into the worst of hells, Unrelenting Torment, our bodies are like fuel for the fire of this hell. The suffering that is experienced is extremely difficult to bear.

Other times we have been born as the gods of the sun or moon, the light of our body eliminated the darkness of the entire world. After that we once again fell into the extreme darkness, like that of the ocean depths. This refers to the darkness of the animal realm in the ocean which is so dense that one could not see the movement of one's own hand. There are so many beings there that they have difficulty even to move. It is said that the main place of animal rebirth is the ocean whereas others are scattered on the surface of the earth. In short, at times one is reborn with a body whose light illuminates the entire world, whereas at other times one is reborn in darkness so thick that one cannot see even one's own hand. This can happen to us again in the future, therefore we need to put effort now into abandoning non-virtuous actions and cultivating virtuous actions as in this way we will take rebirth in the happier states of cyclic existence.

3B2C-2B14G. Reflect on the need to travel onward and to stay alone without a companion

Such being the defects, take up the lamplight
Of the three types of merit;
For alone one enters the infinite darkness
That is undispeled by sun or moon.

[76]

If one does not create the virtues of the three doors, body, speech, and mind, one will find oneself alone without companions in the darkness. Therefore, Nagarjuna tells the king that through understanding that he will die he must create merit and not create non-virtue. The three types of merit, like a lamp, can eliminate darkness. Otherwise when one dies one will travel on alone unaccompanied to a place that is not illuminated by sun and moon. This will happen to us if we do not create virtue. We will take rebirth in infinite darkness and remain there for eons. Therefore, we need to create merit with our three doors by abandoning the three negativities of body, the four of speech, and the three of mind. If we do this we will not fall into the deep and dark abyss [of the lower realms], therefore now we have to create the light of virtue.

3B2C-2B15. Meditate individually on the shortcomings of cyclic existence

- A. Contemplate the sufferings of hell beings
- B. Contemplate the sufferings of animals
- C. Contemplate the sufferings of hungry ghosts
- D. Contemplate the sufferings of gods
- E. Contemplate the sufferings of antigods

3B2C-2B15A. Contemplate the sufferings of hell beings

1. Presenting [the sufferings of hell beings] in general
2. Presenting some particulars of their individual sufferings
3. Generating fear of [these sufferings]
4. The measure of the amount of suffering
5. The length of time for which [these sufferings] are experienced
6. The need to abandon their cause

3B2C-2B15A-1 Presenting [the sufferings of hell beings] in general

For the sentient beings who engage in faulty conduct
There will be perpetual suffering in the hells –

Reviving, Black Line, Very Hot,
Crushing, Crying, Unrelenting Torment, and so forth.

[77]

Sentient beings who engage in faulty conduct by the three doors, that is, who create the many different types of negative actions, will take rebirth in the eight hot hells of Reviving, Black Line, Crushing, Crying, Great Crying, Hot, Very Hot, and Unrelenting Torment. In addition, there are the four neighboring hells and the occasional hells, as well as the eight cold hells. These are described in the teachings on the Stages of the Path. An example of an occasional hell is recounted in the story of a man who went to visit a monastery and asked for permission to stay there for the night. Although the monks agreed they asked him not to look out at night. Wondering why, he saw that at night there was fire and the monks killed each other although during the day it appeared to be a normal quiet monastery. In fact as sunrise once again everything became as it had been the previous day. This is because in a previous life they had been monks who when doing pujas at night had used their food to make dough balls which they threw at each other in the darkness, unseen by the disciplinarian.

3B2C-2B15A-2. Presenting some particularities of their individual sufferings

- A. Presenting some particulars of the suffering of Crushing and Black Line Hells
- B. Presenting some particulars of the suffering of Very Hot Hell
- C. Presenting some particulars of the suffering of the neighboring hells
- D. Presenting some particulars of the suffering of Hot Hell

3B2C-2B15A-2A. Presenting some of the particulars of the suffering of Crushing and Black Line Hells

Some are ground like sesame seeds, similarly,
Others are pulverized like fine powder.
Some are cut with saws, still others are
Split with awful sharp-bladed axes.

[78]

Some beings are squeezed or ground as when oil is extracted from sesame seeds so that their eyes and so forth bulge out bleeding. Some of their bodies are pulverized into powder, just as wheat is ground into flour. Some are cut into pieces with saws, like wooden logs, the blades blazing with fire. The bodies of some are split by axes. These are some of the particular sufferings of the Crushing and Black Line Hells.

3B2C-2B15A-2B. Presenting some particulars of the suffering of Very Hot Hell

Likewise, into others is poured
Dense and incandescent molten metal.
Some are completely impaled on
Barbed and flaming iron spears.

[79]

In the Very Hot Hell the hell guardians melt iron into incandescent boiling liquid which they pour into the beings whereby their internal organs are completely burnt, all that remains is the lower part of the body yet these beings do not die. Some are impaled on burning tridents of iron or made to walk on burning iron barbs, like people engage in walking over burning embers. However, in hell the fires are much stronger and hotter, as soon as one touches them one is burnt up. In short, we should avoid rebirth in the hells!

3B2C-2B15A-2C. Presenting some particulars of the suffering of the neighboring hells

Some, overpowered by ferocious iron-fanged dogs,
Raise their hands to the sky.
Other powerless beings are pecked
By crows with sharp iron beaks and terrible claws. [80]

Some, when bitten by various worms and insects,
As well as tens of thousands of flies and black bees,
Unbearably large wounds are formed; due to being eaten,
They writhe and wail in pain. [81]

Some beings find themselves in gardens made of sword-like leaves and, attacked and bitten by ferocious animals with iron fangs, raise their arms to the sky wailing in great pain. Some beings are attacked by crows with iron beaks and claws. Powerless due to the force of actions, some climb mountains made of fire and are stung by various insects such as stinging bees that form wounds, whereby the insects eat one's brain and so forth. Others are stung by swarms of mosquito-like insects, without escape. Although we are not experiencing this now, if we do not purify our negative actions we may experience it in the future.

3B2C-2B15A-2D. Presenting some particulars of the suffering of Hot Hell

Some, mouths agape, are incessantly burned
In a heap of blazing embers.
Some are boiled, headfirst,
In great iron cauldrons, like rice dumplings. [82]

In this hell the suffering of great heat is experienced in that the hell guardians burn one's body in dense fire, such that we cannot even open our mouth. For example, it is like being thrown into the lava of a volcano. Others are boiled in cauldrons of molten iron, like rice bubbling in boiling water, whereby the skin, flesh, and bones completely separate. Although one experiences great suffering, still one does not die, it only happens all over again.

3B2C-2B15A-3. Generating fear of [these sufferings]

The evil ones who are not frightened in a thousand ways
Upon hearing of the immeasurable sufferings of the hells –
Kept apart from them until their breath ceases –
Are the nature of vajras. [83]

If even seeing drawings, hearing about, recalling,
Reading about, or making images of the hells
Generates fear, what need is there to mention
When this intolerable fruition is experienced? [84]

Having created negative actions we will experience the sufferings of the hell realm. Upon dying, when we exhaled and no longer inhale, in the very next instant one falls into the suffering of the hells. In this way the hell realms are not far from us, rather they are very close. Those who hear about this suffering should generate fear. However, there are those who do not fear them but continue to constantly create non-virtues, such beings' hearts are said to be as hard as vajras or diamonds. On the other hand, there are those who hear about the suffering of the hells experiences fear. Others seeing drawings of the various sufferings of hell experience fear. Some hearing about the hells from others generate fear. Some who try to imagine the hells or read about them are

thoroughly frightened. Due to this fear, one strives to avoid this rebirth by purifying negative actions and creating virtuous actions whereby the fruitional result of rebirth in the hells will not have to be experienced. Since even seeing a drawing of the hells causes fear, there is not need to mention how much fear there will be when one experiences this suffering directly. Therefore, we need to avoid experiencing this result by putting effort into creating virtuous actions.

3B2C-2B15A-4. The measure of the amount of suffering

Just as among all happinesses
The extinction of craving is the lord of happiness,
So too among all sufferings
Is the unbearable suffering of the hell of Unrelenting Torment. [85]

The suffering here of being violently stabbed
By three hundred spears for a day does not
Approximate even the tiniest suffering of the hells,
Nor does it equal even a fraction. [86]

Among the many types of happiness, the best is the abandonment of craving for cyclic existence. This is real happiness. In the same way, the worst suffering is that of rebirth in the hell of Unrelenting Torment. This is extremely unbearable suffering which is the result of one's non-virtuous actions. Therefore, we need to think to create virtuous actions and abandon non-virtuous actions in that virtuous actions bring happiness and non-virtuous actions bring suffering. If in this world one human being were stabbed by three hundred spears for one day, he or she would experience intense suffering. However, the suffering of the hells is much greater, even the suffering of the occasional hells is much greater than this. Therefore, there are no examples among the sufferings of human beings even close to the suffering that exists in the hell realm. However, one can imagine the suffering that one would experience if someone were to iron one's body with a burning iron, torture one with violent electric shocks, or kill one by means of binding us to an electric chair.

3B2C-2B15A-5. The length of time for which [these sufferings] are experienced

Even though such extremely unbearable suffering
Is experienced for a billion years,
One will not be freed from that life
As long as one's non-virtue is not exhausted. [87]

The sufferings that are experienced in the hell realms are unbearable, yet they are experienced for billions of years. Why are they experienced for such a long period? It is due to having created heavy negative actions. Even if one takes such a rebirth and suffers for a billion years, it will not come to an end, that is, one will not die, until the cause, negative actions, is exhausted. Instead one will continue to live and to experience this suffering. Therefore, we should think that if even a small negative action is not purified it will not go to waste but will bring the experience of suffering. One will experience this alone, the result cannot be shared with others. If we create an action, whether virtuous or non-virtuous, if it is not purified it will not be wasted. Thinking in this way, understand that the law of cause and effect is infallible and true. In whatever situation we find ourselves, we should try to eliminate our negative actions and create positive ones.

3B2C-2B15A-6. The need to abandon their cause

The seeds of these results of non-virtue are
Faulty conduct of body, speech, and mind.
You should exert yourself diligently by every means
To not commit even the slightest.

[88]

The results of non-virtue are suffering such as the sufferings of the hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals. However, among these three lower realm, the greatest suffering is that of the hells. The seeds, or causes, of these sufferings are one's faulty conduct created with body, speech, and mind. Therefore, Nagarjuna says to the king to strive diligently to not create even the smallest of faulty actions but instead to strive to create only virtuous actions. The result of even a small negative action will not go to waste but will bring the experience of suffering. Thinking in this way, try to use one's wisdom and intelligence together with method to not create non-virtuous actions. However, if one creates a negative action immediately purify it. In the evening before going to sleep check what one did that day, that is, examine one's own mind, speech, and body to see what kind of actions one created that day, and if one did something bad purify it and if one did something good then praise oneself and rejoice. If one did some virtuous actions dedicate it as a cause that all sentient beings may achieve buddhahood. If a small bit of water is put in the ocean as long as that ocean does not dry up neither will that little bit of water, similarly, if we dedicate our virtues, small or big, that all sentient beings achieve buddhahood then as long as all sentient beings have not achieved buddhahood our virtue will remain.

Tuesday morning, 31 December 2002

3B2C-2B15B. Contemplate the sufferings of animals

1. Contemplate the sufferings of animals in general
2. Contemplate the sufferings of particular [animals]

3B2C-2B15B-1. Contemplate [the sufferings of animals] in general

In an animal birth-source there are the various sufferings
Of being killed, bound, beaten, and more.
For those who have abandoned the virtues that bring peace
There is the extremely intolerable eating of one another.

[89]

We already know the suffering of animal. The Sanskrit word for animal is *tiryak*, meaning "those that go bent over." Some animals are used by human beings and are killed in many different ways, for example, hunters who first release captive animals and then go out to hunt and kill them. Others are bound by ropes and then killed or beaten or used in different ways. We use their wool, bones, skin, and so forth. Human beings also use some animals for carrying heavy burdens and when the animals do not move they are beaten. As a result of having abandoned virtuous actions, they experience many sufferings and are also foolish and stupid. In addition, they eat each other. In this way they have many different types of suffering. We see this, so there is not much to say.

3B2C-2B15B-2. Contemplate the sufferings of particular [animals]

Some die for the sake of pearls,
Their wool, bones, flesh, and skin.
Other powerless ones are put to work with blows
By kicks, slaps, whips, hooks, and prods.

[90]

Oysters are killed in order to take the pearls which are made into jewelry. Others are shaved and their wool is taken. Others are killed for their bones, for example, elephants are killed for their tusks. Many are killed in order to eat their meat. Some are killed for their skin to make clothes, hats, and so forth. In this way animals are not free, they are dominated by human beings who cause them suffering with blows. Horses, buffalo, donkey, elephants, and oxes are put to use. Horses are used for riding, racing, carrying loads, and so forth. Buffaloes are used for their milk. Donkeys are used mainly for transporting loads, in order to make them move they are harshly beaten. In Lhasa some forty years ago I saw many Chinese military men who walking along beside a donkey continually beat it with sticks, its body was completely swollen due to the beating until it fell to the ground and died. They then opened a slit in the body and blew into it until it became like a balloon. When I asked why they had done this, they said that it made the flesh taste better. Elephants are subdued by means of hooks, in this way human beings are able to tame an animal that is even much bigger than themselves such that afterward it does whatever it is ordered to do. In this way animals are used by human beings who cause them much suffering.

3B2C-2B15C. Contemplate the sufferings of hungry ghosts

1. Contemplate the sufferings of hungry ghosts in general
2. The particulars of their individual sufferings
3. The length of time for which [these sufferings] are experienced
4. Identifying their cause

3B2C-2B15C-1. Contemplate the sufferings of hungry ghosts in general

Among hungry ghosts there is constant suffering
Produced by being deprived of the desirable.
They undergo terrible misery created by
Hunger and thirst, cold and heat, fatigue and fear.

[91]

Not only is there the sufferings of hell beings and animals, there is also the suffering of hungry ghosts. The main cause for being reborn as a hungry ghost is to not have practiced generosity, that is, to have been miserly and unable to give away even small things. Constantly thinking “I cannot give as if I do I will become poor,” one is reborn as a hungry ghost and experiences the suffering of hunger and thirst, cold and heat, and so forth. For example, they may see a tree with fruit or a river in the distance but when they come near there are beings with hammers who beat them, with swords that strike them, with nooses that bind them, and so forth and prevent them from obtaining the fruit and so forth. These are the general sufferings of hungry ghosts, which are unbearable. We need to think about them.

3B2C-2B15C-2. The particulars of their individual sufferings

- A. The particular of the suffering of having inner obscurations
- B. The particular of the suffering of tongues of fire
- C. The particular of the suffering of some lowly classes
- D. Presenting other particulars of their sufferings

3B2C-2B15C-2A. The particular of the suffering of having inner obscurations

Some with mouths like the eye of a needle and
Stomachs the size of mountains are tortured by hunger,
Yet they do not have the strength to seek/eat
Even the slightest bit of discarded filth.

[92]

Some hungry ghosts have stomachs the size of mountains but tiny throats, even if they find some discarded filth and try to eat it, it cannot pass through their throats. In spite of this they do not die, due to their previous actions they have a lifespan of a minimum of five hundred years and constantly think of food and drink but are unable to find it. Even if they find something they are unable to eat it. Some human beings also have an illness that prevents them from swallowing food whereby a tube has to be put in their stomachs in order to nourish them. This is a particular suffering that we can see with our eyes. It is due to have created particular actions, which although we cannot see they can be seen by the omniscient beings.

3B2C-2B15C-2B. The particular of the suffering of garlands of tongues of fire

Some with naked bodies of skin and bone
Are like the dried tips of palm trees.
Others, flames coming from their mouths at night,
Eat for food the sand that falls into their blazing mouths. [93]

The bodies of hungry ghosts are dried up, even their blood, so they become only skin and bone and naked they are like the dried tips of palm trees. Some are black like burnt wood. At night flames of fire issues forth from their mouths. If they find something to eat or drink it becomes a cause for the fire burning in their stomachs to blaze even stronger. However, because they are hungry whatever they find they put it in their mouths but the suffering only becomes stronger. This is a particular suffering of hungry ghosts that they have tongues of fire coming from their mouths and whatever they find to eat or drink it only becomes the cause of more suffering. If were to be born in this kind of rebirth we would not be able to bear it.

3B2C-2B15C-2C. The particular of the suffering of some lowly classes

Some lowly classes, not finding even such filth
As pus, excrement, blood, and the like,
Attack each other and eat the pus
From the festering goiters on their throats. [94]

Some lowly classes of hungry ghosts even though they look in every direction for food and drink cannot find anything good to eat or drink. Although they look for it, they are also unable to find pus, excrement, blood, and so forth. When they meet each other they become agitated and angry, whereby they beat each other. On their necks are large goiters. In this way they suffer. Some human beings of lowly class also act like this. For example, in India the lower castes work all day and cannot enter the kitchen of brahmins in order to receive food but must remain outside on the veranda.

3B2C-2B15C-2D. Presenting other particulars of their sufferings

To them in summertime even the moon is hot,
While in winter even the sun is cold.
By their merely gazing at them,
Trees become without fruit and even rivers dry up. [95]

Although moonlight usually gives coolness, for the hungry ghosts the moonlight is hot and burns their bodies. In the winter the rays of the sun are felt to be very cold, not hot. This is due to their actions in the past. When they see a tree with much fruit and run toward it, it becomes a dried up tree without any fruit. When they see rivers and thinking to find water to drink they run toward it

but when they come nearby it is completely dried up. Some see fruit or water, but there are many guardians holding weapons who prevent them from arriving their. This appearance is due to their actions. Some see water but when they approach it they see only pus. In this way they experience many sufferings. These are the different sufferings of hungry ghosts.

3B2C-2B15C-3. The length of time for which [these sufferings] are experienced

Undergoing suffering without interruption,
Some with bodies bound by the strong noose
Of actions that are faulty conduct
Do not die for five thousand or even ten thousand years. [96]

The lifespan of hungry ghosts is like this. They continually experience suffering without interruption while living for five thousand or ten thousand years. Why? This is due to previous actions which are like nooses binding one to this rebirth and not allowing them to escape. Human beings who do not have food and drink even for ten days experience unbearable suffering of hunger and thirst. If we were to stay one year without food and drink we would die. However, hungry ghosts, due to their actions, do not die even though they experience much suffering. Therefore, we should develop the mind of giving thinking to give one's wealth, body, and virtues as well as protection and love to sentient beings.

3B2C-2B15C-4. Identifying their cause

In this way, the diverse sufferings
Of the hungry ghosts acquire a single taste.
The cause of this is a being's delight in avarice.
The Buddha taught miserliness to be ignoble. [97]

The previously mentioned sufferings of hungry ghosts of hunger and thirst, heat and cold, fatigue, and so forth are of one taste, that is, all hungry ghosts are the same in experiencing suffering, they are not different. What is the cause? It is avarice and miserliness, that is, in a previous life not wanting to give but wanting to keep everything for oneself. One was tight-fisted, unable to open one's fingers and give. Due to being tight-fisted, one now has to experience these various sufferings. Also having taken rebirth as a human being, one is unable to find necessities such as food, clothing, a place to sleep, and so forth. Then why does one take this rebirth as a human being? It is because in a previous life one practiced morality, for this reason one is born as a human being but due to not having practiced generosity but having been miserly one is unable to find food and drink, clothes, shelter, and so forth. They are unable to receive even that which others want to give and in this way every day many human beings die of hunger, thirst, and sickness. Having been miserly is the reason that even if one is born as a human being one is poor. Buddha Shakyamuni said that such beings are not noble beings.

3B2C-2B15D. Contemplate the sufferings of gods

1. Contemplate the suffering of death-transference
2. Contemplate the suffering of falling to a lower state

3B2C-2B15D-1. Contemplate the suffering of death-transference

- A. Actual topic
- B. Identifying the signs of death

3B2C-2B15D-1A. Actual topic

Although in the higher states there is great happiness,
Greater than this is the suffering of their death-transference.
Through thinking in this way, noble ones do not
Crave for the higher states that come to an end.

[98]

Even if one takes higher rebirth as a god of the desire realm with great wealth and experiences great happiness for many years, at the time of death there are signs that arise causing great suffering which is even greater than the previous happiness. In this way there is intense mental suffering, yet they cannot do anything, they will die. Therefore, even if one takes higher rebirth having every excellence, one day, because they are essenceless, they will be exhausted, causing one suffering, and dying one will fall to a lower state, that of the hells, hungry ghosts, and animals. If one were to be born as a human being that would be better but this is difficult to obtain. Hence, there are many problems even having taken a higher rebirth. Human beings sometimes experience suffering, sometimes happiness, sometimes suffering, sometimes happiness.

3B2C-2B15D-1B. Identifying the signs of death

The color of one's body becomes unattractive,
One comes to dislike one's cushion, one's flower garland wilts,
One's clothing takes on an unpleasant odor, and
Sweat, which previously it was without, arises on one's body;

[99]

These are the five signs portending death in the higher states.
They occur for the gods who abide in the higher states,
Like human beings on earth who are about to die
Have signs of their portending death.

[100]

There are signs that death is approaching. For example, while previously one's body was attractive now it becomes ugly in that the beautiful color degenerates. One comes to dislike one's cushion, that is, one no longer wants to stay on one's cushion. One's flower garland which was very beautiful in color and perfume, wilts. Previously one's clothing did not have an odor and did not become dirty, comes to smell and becomes dirty. Whereas previously one's body did not sweat, now it begins to sweat. Due to these five signs of death, the gods experience extremely great mental suffering. Since the gods who abide in the higher states experience this suffering at the time of death, there is no need to mention that human beings also suffering when they see the signs of their approaching death. Some cry out "Help me, I am falling down." Some become very cold and asked to be covered in blankets. The nostrils draw inward, this being a sign of death. The tongue thickens and becomes blue in color. These are signs of death of human beings. One can check when oneself is about to die in that in the moonlight if one puts one's fist on one's forehead one will see a gap between one's hand and wrist. This is mentioned in some texts on the transference of consciousness. Also one's body takes on the smell of death. These are the signs of death.

3B2C-2B15D-2. Contemplate the suffering of falling to a lower state

If upon transferring from the world of the gods
One is without some remnants of virtue,
Powerlessly one will come to dwell as is fitting
As an animal, hungry ghost, or hell being.

[101]

If having taken rebirth among the six types of desire realm gods, when one dies what will happen?
If one does not have any remnants of virtuous actions left for the taking of another god rebirth, that

is, these virtues are completely exhausted, one will fall down. One is powerless and falls into an animal rebirth, hungry ghost rebirth, or even to a rebirth in hell. Then one will experience the sufferings of these realms, for example, born as an animal one will experience the suffering of that particular type of animal, some having more suffering and some having less. For example, there are dogs and cats that belong to a rich family that have good food and a good place to live, that is, they are born as animals but live like human beings. There are also horses and so forth that are kept by human beings and are well cared for. For example, cows and buffalo are taken care of and the place they live is regularly cleaned in order that they give milk from which is made butter, yogurt, and so forth. However, even though they are taken care of they are still animals and suffering due to being stupid. As a hungry ghost there is more suffering, and in the hell realm there is constant suffering. Therefore, if one takes rebirth in any of these three realms one will suffer. Why does one take this rebirth? It is due to having created negative actions, that is, negative projecting actions and negative actualizing actions, whereby powerlessly and without protection one will take rebirth in the lower realms.

We need to think what kind of actions bring good results and which bring bad results. Then, we need to always be mindful to not create non-virtuous actions and to strive to create virtuous actions. However, if we carelessly create non-virtuous actions we need to purify it by means of certain practices as in this way we will once again take a good rebirth. We need to take a rebirth in which we are happy so that we can put energy into developing an inner path.

Tuesday afternoon, 31 December 2002

3B2C-2B15E. Contemplate the sufferings of antigods

Also as an antigod there is great mental suffering
Due to their naturally hating the glory of the gods.
Although they are endowed with intelligence,
They do not see the truth due to the obscuration of that migration. [102]

The antigods have strong jealousy with respect to the gods. Due to their strong pride, seeing the belongings of the god, they generate hatred which brings them strong mental suffering due to jealousy. For this reason they fight with the gods but then the bodies of the antigods bodies and limbs are cut and so forth whereby they experience many sufferings. In addition, they are separated from desirable objects. In this way, they experience many different sufferings. Although they have intelligence or wisdom, they have fruitional obscurations due to which they are unable to see the truth. They have strong jealousy, like a burning fire within them, due to which they fight with the gods but always lose. In the teachings on the Stages of the Path it is said that the jambu tree has its roots in the realm of the antigods but its fruit ripens in the realm of the gods whereby they gods pick and enjoy it, therefore this is another reason that they fight with the gods. In addition it is said that the female antigods are extremely beautiful due to which the gods take them away to their land, this being another reason for the antigods to fight with the gods. However, they always lose.

3B2C-2B16. Reflect on the way to exert strong effort for the purpose of abandoning cyclic existence and attaining nirvana

- A. The source of the many harms produced in cyclic existence
- B. The need to quickly accomplish nirvana
- C. Identifying its cause

3B2C-2B16A. The source of the many harms produced in cyclic existence

Since cyclic existence is like this, there are no good rebirths
As gods or human beings, hell beings,
Hungry ghosts, or animals. Birth is
To be understood as the container of many harms. [103]

In short, it is necessary to abandon actions and afflictions or obscurations, the causes of cyclic existence, in order to stop taking rebirth in cyclic existence. We need to put effort into this. Whether we take rebirth as a god, antigod, human being, animal, hungry ghost, or hell being, as any of these six types of rebirth, none of them is any good. Therefore, we need to generate renunciation of cyclic existence. Until now we have wandered in cyclic existence due to which there have been many problems, but now there is no longer need to wander as if we continue to wander we will continue to experience fear and suffering. Therefore, we need to strive to abandon the mental afflictions and contaminated actions.

3B2C-2B16B. The need to quickly accomplish nirvana

Even if your head or clothing were to suddenly catch fire,
You should forsake putting it out and
Instead strive for the sake of ending reincarnation.
There is no other purpose superior to that. [104]

It is necessary to achieve nirvana very quickly, therefore we need to quickly eliminate the harm from taking rebirth in cyclic existence by the force of afflictions and actions. For example, if our head or hair or clothing were to catch on fire one would immediately strive to put out the fire. When I stayed in Buxaduar in West Bengal there was a family in which one man was responsible for taking care of filling the water tank and sending it to the monastery where there were 1500 monks of the four Tibetan traditions. However, sometimes this man, who was a brahmin, would get drunk with his Nepali friends and go to visit a Nepalese woman who was a brahmin with two young children. One time he was to visit her in the evening to eat dinner but arrived late, however as the food was cold he refused to eat. Saddened, she went outside and covered herself with oil, lit a match, and, wearing a synthetic sari, caught fire and died. This story illustrates that we need to quickly abandon our afflictions and contaminated actions in order to quickly become free from cyclic existence and achieve nirvana. This is our main aim or purpose. To achieve nirvana means to achieve everlasting happiness.

3B2C-2B16C. Identifying its cause

By means of morality, wisdom, and concentration
Achieve nirvana, the stainless state of subdued peace,
Ageless, deathless, and inexhaustible,
Free from earth, water, fire, wind, sun and moon. [105]

The three are important: pure morality, wisdom, and concentration. By means of these three higher trainings one can travel the path to the state of liberation or nirvana with or without remainder. Having achieved a nirvana without remainder one experiences complete peace, that is, the stainless state of subdued peace. A nirvana with remainder means that there is a remainder, this being contaminated aggregates that are together with nirvana. Whichever of the two nirvanas one achieves, both are stainless because all the afflictions, the contaminations, have been abandoned. In this way there is no aging and no death. The four external elements, earth, water, fire, and wind, are not necessary. Also one no longer needs to depend on the sun and the moon. One has achieved the highest state, that of nirvana. Therefore, we need to achieve nirvana. First we achieve a nirvana with

remainder and then slowly a nirvana without remainder. This means that the contaminated appropriated aggregates are given up and one attains a mental body or an uncontaminated body.

3B2C-3. The way to generate the path of seeing in your continuum

- A. Actual meaning
- B. Strive in the two, calm abiding and special insight – the principal common causes
- C. Do not contemplate bad views
- D. Practice the path of the twelve dependent-relations

3B2C-3A. Actual meaning

Mindfulness, the thorough discernment of phenomena, effort,
Joy, pliancy, meditative stabilization, and equanimity:
These seven are the branches of enlightenment,
The collection of virtues for the attainment of nirvana.

[106]

In order to achieve nirvana one must first achieve the path of seeing and the seven branches of enlightenment. During the path of seeing, to not forget the observed object that is the four noble truths is mindfulness. The branch of entity is the wisdom that thoroughly and completely discerns what is to be abandoned and what is to be adopted, what is big and what is small, and so forth. The branch of definite emergence is the joyous effort that delights in virtue. We also need joy, the branch of benefit, that is the mental happiness regarding the observed object, the four noble truths. In addition, we need pliancy of body and mind that cannot be changed by afflictions and is therefore very stable. Mental and physical pliancy means that whatever practice one puts effort into, for example, staying in meditation position for many hours, one's body and mind are tireless and stable. One's mind does not scatter due to distractions but abides on its object. We also need meditative stabilization which cannot be moved or changed by the mental afflictions. We also need the equanimity that is not disturbed by laxity and excitement. These seven branches of enlightenment are necessary prior to achieving nirvana on the path of seeing. This collection of virtues is the cause for the attainment of nirvana.

3B2C-3B. Strive in the two, calm abiding and special insight – the principal common causes

Without wisdom there is no concentration;
Also, without a concentration there is no wisdom.
When both exist, the ocean of existence
Becomes like [the water in] an ox's hoofprint.

[107]

Without wisdom one cannot achieve a concentration because all mundane and supramundane qualities are generated in dependence on wisdom. Without a concentration it is not possible to realize the meaning of selflessness. If there is no wisdom of individual investigation regarding selflessness, there is no special insight. the special insight observing selflessness, also single-pointed meditative equipoise on the observed object.

In order to achieve special insight one must first achieve calm abiding. One needs the unification of single-pointed meditative equipoise on the observed object and the wisdom understanding selflessness in order to quickly dry up the ocean of cyclic existence just as the water in an ox's hoofprint is quickly and easily dried up. In this way one will achieve real happiness and real freedom. Therefore, we need to quickly achieve these qualities, the union of calm abiding and special insight. This path can cut the root of cyclic existence.

Among these two, calm abiding and special insight, the main one is special insight. If one does not have the special insight that is the wisdom discriminating the meaning of emptiness or suchness, the profound, even though one has calm abiding or even an actual concentration or

formless absorption one will not be able to cut the root of cyclic existence. Even if one meditates for eons one will not be able to abandon cyclic existence because the root of cyclic existence is the apprehension of a self and this must be eliminated by the wisdom realizing selflessness.

This in general is not an easy subject, however some people may find it easy to understand due to the imprints on one's mental continuum of previous study and meditation which ripen when the conditions are encountered. However, we should try to first intellectually understand selflessness and then generate an experience of it. If we use reasoning, we will understand selflessness or emptiness more easily. Having understood it intellectually, by putting effort slowly one will come to a realization of selflessness or emptiness.

The person depends on the aggregates, without the aggregate the person or being does not exist. Therefore, there is the person and the basis of designation, the four or five aggregates. In this way we can understand that the person does not exist independently and singly. The person is therefore selfless.

3B2C-3C. Do not contemplate bad views

The Kinsman of the Sun taught that there are
Fourteen unpredicted views in the world.
Do not contemplate them,
For the mind will not be pacified by them.

[108]

The Kinsman of the Sun is Buddha Shakyamuni. In a previous life there was a meditator named Gautam who lived in and meditated in a sugarcane field. One day the queen together with her beautiful attendants saw the meditator and generated great faith in him. The king became very angry with her for following this sage and accused her of being in love with him. The king had the meditator impaled on a trident and lit on fire and as he was dying, the buddhas seeing that his lineage would finish, blessed his bodily winds cooling his body and three drops of semen fell on to the sugarcane forming three eggs which due to the sunshine opened up and three boys were born. In this way, the lineage of continued and for this reason Buddha Shakyamuni is called "Kinsman of the Sun."

The Buddha taught not to contemplate the fourteen unpredicted views:

- four dependent on a beginning point: the self and the world are permanent, are impermanent, are both, and are neither;
- four dependent on a end point: the self and the world have an end, do not have an end, have both an end and do not have an end, and have neither;
- four dependent on passed beyond sorrow: the Tathagata, One Gone Like This, has passed away and exists, has not passed away and exists, both, and neither;
- two dependent on body and life-force: they are one substance and they are different substances.

These are views of ancient non-Buddhist schools, thus self means an independent self. The world refers to that which is used by such a self. Both the self, the utilizer, and the objects of its use do not exist truly. Nothing exists concretely or independently.

The Buddha said that it was better not to reflect upon these fourteen views as they cannot pacify the mind. On the other hand, if one thinks about these wrong views one's suffering will only increase because our mental poisons increase. If the mental poisons increase one is unable to achieve peace.

3B2C-3D. Practice the path of the twelve dependent-relations

1. Actual topic
2. The way to see the suchness of phenomena, its result

3B2C-3D1. Actual topic

The Subduer taught that from ignorance,
Action strongly arises; from that, consciousness;
From that, name and form; from that
The six sources completely arise; from them, contact. [109]

From contact, feeling completely arises;
From the basis that is feeling, craving arises.
From craving, grasping is produced;
From that, becoming; from becoming, there is birth. [110]

When birth exists, there arises very strongly
A heap of sufferings such as sorrow, sickness, and aging,
Being deprived of the desirable, and the fear of death.
By stopping birth, all this will cease. [111]

These are the twelve links. The first is the link of ignorance which is to not know selflessness or suchness, or the conception of a self. This is the conception that the person to be inherently or truly existent or self-sufficient substantially existent. From this ignorance comes actions, that is, karmic formations or projecting actions that project a future rebirth. There are meritorious karmic formations, demeritorious karmic formations, and immovable karmic formations. The demeritorious project rebirth in one of the three lower realms: the hell, hungry ghost, and animal realms. The meritorious project rebirth in the desire realm as human beings, antigods, or gods. The immovable project rebirth in the form and formless realms. Having created a projecting action or karmic formation, it leaves an imprint on the consciousness. The consciousness that is the base or support of the imprints is called the link of consciousness. From it comes the fourth link of name and form. Upon conception in the mother's womb the link of name and form is established. "Name" refers to the last four aggregates: the feeling aggregate, discrimination aggregate, compositional factor aggregate, and consciousness aggregate. The form aggregate is what is called "form." It is composed of the mind that enters the union of the mother's egg and father's sperm. The period of development of embryo in the mother's womb until the six sources are completed is the fifth link, the link of the six sources. Then, the period up until the object, faculty, and consciousness meet is the link of contact. Contact then produces feeling, this is the link of feeling. Pleasant feeling produces craving or attachment, this is the link of craving. The increase of this craving is called "grasping," this is the link of grasping. The ripening of the imprint, whether virtuous or non-virtuous, that was previously left on the consciousness due to the conditions of craving and grasping is called "becoming." This is an action that is called an "actualizing action." This brings rebirth, if as a human being, in the mother's womb, this is the link of birth. After this the baby develops and is born, it then grows, the body changing, this being called the link of aging. The link of death can even occur in the mother's womb as sometimes an embryo dies but it can also happen after birth. The link of death is the cutting of the relationship between body and mind in that there is the cessation of their union with the life-force.

Having been born one experiences a heap of sufferings such as sorrow, sickness, and aging, being deprived of the desirable, and the fear of death.

Wednesday morning, 1 January 2003

How are the twelve links ceased? By the power of the mental afflictions and actions we take rebirth, due to which there is also aging and death. If birth ceases, then aging-death cease. How is birth

ceased? If becoming, the actualizing action, ceases, then birth ceases. Due to what does becoming cease? By ceasing grasping, the ninth link, becoming ceases. Due what does grasping cease? By ceasing craving, the eighth link, the link of grasping ceases. By ceasing feeling, the seventh link, the link of craving ceases. By ceasing contact, the sixth link, the link of feeling ceases. By ceasing the six sources, the fifth link, then the link of contact ceases. By ceasing name and form, the fourth link, the link of six sources ceases. By ceasing consciousness, the third link, the link of name and form ceases. By ceasing karmic formations, the second link, the link of consciousness ceases. By ceasing ignorance, the first link, the link of karmic formations ceases. In this way, with the cessation of ignorance and consequently all twelve links, one achieves nirvana. How is the link of ignorance or the conception of a self ceased? It is ceased by meditating on selflessness.

3B2C-3D2. The way to see the suchness of phenomena, its result

Dependent and related arising is the most cherished and
Profound of treasures of the Conqueror's speech.
Whoever correctly sees it, sees the buddha –
The supreme knower of thusness.

[112]

Both nirvana and cyclic existence are empty of inherent existence, not the slightest atom is established inherently. They are mutually dependent and related, they do not exist inherently. Therefore, by realizing interdependence one will realize the lack of inherent existence. Therefore, among the teachings of the Buddha the path of dependent-arising or dependent-relation is to be cherished. In this way, we will understand the essence of the Buddha's teachings and scriptures. Then, we will realize that all functioning things are not produced inherently because they are not produced from self, other, both, and without cause. This is said by Nagarjuna in *Fundamental Wisdom*, this reason is called the diamond sliver reasoning. Even a sliver of a diamond can cut other material, for example, a piece of glass. We need to understand that all phenomena are not produced from self, if they were to arise from self they would not need to depend on causes and conditions. By means of these reasons one will come to realize that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence and in this way, developing higher and higher realizations, one will achieve buddhahood.

3B2C-4. The way to generate the path of meditation in your continuum

- A. Actual meaning
- B. The way to meditate on the observed objects and aspects of the four truths
- C. Contemplate the way it is not necessary to become discouraged when accomplishing the path to liberation

3B2C-4A. Actual meaning

Correct view, livelihood, effort, mindfulness,
Meditative stabilization, speech, aims of actions, and
Correct investigation are the eightfold path.
Cultivate it in order to achieve peace.

[113]

Correct view is the branch of complete analysis, the analysis of how phenomena are. Correct investigation is the branch that makes others understand, for example, selflessness. Correct speech, correct aims of actions, and correct livelihood are the branch that makes others confident, for example, by speaking the truth others will believe one, by behaving well, by eating and drinking correctly and so forth, others generate faith in oneself. Correct effort is the branch that puts effort into abandoning the obscurations of the afflictions. Correct mindfulness is the branch that abandons the obscurations that are the secondary afflictions. There are twenty-six afflictions, six root afflictions and twenty secondary afflictions. Correct meditative stabilization is that branch that

purifies the obscurations to higher qualities, that is, it purifies the obscurations to absorption. Terminologically there are four types of obscurations: afflictive obscurations, knowledge obscurations, obscurations of absorption, and obscurations of the inferior, for example, the cherishing of oneself thinking “I, I, I.” It is so-called because it makes oneself inferior in the sense that it obstructs one to generating the mind of enlightenment and becoming a bodhisattva. All these eight paths are obtained on the path of seeing.

First one contemplates the disadvantages of the first two of the four noble truths, true sufferings and true origins. In this way one sees their faults, and asks what is needed to pacify them. The response is true cessations and true paths. We must understand the four noble truths and their sixteen attributes. In order to become liberation from cyclic existence one must practice the three paths or the three higher trainings. First think that one’s body, this appropriated contaminated aggregate, is impermanent. Then think of the general sufferings of cyclic existence and the particular sufferings. What is the creator of sufferings? The creator of the general and particular sufferings is none other than oneself. There is no else who creates this suffering. Then we need to understand that the self that experiences this suffering is not an independent self. In this way one investigates true sufferings.

The general and particular sufferings of cyclic existence come from causes and conditions. Examining their causes, they are found to be contaminated actions and afflictions. In this way examine true origins which have four attributes: cause, origin, strong production, and condition. Try to understand these and then strive to abandon them. Then one needs to understand that there is the cessation of true sufferings and true origins, in this way one will come to understand or realize true cessations. These also have four attributes: cessation, peace, auspicious highness, and definite emergence. We need to manifest these in our continuum. What is the method for achieving these? The method is true paths. True paths realize the four noble truths in general and specifically they realize selflessness. These realizations are called “paths.” By cultivating them one achieves true cessations. True paths also have four attributes: path, suitability, achievement, and definite deliverance.

3B2C-4B. The way to meditate on the observed objects and aspects of the four truths

Birth is suffering; that called “craving”
Is its vast origin;
Its cessation is liberation; the path for
Attaining it is the eightfold arya path. [114]

Since that is so, constantly strive
In order to see the four arya truths.
Even those lay people in whose laps rest abundance,
By means of knowledge, cross the river of the afflictions. [115]

Birth is suffering, that is clear. Having taken birth, one experiences suffering by the force of actions and afflictions. Having taken birth one dies, again one is reborn and dies, again one is reborn and dies, like this we continually circle in cyclic existence taking five appropriated contaminated aggregates. These five aggregates are actual suffering. The attachment to the five aggregates, mainly the body aggregate, is called “craving.” This craving once again produces even more suffering. This craving is called “the origin of suffering.” It is what produces suffering. Therefore, we need to think not to be attached to and to not have craving for our body. We should strive not to be attached to our body, feelings, discriminations, and so forth, that is, to not be attached to any of the five aggregates. In this way we will gain some result. In short, we need to contemplate the four noble truths and their sixteen attributes.

If true origins cease, the state of liberation is attained. How is liberation achieved? It is achieved by means of the eightfold arya path which was mentioned above.

Here the text mentions lay people. It is easier for the ordained to study as they do not need to take care of children and a partner, they live alone. However, Nagarjuna is giving advice mainly to a king who is a lay person with wives and children. Thus, he says that even lay people by meditating on selflessness or true paths and examining and recognizing true sufferings and examining their causes, true origins, and then striving to eliminate them they too will achieve nirvana. That is, they can see the four noble truths directly, whereby this becomes the cause for achieving nirvana or the state of liberation. In the past there were two kings, one who lived in the Magadha in central Indian and the other who lived in a border land that is now Orissa in Bengal. The king who lived in central India sent the other king a present of jewels. The other king, Udayana, who did not have similar wealth wondered what he could offer to the other king in return. One minister suggested that since Buddha Shakyamuni was living in their area that King Udayana send a drawing of the Buddha to the other king. A famous painter was called to paint the Buddha. The Buddha sat for the painting, however, the painter was unable to measure the height of the crown protuberance. The Buddha suggested that in order to do this they put a white sheet on the ground and the Buddha would cast his shadow onto the sheet whereby the painter could trace it. In this way he made a painting of Buddha Shakyamuni and also one of the wheel of existence held in the mouth of the Lord of Death. King Udayana sent a message to the other king telling him to prepare for the arrival of this precious gift. When the other king saw the painting of Buddha Shakyamuni he generated strong faith, and when he saw the painting of the twelve links he developed an understanding of them and to realize selflessness and true paths. He then left his kingdom and went to central India where he took ordination and became a monk.

3B2C-4C. Contemplate the way it is not necessary to become discouraged when accomplishing the path to liberation

Those who have directly perceived phenomena
Did not fall from the sky nor come forth
From the ground like crops. Previously
They too were just beings subject to afflictions.

[116]

We need to understand what is to be abandoned, the phenomena of the thoroughly afflicted class, true sufferings and true origins, and what is to be adopted, the phenomena of the completely pure class, true cessations and true origins, which are to be directly realized. In this way one will achieve the arya path. The many aryas of the past did not fall from the sky or come forth from the ground. Previously they were ordinary beings who strove to overcome the afflictions and actions by listening to instructions from virtuous spiritual friends and practicing them accordingly, that is, discarding what is to be abandoned and practicing what is to be adopted, whereby they attained the state of arya being. Therefore, there is no need to be discouraged since if we too put effort into abandoning the first two of the four noble truths and achieving the latter two, we will only get better.

3B3. Summarized meaning: the way to practice

What need is there to say much to a fearless one?
The meaning of this beneficial instruction
Is to subdue your mind. The Bhagavan
Taught that the mind is the root of qualities.

[117]

Nagarjuna wrote this condensed explanation of the practice. Nagarjuna calls the king “the fearless” and says that there is not much to say to him. He has already given many instructions for the temporal and final benefit of the king and all beings. Therefore, he tells the king that he must control his own mind. He must not allow his mind to be overcome by the mental afflictions, as in this way he will become free from cyclic existence. On the other hand, if the mind is overcome by mental afflictions one will accumulate various actions that lead to constant rebirth in the three realms. Therefore, try not to let one’s mind be overcome by non-virtue even for an instant. One needs to strive always to rely on mindfulness and introspection in order to pacify and subdue one’s mind. If one does this, all virtues will be amassed. A subdued mind is the root of all virtuous qualities.

3C. The way to actualize the results of practice

1. The way to actualize the temporal results
2. The way to actualize the final result, the state of a buddha

3C1. The way to actualize the temporal results

- A. The way to make this life meaningful
- B. The way to make future lives meaningful

3C1A. The way to make this life meaningful

These instructions that have been expressed to you
Are difficult even for a monk to do. Among them,
Make your life meaningful by relying upon
The good qualities that are the entity of conduct.

[118]

Nagarjuna says to the king that the instructions he has told are difficult to practice and achieve completion in even for monks who abide alone in solitary places. Therefore, there is no need to mention that they are difficult for lay people who are engaged in and distracted by many activities. However, Nagarjuna asks the king to among these many instructions to put some into practice, to abandon faults and develop his qualities, and to strive to familiarize with this in this life in order to make his life meaningful. In this way he will take a high rebirth in the next life and will gradually achieve definite goodness, that is, buddhahood. This is certain, there is absolutely no doubt that this will occur.

3C1B. The way to make future lives meaningful

1. Empower the Dharma of the Buddha in your continuum
2. The way to completely ripen sentient beings

3C1B-1. Empower the Dharma of the Buddha in your continuum

Rejoice in all the virtues of everyone and
Dedicate the three types of good conduct
For the sake of the attainment of buddhahood.
Then, by means of this mass of virtue,

[119]

Become a master of yoga in all the worlds of
Gods and humans for immeasurable rebirths.

[120ab]

The buddhas and bodhisattvas rejoice in the virtues created by ordinary beings and arya beings. Therefore, one should rejoice in one’s own and others virtues and then dedicate them. Nagarjuna tells the king to do just as the buddhas do, that is, if he created good conduct or virtue with his body,

speech, and mind or if others created virtue he should dedicate it that it become the cause that all sentient beings achieve buddhahood. Having dedicated this virtue that all beings become enlightenment, it becomes the cause that in the future the king will take rebirth as a god or human being. At this time he will also be able to create the many good qualities of retention, concentration, and so forth, and thereby accumulate infinite merit and therefore infinite qualities.

3C1B-2. The way to completely ripen sentient beings

Then, care for the many miserable beings
With the activities of Arya Avalokiteshvara. [120cd]

Through taking birth, dispel sickness, aging,
Attachment, and hatred. Then, in a buddha field,
Become a protector of the world,
Like Bhagavan Amitabha, for immeasurable rebirths. [121]

Arya Avalokiteshvara takes care of all the sufferings of sentient beings by means of the enlightened activities of his body, speech, and mind, whereby he ripens them and sets them in the state of liberation. Arya Avalokiteshvara ripens some sentient beings with the actions of his body, some with the actions of his speech, and some with the actions of his mind. Nagarjuna tells the king to do likewise. Just as Arya Avalokiteshvara takes care of the miserable sentient beings so too should the king perform activities to ripen all sentient beings, to complete prayers, and to purify a buddha field. He should eliminate the suffering of birth, sickness, and so forth, that is, true sufferings, as well as the attachment and hatred that are included in the true origins. The king should dispel all these sufferings by ripening the minds of the infinite sentient beings and then setting them in the state of liberation. Who can do this? Buddha Amitabha who abides in the Blissful Pure Land can do this. Like this, the king should generate the same motivation as that of Amitabha.

3C2. The way to actualize the final result, the state of a buddha

Through causing the greatly renowned and stainless wisdom,
Morality, and giving to flourish in the lands of the gods, the sky, and the earth,
The joy of the human beings on earth and the gods of high states,
Who enjoy the happiness of the best of youths, is definitely and thoroughly pacified.
[122]

Having achieved the state of a lord of conquerors who pacifies fear and
The birth and death of the sentient beings beleaguered by afflictions,
Obtain the state of the merely named supramundane, fearless in peace,
The ageless, that without defects. [123]

Stainless wisdom is the wisdom realizing the two truths, the conventional truth and ultimate truth. Morality is the vows obtained from abbots or acharyas which are to be maintained purely and not allowed to degenerate. Giving is to give one's body, belongings, without attachment. By means of this one will become stainless and renowned in the land of the six types of gods of the desire realm, in the sky, and among human beings on the earth. One must also try to help the six types of gods of the desire realm who are disturbed by attachment to beautiful women to generate renunciation. They are non-conscientious and engage in many actions, one should help them to generate happiness and joy. Strive also to protect them from the sufferings of cyclic existence in general and the sufferings of the lower realms in particular in this way one will become a protector. In this way one will attain the supramundane, the fearless in peace, the ageless, and that without defects.

May this rainfall of advice of the virtuous friend Nagarjuna,
Through spreading the ocean of the thought of the Conqueror, the lord of human beings,
Protect the many fish and frogs that surround this kingdom.
May it fulfill their hopes like a wish-granting jewel.

4. Meaning of the conclusion

- A. Which master composed it
- B. Which translators and pandits translated it

I have tried to give some explanation but because of the limits of my language perhaps it was not so clear at times but I tried with a good heart to give some explanation in order to help you. I do not remember having received teachings on this entire text, therefore I have not given the transmission. Studying this text is useful. Nagarjuna gave these instructions to King Decho Sangpo (Bhadra Sukavatara), Using Happiness Well.

The root verses of Nagarjuna's *Letter to a Friend*
were translated from Tibetan into English
by Joan Nicell based on a previous translation
by Geshe Lobsang Tharchin and Artemus B. Engle
(*Nagarjuna's Letter*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, 1979)
whereas the outlines were translated from Geshe Losang Jinpa's
Thoroughly Clarifying the Intention of the Arya: An Explanation of
'A Letter to a Friend' composed by the Glorious Protector, Arya Nagarjuna
at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy,
on the occasion of the oral commentary to this text
by the virtuous spiritual friend,
Geshe Jampa Gyatso, December 2002.

Commentary transcribed by Joan Nicell.

May the teachings of Arya Nagarjuna flourish in this world.
May there always be qualified masters who explain these teachings,
dispelling the suffering of the myriad sentient beings.