

**The Introductory Verses of**  
**the *Ornament for Clear Realizations***  
**and**  
**Bodhicitta**



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## The Introductory Verses of the *Ornament for Clear Realizations* and Bodhicitta

The following handout presents the introductory verses of Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realizations* and the first topic of its first chapter, Bodhicitta. In the Gelugpa tradition, the study of Bodhicitta is mainly based on the explanations provided in the *Ornament for Clear Realizations*.

### The Three Wheels of Dharma

Buddha Shakyamuni taught extensively. After he attained enlightenment he spent the remaining 45 years of his life travelling across the Indian subcontinent, turning the *Wheel of Dharma*, that is, explaining and disseminating what he had come to realize.

Being an extremely skillful pedagogue, he addressed the needs of his listeners by teaching them according to their predispositions, interests, levels of comprehension, and so forth. Sometimes the Buddha deliberately articulated viewpoints that directly contradicted views he had expressed earlier, because they were more beneficial to his immediate audience. And although that particular viewpoint might not reflect the Buddha's own view, it would still serve as an effective platform or stepping-stone to prepare the audience to be taught the 'higher' viewpoints at a later time.

It is said that the Buddha gave 84,000 different discourses. Among the different ways in which those teachings are classified, one of the most common is the classification into the *Three Wheels of Dharma*. The convention of the three wheels is an attempt to categorize the content and philosophical views of the large array of Buddhist teachings.

There are different ways in which to classify the discourses into three wheels. One is from the point of view of time. The time from the Buddha's enlightenment until his passing away can be divided into three periods. The teachings the Buddha gave during the initial period fall into the category of the first wheel, the teachings he gave during the intermediate period fall into the category of the second wheel, and the teachings he gave during the later period fall into the category of the third wheel.

From the point of view of the time, the three wheels are:

A discourse that pertains to the first wheel is the *Sutra on the Four Noble Truths* (Skt. *Catvari Aryasatyani Sutra*, Tib. '*phags pa'i bden pa bzhi'i mdo*) that the Buddha gave in the Sarnath deer park near Varanasi to his first five disciples, shortly after his enlightenment. In this sutra, the Buddha laid down the framework for all the Buddhist teachings, the four noble truths.

Another example of a discourse that pertains to the first wheel is the teaching in which the Buddha explains to the first five disciples that the lower part of the monastic robes (Tib. *sham thabs*) should be worn in a circular fashion. This discourse is from the *Minor Teachings [of the Vinaya]* (Tib. *lung phran tshegs*), which is one of the *Four Texts on the Vinaya* (Tib. '*dul ba lung sde bzhi*) taught by the Buddha.

Examples of discourses that pertain to the second wheel are the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* given on Vulture Peak Mountain in Rajghir. In those sutras the Buddha elaborated in particular on the third and fourth noble truths (the truth of cessation and the truth of the path). The truth of the path constitutes the three trainings (morality, concentration, and wisdom), among which wisdom is the principal training. Therefore, in the discourses pertaining to the second wheel the Buddha

provided explanations on wisdom, in particular, by extensively expounding on the main object of wisdom, emptiness.

Examples of teachings that pertain to the third wheel are the ***Sutra on the Essence of the Tathagata*** (Skt. *Tathagathagarbha Sutra*, Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i mdo*) and the ***Condensed Vinaya*** (Tib: '*dul ba mdor bsdus*).

The ***Sutra on the Essence of the Tathagata*** serves as the source sutra of Maitreya's ***Sublime Continuum*** (Skt. *Uttaratantra*, Tib. *rgyud bla ma*). Both the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** and the ***Sutra of the Essence of the Tathagata*** present Buddha nature. In the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** the Buddha mainly described the objective Buddha Nature – also called the 'objective clear light' – which refers to the ultimate truth of emptiness. On the other hand, in the ***Sutra of the Essence of the Tathagata***, the Buddha additionally teaches about the subjective Buddha Nature, the clear light nature of the mind – also referred to as the 'subjective clear light'. This sutra is therefore regarded as a bridge between the Sutric and the Tantric teachings.

The ***Condensed Vinaya***, which also pertains to the third wheel, is a discourse from the ***Minor Teachings [of the Vinaya]***.

Another way to classify the Buddha's teachings into three wheels is from the point of view of the subject matter, or more precisely, from the point of view of teaching selflessness. This way of classifying the teachings is based on the ***Sutra Unraveling the Thought*** (Skt. *Samdhinirmocana sutra*, Tib. *dgongs pa nges par 'grel ba'i mdo*) and does not include all the discourses. For instance, it does not include the teaching in which the Buddha explains that the lower part of the monastic robes should be worn in a circular fashion, because it does not set forth selflessness.

The three wheels according to the ***Sutra Unraveling the Thought*** are:

The first wheel is the teachings of the Hinayana (Pali tradition/Theravada/Fundamental Vehicle) and includes the Buddha's first discourse, the ***Sutra on the Four Noble Truths***.

In the first wheel, i.e., the ***Sutra on the Four Noble Truths***, the Buddha not only sets forth the four noble truths, he also literally teaches that the five aggregates, the eighteen constituents, the twelve sense-spheres, the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, and so forth exist truly.

However, it is important to understand that the principal disciples of the ***Sutra on the Four Noble Truths*** are Hinayana practitioners who are followers of the Vaibashika (Great Exposition School), Sautrantika (Sutra School), and Prasangika Madhyamika (Middle Way Consequentialist School).

The Buddha teaches true existence in this sutra only to Hinayana practitioners who are proponents of the Vaibashika and Sautrantika. To Hinayana practitioners who are followers of the Prasangika Madhyamika he teaches the *lack* of true existence.

Sutras that teach related subject matter and therefore pertain to the category of the first wheel are:

1. ***Sutra on the Close Placement of Mindfulness on the Sacred Dharmas*** (Skt. *Saddharma smṛtyupashthana sutra*, Tib. *dam pa'i chos dran pa nyer bzhag gi mdo*)
2. ***Hundreds of Karmic Deeds*** (Skt. *Karmashataka Sutra*, Tib. *las brgya pa*)
3. ***Hundreds of Accounts of Realizations*** (Skt. *Avadanashataka Sutras*, Tib. *rtogs brjod brgya pa*)
4. ***Scriptural Texts of the Rules of Discipline*** (Skt. *Vinayagama*, Tib. '*dul ba'i lung shes che ba*).

Even though these four sutras *pertain* to the first wheel, they are not referred to as the first wheel.

The second wheel constitutes Mahayana (Nalanda tradition/Universal Vehicle) teachings and refers to the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. They explicitly teach the ultimate truth, that is, the lack of true existence (the view of the Madhyamika tenet system), and implicitly, the meditational paths that lead to full enlightenment.

Since they teach related subject matter, the following sutras pertain to the category of the second wheel (though they are not referred to as the second wheel):

1. **Descent into Lanka Sutra** (Skt. *Lankavatara Sutra*, Tib. *lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo*),
2. **King of Concentration Sutra** (Skt. *Samadhiraja Sutra*, Tib. *ting nge 'dzin rgyal po'i mdo*),
3. **Sutra of the Ten Bhumis** (Skt. *Dashabhumika Sutra*, Tib. *mdo sde sa bcu pa*),
4. **Sutra on the Essence of the Tathagata** (Skt. *Tathagathagarbha Sutra*, Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i mdo*),
5. **Sutra Requested by the Arya Shrimala** (Skt. *Aryashrimala Pariprccha Sutra*, Tib. *'phags pa dpal 'phreng gi mdo*),
6. **Sutra of the Ornament for the Illumination of Primordial Wisdom** (Skt. *Jnanaloka Alamkara Sutra*, Tib. *Yeshes snang ba'i rgyan gyi mdo*),
7. **Sutra of the Great Nirvana** (Skt. *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, Tib. *mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo*),
8. **Sutra of the Question of Dharanishvararaja** (Skt. *Dharanishvararajapariprccha*, Tib. *gzungs kyi dbang phyug rgyal pos zhus pa*)

Please note that even though the **Sutra on the Essence of the Tathagata** is described as *pertaining to* the category of the second wheel, according to the categorization of the teachings of the Buddha into three wheels from the point of view of time, it is a sutra of the third wheel.

The third wheel is also from the point of view of the Mahayana and refers to the seventh chapter of the **Sutra Unravelling the Thought**, called **Questions by Paramartha Samudgata** (Skt. *Paramartha Samudgata Pariprccha*, Tib. *don dam yang dag 'phags kyis zhus pa*).

In the seventh chapter of this sutra, the Bodhisattva Paramartha Samudgata asks the Buddha what he had in mind when during the first wheel he said that the five aggregates, etc. exist truly and during the second wheel that they do not, for if taken literally, these two statements appear to be contradictory. Since the Buddha was aware that the principal disciples present at the time of Paramartha Samudgata's question were suitable vessels for the Chittamatra (Mind-Only) tenets, he replied by explaining that phenomena can be divided into those phenomena that exist truly and those that do not. With this explanation the Buddha presented the philosophical system of the Chittamatra, whose proponents assert that impermanent phenomena and emptiness exist truly, whereas permanent phenomena other than emptiness do not.

The remaining nine chapters of the **Sutra Unravelling the Thought** pertain to the category of the third wheel (but are not referred to as the third wheel).

Please note that the **Sutra Unravelling the Thought** has ten chapters containing questions put by nine Bodhisattvas and one Hearer (Subhuti). In the first chapter a Bodhisattva replies, whereas in the remaining chapters the reply is given by the Buddha. The Sutra was taught in Vaishali.

This concludes a brief description of the three wheels.

Of the three wheels, the study of Buddhist philosophy according to the Nalanda tradition of Buddhism principally relies on the teachings of the second wheel, the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**.

These sutras flourished in many countries, including China - from where they were taken to Japan,

Korea and Vietnam - and Tibet, from where they were transmitted to Mongolia, the trans-Himalayan region and areas within the Russian Federation.

The **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** are also called 'Sutras of the Sublime Mother'. Here, 'Sublime Mother' refers to Prajna-Paramita, a female Buddha figure representing wisdom. Wisdom is called 'Sublime Mother' because like a mother gives birth to her children, wisdom gives birth to all Arya beings (i.e., those who have directly realized the ultimate nature of emptiness) and to their attainment of liberation and Buddhahood.

There are different **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** of various lengths. Seventeen were translated into Tibetan, one of them being the **Heart Sutra**. These seventeen are collectively called the **Seventeen Mother and Son Sutras** and they consist of six 'Mother Sutras' and eleven 'Son Sutras'.

The **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** explicitly teach emptiness and implicitly, or in a hidden fashion, the meditational paths leading to enlightenment.

In his **Six Compendiums of Reasoning** (Tib. *dbu ma rigs tshogs drug*), Nagarjuna expounds on the explicit meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. Maitreya in his **Ornament for Clear Realizations** (Skt. *Abhisamayalamkara*, Tib. *mngon rtogs rgyan*) – abbreviated as the Ornament – expounds on the implicit meaning of those sutras. Here, the text on which the study of Bodhicitta is based is Maitreya's text.

Since Tibetan Buddhism is based on the Nalanda tradition, students of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition chiefly rely on the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**.

In general, the different topics of Buddhist philosophy studied and debated in Tibetan monastic institutions can be summarized into what are called the *Five Volumes of the Great Texts* (Tib.: *gzhung chen bka' pod lnga*). These basically cover five different topics or fields of study:

- Prajnaparamita (*Perfection of Wisdom*, Tib. *shes rab kyi pha rol du phyin pa/phar phyin*)
- Madhyamika (*Middle Way*, Tib. *dbu ma*)
- Pramana (*Logic/epistemology*, Tib. *tshad ma*)
- Abhidharma (*Phenomenology*, Tib. *mngon pa mdzod*)
- Vinaya (*Discipline*, Tib. *'dul ba*)

The foundation of these five topics is the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. The study of *Prajnaparamita* (or *Pharchin*) entails the study of the implicit or hidden meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** and thus the study of the meditational paths that lead practitioners to the enlightenment of a Buddha. The study of the *Madhyamika* refers to studying the explicit meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**, i.e., the ultimate nature of emptiness, which must be directly realized to attain Buddhahood. The study of *Pramana* (or Logic/Epistemology) entails a study of the methods of analysis which are an essential tool for comprehending the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. The study of *Abhidharma* examines the different classifications of reality that are central to the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. Finally, the study of *Vinaya* reviews the moral conduct by which practitioners of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** should abide.

In addition, by studying the five topics, students gain an understanding of the four philosophical tenet systems (Vaibashika, Sautrantika, etc.). This is because the main text used for the study of *Abhidharma* is Vasubhandu's **Treasury of Knowledge** (Skt. *Abhidharmakosha*, *mngon pa mdzod*), which teaches Vaibashika (Great Exposition School) and Sautrantika (Sutra School) tenets. The main text used for the study of *Pramana* is Dharmakirti's **Commentary on Pramana** (Skt. *Pramanavarttika*, Tib. *tshad ma rnam 'grel*) which is composed from the point of view of the Chittamatra (Mind-Only School). The main text used for the study of the *Prajnaparamita* is Maitreya's **Ornament for Clear Realizations** traditionally presented from a Svatantrika Madhyamika (Middle Way Autonomy School) perspective. And the main text for the study of

*Madhyamika* is Chandrakirti's **Supplement to the Middle Way** (Skt. *Madhyamikavatara*, Tib. *dbu ma la 'jug pa*), which teaches the Prasangika Madhyamika (Middle Way Consequentialist School).

The reason for traditionally presenting the topic of the *Prajnaparamita* from the point of view of the Svatantrika Madhyamika (although Maitreya actually taught the **Ornament of Clear Realizations** from the perspective of Prasangika Madhyamika) is that a majority of the authors of the most important Indian commentaries on Maitreya's **Ornament** were proponents of Svatantrika Madhyamika.

The Svatantrika Madhyamika tenet system has two sub-schools:

1. Yogachara Svatantrika (*Yogic Autonomy School*, Tib. *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma rang rgyud pa*)
2. Sautrantika Svatantrika (*Sutric Autonomy School*, Tib. *mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma rang rgyud pa*)

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the **Ornament** is usually presented from the Yogachara Svatantrika point of view, since Shantarakshita and Haribhadra were both followers of this philosophical tenet system. The philosophical viewpoint Tibetan Buddhist students follow when they study the **Ornament** is determined by the philosophical viewpoint of these two Indian masters, for Shantarakshita introduced the teachings of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutra** and the **Ornament** in Tibet while Haribhadra's **Commentary Clarifying the Meaning** (Skt. *Sphutartha*, Tib. *'grel ba don gsal*) is the most prominent Indian commentary on the **Ornament** in the Tibetan tradition. Haribhadra was also Shantarakshita's disciple.

However, the explanations in this handout are from the point of view of the Prasangika Madhyamika (Middle Way Consequentialist) School, the highest philosophical tenet system. The reason is that Western students of philosophy are usually more familiar with this tenet school, and since the different *Prajnaparamita* topics are very extensive and complicated, it may be better to avoid creating more confusion by presenting them from the point of view of the Yogachara Svatantrika.

## The Ornament for Clear Realizations

The **Ornament for Clear Realizations** is one of five treatises revealed to Asanga in the Tushita pure realm by the future Buddha Maitreya. As mentioned above, it is a commentary on the implicit or hidden meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**, and thus describes the different meditative stages and awarenesses required to become a fully awakened Buddha, from the generation of Bodhicitta up to the attainment of the omniscient mind of a Buddha.

Even though the **Ornament** is a commentary of all the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**, its principal sutric sources (Tib. *bshad bya rtsa ba'i mdo*) are three:

1. [*The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in*] **One Hundred Thousand** [Verses] (Tib. *'bum*)
2. [*The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in*] **Twenty Thousand** [Verses] (Tib. *nyi khri*)
3. [*The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in*] **Eight Thousand** [Verses] (Tib. *brgyas stong pa*)

Owing to their different lengths, the three principal sutric sources of the **Ornament** are commonly also known as the 'extensive, middling, and short Sublime Mothers'.

Twenty-two of the Indian commentaries on the **Ornament** were deemed the most important and were translated into Tibetan. These commentaries are also commentaries on the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. However, some of them correlate the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** with the **Ornament** (twelve commentaries) and some do not (nine commentaries).

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the most popular of the twenty-two Indian commentaries are Arya Vimuktisena's commentary **Illuminating the [Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in] Twenty-**



**Thousand [Verses]** (Skt. *Abhisamayalamkaravrtti*, Tib. *nyi khri snang ba*) and Haribhadra's **Commentary Clarifying the Meaning** (Skt. *Sphuṭārtha*, Tib. *'grel pa don gsal*).

Of the two, Haribhadra's commentary is the most prominent and most extensively studied, for it is a relatively short text that clearly presents the meaning of the **Ornament** and indicates that the **Ornament** is an 'ornament' for all three principal sutric sources.

The **Ornament** has eight chapters; each chapter presents one 'clear realization' (Tib. *mngon par rtogs pa*). A clear realization refers to a path consciousness. Hence the five Hinayana and the five Mahayana paths (Mahayana path of accumulation, preparation, etc.) are all clear realizations.

The eight clear realizations presented in the **Ornament** are:

1. Exalted Knower of Aspects (i.e., the omniscient mind of a Buddha) (Tib. *rnam mkhyen*)
2. Knower of Paths (Tib. *lam shes*)
3. Knower of Bases (Tib. *gzhi shes*)
4. Training in Complete Aspects (Tib. *rnam rdzogs sbyor ba*)
5. Peak Training (Tib. *rtse mo'i sbyor ba*)
6. Gradual Training (Tib. *mthar gyis sbyor ba*)
7. Training in a Single Instant (Tib. *skad cig ma'i sbyor ba*)
8. Resultant Dharmakaya (Tib. *'bras bu chos sku*)

Among the eight clear realizations, the principal clear realizations are the first three, called the 'three knowers' (or 'three wisdoms'). They are explained below.

As mentioned above, each chapter of the **Ornament** presents one clear realization. It is presented by way of presenting specific phenomena or topics that characterize each one of the eight. For example, the first clear realization, the exalted knower of aspects, is characterized by ten topics.

Therefore:

The **first** chapter explains the **exalted knower of aspects** by way of **ten** topics.

The **second** chapter explains the **knower of paths** by way of **eleven** topics.

The **third** chapter explains the **knower of bases** by way of **nine** topics.

The **fourth** chapter explains the **training in complete aspects** by way of **eleven** topics.

The **fifth** chapter explains the **peak training** by way of **eight** topics.

The **sixth** chapter explains the **gradual training** by way of **thirteen** topics.

The **seventh** chapter explains the **training in a single instant** by way of **four** topics.

The **eighth** chapter explains the **resultant dharmakaya** by way of **four** topics.

In total, the **Ornament** expounds on **seventy** different topics, which is why the **Ornament** is commonly described as a treatise that presents the implicit or hidden meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** by way of **eight clear realizations** and **seventy topics**.

## The Name of the Text

The Tibetan translation of the **Ornament** starts by citing the **Ornament's** full name in Sanskrit, the language in which Maitreya originally taught the text:

*In Sanskrit: Abhisamayalamkara nama prajnaparamita upadesha shastra karika*

Traditionally, Tibetan translators (who translated the Buddhist sutras, tantras and treatises from Sanskrit into Tibetan) would add the original title in Sanskrit to their translations, in order to demonstrate the authenticity of the texts and to indicate that the original was in Sanskrit.

They also sought to leave imprints in the continuum of students of these texts, since all founding Buddhas of the past, present, and future are said to teach in Sanskrit. Unless one attains enlightenment before the coming of the future Buddha Maitreya, etc., imprints of the Sanskrit language will be beneficial when receiving teachings from him and other founding Buddhas in the future.

Furthermore, by reading or hearing the title in Sanskrit, students will remember the great kindness of the Tibetan translators who underwent immense hardships while traveling to India, learning Sanskrit, receiving teachings, translating the Buddhist scriptures into Tibetan, and making them available in Tibet. Without their inconceivable effort and sacrifice we would not have access to most of these teachings nowadays.

The title in Sanskrit is followed by the citation of the full name in Tibetan:

*In Tibetan: Shes rab kyi pha rol du phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa*

The meaning of the Sanskrit is:

*Abhisamaya* - clear realization, *alamkara* - ornament, *nama* - called, *prajnaparamita* - perfection of wisdom, *upadesha* - quintessential instruction, *shastra* - treatise, *karika* - verses and chapters

The meaning of the Tibetan is:

*Shes rab kyi pha rol du phyin pa* - perfection of wisdom, *man ngag* - quintessential instruction, *bstan bcos* - treatise, *mngon par rtogs pa* - clear realization, *rgyan* - ornament, *zhes bya ba* - called, *tshig le'ur byas pa* - verses and chapters

In English, the full title of the *Ornament* is:

*The Verses and Chapters of what is Called the 'Ornament for Clear Realizations', a Quintessential Instruction Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom*

In general, the **perfection of wisdom** can be categorized into three: (1) the textual perfection of wisdom (Tib. *gzhung sher phyin*), (2) the path perfection of wisdom (Tib.: *lam sher phyin*), and (3) the resultant perfection of wisdom (Tib. *'bras bu'i sher phyin*).

Among the three, the *resultant perfection of wisdom* constitutes the *actual* perfection of wisdom, for it refers to the omniscient mind of a Buddha. The other two are just called 'perfection of wisdom' because they serve as the causes of the real perfection of wisdom.

The *textual perfection of wisdom* refers to the Buddha's teachings that chiefly teach either Mahayana paths or Mahayana results. Examples of the *textual perfection of wisdom* are the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**.

The *path perfection of wisdom* refers to the path consciousnesses in the continuum of Bodhisattvas. By listening, contemplating, and meditating on the *textual perfection of wisdom*, practitioners cultivate the *path perfection of wisdom*, which eventually evolves into the *resultant perfection of wisdom*, i.e. the omniscient mind of a Buddha.

A **quintessential instruction treatise** is a commentary which gives the core insight into a whole topic in only a few words. Thus, Maitreya describes the **Ornament** as a treatise which conveys the essential meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** in very precise terms, enabling students of the **Ornament** to easily understand the meaning of these sutras.

As mentioned above, a **clear realization** refers to a path consciousness. The etymology of the Tibetan term for clear realization (*mngon rtogs*) is *mgon du phyogs pa*, which means 'to move in the direction of', or *mngon sum du rtogs pa*, which means 'to realize directly'. Hence, a path

consciousness moves practitioners in the direction of liberation and Buddhahood by cultivating a direct realization of the ultimate nature of phenomena.

An **ornament** is explained to be of three types: (1) a natural ornament, (2) a beautifying ornament, and (3) a clarifying ornament.

A natural ornament refers to a naturally beautiful phenomenon, such as a woman's beautiful physique. A beautifying ornament refers to a decoration that accentuates or highlights the natural beauty of a phenomenon, such as jewels worn by a beautiful woman. And the clarifying ornament refers to that which clearly shows or reflects the beauty of a phenomenon, such as a mirror that clearly reflects the woman's beauty.

The **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** are likened to a natural ornament; the eight clear realizations and the seventy topics to a beautifying ornament; and the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** to a clarifying ornament.

The **Ornament for Clear Realizations** is explained to be like a clarifying ornament or a mirror in that it reflects or clarifies the whole meaning of the natural ornament, the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**, by way of presenting the sutras' beautifying ornament, the eight clear realizations and seventy topics. Just as a person experiences pleasure when perceiving the mirror reflection of a beautiful woman adorned with jewels, the wise are said to experience pleasure when studying the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** which clarifies the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** that are adorned with, i.e. that teach, the eight clear realizations and the seventy topics.

The **verses and chapters** refer to the eight chapters of the Ornament, which are composed in verse.

## Homage by the Translators

The full title of the **Ornament** is followed by a line of homage inserted by the Tibetan translators:

*I bow to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.*

The homage by the translators is not part of the **Ornament** taught by Maitreya but a later addition. The Tibetan translators pay homage to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in order to remove obstacles to the accomplishment of temporary goals (such as successfully translating the text) or to the ultimate goal of attaining liberation and full enlightenment.

Additionally, the homage reveals the principal subject matter of the text to the reader. Following a decree passed by a former Tibetan king, many Tibetan translators traditionally pay homage to particular entities in order to indicate which of the three trainings serves as the principal subject matter of the text:

- a) When the principal subject matter of the text is ethics/morality, the translators pay homage to the omniscient mind of a Buddha.
- b) When the principal subject matter is meditational paths/concentrations, they pay homage to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
- c) And when the principal subject matter is wisdom, they pay homage to Manjushri.

Since the principal subject matter of the **Ornament** is meditational paths, the translators pay homage to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

## The Homage of the Ornament

The text of the **Ornament** begins with Maitreya paying homage and explaining the purpose for composing the text.

Regarding the four lines of the homage, in the first line (the fourth line in the Tibetan text) Maitreya pays homage to the perfection of wisdom (the textual, path, and resultant perfection of wisdom) by way of describing it as the 'Sublime Mother' of the four types of Aryas, i.e., Arya Hearers, Arya Solitary Realizers, Arya Bodhisattvas, and Arya Buddhas – although Arya Solitary Realizers are not explicitly mentioned.

In the remaining three lines, he pays homage to the three knowers (Tib. *mkhyen pa gsum*) by revealing their different qualities. And since the eight clear realizations are subsumed under the three knowers, Maitreya implicitly pays homage to the eight clear realizations.

The purpose for composing the homage is to instill faith in the three knowers and their qualities in the mental continuum of students of the **Ornament**. In turn, the purpose of such faith is to cause students to listen, contemplate, and meditate on the **Ornament** and ultimately to attain liberation and Buddhahood.

*I bow to the Mother of Buddhas and of the assembly of Hearers and Bodhisattvas;  
Who through the **knower of bases** leads Hearers seeking pacification to complete peace,  
Who through the **knower of paths** causes those benefitting migrators to achieve the aims of the world.  
And who through possession of which (i.e., of the **exalted knower of aspects**/the omniscient mind) the Subduers set forth the varieties having all aspects.*

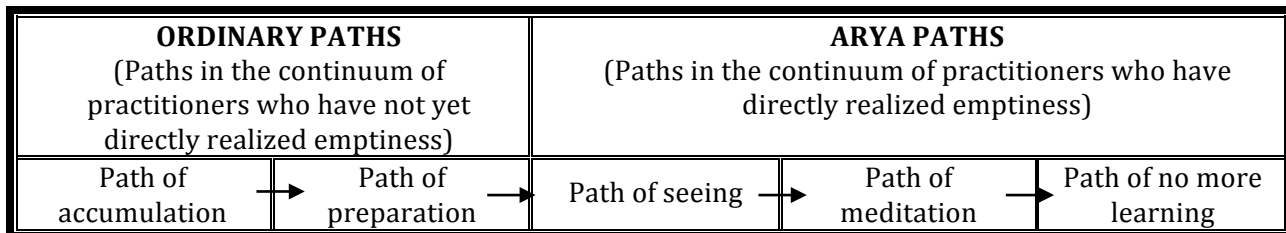
The meaning of the verse of homage is:

**I, Maitreya, bow to the Sublime Mother of Arya Buddhas and of the assembly of Arya Hearers, Arya Solitary Realizers, and Arya Bodhisattvas, Who through the knower of bases leads Arya Hearers and Arya Solitary Realizers seeking pacification from Samsara to the complete peace of self-liberation, Who through the knower of paths enables or causes those Arya Bodhisattvas who are benefitting migrator sentient beings to achieve the aim of the world, that is, Buddhahood, And who through possession of which, i.e. through possession of the exalted knower of aspects (the omniscient mind) the Subduers, Arya Buddhas set forth the varieties of different teachings which reveal all the aspects of the paths of the three vehicles (Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva vehicle).**

As mentioned above, since the perfection of wisdom gives rise to Arya beings and eventually to liberation and Buddhahood, it is called the 'Sublime Mother'.

Aryas (Tib. *'phags pa*) are spiritually highly accomplished beings who have cultivated the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness and are thus on the path of seeing, the path of meditation, or the path of no more learning.

Of the five levels or paths taking practitioners to a state of self-liberation or Buddhahood, the first two (the path of accumulation and the path of preparation) are ordinary paths, while the latter three (the path of seeing, the path of meditation, and the path of no-more-learning) are Arya paths.



Furthermore, Aryas pertain to one of the four types of Aryas (Arya Hearers, Arya Solitary Realizers, Arya Bodhisattvas, or Arya Buddhas).

## **The Four Types of Aryas**

In general, there are three types of Buddhist practitioners: (1) Hearers, (2) Solitary Realizers, and (3) Bodhisattvas.

Both Hearer and Solitary Realizer practitioners are on the Hinayana path and engage in Hinayana practices by meditating on the four noble truths, subtle impermanence, and so forth. The entryway to the Hinayana path (i.e. the criterion for generating that type of path) is a sincere and spontaneous aspiration that aspires to attain self-liberation. The moment trainees cultivate such an aspiration (known as renunciation) they *enter* the Hinayana path.

The term 'self-liberation' is used to indicate that Hinayana practitioners merely aspire to attain liberation and do not strive to attain the state of a Buddha.

Yet, even though Hearer and Solitary Realizer practitioners seek to achieve the same goal, they differ in the way in which they practice and thus actualize that goal. Hearer practitioners are Hinayana trainees who strive for Nirvana on the basis of listening to instructions from a teacher and associating with other practitioners, whereas Solitary Realizers practitioners are Hinayana trainees who mainly strive for Nirvana in solitude, without relying as much on a teacher, etc.

Bodhisattvas, on the other hand, are on the Mahayana path. They engage both in Mahayana practices and in practices that are common to the Hinayana. The entryway to the Mahayana path (i.e., the criterion for having generated the Mahayana path) is Bodhicitta, a sincere and spontaneous mind that aspires to become enlightened in order to be of benefit to all sentient beings.

Bodhisattvas engage not only in Mahayana practices but also in practices that are common to the Hinayana because such practices serve as the foundation for Mahayana practices. This means that without meditating, for instance, on the four noble truths, trainees are unable to effectively engage in Mahayana practices such as meditating on great compassion, the six perfections, and so on.

However, instead of engaging in Hinayana practices, Bodhisattvas engage in practices that are *common to the Hinayana* since engaging in Hinayana practices is defined as meditating, for example, on the four noble truths conjoined with the aspiration to *merely* attain self-liberation. In contrast, Bodhisattvas meditate on the four noble truths conjoined with Bodhicitta, for they do not merely strive to attain liberation but to reach the state of a Buddha.

### ***Arya Hearers***

Hearers (Skt.: *Shravaka*, Tib.: *nyan thos*) can be categorized into two types: (a) ordinary Hearers and (b) Arya Hearers. Ordinary Hearers are Hearer practitioners who have not yet directly realized emptiness and are on the Hearer paths of accumulation or preparation. Arya Hearers are Hearers who have directly realized emptiness; they are on the Hearer paths of seeing, meditation, or no-more-learning.

The Tibetan term for Hearer (*nyan thos*) is a combination of the two Tibetan syllables *listen* and *hear*. It means that Hearers listen to the teachings given by the Buddha and other masters, practice what they have heard, and then cause others to also *hear* those teachings, i.e., teach others what they have learned and understood.

The Tibetan term *nyan thos* is not a literal translation of the Sanskrit term 'Shravaka'. The literal translation of the Sanskrit term is *thob sgrogs* in Tibetan, which means 'proclaiming the attained', or *thos sgrogs* which means 'proclaiming the heard'.

Therefore, Hearers proclaim or teach to others whatever personal realizations they have attained, and they proclaim or teach to those aspiring to attain enlightenment whatever Mahayana teachings they have heard.

### ***Arya Solitary Realizers***

Solitary Realizers (Skt.: *Pratyekabuddha*, Tib.: *rang rgyal/rang sangs rgyas*) can also be categorized into two types: (a) ordinary Solitary Realizers and (b) Arya Solitary Realizers. Ordinary Solitary Realizers are Solitary Realizer practitioners who have not yet directly realized emptiness and are on the Solitary Realizer paths of accumulation or preparation. Arya Solitary Realizers are Solitary Realizers who have directly realized emptiness and are on the Solitary Realizer paths of seeing, meditation, or no-more-learning.

Solitary Realizer practitioners also aspire to attain self-liberation but they are different from Hearers in that they make the following prayers when they enter the Hinayana path:

- "May I be reborn in a place where there is no Buddha performing the various activities like teaching the Dharma and so forth (here Buddha mainly refers to a historical or founding Buddha, such as Buddha Shakyamuni)";
- "May I be able to teach the Dharma not verbally but by way of the movements of my body";
- "May I, in my last rebirth in samsara, attain nirvana/self-liberation without relying upon the quintessential instructions of a master."

### ***Arya Bodhisattvas***

Bodhisattvas (Tib. *byang chub sem dpa'* or literally 'Heroes of the Mind of Enlightenment') are Mahayana practitioners who have generated Bodhicitta based on great compassion for all sentient beings and thus aspire to attain the state of a Buddha in order to be of the utmost benefit to all beings.

They can also be categorized into: (1) ordinary Bodhisattvas and (2) Arya Bodhisattvas. Ordinary Bodhisattvas are Mahayana practitioners on the Mahayana paths of accumulation or preparation. Arya Bodhisattvas are Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana paths of seeing or meditation. There are no Arya Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of no-more-learning, for Aryas on that path are necessarily Arya Buddhas.

Please note that Bodhisattvas who have attained the wisdom directly realizing emptiness are not necessarily Arya Bodhisattvas, for there are Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation or preparation who have attained such wisdom. There are Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation or preparation who have attained the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness because there are Hinayana Arhats who achieved self-liberation before they entered the Mahayana path and became Bodhisattvas .

However, Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation or preparation who achieved self-liberation before they entered the Mahayana path are not *Arya* Bodhisattvas, for they have not yet reached the Mahayana path of seeing.

## ***Arya Buddhas***

There is a difference between an Arya Buddha (Tib. *sangs rgyas 'phags pa*) and a Buddha (Tib. *sangs rgyas*). According to the scriptures, an Arya Buddha is necessarily a person whereas a Buddha is not necessarily a person.

This is not the way in which the term 'Buddha' is used in English, but in Tibetan any *kaya*, i.e., any features of an Arya Buddha that are the result of meditation, such as his omniscient mind, his truth of cessation, his physical body, etc. are explained to be Buddhas. However, these features are not Arya Buddhas, for they are not living beings. Buddha Shakyamuni, on the other hand, is both a Buddha and an Arya Buddha. He is a Buddha because he is a *Nirmanakaya* or *Emanation body*, and he is an Arya Buddha because he is a fully ordained monk who has overcome afflictive and cognitive obstructions.

Therefore, whoever is an Arya Buddha is necessarily a Buddha whereas whatever is a Buddha is not necessarily an Arya Buddha.

Aryas are extra-ordinary beings owing to the Arya paths they have cultivated in their mental continuum. In general, an Arya path is an awareness that is conjoined with or affected by the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness.

Arya paths can be categorized into three knowers. These three are essential, for they fulfill the aspirations of the four types of Aryas.

## **The Three Knowers**

The three knowers are:

- (1) Knower of bases
- (2) Knower of paths
- (3) Exalted knower of aspects

### ***Knower of Bases***

A knower of bases (Tib. *gzhi shes*) refers to any Arya path in the continuum of Arya Hinayana practitioners – Arya Hearers and Arya Solitary Realizers. An Arya path in the continuum of a Hinayana practitioner is not only conjoined with or affected by the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness, it is also conjoined with renunciation, i.e., with the aspiration to attain self-liberation.

The main goal of Hinayana Aryas is the complete peace of self-liberation, and they cultivate the knower of bases because it enables them to overcome afflictive obstructions (obstructions to liberation)<sup>1</sup> and attain the state of an Arhat. All Hinayana Arya paths (i.e., Hinayana paths of seeing, meditation, and no-more-learning) are necessarily knowers of bases.

Knowers of bases do not only arise in the continuum of Hinayana Aryas; they also arise in the continuum of Arya Mahayanists. For instance, the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of Arya Bodhisattvas or Arya Buddhas is a knower of bases because it is an Arya path that is typical of Hinayana paths (Tib. *theg dman gyi rtogs rigs su gnas pa*). It is an Arya path that is

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<sup>1</sup> Afflictive obstructions refer to the root ignorance perceiving inherent/intrinsic existence, to the other afflictions (such

typical of Hinayana path, for it is one of the principal objects of meditation<sup>2</sup> of Hinayana practitioners.

Therefore, the definition of a knower of bases is: a knower in the continuum of an Arya that is typical of Hinayana paths. 'A knower in the continuum of an Arya' and an Arya path are equivalent.

Please note that the wisdom directly realizing emptiness is not only typical of Hinayana paths but also of Mahayana paths. It is typical of Mahayana paths, for it is also the principal object of meditation of Mahayana practitioners.

According to the Prasangika Madhyamika, a path that is typical of *Hinayana* wisdom paths and a path that is typical of *Mahayana* wisdom paths are synonymous, while a path that is typical of *Hinayana* method paths (e.g. the wish to attain self-liberation) and a path that is typical of *Mahayana* method paths (e.g. Bodhicitta) are contradictory.

### ***Knower of Paths***

A knower of paths (Tib. *lam shes*) refers to any Arya path in the continuum of Arya Bodhisattvas having as its main purpose to be of help to migrating sentient beings. Arya Bodhisattvas cultivate a knower of paths because it enables them to eliminate cognitive obstructions (obstructions to omniscience<sup>3</sup>) and attain the state of a Buddha. Knowers of paths do not only arise in the continuum of Arya Bodhisattvas since any path in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is a knower of paths.

In short, whatever is a Mahayana path of seeing, meditation, or no-more-learning is necessarily a knower of paths. Thus, the definition of a knower of paths is: a knower in the continuum of a Mahayana Arya that is conjoined with special method and wisdom.

'A knower in the continuum of a Mahayana Arya' and a Mahayana Arya path are equivalent. 'Special method' refers to Bodhicitta in the continuum of an Arya who has attained at least the Mahayana path of seeing; 'special wisdom' refers to the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. Hence, a knower of paths constitutes a Mahayana Arya path that is conjoined with or affected by that kind of Bodhicitta and the wisdom directly realizing emptiness.

### ***Exalted Knower of Aspects***

An exalted knower of aspects (Tib.: *rnam mkhyen*) refers to any omniscient mind (mental

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that there are two types of objects of meditation: (a) objective objects of meditation and (b) subjective objects of meditation. Objective objects of meditation are the objects that are perceived by meditating consciousnesses. For instance, impermanence and emptiness are objective objects of meditation because impermanence is the object perceived by a Hearer path of accumulation reflecting on impermanence, and emptiness is the object perceived by a Mahayana path of preparation conceptually realizing emptiness.

Subjective objects of meditation refer to awarenesses such as love, compassion, the wisdom realizing emptiness, and so forth. They are called subjective objects of meditation because they are the awarenesses in the nature of which the meditating consciousnesses arise. For instance, the wisdom realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Solitary Realizer on the path of seeing is a subjective object of meditation since it is an awareness meditating on emptiness. It is not an objective object of meditation because the wisdom realizing emptiness is not an object that is perceived by the wisdom realizing emptiness.

<sup>3</sup> Cognitive obstructions refer to the *imprints* of afflictions. Afflictions such as ignorance, anger, etc. leave imprints or residues in the mental continuum of sentient beings which obstruct and limit the beings' mental abilities, in particular the ability to realize all phenomena.



consciousness) in the continuum of Arya Buddhas, the possession of which enables them to dispense a variety of different teachings, allowing them to reveal – according to disciples' interests and predispositions – the different paths of the three vehicles.

The definition of an exalted knower of aspects is: a final exalted wisdom that directly realizes all phenomena. Alternatively, the definition that is cited particularly in the **Prajnaparamita** literature is: a final exalted wisdom that directly realizes the ten phenomena, such as Bodhicitta, and so on.

'The ten phenomena, such as Bodhicitta, and so on' refers to the ten topics explained in the first chapter of the **Ornament**. The term 'and so on' includes the remainder of the seventy topics of the **Ornament** as well as all other objects of knowledge.

In brief, knowers of bases arise in the continuum of Arya Hearers, Arya Solitary Realizers, Arya Bodhisattvas, and Arya Buddhas. Knowers of paths do not arise in the continuum of Arya Hearers and Arya Solitary Realizers, but only in the continuum of Arya Bodhisattvas and Arya Buddhas. Exalted knowers of aspects arise only in the continuum of Arya Buddhas.

Moreover, an Arya path that is typical of Hinayana paths and manifests in the continuum of a Bodhisattva is both a knower of bases and a knower of paths. However, it is not an exalted knower of aspects for it is not a mental consciousness of an Arya Buddha. On the other hand, an Arya path that is typical of Hinayana paths and manifests in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is all three: a knower of bases, a knower of paths, and an exalted knower of aspects.

But not all knowers of bases manifest in the continuum of Arya Bodhisattvas and Arya Buddhas. For instance, the awareness that wishes to attain self-liberation only manifests in the continuum of Hearers and Solitary Realizers; it does not arise in the continuum of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Furthermore, not all knowers of paths are knowers of bases. For instance, Bodhicitta or great compassion are not knower of bases and do not arise in the continuum of Hearers and Solitary Realizers.

**Knower of bases:**

	<b>Arya Hearers</b>	<b>Arya Solitary Realizers</b>	<b>Arya Bodhisattvas</b>	<b>Arya Buddhas</b>
<b><i>Knower of bases</i></b>	Any path in the continuum of an Arya Hearer is necessarily a knower of bases	Any path in the continuum of an Arya Solitary Realizer is necessarily a knower of bases	Any path that is typical of the Hinayana and manifests in the continuum of an Arya Bodhisattva is necessarily a knower of bases.	Any path that is typical of the Hinayana and manifests in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is necessarily a knower of bases.

**Knower of paths:**

	Arya Hearers	Arya Solitary Realizers	Arya Bodhisattvas	Arya Buddhas
<i>Knower of paths</i>			Any path in the continuum of an Arya Bodhisattva is necessarily a knower of paths.	Any path in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is necessarily a knower of paths.

**Exalted knower of aspects:**

	Arya Hearers	Arya Solitary Realizers	Arya Bodhisattvas	Arya Buddhas
<i>Exalted knower of aspects</i>				Any mental consciousness in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is necessarily an exalted knower of aspects

Regarding the order in which homage is paid to the three knowers, Maitreya first bows to the knower of bases, then to the knower of paths, and lastly to the exalted knower of aspects in order to indicate to the students of the **Ornament** the order in which to engage in Mahayana practice.

The knower of bases is associated with Hinayana practice, i.e., it is typical of Hinayana paths. Therefore, Mahayana trainees must first develop their minds by engaging in practices that are common to the Hinayana, such as meditating on the four noble truths, death and impermanence, karma, and so forth. Thereafter they need to engage in Mahayana practices, such as meditating on great compassion, Bodhicitta, the six paramitas, and so on.

This is because without developing the practices associated with the *knower of bases*, i.e., those that are common to the Hinayana, it is impossible to develop great compassion.

Without great compassion it is impossible to cultivate Bodhicitta; without Bodhicitta it is impossible to develop the *knower of paths*; and without the knower of paths it is impossible to attain the *exalted knower of aspects*.

Hence it is vital to understand that is not possible to engage in effective Mahayana practice without first building a sound foundation in the practices common to the Hinayana.

**The Purpose for Composing the *Ornament***

Following the homage, Maitreya explains in two verses the purpose for composing the *Ornament*:

*The paths of the exalted knower of aspects  
 Are what the teacher explained here;  
 That which is not experienced by others,  
 And has the nature of the ten Dharma activities.  
 The meaning of the sutras is placed within one's mindfulness.*

*Then those with intelligence will see.  
Therefore, "easily realizing"  
Is the purpose of this composition.*

The meaning of these two verses is:

**The teacher**, the Buddha, **explained here** in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* **the paths** leading to enlightenment, i.e., the paths leading to **the exalted knower of aspects** – the knower that **has the nature** of, or is characterized by, the **ten Dharma activities** (the ten topics of the first chapter) and **which is not experienced by others** such as non-Buddhists, Hearers and Solitary Realizers.

**The meaning of the** Perfection of Wisdom **Sutras is placed within** the trainee's **mindfulness** through repeated study and contemplation. **Then those with intelligence will come to see** the meaning of these sutras. **Therefore, "easily realizing** the meaning of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* **is the purpose of this composition**, the *Ornament for Clear Realization*.

## The Summary of the Ornament

The homage and explanation of the purpose are followed by a summary of the **Ornament** in fifteen verses. These fifteen verses set out the topics of the *Ornament*, which can be summarized into:

- a. The eight clear realizations and
- b. The seventy topics

## The Summary of the Eight Clear Realizations

Maitreya summarizes the eight clear realizations in two verses:

*The Perfection of Wisdom [Sutras]  
Are well explained through the eight clear realizations;  
The exalted knower of all aspects, the knower of paths,  
Then the knower of all [bases],  
  
Complete clear realization of all aspects,  
Reaching the peak, gradualism,  
Actual complete enlightenment in a single moment,  
And the Dharmakaya are the eight aspects.*

The meaning of the two verses is:

In the *Ornament*, the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras are well explained through the eight clear realizations**: (1) **the exalted knower of all aspects**, (2) **the knower of paths**, (3) **the knower of all bases**, (4) **the completely clear realization of all aspects** (the training in complete aspects), (5) **reaching the peak** (peak training), (6) **gradualism** (gradual training), (7) **actual complete enlightenment in a single moment** (training in a single instant), and (8) **the resultant Dharmakaya** – those eight are the **eight aspects**, i.e., the eight clear realizations.

## The Summary of the Seventy Topics

As explained above, each clear realization is further characterized by different topics. Therefore, the eight chapters present seventy topics which the **Ornament** summarizes in thirteen verses.

The first two of these thirteen verses present the ten topics of the first chapter, which characterize the exalted knower of aspects:

*Generated mind, practice instructions,  
The fourfold branches of definite distinction,  
The foundation of practice –  
The natural Dharmadatu,  
  
The focal objects, the objectives,  
Armor-like, activities of engagement,  
Accumulation and definite emergence:  
These are the exalted knower of all aspects of the Conqueror.*

Since the thirteen verses merely list the seventy topics, with more extensive explanation given in subsequent verses of the *Ornament*, only the first two verses are cited here.

The meaning of the two verses is:

**Generated mind**, i.e., Bodhicitta, (2) Mahayana **practice instructions**, (3) **the fourfold branches of definite distinction**, i.e. the Mahayana path of preparation, (4) **the foundation** of Mahayana **practice** - the **naturally** abiding Buddha nature of **Dharmadhatu**, (5) **the focal objects** of Mahayana practice, (6) **the three great objectives** of Mahayana practice, (7) **armor-like** practice, (8) **activities of engagement**, i.e. engaged practice, (9) practice of **accumulation**, and (10) practice of **definite emergence**. **These are** the ten topics that characterize **the exalted knower of all aspects of the Conqueror**.

The ten topics that characterize the exalted knower of aspects are:

1. **Bodhicitta**: Bodhicitta is explained first because it is the entryway to the Mahayana path. It refers to a mental consciousness that aspires to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. The moment such a mind arises spontaneously in the mental continuum of a practitioner, he enters the Mahayana path of accumulation.
2. **Mahayana Practice instructions**: Yet aspiring to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings is not enough; one needs to engage in the study, contemplation, and meditation of the Mahayana practice instructions given by the Buddha and other masters.
3. **The Mahayana path of preparation**: Having generated Bodhicitta (and thus entered the Mahayana path of accumulation), and having studied, contemplated, and meditated on the two truths, etc. by relying on the Mahayana practice instructions, the Bodhisattva then enters the Mahayana path of preparation. The path of preparation is attained when the practitioner achieves a union of calm abiding and special insight that realizes emptiness conceptually.
4. **Buddha nature**: The nature of the mind that engages in Mahayana practice is the mind's *lack of inherent existence*. This lack of inherent existence of the mental consciousness is 'Buddha nature' and serves as the basis for Mahayana practice. Having reached the Mahayana path of accumulation, etc. one is now also able to realize that one possesses Buddha nature.
5. **Objects of focus of Mahayana practice**: Having explained the basis of Mahayana practice, which is Buddha nature, the *Ornament* proceeds to explain the objects of focus of Mahayana practice.
6. **The three great objectives of Mahayana practice**: This topic is concerned with the objectives or purposes of Mahayana practice, i.e. the purpose for studying, contemplating, and meditating on the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*.
7. **Armor-like practice**: Having discussed the basis, objects of focus, and objectives of Mahayana practice, the *Ornament* subsequently explains the actual practice starting with armor-like

practice. Armor-like practice is concerned with generating the right motivation, which serves as armor or protection against unfavorable conditions.

8. **Engaged practice:** After the motivation for practice, the engaged practice is explained. Engaged practice is concerned with the development of calm abiding, the six perfections, the Arya paths such as the path of seeing, etc., the four immeasurables and so forth.
9. **Practice of accumulation:** This topic refers to accumulating great merit and great wisdom.
10. **Practice of definite emergence:** This consists of practicing eight different 'definite emergences' such as practicing the three great objectives, equally realizing the emptiness of all phenomena, endlessly working for the benefit of sentient beings, and so forth.

## The First Chapter of the Ornament

The first chapter of the *Ornament* presents the first of the eight clear realizations, the *exalted knower of aspects*. This means that the first chapter explains the meaning of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* by way of presenting the omniscient mind of a Buddha.

The reason for presenting the omniscient mind from the start is to generate interest and enthusiasm in the continuum of practitioners. By studying, contemplating, and meditating on the first chapter, practitioners generate faith and the aspiration to attain the result of the Mahayana path – the omniscient mind of a Buddha (i.e., the exalted knower of aspects). In turn, this aspiration will motivate them to study, contemplate, and meditate on the remaining chapters of the *Ornament*, which expound the variety of different paths that lead to the enlightened state of a Buddha.

However, instead of explaining the *exalted knower of aspects* itself (its definition, divisions, and so forth), the first chapter presents the *exalted knower of aspects* by way of presenting ten topics that characterize the *exalted knower of aspects*.

How do the ten topics characterize the omniscient mind of a Buddha? The ten topics characterize the *exalted knower of aspects* because they are its objects. The *exalted knower of aspects* is omniscient and simultaneously realizes all ten topics. It realizes all the practices required to attain Buddhahood, thus making the Buddha the perfect guide to lead sentient beings to enlightenment. By comprehending the ten topics as the objects of the omniscient mind, one is effortlessly able to comprehend the object-possessor – the omniscient mind itself.

This completes the presentation of the introductory verses of the *Ornament*.

## Bodhicitta

The first of the ten topics that characterize the *exalted knower of aspects* is Bodhicitta, which in English is called *Generated Mind* (Skt. *Chitta utpada*, Tib. *sems bskyed*) or *Mind of Enlightenment* (Skt. *Bodhicitta*, Tib. *byang chub sems*).

The meaning of the term *Generated Mind* is 'that which has generated the mind into a broader state' or 'that which has broadened the mind' (*sems rgya bskyed pa*).

The meaning of the term *Mind of Enlightenment* is 'a mind that aspires to attain enlightenment'.

Maitreya explains Bodhicitta in three verses. The first one describes the definition and the two 'limbs' or components (Tib. *yan lag*) of Bodhicitta:

*The Generated Mind is the wish for  
Perfect, complete enlightenment for the benefit of others.*

*Just as in the sutra, the one and the other  
Are explained briefly and extensively.*

The meaning of the verse is:

**The Generated Mind** or Bodhicitta is defined as a special mental main mind which is the entry-way to the Mahayana path and is concomitant with its assistant aspiration, **the intense wish** that focuses on **perfect, complete enlightenment for the benefit of others**.

**Just as the one** (the *enlightenment aspiration*) **and the other** (the *aspiration to benefit others*) are explained **in the middling sutra** (the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Twenty Thousand Verses*) likewise they **are explained briefly and extensively** in the short (the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Eight Thousand Verses*) and the extensive sutra (the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in One Hundred Thousand Verses*) respectively.

Therefore, the first two lines of the first verse present the definition of Bodhicitta, while the third and fourth lines present the two 'limbs' or components of Bodhicitta.

## The Definition of Bodhicitta

The definition of the Generated Mind or Bodhicitta is: a special mental main mind (mental consciousness that is a main mind) which is the entry-way to the Mahayana path and which is concomitant with its assistant aspiration, (a mental factor) that focuses on complete enlightenment for the welfare of others.

The meaning of the different aspects of the definition:

- Bodhicitta is **special** because it is one of the principal awarenesses required to attain enlightenment
- Bodhicitta is a **mental main mind** because it is a mental consciousness (as opposed to a sense consciousness) and a main mind (as opposed to a mental factor). Of the two, sense and mental consciousnesses, Bodhicitta is a mental consciousness because it is cultivated in dependence on meditation.
- Bodhicitta is **the entry-way to the Mahayana path** because practitioners on the Mahayana path are characterized by having generated Bodhicitta. This means that being or not being on the Mahayana path primarily depends on whether a person has Bodhicitta or not. The moment he has generated Bodhicitta he enters the Mahayana path and becomes a Bodhisattva, whereas the moment his Bodhicitta has deteriorated he loses his Mahayana path and is no longer a Bodhisattva.

Yet, even though Bodhicitta is the criterion that determines whether practitioners are on the Mahayana path, this does not mean that Bodhicitta must always be present in their continuum. At times (for example during deep sleep or when meditating on emptiness) Bodhicitta lies dormant; it exists in the form of a seed (i.e. a potential) and is not an active awareness.

Nonetheless, it still influences the physical, verbal, and mental actions of Bodhisattvas. Therefore, the scriptures explain that the factor which determines whether practitioners are Bodhisattvas is not whether Bodhicitta is actively present in their continuum, but whether Bodhicitta “has been attained and has not deteriorated”.

- Bodhicitta is **concomitant with its assistant aspiration** because as a main mind it is associated or concomitant with different functions, i.e., mental factors. Therefore, in addition to

being concomitant with the five omnipresent mental factors, Bodhicitta is also concomitant with the mental factor of aspiration.

- **Its concomitant mental factor of aspiration focuses on complete enlightenment for the benefit of others** because its main objective is the enlightenment of a Buddha, which it strives to attain in order to be of the utmost benefit to all sentient beings.

## The Two Components of Bodhicitta

Bodhicitta has two components: one is its cause and the other its concomitant mental factor:

- a) The aspiration to benefit others
- b) The enlightenment aspiration

### *The Aspiration to Benefit Others*

The *aspiration to benefit others* (Tib.: *gzhan don 'dun pa*) is a mental factor that aspires to achieve the benefit of others.

Here '*others*' refers to sentient beings other than oneself, whereas 'benefit' is of two types: (1) temporary benefit, the liberation of an Arhat and (2) ultimate benefit, the enlightenment of a Buddha.

The *aspiration to benefit others* is a component of Bodhicitta because it constitutes the mental factor of aspiration that is one of Bodhicitta's main causes. It therefore precedes the cultivation of Bodhicitta and arises as a result of meditating on the two principal methods for generating Bodhicitta: (1) the *sevenfold cause and effect method* and (2) *equalizing and exchanging self and others* (which are explained below).

The main focus of the *aspiration to benefit others* is other sentient beings' liberation from suffering in general and their attaining enlightenment in particular. Thus, the aspiration that must precede the *Mind of Enlightenment* is a mental factor that aspires to bring about other sentient beings' liberation from suffering and complete enlightenment.

### *The Enlightenment Aspiration*

The *enlightenment aspiration* refers to the mental factor concomitant with Bodhicitta that focuses on complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. It arises as a *result* of wishing for the liberation and enlightenment of all sentient beings, i.e., as a result of the *aspiration to benefit others*.

The enlightenment of a Buddha refers to two bodies or *kayas*:

- (1) The *Dharmakaya* (*Truth-body*, Tib.: *chos sku*)
- (2) The *Rupakaya* (*Form-body*, Tib.: *gzugs sku*)

The *Dharmakaya* basically constitutes the omniscient mind and the cessation of all obstructions (afflictive and cognitive obstructions).

The *Rupakaya* refers to a Buddha's body as well as to an actual Arya Buddha who gives teachings and manifests in whichever way is most beneficial to sentient beings. Since sentient beings cannot communicate with the omniscient mind or the cessations of a Buddha, it is the *Rupakaya* that is most beneficial to them. Thus, when aspiring to attain enlightenment – as a result of aspiring to benefit sentient beings – Mahayana practitioners mainly aspire to attain the *Rupakaya* of a Buddha.

In short, the *aspiration to benefit others* must precede the generation of Bodhicitta and thus the generation of the *enlightenment aspiration*, because the main objective of a practitioner of the Mahayana is the benefit of others, i.e. their lasting happiness and omniscient state.

Therefore, based on the two techniques for generating Bodhicitta: the 'Sevenfold Cause and Effect Method' and 'Equalizing and Exchanging Self and Others', practitioners first generate great compassion for all sentient beings. Then they cultivate the *aspiration to benefit others*, which is the aspiration that wishes for all sentient beings to attain liberation and Buddhahood.

However, since one is able to lead others to enlightenment only *after* one has become a Buddha oneself, practitioners generate the aspiration to attain enlightenment (i.e., the *enlightenment aspiration*) only once they have generated the *aspiration to benefit others*.

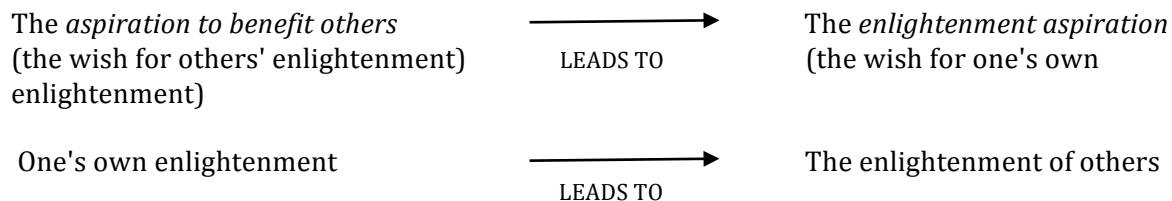
Thus, the aspiration to attain enlightenment oneself arises from the aspiration that seeks the enlightenment of all sentient beings and thus arises in dependence on the latter.

Furthermore, of the two objectives – others' enlightenment and one's own enlightenment – others' enlightenment is the principal or immediate objective whereas one's own enlightenment is merely the secondary or indirect aim.

An analogy for this is someone having the wish to get a glass in order to drink some water. Drinking water is that person's principal or immediate aim. In order to be able to drink the water, he then wishes for a glass. Getting the glass is his secondary or indirect objective, for the glass merely serves as the means to accomplish the principal aim of drinking water.

Wishing for one's own enlightenment compares with the wish to get a glass, for it merely serves as the means to accomplish others' welfare.

However, even though the aspiration for others' enlightenment must precede the aspiration to one's own enlightenment, in order to fulfill the two aspirations, one's own enlightenment must precede the enlightenment of others.



The three sutras referred to in the third and fourth lines of the above-cited verse of the **Ornament** (*Just as in the sutra, the one the other / Are explained briefly and extensively*) are the extensive, middling, and short **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** (i.e. the extensive, middling, and short Sublime Mothers).

As mentioned before, the extensive sutra refers to the [*Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in* **One Hundred Thousand** [Verses], the middling sutra to the [*Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in* **Twenty Thousand** [Verses], and the short sutra to the [*Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in* **Eight Thousand** [Verses].

Thus, Maitreya says in these two lines that the two components of Bodhicitta, the *aspiration to benefit others* and the *enlightenment aspiration* are explained in the three principal sutric sources of the **Ornament**.

Having presented the definition and the two components of Bodhicitta, next follows a presentation of the different causes of Bodhicitta.



## The Causes of Bodhicitta

Owing to our innate self-cherishing and self-centered attitude it is initially extremely difficult to generate Bodhicitta. Therefore, the scriptures describe numerous causes and conditions that assist us in the attempt to reduce our selfish concerns, and replace them with altruistic minds of affectionate love, great compassion, the special attitude, and eventually Bodhicitta.

In general, there are three sub-categories of causes and conditions that aid practitioners in their cultivation of Bodhicitta:

1. The four causes
2. The four conditions
3. The four strengths

Asanga says in his *Bodhisattva Bhumi (Bodhisattva Grounds, Tib. byang sa)*:

*One should know that the Generated Mind arises in dependence on four causes, four conditions, and four strengths.*

### The Four Causes

With these four causes (Tib. *rgyu bzhi*) one's Bodhicitta will be strong and one will easily engage in the various Bodhisattva activities. The four causes are:

- 1) Having an excellent lineage (Tib. *rigs*). Some explain this to refer to an excellent disposition, i.e., a strong affinity with and interest in practicing the Mahayana teachings. Others explain that having an excellent lineage refers to the family in which one is born. If one is born in an excellent family, one will be provided with the necessary conditions (education, support, etc.) for spiritual development.
- 2) Relying on a properly qualified teacher who teaches and inspires one to cultivate Bodhicitta and practice the path.
- 3) Having great love and compassion for other sentient beings.
- 4) Not being disheartened by the difficulties and problems of Samsara. A lot of obstacles and hardship may arise when practicing the Dharma and working for the welfare of others. However, we should try to not feel discouraged but instead to rejoice in the negative karma we purify and in the positive potential we newly generate. Also, we should remember the Buddha's explanation that the Arhats' experience of joy when they attain self-liberation cannot compare to the joy Bodhisattvas experience even when they encounter adversity while working for the welfare of other sentient beings.

### The Four Conditions

The four conditions (Tib. *skyen bzhi*) of Bodhicitta refer to four different thought processes in dependence on which Bodhicitta may arise. However, when a mind that wishes to become a Buddha arises *merely* in dependence on any of these four it is not complete but *nominal* Bodhicitta. The reason for this is that the aspiration to attain enlightenment that arises from any of these conditions is not based on an *aspiration to benefit others* founded on great love and compassion.

However, by mainly relying on the principal causes for generating Bodhicitta (the *sevenfold cause and effect method and equalizing and exchanging self and others*) these four conditions may serve as indirect causes assisting practitioners in the cultivation of Bodhicitta.

The four conditions are:

- 1) Having directly seen for oneself the outstanding abilities and powers of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other highly realized beings, or having heard about them from a reliable person, one aspires to develop the same extraordinary qualities.
- 2) Even though one may not have seen or heard about such inconceivable qualities, one studies and listens extensively to teachings that describe unsurpassed enlightenment, etc. In dependence on these teachings one then generates faith and admiration and aspires to attain the same state.
- 3) Even if one has not studied or listened to those teachings, one becomes aware that the Mahayana teachings are disappearing from this world. Since one also understands that the Dharma can be of true benefit to others, one finds the degeneration of the Dharma, particularly the Mahayana, unbearable. Hence, one cultivates the wish to become a Buddha out of distress over the degeneration of the Dharma.
- 4) Although one may not be aware of the degeneration of the Dharma, one recognizes that sentient beings are increasingly dominated by ignorance, competitiveness, greed, and so forth. Therefore, since it is becoming quite rare for anyone to aspire even to self-liberation, let alone complete enlightenment, one generates Bodhicitta to set an example and inspire others to engage in Mahayana practices.

The wish to become enlightened that merely arises in dependence on one of the first two conditions is not based on great love and compassion for all sentient beings but on faith and admiration for the great qualities of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and other highly realized beings.

With respect to only relying on the third condition, even though one finds it unbearable that the method sentient beings use to attain freedom will soon be lost, the primary motivation to become a Buddha does not depend on the wish for sentient beings to attain liberation and Buddhahood but on concern about the disappearance of the Dharma.

Likewise, regarding the reliance on merely the fourth condition, one's aspiration to become enlightened arises from the wish for sentient beings to enter the Mahayana path owing to the rarity of Mahayana teachings and practice.

### ***The Four Strengths***

There are also four strengths (Tib. *stobs bzhi*) in dependence on which Bodhicitta can arise. These four are:

1. One's own strength: aspiring to attain enlightenment in dependence on reflecting on the numerous types of suffering other sentient beings experience, without directly perceiving any of these sufferings.
2. Others' strength: aspiring to attain enlightenment through the inspiration one receives upon directly perceiving sentient beings' sufferings.
3. Strength of the cause: aspiring to attain enlightenment in dependence on having meditated on Bodhicitta in previous lives.
4. Strength of application: even if one did not meditate on Bodhicitta in previous lives, aspiring to attain enlightenment in dependence on putting into practice the Mahayana teachings one received by a spiritual teacher.

The various ways in which these causes, conditions and strengths are practiced in combination result in different degrees of stability of Bodhicitta. In general, generating Bodhicitta in reliance on the four conditions and four causes in combination with the first strength (one's own strength) or the third strength (the strength of the cause) will result in strong and stable Bodhicitta. When they are combined with the second strength (others' strength) or the fourth strength (strength of application) Bodhicitta will be less stable. However, with continuous practice the latter Bodhicitta will eventually also become firm and stable.

### ***The Two Principal Causes***

As mentioned above, there are two principal causes or techniques for generating Bodhicitta. These two are explained separately but combined in practice.

The two techniques are:

1. The sevenfold cause and effect method
2. Equalizing and exchanging self and others

*The sevenfold cause and effect method* originated with Shakyamuni Buddha. It has come down to us through the great masters Maitreya, Asanga, Chandrakirti, Chandragomin, Kamalashila, and others.

*Equalizing and exchanging self and others* also originated with Shakyamuni Buddha. It has come down to us through the great masters Manjushri, Nagarjuna, Shantideva, and others. The Indonesian master Serlingpa held both traditions and passed them on to his disciple Atisha, who disseminated them in a combined form in Tibet.

However, before practitioners engage in meditation on either of the two techniques they must generate the aspiration to attain liberation (renunciation) and equanimity. These two causal awarenesses will arise out of intense and prolonged study, contemplation, and meditation on the Buddha's teachings.

### **The awareness that aspires to attain liberation**

Here, the awareness that aspires to attain liberation differs from the awareness that *only* aspires to attain liberation, which is the entryway into the Hinayana path. In this case, the awareness that aspires to attain liberation, and necessarily precedes the cultivation of Bodhicitta, is a mind which does not limit itself to merely aspiring to attain liberation for oneself, i.e. to attain self-liberation. Instead, it is a mind that is conjoined with an affinity for the Mahayana vehicle and thus with an interest in developing great compassion and Bodhicitta.

Nonetheless, just like generating the renunciation that serves as an entryway to the Hinayana path, generating this mind depends on studying, contemplating, and meditating on Hinayana teachings, in particular the teachings on the four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent arising, karma and so forth.

The awareness that aspires to attain liberation refers to the sincere wish to overcome cyclic existence and hence the three types of suffering (i.e., the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change, and pervasive conditioned suffering). It must precede the cultivation of great compassion and Bodhicitta because one cannot wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering if one does not wish to be free from suffering oneself.

### **Equanimity**

The next awareness practitioners develop is equanimity, which must precede the two principal

techniques for generating Bodhicitta. Those two techniques will be explained below.

Equanimity refers to impartiality towards all sentient beings and serves as a basis for great compassion and Bodhicitta. It constitutes a state of mind that feels it is pointless to develop any prejudice towards others, i.e. to discriminate between friend and enemy or agreeable and disagreeable, and to act under the sway of attachment and anger. Therefore, practitioners who have developed this type of equanimity can restrain the coarser forms of those undesirable responses; and once free from acting under their influence, gain some mental equilibrium.

In order to cultivate such equanimity one should contemplate the following points, which are based on two reasons why it makes sense to have equanimity towards all sentient beings:

- i. From their own side, sentient beings are equal: all sentient beings are the same in that they want to be happy and do not want to experience suffering.
- ii. There is no reason to discriminate from our side because:
  - a) Regarding our relationship with other sentient beings, we are attached to some, have aversion towards others and feel indifferent towards the rest. As soon as we meet someone, we immediately judge them as being agreeable, disagreeable or neither.
  - b) There are numerous disadvantages to such attachment, aversion, and so forth.
  - c) Our preference or dislike for some sentient beings is often based on very superficial reasons and many of those reasons are not in accordance with reality.
  - d) As for those sentient beings who really benefitted or harmed us in this lifetime, our relationships with them are not as clear-cut and unchanging as they seem. Just within this one lifetime many changes can take place. Our ever-changing relationships with other sentient beings become even more obvious when we consider past and future lives.

Kamalashila says in the *Middling Stages of Meditation* (Skt. *Bhavanakrama*, Tib. *sgom rim bar pa*):

*Begin by meditating on equanimity. We should actualize impartiality towards all sentient beings by stopping attachment and anger. All sentient beings want happiness and do not want suffering. Think well about how, in this beginningless cycle of existence, there is not one sentient being who has not been our friend or relative hundreds of times. We are attached to some and angry with others. Therefore, think that I shall [develop] the mind of equanimity towards all sentient beings. Begin [the meditation on equanimity] by thinking of a neutral person and then consider friends and foes.*

Equanimity is the essential prerequisite for the practice of any of the three vehicles, so it is often not explicitly cited as one of the causes of Bodhicitta.

Having cultivated some mental equilibrium towards all sentient beings, practitioners then proceed to familiarize themselves with the two techniques.

## **The sevenfold cause and effect method**

The six causes are:

1. Understanding that all sentient beings have been one's mother
2. Recognizing their kindness
3. Wishing to repay their kindness
4. Affectionate love

5. Great compassion
6. The special attitude

In dependence on these causes the effect is:

7. Bodhicitta

**1. Understanding that all sentient beings have been one's mother**

Meditating on all sentient beings having been our mother is based on the fact that we have been taking birth in cyclic existence since beginningless time and that each and every sentient being has thus been our mother limitless times.

Through continuous and prolonged familiarity with this idea, we come to a point where we have an automatic mental response and ascertainment that whoever we encounter has acted as our mother during countless lifetimes.

**2. Recognizing their kindness**

Having developed a deep understanding that all sentient beings have been our mother countless times, we come to recognize that not only has each and every sentient being displayed the same or even more devotion and kindness towards us as our mother in this present life, each of them has done so *infinite* times.

**3. Wishing to repay their kindness**

After having developed a strong sense of our mothers' kindness, we develop a strong wish to repay all sentient beings for everything they have done for us.

**4. Affectionate love**

In general, the definition of love is: a caring attitude that wants (a) sentient being(s) to be happy. However, affectionate love is not love in the sense of a mental factor that wants sentient beings to be happy. This type of love is a caring affection that finds *all* sentient beings endearing and feels close to them.

**5. Great compassion**

The definition of great compassion is: a caring attitude that wants all sentient beings to be free from suffering. Great compassion is different from ordinary compassion since it wishes for *all* sentient beings to be free from suffering.

Kamalashila says in the ***Middling Stages of Meditation*** (Skt. ***Bhavanakrama***, Tib. ***sgom rim bar pa***):

*Therefore, see all migrating beings as immersed in a great fire of misery. Think that they are all like you in not wishing for suffering at all: 'Alas! All my beloved sentient beings are in such pain. What can I do to set them free?' and make their suffering your own. Whether you are engaged in one-pointed meditation or pursuing your ordinary activities, meditate on compassion at all times, focusing on all sentient beings and wishing that they all be free from suffering. Begin by meditating on your friends and relatives. Recognize how they experience the various sufferings that have been explained. Then, having seen all sentient beings as equal with no difference between them, you should meditate on sentient beings to whom you are indifferent. When the compassion you feel towards them is the same as the compassion you feel towards your friends and relatives, meditate on compassion for all sentient beings throughout the ten directions. Just as a mother responds to her small, beloved, and suffering child,*

*when you develop a spontaneous and equal sense of compassion towards all sentient beings, you have completed [the practice]. You have attained what is called 'great compassion'.*

#### **6. The special attitude**

Having cultivated great compassion, and thus the wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering, we now resolve to free all sentient beings from suffering *ourselves*.

#### **7. Bodhicitta**

Having now developed the superior intention to free all sentient beings, we come to the understanding that we will only be able to free all sentient beings from suffering and lead them to Buddhahood if we become enlightened ourselves. So we cultivate the aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

### **Equalizing and exchanging self and others**

The method of *equalizing and exchanging self and others* also consists of a number of sequential steps which lead to the generation of Bodhicitta:

1. Equalizing and exchanging self and others
2. Affectionate love
3. Great compassion
4. The special attitude

In dependence on these causes the effect is:

5. Bodhicitta

Please note that the last three causes of this method (affectionate love, great compassion, and the special attitude) are the same as the last three causes of the *sevenfold causes and effect methods*.

Equalizing and exchanging self and others can be further categorized into the following meditational steps:

- a) Identifying the self-cherishing/self-centred attitude
- b) The shortcomings of the self-cherishing attitude
- c) The qualities of cherishing others
- d) Self and others are equal
- e) Exchanging self and others

#### **a) Identifying the self-cherishing/self-centered attitude**

The self-cherishing attitude refers to a type of attachment that clings to "I" and "mine" and considers our personal happiness and well-being to be more important than that of others. This attachment is induced by the ignorance or misperception that perceives "I" and "mine" to exist inherently. Therefore, the ignorance perceiving "I" and "mine" to exist inherently comes first, and is followed by the self-cherishing attitude induced by that misperception.

This attitude causes us to avoid short-term problems and makes us reluctant to strive towards long-term happiness. Out of attachment to our self and from exaggerating its importance we are unable to bear even the slightest harm. Even minimal difficulties are considered to be extremely disconcerting, and there is a constant sense of impending personal loss.

**b) The shortcomings of the self-cherishing attitude**

The self-cherishing attitude is described as the doorway to misery since it is responsible for our problems and difficulties. Unhappiness, depression, worry, dissatisfaction, pain, illness, etc. are all the results of our self-centeredness, of our attachment and clinging to “I” and “mine”.

Shantideva says in his *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* (*A Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, Tib. *spyod 'jug*):

*Whatever suffering there is in the world  
Arises from the desire for one's own personal happiness*

The first Panchen Lama Lobsang Choekyi Gyaltzen says in the *Guru Puja* (Tib. *bla ma mchod pa*):

*The self-cherishing attitude is the doorway to all misery*

**c) The qualities of cherishing others**

Cherishing others, on the other hand, is described as the basis of all positive qualities, for it is responsible for all our happiness. Everything good in our life, our positive experiences with family and friends, our well-being, possessions, comfort, and so forth are the results of cherishing others.

Shantideva says in his *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*:

*Whatever happiness there is in the world  
Derives from desiring happiness for others*

The first Panchen Lama Lobsang Choekyi Gyaltzen says in the *Guru Puja*:

*Cherishing mother beings is the basis of all [positive] qualities*

**d) Self and others are equal**

Contemplating just a few facts will enable practitioners to experience a deep sense of the equality of self and others. Those facts stress the importance of *other* sentient beings, since ordinarily we feel that we and our happiness are more important than others and their happiness:

- i. Sentient beings are extremely important for our mere survival. Our food, clothing, shelter and everything that is required to sustain us is provided by other sentient beings. It is in dependence on them that we derive resources and enjoyments. Even something as insignificant as a plate of rice depends on the culmination of the efforts of numerous sentient beings.
- ii. Furthermore, everything we know – our education, all our skills and abilities – depend on others since we acquired them by directly or indirectly relying on other sentient beings.
- iii. Also from the point of view of the Dharma, whatever positive qualities we possess depend on other sentient beings. We can generate love and compassion only when there are other beings who are the focus of those wholesome mental states. The same is true for qualities such as generosity, morality, patience, and so forth. Therefore, it is said that we should respect sentient beings the way we respect Buddhas.

Nagarjuna says in his *Bodhicitta Commentary* (Skt. *Bodhicittavivarana*, Tib. *byang chub sems 'grel*):

*In dependence on sentient beings  
One can attain the Buddha's unsurpassable state*

Shantideva says in his ***Bodhisattvacharyavatara***:

*Sentient beings and Buddhas are similar  
From them you achieve a Buddha's qualities  
How is it that you do not respect sentient beings  
Just as you respect Buddhas?*

- iv. Moreover, self and others are equal because everyone wants to be happy and free from misery. No one wants to experience the slightest suffering, and everybody constantly strives to experience happiness. This is the one characteristic we have in common with all sentient beings.

The first Panchen Lama Lobsang Choekyi Gyaltzen says in the ***Guru Puja***:

*No one wants the slightest amount of suffering.  
No one is satisfied with even the best happiness.  
There is no difference between myself and others  
So may I be blessed to rejoice in others' happiness.*

- v. Lastly from the point of view of ultimate reality, all sentient beings are equal, for they equally lack inherent existence. Therefore, "I" and "others" are merely imputed, relative and dependent on one another, just as "here" and "there", or "this" and "that".

Shantideva says in his ***Bodhisattvacharyavatara***:

*By becoming accustomed to the equality of self and others  
Bodhicitta will become firm.  
Self and others are dependently established;  
They are false, like this shore and the other shore.  
That shore is not in itself the other shore;  
In relation to someone else it is this shore.  
The self is not established in and of itself;  
In relation to someone else it is other.*

Shantideva says in his ***Sikshasamucchaya (Compendium of Training, Tib. bslab pa kun btus)***:

*Acquaintance with the equality of self and other  
Will make the mind of enlightenment stable.  
Self and other are dependent [upon one another]  
And thus are false like "here" and "there".  
One side is not "there" in itself;  
In reference to another perspective  
It will be "here".  
And as self is not that in its own right,  
With reference to something else it is "other".*

### e) Exchanging self and others

Having realized the faults of cherishing oneself, the benefits of cherishing others, and the fact that self and others are equal, we are now able to replace the mind that cherishes oneself with the mind that cherishes others. The latter, unlike the mind that cherishes oneself, is a mental state that accords with reality and is responsible for our own and others' welfare.

However, this does not mean that we should totally neglect ourselves. Instead, it means that our primary focus becomes others' happiness and well-being. If we neglect ourselves we cannot



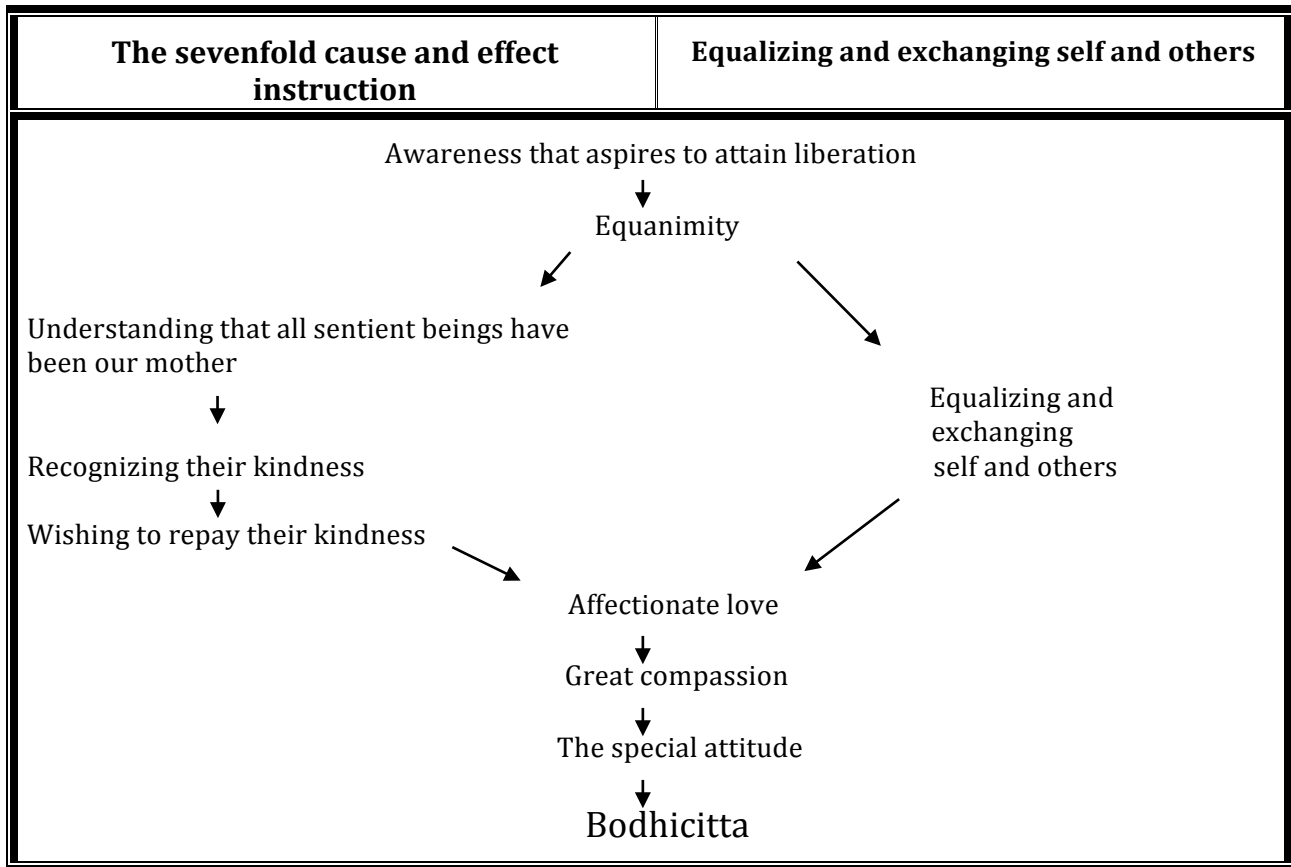
effectively work for the welfare of others and thus it is crucial that we assure our personal physical and mental well-being.

Reversing our focus from "I" and "mine" to "others" is very difficult initially, owing to the strong imprints of the self-cherishing attitude; continuous effort and mindfulness are required.

However, as Shantideva says in his *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*:

*There is nothing which  
Familiarity does not make easier*

Therefore, with prolonged meditation we will eventually be able 'to exchange self and others'. Once we are able to do so, we move on to develop the remaining causes of Bodhicitta that were explained during the description of the *sevenfold cause and effect method* – affectionate love, great compassion, and the special attitude – before cultivating Bodhicitta itself.



This completes the presentation of the causes of Bodhicitta. Next follows a presentation of the different categories of Bodhicitta.

### Categories of Bodhicitta

There are four different ways of categorizing Bodhicitta:

1. The category from the point of view of its nature
2. The category from the point of view of the perimeter
3. The category from the point of view of the purpose

#### 4. The category from the point of view of similes

The category from the point of view of its nature can be further classified into two:

- 1.1. The nominal category
- 1.2. The category by way of being (i.e., by way of being Bodhicitta)

### **The Nominal Category**

The nominal category of Bodhicitta is twofold:

- a) Conventional Bodhicitta
- b) Ultimate Bodhicitta

Kamalashila says in the *Middling Stages of Meditation* (Skt. *Bhavanakrama*, Tib. *sgom rim bar pa*):

*As it is said, “The mind of enlightenment [has] two aspects: conventional and ultimate.”*

In general, a nominal category refers to a category where the sets of classes are not necessarily the phenomenon that is categorized.

In this case, the category is nominal because only conventional Bodhicitta is actual Bodhicitta. In fact, conventional Bodhicitta and Bodhicitta are equivalent.

Ultimate Bodhicitta (Tib. *don dam sems bskyed*) is not Bodhicitta. It is not Bodhicitta because it is typical of Mahayana *wisdom* paths while Bodhicitta is necessarily typical of Mahayana *method* paths.

Ultimate Bodhicitta is typical of Mahayana *wisdom* paths (a) because it is the main object of meditation of Mahayana practitioners and (b) because it is typical of paths that realize their objects. Therefore, of the two aspects, method and wisdom, ultimate Bodhicitta pertains to the wisdom aspect of Mahayana practice.

Conventional Bodhicitta (Tib. *kun rdzob sems bskyed*), on the other hand, is typical of Mahayana *method* paths (a) because it is the main object of meditation of Mahayana practitioners and (b) because it is typical of paths that do not realize their objects. Thus, conventional Bodhicitta pertains to the method aspect of Mahayana practice.

Furthermore, paths that are typical of Mahayana wisdom paths serve as the principal cause for attaining the *Dharmakaya* (Truth body) of a Buddha whereas paths that are typical of Mahayana method paths serve as the principal cause for attaining the *Rupakaya* (Form body) of a Buddha.

Nagarjuna says in his *Ratnavali (Jewel Garland)*, Tib. *rin chen phreng ba*):

*In brief, the Rupakaya,  
O King, arises from the collection of merit.  
In brief, the Dharmakaya,  
O King, arises from the collection of wisdom.*

### **Conventional Bodhicitta**

As mentioned above, conventional Bodhicitta and Bodhicitta are equivalent. Therefore, conventional Bodhicitta refers to a special mental main mind which is the entry-way to the Mahayana path and is concomitant with its assistant aspiration that focuses on complete enlightenment for the benefit of others.

### ***Ultimate Bodhicitta***

Ultimate Bodhicitta refers to a meditative equipoise, in the continuum of a Mahayana Arya, that directly realizes emptiness.

The definition of ultimate Bodhicitta is:

A mental main mind (a mental consciousness that is a main mind), in the continuum of a Mahayana Arya, that is typical of wisdom paths and is free from duality with respect to the [final] mode of existence of complete enlightenment.

The meaning of the different aspects of the definition is:

- Ultimate Bodhicitta is a **mental consciousness** because it arises in dependence on meditation
- Even though ultimate Bodhicitta is dependent on its concomitant mental factors (such as the mental factor of wisdom), it is nonetheless a **main mind**, the principal function of which is to apprehend its object.
- Ultimate Bodhicitta arises only **in the continuum of a Mahayana Arya** because it only arises in the continuum of someone who is on the Mahayana path of seeing, the Mahayana path of meditation, or the Mahayana path of no-more-learning.
- Ultimate Bodhicitta is **typical of wisdom paths** because it is typical of a path that realizes its object.
- Ultimate Bodhicitta is **free from duality with respect to the final mode of existence of complete enlightenment** because ultimate Bodhicitta directly realizes the emptiness or ultimate truth of complete enlightenment.

The emptiness of a phenomenon, the ultimate truth of a phenomenon, and the final mode of existence of a phenomenon are equivalent.

For an awareness to be free from duality with respect to the final mode of existence of a phenomenon means that the awareness *directly realizes* the ultimate truth of that phenomenon without any conventional truth appearing to it.

Ultimate Bodhicitta is free from duality with respect to the final mode of existence of complete enlightenment because it is free from duality with respect to the final mode of existence of *all* phenomena. Ultimate Bodhicitta is free from duality with respect to the final mode of existence of all phenomena because it directly realizes the ultimate truth of all phenomena.

Although ultimate Bodhicitta is not actual Bodhicitta, it is called ultimate 'Bodhicitta' because it directly realizes the ultimate truth of all phenomena, and conjoined with Bodhicitta that is attained from the Mahayana path of seeing onwards, it is the entryway to the Mahayana Arya paths (the Mahayana path of seeing, the Mahayana path of meditation, and the Mahayana path of no-more-learning). Furthermore, conjoined with Bodhicitta it serves as the antidote to cognitive obstructions (the obstructions to omniscience), for it gradually eliminates these obstructions and takes practitioners to complete enlightenment.

Kamalashila says in the ***Middling Stages of Meditation*** (Skt. ***Bhavanakrama***, Tib. ***sgom rim bar pa***):

*Ultimate Bodhicitta is supramundane and free from elaborations. It is extremely clear, the object of the ultimate, stainless, unwavering, like a butter lamp undisturbed by the wind.*

Comparison between conventional and ultimate Bodhicitta (in the continuum of sentient beings):

<b>Conventional Bodhicitta</b>	<b>Ultimate Bodhicitta</b>
Mental consciousness	Mental consciousness
Main mind	Main mind
Typical of method paths	Typical of wisdom paths
Main cause of the <i>Rupakaya</i> (Form body) of a Buddha	Main cause of the <i>Dharmakaya</i> (Truth body) of a Buddha
Concomitant with the mental factor of aspiration	Concomitant with the mental factor of wisdom
Conceptual consciousness	Direct perceiver
Focal object: complete enlightenment	Focal object: complete enlightenment (and all other phenomena)
Object of engagement: complete enlightenment	Object of engagement: emptiness
Entryway to the Mahayana path	Entryway to the Mahayana Arya paths

### **The category by way of being**

There are two types of Bodhicitta that are both actual Bodhicitta:

- a) Aspirational Bodhicitta
- b) Engaging Bodhicitta

Even though from the point of view of cultivating the two types of Bodhicitta, aspirational Bodhicitta (Tib. *mos sems*) is cultivated before engaging Bodhicitta (Tib. *'jug sems*), here engaging Bodhicitta is explained first.

### ***Engaging Bodhicitta***

Engaging Bodhicitta refers to Bodhicitta that manifests in the continuum of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of Bodhisattvas constitutes Bodhicitta in the continuum of Mahayana practitioners (1) who have obtained the Bodhisattva vow (i.e., received and not transgressed it) and (2) are practicing any of the six perfections.

The Bodhisattva vow must definitely have been taken by Bodhisattvas on the *middling* Mahayana path of accumulation. At that level there is no longer any transgression of the vow. Therefore, from the *middling* Mahayana path of accumulation onwards, Bodhisattvas will necessarily have obtained the Bodhisattva vow. On the *small* Mahayana path of accumulation, Bodhisattvas have not necessarily obtained the vow. Some may not yet have received the vow and others may have transgressed it. Regarding the latter, on the small Mahayana path of accumulation Bodhisattvas may still transgress and thereby lose the vow (although it is possible to take it again and purify the non-virtue of breaking the vow).

The Bodhisattva vow exists as a subtle physical form in the continuum of Bodhisattvas and having this form constitutes the practice of the perfection of morality. Therefore, Bodhisattvas who have the Bodhisattva vow are always engaging in the practice of the perfection of morality even while in

deep sleep with no path consciousness manifesting in their continuum, for the subtle form that is the Bodhisattva vow is always present.

This means that Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who has the Bodhisattva vow is necessarily *engaging Bodhicitta*, for it is Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Mahayana practitioner (1) who has obtained the Bodhisattva vow and (2) is engaging in the practice of any of the six perfections – in this case, the perfection of morality.

Furthermore, engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva is *directly conjoined* with the practice of the perfection of morality because engaging Bodhicitta and the practice of the perfection of morality are simultaneously present in the continuum of that Bodhisattva, and because they affect one another. The way they affect one another is that engaging Bodhicitta in that Bodhisattva's continuum enhances and strengthens the practice of the perfection of morality, and the practice of the perfection of morality enhances and strengthens engaging Bodhicitta.

Engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva is not necessarily directly conjoined *only* with the practice of the perfection of morality, for it can also be directly conjoined with the practice of any of the other perfections. For instance, Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the path of seeing, in whose continuum an awareness practicing the perfection of patience has arisen, is engaging Bodhicitta that is directly conjoined with the practice of the perfection of patience, because it is directly conjoined with the *awareness* practicing the perfection of patience. Engaging Bodhicitta and the awareness practicing the perfection of patience are both present in the continuum of that Bodhisattva and the two awarenesses affect one another because (in that Bodhisattva's continuum) engaging Bodhicitta enhances and strengthens the awareness practicing the perfection of patience, and the awareness practicing the perfection of patience enhances and strengthens engaging Bodhicitta.

However, *Bodhicitta* in the continuum of a Bodhisattva is not necessarily *engaging Bodhicitta*, because aspirational Bodhicitta (which is explained below) also manifests in Bodhisattvas' continuum (although it manifests only on the *small* Mahayana path of accumulation).

On the other hand, *Bodhicitta* in the continuum of Arya Buddhas is necessarily *engaging Bodhicitta*, for *Bodhicitta* in the continuum of an Arya Buddha and *engaging Bodhicitta* in the continuum of an Arya Buddha are equivalent.

Also, engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of Arya Buddhas is not directly conjoined with the *practice* of any of the six perfections but with the six perfections themselves, because Arya Buddhas no longer engage in practice as they have thoroughly completed practice.

The definition of engaging Bodhicitta is: Bodhicitta that is directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections, such as generosity etc., which pertains to the Bodhisattva vow.

The meaning of the different aspects of the definition is:

- Engaging Bodhicitta is **Bodhicitta**, for, as mentioned above, it is an actual mind of enlightenment that is concomitant with the aspiration that focuses on enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.
- The reason why engaging Bodhicitta is **directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections such as generosity etc.** is as follows. There are two types of engaging Bodhicitta that are conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections: (1) engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of Bodhisattvas and (2) engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of Buddhas.

Engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of Bodhisattvas is directly conjoined with the *function* of practicing any of the six perfections because, as mentioned above, it is necessarily directly conjoined with the practice of the perfection of morality, and because the *function* of practicing the perfection of morality is a characteristic of the practice of the perfection of morality. Also, engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of Bodhisattvas is directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections because both engaging Bodhicitta and the function of the practice of any of the six perfections are present at the same time, and they affect one another. They affect one another, for (in the continuum of Bodhisattvas) engaging Bodhicitta enhances and strengthens the function of the practice of any of the perfections and the function of the practice of any of the perfections enhances and strengthens engaging Bodhicitta.

Engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of Arya Buddhas is directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections because, while Buddhas no longer *engage* in the practice of the six perfections, they still possess the *function* of practicing the six perfections. In other words, the six perfections (which only exist in the continuum of Arya Buddhas) are awarenesses that do not *practice* the six perfections but still possess the *function* of practicing the six. So engaging Bodhicitta in the continuum of Arya Buddhas is directly conjoined with the *function* of practicing any of the six perfections without being directly conjoined with the *practice* of any of the six perfections itself.

- Engaging Bodhicitta is **directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections such as generosity, etc. which pertains to the Bodhisattva vow** because not only is engaging Bodhicitta directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections, that function also pertains to the Bodhisattva vow. The function of practicing any of the six perfections that is directly conjoined with engaging Bodhicitta pertains to the Bodhisattva vow because it is a function that manifests in the continuum of someone who has obtained the Bodhisattva vow (i.e. who has received and not transgressed it).

This aspect of the definition excludes aspirational Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the *small* path of accumulation who has not yet taken the Bodhisattva vow but who is practicing any of the six perfections. Such aspirational Bodhicitta is directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections but is *not* directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections *that pertains to the Bodhisattva vow*. It is not directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections that pertains to the Bodhisattva vow because, even though it is directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections, that function of practicing any of the six perfections with which it is directly conjoined is present in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who has *not* yet obtained the Bodhisattva vow.

In short, engaging Bodhicitta is Bodhicitta in the continuum of beings who have obtained the Bodhisattva vow *and* in whose continuum the function of practice of any of the six perfections is present. It arises in the continuum of Mahayanists on all levels of the five paths, i.e., the small, middling, and great Mahayana path of accumulation as well as on the Mahayana paths of preparation, seeing, meditation, and no-more-learning.

Please note that when two awarenesses that enhance and strengthen one another (such as engaging Bodhicitta and the mind that practices any of the six perfections) are both manifest in someone's continuum, they are *directly* conjoined.

When only one of two awarenesses that enhance and strengthen one another is manifest, while the other lies dormant, the awareness that is manifest is merely *conjoined* with the awareness that lies dormant, but not *directly* conjoined. For instance, the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of an Arya Bodhisattva is conjoined but not *directly* conjoined with

Bodhicitta. It is not *directly* conjoined with Bodhicitta, for Bodhicitta cannot arise in the continuum of an Arya Bodhisattva while he directly realizes emptiness. But the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness is conjoined with Bodhicitta because, even though Bodhicitta lies dormant (in that Arya Bodhisattva's continuum), that meditative equipoise enhances and strengthens (the dormant) Bodhicitta and (the dormant) Bodhicitta enhances and strengthens the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness.

### ***Aspirational Bodhicitta***

Aspirational Bodhicitta refers to Bodhicitta that only manifests in the continuum of Bodhisattvas on the *small* Mahayana path of accumulation who have not yet obtained the Bodhisattva vow; it does not manifest in the continuum of Mahayana practitioners who have reached a higher level, such as the middling Mahayana path of accumulation, the great Mahayana path of accumulation, and so forth.

The definition of aspirational Bodhicitta is: Bodhicitta that is *not* directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections, such as generosity etc., which pertains to the Bodhisattva vow.

The meaning of the different aspects of the definition is:

- Aspirational Bodhicitta is **Bodhicitta** because, like engaging Bodhicitta, aspirational Bodhicitta is an actual mind of enlightenment that is concomitant with the aspiration that focuses on enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.
- The reason why aspirational Bodhicitta **is not directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections, such as generosity, etc. which pertains to the Bodhisattva vow** is as follows. There are two types of aspirational Bodhicitta: (1) aspirational Bodhicitta that is directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections and (2) aspirational Bodhicitta that is *not* directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections.

An example of the first type is Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who has not yet taken the Bodhisattva vow and who is practicing the perfection of generosity. That type of aspirational Bodhicitta is directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections because it is directly conjoined with the function of practicing the perfection of generosity. However, it is not directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections that pertains to the Bodhisattva vow, for the Mahayana practitioner has not obtained the Bodhisattva vow.

An example of the second type of aspirational Bodhicitta is Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the small Mahayana path of accumulation who does not have the Bodhisattva vow and who is not engaging in the practice of any of the six perfections.

As mentioned above, of the two types of Bodhicitta, aspirational Bodhicitta is generated before engaging Bodhicitta. Mahayana practitioners have to cultivate Bodhicitta and thereby enter the Mahayana path of accumulation *before* they can receive the Bodhisattva vow.

The difference between aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta is expressed by the following quotes:

The Buddha says in the ***Gandhavyuha Sutra (Sutra of the Arrayed Tree)***:

*Son of the lineage, sentient beings whose mind aspires to the unsurpassed, complete and perfect enlightenment are rare indeed. But extremely rare are sentient beings who go on to unsurpassed, complete and perfect enlightenment.*

Shantideva says in the ***Bodhisattvacharyavatara***:

*Just as one understands the difference  
Between wishing to go and going,  
The wise should gradually understand  
The difference of these two.*

Kamalashila says in the ***First Stages of Meditation*** (Skt. ***Bhavanakrama***, Tib. ***sgom rim dang po***):

*The aspirational mind of enlightenment is the initial striving, "May I become a Buddha in order to benefit all migrators". The mind of engagement engages in the collection [of merit and wisdom] after having taken the vow.*

Please note that the above explanation of aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta according to the Prasangika Madhyamika is slightly different from the explanation according to some other Buddhist tenet systems, such as the Svatantrika Madhyamika.

The main difference between those tenet systems stems from their different assertions regarding the nature of vows.

In general, proponents of all Buddhist tenet systems assert that there are three classes of vows:

- (1) The Pratimoksha vows
- (2) The Bodhisattva vow
- (3) The Tantric vow

The **Pratimoksha vows** can be further categorized into lay vows and ordination vows.

Lay vows constitute two sets of vows:

1. The laymen's vow (five vows)
2. The laywomen's vow (five vows)

Ordination vows constitute five sets of vows:

1. The male novice vow (36 vows)
2. The female novice vow (36 vows)
3. The postulant/probationer nun's vow (the postulant/probationer vow is taken by novice nuns undergoing two years' probation before being ordained as fully ordained nuns. They have to observe six root Dharmas and six auxiliary Dharmas in addition to their novice vow)
4. The fully ordained monks' vow (253 vows)
5. The fully ordained nuns' vow (264 vows)

There are sometimes said to be eight types of Pratimoksha vows when adding the one-day vow (eight vows) to the lay vows.

The **Bodhisattva vow** comprises eighteen major and forty-six secondary vows and the **Tantric vow** fourteen major and eight secondary vows.

Among the Pratimoksha vows, the one-day vow is taken for only twenty-four hours, while the remaining vows are binding until death. The Bodhisattva and Tantric vows are taken until Buddhahood.

Regarding the nature of vows, the proponents of the Prasangika Madhyamika (as well the Vaibashika) hold that vows are subtle physical forms, which, unless transgressed, are always present in a person's continuum. Of course, they are only present for the time for which they were



taken, which accounts for the one-day Pratimoksha vow naturally disintegrating after twenty-four hours and the remaining Pratimoksha vows naturally disintegrating at death.

However, this assertion is different from the assertion of the proponents of the Svatantrika Madhyamika, Chittamatra, and Sautrantika systems, for they hold that the different categories of vows are mental events, and sometimes manifest in a person’s mental continuum and at other times lie dormant. According to these schools, vows constitute what are called 'protective minds' (Tib.: *srung sems*) because they are main minds that guard a person from transgressing the vows.

In particular, the followers of the Svatantrika Madhyamika and Chittamatra schools hold that the Bodhisattva vow, for instance, is a protective mind that guards Mahayanists from engaging in any of the eighteen downfalls or the forty-six faulty actions (i.e., from breaking any of the eighteen major and forty-six secondary vows).

Therefore, even though Svatantrika Madhyamika and Chittamatra tenet holders accept the above-cited definitions of aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta, they differ in their assertions with regard to the Bodhisattva paths and levels on which aspirational Bodhicitta arises.

Unlike the followers of the Prasangika Madhyamika, they maintain that aspirational Bodhicitta does not only manifest on the *small* Mahayana path of accumulation but also on the middling and great Mahayana path of accumulation, the path of preparation, the path of seeing, and the first seven bhumis of the path of meditation. This is because even though Bodhisattvas who have reached the middling Mahayana path of accumulation have definitely obtained the Bodhisattva vow, the vow (i.e., the 'protective mind' that is the Bodhisattva vow) does not always have to be present in their mental continuum but may lie dormant. So, according to those tenet holders, Bodhisattvas who have taken the Bodhisattva vow are not always engaging in the practice of the perfection of morality.

Thus, according to Svatantrika Madhyamika and Chittamatra systems, Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who has obtained the Bodhisattva vow is not necessarily engaging Bodhicitta since it is not necessarily directly conjoined with any of the six perfections. For example, Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the path of seeing in whose continuum the Bodhisattva vow lies dormant and who is not engaging in the practice of any of the six perfections is aspirational Bodhicitta. It is aspirational Bodhicitta because it is Bodhicitta that is *not* directly conjoined with the function of practicing any of the six perfections.

**Aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta on the five paths according to the Prasangika Madhyamika:**

Path of accumulation			Path of Preparation	Path of Seeing	Path of Meditation	Path of No-More-Learning
<i>small</i>	<i>middling</i>	<i>great</i>				
ASPIRATIONAL BODHICITTA			ENGAGING BODHICITTA			

**Aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta on the five paths according to the Svatantrika Madhyamika and Chittamatra:**

Path of Accumulation	Path of Preparation	Path of Seeing	Path of Meditation										Path of No-More-Learning
			1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	
A S P I R A T I O N A L   B O D H I C I T T A													
E N G A G I N G   B O D H I C I T T A													

**The category from the point of view of the perimeter**

Bodhicitta can also be categorized according to its perimeter, i.e., according to the level reached by the Mahayanist in whose continuum it manifests.

This category consists of four types of Bodhicitta:

- a) Bodhicitta of devoted conduct
- b) Bodhicitta of the pure special attitude
- c) Fully mature Bodhicitta
- d) Bodhicitta without obstructions

***Bodhicitta of devoted conduct***

Bodhicitta of devoted conduct (Tib. *mos pa spyod pa'i sems bskyed*) refers to Bodhicitta in the continuum of ordinary Bodhisattvas, that is, Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation or preparation.

***Bodhicitta of the pure special attitude***

Bodhicitta of the pure special attitude (Tib. *lhag bsam dag pa'i sems bskyed*) refers to Bodhicitta in the continuum of Arya Bodhisattvas on any of the seven impure Bodhisattva bhumis (the first to the seventh Bodhisattva bhumi).

***Fully mature Bodhicitta***

Fully mature Bodhicitta (Tib. *rnam par smin pa'i sems bskyed*) refers to Bodhicitta in the continuum of Arya Bodhisattvas on any of the three pure Bodhisattva bhumis (the eighth, ninth, and tenth Bodhisattva bhumis).

***Bodhicitta without obstructions***

Bodhicitta without obstructions (Tib. *sgrib pa spangs pa'i sems bskyed*) refers to Bodhicitta in the continuum of Buddhas.

**The category from the point of view of the aim**

From the point of view of the aim Bodhicitta can be categorized into three types:

- a) Shepherd-like Bodhicitta

- b) Ferryman-like Bodhicitta
- c) King-like Bodhicitta

All three types of Bodhicitta are actual Bodhicitta. However, the first two are based on wishes that are not realistic. Yet, as Lama Tsongkhapa explains in his *Golden Rosary* (Tib. *gser 'phreng*), these wishes are not *wrong* consciousnesses since they are cultivated deliberately and do not arise as the result of a misperception. In fact, Bodhisattvas knowingly make many prayers and engage in practices that are unrealistic – yet highly effective. An example of such a practice is the practice of *Tong-Len* (Tib. *gtong len*) or *Giving and Taking*.

### **Shepherd-like Bodhicitta**

Shepherd-like Bodhicitta (Tib. *phyug rdzi lta bu'i sems bskyed*) refers to actual Bodhicitta that is the result of a wish to lead all sentient beings to enlightenment first and only then become a Buddha oneself. This means that after having generated the *aspiration to benefit others*, practitioners consider how they could be of greatest benefit to all sentient beings. Having come to the conclusion that it would be of greatest benefit to take all sentient beings to enlightenment, they cultivate the wish to lead all sentient beings to Buddhahood first and only then to become Buddhas themselves. Based on that wish they generate Bodhicitta, i.e., the special mental main mind which is the entry-way to the Mahayana path and is concomitant with its assistant aspiration (*the enlightenment aspiration*) that focuses on complete enlightenment for the benefit of others.

This type of Bodhicitta is called 'shepherd-like Bodhicitta' because it is induced by a wish modelled on the action of a shepherd who guides his flock by walking behind it. Although the wish to lead all sentient beings to Buddhahood before becoming a Buddha oneself is not realistic, it is nonetheless an effective method for cultivating Bodhicitta.

### **Ferryman-like Bodhicitta**

Ferryman-like Bodhicitta (Tib. *mnyan pa lta bu'i sems bskyed*) refers to actual Bodhicitta that is the result of the wish to attain enlightenment along with all sentient beings. After having generated the *aspiration to benefit others*, practitioners consider how they could be of greatest benefit to all sentient beings. Having come to the conclusion that it is of greatest benefit to lead sentient beings to enlightenment, they cultivate a wish to lead sentient beings to enlightenment by attaining Buddhahood together with everyone else. Based on that wish they generate Bodhicitta.

This type of Bodhicitta is called 'ferryman-like Bodhicitta' because it is induced by a wish modelled on the action of a ferryman who reaches the other shore at the same time as the passengers on his boat. Just like the wish to take others to enlightenment before becoming a Buddha oneself, the *shepherd-like* wish to take sentient beings to enlightenment by becoming enlightened together with them is not realistic yet it is effective for cultivating Bodhicitta.

### **King-like Bodhicitta**

King-like Bodhicitta (Tib. *rgyal po lta bu'i sems bskyed*) refers to actual Bodhicitta that is the result of a wish to attain enlightenment before leading all sentient beings to Buddhahood. As before, after having generated the *aspiration to benefit others*, practitioners consider how they could be of greatest benefit to all sentient beings. Understanding that it is of greatest benefit to lead sentient beings to enlightenment, they cultivate the wish to become Buddhas themselves first in order to be able to guide all other sentient beings to enlightenment. Based on that wish they generate Bodhicitta. This type of Bodhicitta is called 'king-like Bodhicitta' because it is induced by a wish the object of which is comparable to the way a king walks in front of and leads his subjects.

Among these three types of Bodhicitta, only the third type is induced by a wish that is based on reality, for it is only possible to lead sentient beings to Buddhahood after one has become a Buddha oneself.

### **The category from the point of view of similes**

This category contains twenty-two different types of Bodhicitta that are described by way of similes. The **Ornament** enumerates the twenty-two similes in two verses:

*As for this: earth, gold, moon, fire,  
Treasure, jewel mine, ocean,  
Vajra, mountain, medicine, spiritual friend,  
Wish-fulfilling jewel, sun, song,  
  
King, store-house, great path,  
Riding mount, spring,  
pleasant sound, river, and cloud.  
Thus, these are the twenty-two aspects.*

The meaning of the two verses is:

**As for this**, the category by way of similes, sets forth twenty-two different types of Bodhicitta: (1) **earth**-like Bodhicitta, (2) **gold**-like Bodhicitta, (3) **moon**-like Bodhicitta, (4) **fire**-like Bodhicitta, (5) great **treasure**-like Bodhicitta, (6) **jewel mine**-like Bodhicitta, (7) great **ocean**-like Bodhicitta, (8) **Vajra**-like Bodhicitta, (9) king of **mountain**-like Bodhicitta, (10) **medicine**-like Bodhicitta, (11) **spiritual friend**-like Bodhicitta, (12) **wish-fulfilling jewel**-like Bodhicitta, (13) **sun**-like Bodhicitta, (14) pleasant Dharma **song**-like Bodhicitta, (15) great **king**-like Bodhicitta, (16) **store house**-like Bodhicitta, (17) **great path**-like Bodhicitta, (18) **riding mount**-like Bodhicitta, (19) **spring**-like Bodhicitta, (20) **pleasant sound**-like Bodhicitta, (21) **river**-like Bodhicitta, (22) **cloud**-like Bodhicitta. **Thus, these are the twenty-two different aspects** of Bodhicitta.

The twenty-two types of Bodhicitta that the twenty-two similes represent are:

(1) Bodhicitta endowed with aspiration, (2) Bodhicitta endowed with resolve, (3) Bodhicitta endowed with a special attitude, (4) Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers, (5) Bodhicitta endowed with generosity, (6) Bodhicitta endowed with ethics, (7) Bodhicitta endowed with patience, (8) Bodhicitta endowed with joyous effort, (9) Bodhicitta endowed with concentration, (10) Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of wisdom, (11) Bodhicitta endowed with skillful means, (12) Bodhicitta endowed with prayer, (13) Bodhicitta endowed with power, (14) Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of exalted wisdom, (15) Bodhicitta endowed with clairvoyance, (16) Bodhicitta endowed with merit and exalted wisdom, (17) Bodhicitta endowed with the thirty-seven harmonies of enlightenment, (18) Bodhicitta endowed with compassion and special insight, (19) Bodhicitta endowed with retention and confidence, (20) Bodhicitta endowed with a festival of the four seals of Dharma, (21) Bodhicitta endowed with the one path traveled, and (22) Bodhicitta concomitant with the truth body which emanates the twelve enlightened deeds and benefits sentient beings.

Next follows a detailed explanation of the twenty-two types of Bodhicitta and their similes. Please note that the first types of Bodhicitta are the causes of the latter types.

### 1. **Earth-like Bodhicitta**

**Earth-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with aspiration*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the small Mahayana path of accumulation. It is like the earth because just as the earth is the foundation for houses, crops, etc., *Bodhicitta endowed with aspiration* serves as the basis from which all wholesome qualities can grow and all higher paths be induced.

### 2. **Gold-like Bodhicitta**

**Gold-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with resolve*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the middling path of accumulation. This *Bodhicitta* is like refined gold because just as refined gold's nature does not change even after being cut, rubbed or burned, *Bodhicitta endowed with resolve* can no longer degenerate. This means that once Bodhisattvas reach the middling path of accumulation and cultivate **gold-like Bodhicitta**, their Bodhicitta, and consequently their Mahayana path, can no longer degenerate.

### 3. **Moon-like Bodhicitta**

**Moon-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with the special attitude*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the great path of accumulation. This *Bodhicitta* is like the waxing moon because just as the new moon waxes until it is full, with *Bodhicitta endowed with the special attitude* a Bodhisattva's Dharma qualities increase continuously. Those Dharma qualities are, for instance, the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment (the four mindfulnesses, etc.). The reason for such increase is that on the great path of accumulation Bodhisattvas cultivate a special meditative stabilization called '*Meditative Stability of Continuous Dharma*' (Tib. *chos rgyun gyi ting nges 'dzin*), which enables them to directly perceive the Nirmanakaya/Emanation bodies of Buddhas in distant places and receive teachings from them.

### 4. **Fire-like Bodhicitta**

**Fire-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the path of preparation. *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers* is like fire because with this *Bodhicitta*, Bodhisattvas "start to burn the firewood of obstructions to the three *exalted knowers*". The three *exalted knowers* are the 'knower of bases', 'the knower of paths', and the 'exalted knower of aspects' in the continuum of a Buddha.

Bodhisattvas reach the path of preparation when they generate the meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight realizing emptiness conceptually. With the attainment of this union conjoined with *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers*, Bodhisattvas start to undermine the obstructions to omniscience and the obstructions to the attainment of the three exalted knowers of a Buddha.

Please note that Bodhicitta on the path of preparation is called *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers* because Bodhisattvas on the path of preparation who did not become Hinayana Arhats before they entered the Mahayana paths have only *similitudes* of the three knowers in their continuum. This is because they will only generate the first two of the three knowers - the knower of bases and the knower of paths - once they reach the path of seeing (i.e. the first Bodhisattva bhumi). They will generate the last of the three knowers - the exalted knower of aspects - once they reach full enlightenment.

### 5. **Great treasure-like Bodhicitta**

**Great treasure-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with generosity*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the first Bodhisattva bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with generosity* is like a treasure because it satisfies sentient beings through resources, etc. Even though Bodhisattvas engage in the practice of the six or ten perfections on all four Bodhisattva paths (i.e., from the Mahayana path of accumulation to the Mahayana path of meditation), on the first Bodhisattva bhumi they engage especially in the practice of the perfection of generosity.

Bodhisattvas newly reach the first bhumi – and thus the path of seeing – once they realize emptiness directly. When they arise from the meditative absorption realizing emptiness directly, they enter the subsequent attainment period of the Mahayana path of seeing. During that period they especially engage in the practice of the perfection of generosity. Therefore, on the first bhumi Bodhisattvas obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of generosity; they are able to easily give away their body and to place others in the practice of generosity.

### 6. **Jewel mine-like Bodhicitta**

**Jewel mine-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with ethics*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the second bhumi. It is like a jewel mine because with *Bodhicitta endowed with ethics* Bodhisattvas obtain excellent qualities. Bodhisattvas on the second bhumi engage especially in the practice of the perfection of ethics/morality. Due to the emphasis on controlling and purifying themselves, Bodhisattvas on this bhumi become the source of many great qualities that are compared to a jewel mine providing great riches. Furthermore, on the second bhumi, Bodhisattvas do not even dream about engaging in non-ethical conduct; they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of ethics and are able to place others in the practice.

### 7. **Great ocean-like Bodhicitta**

**Great ocean-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with patience*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the third Bodhisattva bhumi. This *Bodhicitta* is like a great ocean because just as a great ocean is not disturbed when objects are thrown into it, with *Bodhicitta endowed with patience* Bodhisattvas are not swayed or affected by disturbing factors such as aggression and suffering. Bodhisattvas on the third bhumi especially engage in the practice of the perfection of patience. Therefore, they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of patience and are able to place others in the practice.

### 8. **Vajra-like Bodhicitta**

**Vajra-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with joyous effort*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the fourth bhumi. It is like a vajra because just as a vajra has the quality of indestructibility, with *Bodhicitta endowed with joyous effort* a Bodhisattva's resolve is indestructible. Bodhisattvas on the fourth bhumi emphasize the practice of the perfection of joyous effort. Therefore they do not become discouraged or depressed by any obstacles they encounter; they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of joyous effort and are able to place others in the practice.

### **9. King of mountain-like Bodhicitta**

**King of mountain-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with concentration*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the fifth bhumi. It is like the king of mountains because just as the king of mountains possesses great firmness and solidity, with *Bodhicitta endowed with concentration* a Bodhisattva's mind is very firm and stable. Bodhisattvas on the fifth bhumi emphasize the practice of the perfection of concentration. Therefore, their minds remain unmoved by distracting objects; they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of concentration and are able to place others in the practice.

### **10. Medicine-like Bodhicitta**

**Medicine-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of wisdom*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the sixth bhumi. This *Bodhicitta* is like medicine because just as medicine pacifies illnesses, with *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of wisdom* Bodhisattvas are able to pacify the illness of afflictive and cognitive obstructions. Bodhisattvas on the sixth bhumi especially engage in the practice of the perfection of wisdom. They are able to enter into and arise from an absorption that perceives a cessation within the shortest amount of time in which an action can be completed. Further, they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of wisdom and are able to place others in the practice.

### **11. Spiritual friend-like Bodhicitta**

**Spiritual friend-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with skillful means*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the seventh bhumi. It is like a virtuous spiritual friend because just as a virtuous spiritual friend never gives up seeking the welfare of sentient beings, with *Bodhicitta endowed with skillful means* Bodhisattvas enhance their mastery and attain confidence in skillful means. Thus, they never forsake the welfare of a single sentient being.

### **12. Wish-fulfilling jewel-like Bodhicitta**

**Wish-fulfilling jewel-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with prayer*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the eighth bhumi. This *Bodhicitta* is like a wish-fulfilling jewel because just as a wish-fulfilling jewel actualizes all material dreams and aspirations, with *Bodhicitta endowed with prayer* Bodhisattvas possess the five clairvoyances and are able to actualize many of their prayers and aspirations concerning the welfare of sentient beings.

### **13. Sun-like Bodhicitta**

**Sun-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with power*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the ninth bhumi. It is like the sun because just as the sun shines equally on everything and just as it ripens crops etc., with *Bodhicitta endowed with power* Bodhisattvas obtain the four means of gathering disciples, which enables them to gradually lead trainees to the practice of the perfections and ripen their continuum.

The four means of gathering disciples are: (1) giving necessities such as food, drink, clothes and so forth, (2) speaking pleasantly, (3) giving teachings according to disciples' needs, and (4) practicing in accordance with what one teaches.

#### **14. Pleasant Dharma song-like Bodhicitta**

**Pleasant Dharma song-like Bodhicitta** represent *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of exalted wisdom*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the tenth bhumi. This *Bodhicitta* is like a pleasant Dharma song because just as a pleasant Dharma song inspires those who hear it, with *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of exalted wisdom* Bodhisattvas having trained in the 'Four Specific Understandings' greatly inspire trainees through teaching the Dharma.

The 'Four Specific Understandings' are four ways in which Bodhisattvas know the distinct features, characteristics and states of phenomena. These are: (1) specific perfect understanding of Dharma, (2) specific perfect understanding of the meaning, (3) specific perfect understanding of definitive words, and (4) specific perfect understanding of confidence.

The following five types of Bodhicitta pertain to all three pure bhumis, the eighth, ninth and tenth bhumis. As before, the first types are the causes of the latter types:

#### **15. Great king-like Bodhicitta**

**King-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with clairvoyance*, which is like a great king because just as a great king accomplishes the welfare of his subjects through his power and status, Bodhisattvas with *Bodhicitta endowed with clairvoyance* obtain great power through clairvoyance. Owing to the power of their clairvoyance their realizations do not degenerate and they are able to accomplish the welfare of sentient beings in the numerous worlds of the ten directions.

#### **16. Storehouse-like Bodhicitta**

**Storehouse-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with merit and exalted wisdom* which is like a storehouse from which wealth can be distributed because with *Bodhicitta endowed with merit and exalted wisdom* Bodhisattvas possess the treasury of the two great collections of merit and exalted wisdom.

#### **17. Great path-like Bodhicitta**

**Great path-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment*, which is like a great path or highway because all Arya Bodhisattvas of the three times have traveled and will travel the path of the practices of the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment.

#### **18. Riding mount-like Bodhicitta**

**Riding mount-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with compassion and special insight*, which is like a riding mount because just as a riding mount takes its rider to his destination, with *Bodhicitta endowed with compassion and special insight* Bodhisattvas are taken to full enlightenment. In order to reach full enlightenment, Bodhisattvas must avoid the extreme of Samsara and the extreme of Nirvana/solitary peace. Thus, by cultivating special insight, Bodhisattvas overcome Samsara and by cultivating compassion, they avoid Nirvana.

#### **19. Spring-like Bodhicitta**

**Spring-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with retention and confidence*, which is like a spring because just as a spring spouts water and is inexhaustible, likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with retention and confidence* Bodhisattvas are able retain the Dharma without



exhaustion. By means of retention Bodhisattvas are able to retain previously heard or unheard Dharmas and by means of confidence they are able to retain them inexhaustibly.

The last three types of Bodhicitta is explained to pertain to the bhumi of a Buddha. (Please note that the first of those three types actually arises in the continuum of Bodhisattvas. Nonetheless it is explained as pertaining to the Buddha bhumi):

### **20. Pleasant sound-like Bodhicitta**

**Pleasant sound-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with a festival of the four seals of Dharma*, which refers to Bodhicitta at the end of the continuum as a sentient being. *Bodhicitta endowed with a festival of the four seals of Dharma* is like a pleasant sound because with this mind, Bodhisattvas pleasantly proclaim the Dharma of the four seals to those aspiring to liberation. Even though Bodhisattvas at the end of the continuum as sentient beings abide in the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness and are thus unable to teach the Dharma, they send out numerous emanations who teach.

### **21. River-like Bodhicitta**

**River-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta endowed with the one path traveled*, which refers to Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Buddha who has newly attained enlightenment. This *Bodhicitta* is like a river because just as a river flows effortlessly, indiscriminately and continuously, with *Bodhicitta endowed with the one path traveled* Buddhas effortlessly, indiscriminately and continuously work for the benefit of sentient beings.

### **22. Cloud-like Bodhicitta**

**Cloud-like Bodhicitta** represents *Bodhicitta concomitant with the truth body that emanates the twelve enlightened deeds and benefits sentient beings*, which refers to Bodhicitta in the continuum of Buddhas who emanate a supreme Nirmanakaya/Emanation Body. *Bodhicitta concomitant with the truth body that emanates the twelve enlightened deeds and benefits sentient beings* is like a cloud because it enables Buddhas to rain down the twelve enlightened deeds.

The twelve enlightened deeds are (1) descent from Tushita pure realm, (2) entering the womb of his mother, (3) taking birth, (4) displaying his skill in the worldly arts, (5) enjoying the company of his wife, (6) becoming a monk, (7) practicing austerity, (8) meditating under the Bodhi tree, (9) defeating Mara, (10) attaining full enlightenment, (11) turning the wheel of Dharma, and (12) passing away.

This completes the presentation of the different categories of Bodhicitta. Next comes a presentation of the bases and the benefits of Bodhicitta.

## **The bases of Bodhicitta**

The bases of Bodhicitta are twofold:

- (1) The physical basis
- (2) The mental basis

## The physical basis

Here the physical basis refers to the physical body of any of the realms in which a practitioner (who has not yet overcome Samsara) must take birth in order to be able to newly cultivate Bodhicitta.

Samsara has three realms:

- I. The Desire Realm
- II. The Form Realm
- III. The Formless Realm

In the Desire Realm there are a further six realms:

- i) The Hell Realm
- ii) The Preta Realm
- iii) The Animal Realm
- iv) The Human Realm
- v) The Semi-Celestial Realm
- vi) The Celestial Realm

The physical basis of Bodhicitta can be subdivided into two:

- a) The physical basis of aspirational Bodhicitta
- b) The physical basis of engaging Bodhicitta

### ***The physical basis of aspirational Bodhicitta***

Aspirational Bodhicitta can be cultivated newly in the continuum of practitioners of any of the six realms. This is evidenced by several quotes from the sutras.

One sutra says:

*At that time eight thousand celestials and humans  
Generated the mind of enlightenment.*

This sutra indicates that celestial and human beings are able to newly generate aspirational Bodhicitta.

The ***Questions of the Naga King Sagara Sutra*** (Skt. *Saganagarajapariprcchasutra*, Tib. *klu'i rgyal po rgya mtshos zhus pa'i mdo*) says:

*Twenty-two thousand Nagas generated the unsurpassable mind of enlightenment.*

and the ***Questions of the Naga King Anavatapta Sutra*** (Skt. *Anavataptanagarajapariprcchasutra*, Tib. *klu'i rgyal po ma dros pas zhus pa'i mdo*) says:

*Seventy-two thousand Nagas generated the mind of unsurpassed, perfect, and full enlightenment.*

Since Nagas (or serpents) belong to the animal realm, those two quotes establish that animals are able to newly generate aspirational Bodhicitta.

The ***Sutra of Repaying Buddha's Kindness*** (Tib. *thabs mkhas chen po sang rgyas drin lan bsabs pa'i mdo*) says that in one of his previous lives as a hell-being our Teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha, newly generated Bodhicitta while pulling a chariot with great physical strength in order to help his companion. This indicates that it is possible to generate aspirational Bodhicitta in the hell realm.

In dependence on those quotes one can infer that if it is possible to newly generate Bodhicitta in the hell, the animal, and the celestial realms, it should also be possible to newly generate it in the preta and the semi-celestial realms.

### ***The physical basis of engaging Bodhicitta***

The physical basis for engaging Bodhicitta is the body of a celestial or a human being. Therefore, in order to be able to take the Bodhisattva vow and generate engaging Bodhicitta, practitioners must be either celestial or human beings. Furthermore, of the three types of celestial beings, they must be celestial beings of the Desire or the Form Realms. Celestial beings of the Formless Realm cannot take the Bodhisattva vow newly, because in order to take the Bodhisattva vow they need to listen to the instructions of the spiritual teacher who confers the vows. However, since celestial beings of the Formless Realm always remain in meditative absorption and have no physical body, they are unable to listen to such instructions.

According to Atisha's ***Lamp of the Path***, in order for humans to take the Bodhisattva vow they must first take one of the seven types of Pratimoksha vows.

Atisha's ***Lamp of the Path*** (Tib. ***lam sgron***):

*Those who maintain any of the seven  
Types of Pratimoksha [vows],  
Have the ideal [prerequisite] for  
The Bodhisattva vow - not others.*

The seven types of Pratimoksha vows refer to the above-mentioned two types of lay vows (the laymen's vow and the laywomen's vow) and the five types of monastic vows.

Please note that only a human body can serve as the physical basis of the Pratimoksha vow. Hence, celestial beings do not take the Pratimoksha vow before taking the Bodhisattva vow.

### **The Mental Basis**

The mental basis refers to the mental state that serves as a cause of Bodhicitta. The mental basis of both aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta is:

1. Having faith in the Buddha
2. Having compassion for sentient beings
3. Having perseverance that is able to bear the austerities of a Bodhisattva's life as well as faith

The Buddha says in the ***Jewel Lamp Sutra*** (Tib. ***dkon mchog sgron me***):

*Having faith in the Victorious and his Dharma,  
Having faith in the conduct of the children of the Victorious,  
Having faith in unsurpassable enlightenment  
One generates the mind of great beings.*

Maitreya says in the ***Mahayanasutraalamkara*** (Skt. ***Ornament for Mahayana Sutras***, Tib. ***mdo sde rgyan***):

*It is accepted that its root is compassion*

The mental basis of engaging Bodhicitta is aspirational Bodhicitta.

## Benefits of Bodhicitta

Shantideva's *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* describes the following benefits of generating Bodhicitta:

1. Previously accumulated negative karma will be purified
2. One will take rebirth in the higher realms
3. One will be called 'Child of the Conquerors'
4. One will become worthy of being an object of worship for celestial beings
5. One will eventually attain full enlightenment

Shantideva's *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*:

*It is like the supreme gold-making elixir,  
For it transforms the unclean body we have taken  
Into the priceless jewel of a Buddha's body.  
Therefore firmly seize this Mind of Enlightenment*

and:

*The moment a Mind of Enlightenment arises  
In [the continuum of] those fettered and weak in the jail of Samsara,  
They will be named 'Child of the Conquerors',  
And will become an object of worship for human and celestial beings of the world.*

This completes the presentation of Bodhicitta.

MAY ALL SENTIENT BEINGS BE HAPPY.