Glossary

Bodhichitta. The mind of enlightenment. This is a key word in the Mahayana. On the relative level, it is the wish to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all beings and the practice necessary to do this. On the absolute level, it is the direct insight into the ultimate nature of self and phenomena.

Bodhisattva. A practitioner on the path to Buddhahood, training in the practice of compassion and the six pāramitās (q.v.), who has vowed to attain enlightenment for the sake of all beings. The Tibetan translation of this term means “hero of the enlightened mind.”

Bodhisattvayana. The vehicle of the Bodhisattvas within the Sutrayana (q.v.) or the Sutrayana part of the Mahayana.

Buddha. One who has removed the two veils (the veil of afflictive emotions, which is the cause of suffering, and the veil of ignorance, which is the obstacle to omniscience) and who has brought to perfection the two sorts of knowledge (of the ultimate and relative nature of phenomena).

Buddhadharma. The teaching of the Buddha. See also Dharma.

Circumambulation. A highly meritorious devotional practice, consisting in walking clockwise, concentratedly and with awareness, around a sacred object, such as a temple, stupa, holy mountain, or the house (and even the person) of a spiritual master.

Clear, or penetrating, insight (Skt., vipashyana). Meditation that reveals the absence of inherent existence in both the mind and phenomena.

Dharma. The body of teaching expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha and other enlightened beings that shows the way to enlightenment. It comprises two aspects: the Dharma of transmission, namely, the teachings that are actually given, and the Dharma of realisation, or the states that are attained through the application of the teachings.

Dharmakaya. The absolute, or truth, body; an aspect of emptiness.

Doctrine. See Dharma.

Eight worldly preoccupations. Gain or loss, pleasure or pain, praise or criticism, and fame or infamy. Most people who are not following a spiritual path seek gain and try to avoid loss, and so on, for each of these pairs of opposites.

Eighteen characteristics of a precious human existence. These eighteen characteristics comprise eight freedoms and ten endowments. The eight freedoms consist in not being born (1) in the realms of hell; (2) asa hungry ghost; (3) as an animal; (4) in the realms of the gods; (5) among barbarians who are ignorant of the teachings and practices of the Buddhadharma; (6) as one with wrong views, such as those of nihilism, of the substantiality of the ego and phenomena, etc.; (7) in a time or place where a Buddha has not appeared; and (8) as mentally handicapped. The ten endowments are subdivided into five that are considered intrinsic and five considered extrinsic. The five intrinsic endowments are (1) to be born as a human being; (2) to inhabit a central land, that is, one where the Buddhadharma is proclaimed; (3) to be in possession of normal faculties; (4) to be one who has not abandoned oneself to great karmic negativity; and (5) to have faith in the Dharma. The five extrinsic endowments are the facts (1) that a Buddha has appeared in the world; (2) that he has expounded the Dharma; (3) that his Teaching still persists; (4) that it is practiced; and (5) that one is accepted as a disciple by a spiritual master.

Five aggregates (Skt., skandhas). The five psychophysical constituents that characterise sentient beings: form, feeling, appraisal, impulse, and consciousness.

Five paths. The paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no more learning. These represent successive stages in spiritual progress rather than distinct and different pathways to enlightenment. A Bodhisattva on the path of no more learning has attained Buddhahood. See also Ten levels.

Five poisons. The five principal negative emotions: ignorance, attachment, hatred, pride, and jealousy.

Four Noble Truths. (1) Suffering: the nature of existence in saṃsāra is suffering. (2) Cause: the cause of suffering is negative or obscuring emotions. (3) Cessation: the cessation of suffering is Buddhahood. (4) Path: the path is the means to attain liberation.

Fundamental Vehicle. See Shravakayana.

Gelug. One of the four main traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, founded by Tsongkhapa (1357-1419).

Higher realms. See Six realms.

Hinayana. See Shravakayana.

Kadam. Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism deriving from the teachings of Atisha (982-1054). Its teaching emphasises monastic discipline, study, and the practice of compassion. The influence of the Kadam tradition is pervasive in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism, although it is especially associated with the Gelug teaching, which is indeed sometimes referred to as the New Kadam.

Kagyu. One of the four main traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, founded by Marpa the Translator (1012—1095).

Kalpa. An immense period of time as conceived in the traditional cosmology of India. A great kalpa, which corresponds to the period of formation, duration, disappearance, and absence of a universal system,

comprises eighty small kalpas. An intermediary kalpa consists of two small kalpas taken together, in the first of which the duration of life increases, while in the second it decreases.

Karma. Sanskrit word meaning “action,” understood as the law of causality. According to the Buddha’s teaching, all actions, whether of thought, word, or deed, are like seeds that will eventually bear fruit in experience, whether in this or future lives. A positive or virtuous act will result in happiness, and the definition of sin or negative action is that which is the cause of suffering later on.

Lower realms. See Six realms.

Mahayana. The Great Vehicle, including the teachings of both Shravakayana and Mantrayana (q.v.). See under Shravakayana.

Mantra. A group of words or syllables associated with specific meditational deities, the recitation of which forms an essential part of tantric meditation.

Mantrayana. The vehicle of the secret mantras, sometimes called the Diamond Vehicle, or Vajrayana. This collection of teachings and practices is based on the tantras, and though it is, in fact, an aspect of the Mahayana, it is sometimes considered a separate vehicle. See Shravakayana.

Mental calm (Skt., shamatha). A state in meditation in which the mind concentrates one-pointedly and effortlessly on the object of meditation.

Negative emotions or afflictions (Skt., klesha). Mental factors whose influence on thoughts and actions ultimately produces suffering. The five principal negative emotions are the five poisons (q.v.).

Nirmanakaya. The manifestation body, the aspect of compassion and means, whereby a Buddha may be perceived by unenlightened beings. This is, therefore, the means by which he can communicate with and help them.

Nirvana. The Tibetan translation of this Sanskrit word means “gone beyond suffering” and indicates the various levels of enlightenment gained according to the practice of the Shravakayana or the Mahayana.

Nyingma. The earliest of the four main traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, founded in the eighth century by Guru Padmasambhava.

Pratyekabuddha. One who attains enlightenment alone, without the aid of a master, and who does not transmit teachings to others.

Refuge. A Buddhist seeks the protection and guidance of the Three Jewels (q.v.) in order to find freedom from the suffering of saṃsāra. The Three Jewels therefore constitute the Buddhist refuge, and a Buddhist can be defined as someone who takes refuge in them.

Sambhogakaya. The body of enjoyment, or the transhumant forms in which Buddhas may manifest themselves. The sambhogakaya is directly perceptible only to highly realised beings.

Saṃsāra. The wheel, or round, of existence. The state of being unenlightened, in which the mind, enslaved by the three poisons of attachment, hatred, and ignorance, passes uncontrolled from one state to another through an endless stream of psychophysical experiences that are all characterised by suffering. See also Six realms; Three worlds.

Sakya. One of the four main traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, founded by Khon Konchok Gyalpo. (1034—I102).

Shravakayana or Hinayana. The practitioners of Dharma are identified as belonging to two different sets of teaching, or vehicles, according to the nature of their aspirations. These are known as the Hinayana, or Fundamental Vehicle, and the Mahayana, or Great Vehicle. The Fundamental Vehicle is subdivided into the way of the Hearers (or Shravakas), who are disciples of the Buddha, and the way of those who seek enlightenment relying only on themselves, or Pratyekabuddhas. The goal of the Shravaka and Pratyekabuddha paths is nirvana, conceived of as definitive liberation from the sufferings of saṃsāra. The Great Vehicle is that of the Bodhisattvas, or those who, while accepting the validity and efficacy of the other vehicle, aspire to the full enlightenment of Buddhahood for the sake of all beings. The term Hinayana means “Lesser Vehicle,” but this should not be understood in a pejorative sense, since its teachings are fundamental to the practice of the Great Vehicle as well. The Dalai Lama has suggested the term Shravakayana be used instead of Hinayana. In this case the term should be understood as including the Pratyekabuddhayana as well.

Six pāramitās, or transcendent practices. The six activities of generosity, moral discipline, patience, endeavour, meditative concentration, and wisdom, which form the practice of the Bodhisattva path. They are termed transcendent because, unlike ordinary generosity, etc., they are untainted by attachment and other negative emotions.

Six realms. The experience of beings in saṃsāra is traditionally schematised into six general categories, referred to as realms or worlds, in which the mind abides as the result of previous actions, or karma. None of these states is satisfactory, though the degree of suffering in them differs from one to 200 GLOSSARY another. The three higher, or fortunate, realms, where suffering is alleviated by temporary pleasures, are the heavens of the celestial beings, or devas; the realms of the Asuras, or demigods; and the world of human beings. The three lower realms, in which suffering predominates over every other experience, are those of the animals, the hungry ghosts, and the hells.

Sutras. The teachings given by Shakyamuni Buddha, memorised by his disciples, and subsequently written down.

Sūtrayāna. The Mahayana has two subsections: the Sūtrayāna, that is, the teachings based on the sūtras and propounding the practice of the six pāramitās, and the Mantrayana, the teachings and practices based on the tantra texts.

Tathagata. An epithet for a Buddha.

Tathagatagarbha. The Buddha nature, the potential for Buddhahood, present in the mind of every sentient being.

Ten levels. Stages on the path to enlightenment. The first Bodhisattva level marks the beginning of the path of seeing. The second to tenth levels are progressive stages within the path of meditation.

Three Jewels or Triple Jewel. The Buddha, the Dharma (Doctrine), and the Sangha (Assembly of disciples and practitioners). These are the three objects of refuge.

Three trainings. Discipline, concentration, and wisdom.

Three worlds, or realms. In some contexts saṃsāra is spoken of as being divided into three worlds, or realms—those of desire, of form, and of formlessness. The world of desire includes all six realms (q.v.). The worlds of form and formlessness exist only for certain types of celestial beings, who have attained these states through the four meditative concentrations of form and the four formless absorptions, respectively.

Triple Gem. See Three Jewels.

Twelve links of interdependence. Ignorance, habitual tendencies, consciousness, name and form, the six sense fields, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, coming into being (existence), birth, and old age and death.

Vajrayana. See Mantrayana.

Shāntideva full text

1 The Excellence of Bodhichitta

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

1.
To those who go in bliss,[51] the dharmakāya[52] they possess, and all their heirs,[53]
To all those worthy of respect, I reverently bow.
According to the scriptures, I shall now in brief describe
The practice of the Bodhisattva discipline.

2.
Here I shall say nothing that has not been said before,
And in the art of prosody I have no skill.
I therefore have no thought that this might be of benefit to others;
I wrote it only to habituate my mind.

3.
My faith will thus be strengthened for a little while,
That I might grow accustomed to this virtuous way.
But others who now chance upon my words
May profit also, equal to myself in fortune.

4.
So hard to find the ease and wealth[54]
Whereby the aims of beings may be gained.
If now I fail to turn it to my profit,
How could such a chance be mine again?

5.
Just as on a dark night black with clouds,
The sudden lightning glares and all is clearly shown,
Likewise rarely, through the Buddhas' power,
Virtuous thoughts rise, brief and transient, in the world.

6.
Virtue, thus, is weak; and always
Evil is of great and overwhelming strength.
Except for perfect bodhichitta,
What other virtue is there that can lay it low?

7.
For many aeons deeply pondering,
The mighty Sages[55] saw its benefits,
Whereby unnumbered multitudes
Are brought with ease to supreme joy.

8.
Those who wish to crush the many sorrows of existence,
Who wish to quell the pain of living beings,
Who wish to have experience of a myriad joys
Should never turn away from bodhichitta.

9.
Should bodhichitta come to birth
In those who suffer, chained in prisons of saṃsāra,
In that instant they are called the children of the Blissful One,
Revered by all the world, by gods and humankind.

10.
For like the supreme substance of the alchemists,
It takes our impure flesh and makes of it
The body of a Buddha, jewel beyond all price.
Such is bodhichitta. Let us grasp it firmly!

11.
Since the boundless wisdom of the only guide of beings
Perfectly examined and perceived its priceless worth,
Those who wish to leave this state of wandering
Should hold well to this precious bodhichitta.

12.
All other virtues, like the plantain tree,
Produce their fruit, but then their force is spent.
Alone the marvellous tree of bodhichitta
Constantly bears fruit and grows unceasingly.

13.
As though they pass through perils guarded by a hero,
Even those weighed down with dreadful wickedness
Will instantly be freed through having bodhichitta.
Why do those who fear their sins not have recourse to it?

14.
Just as by the fire that will destroy the world,
Great sins are surely and at once consumed by it.
Its benefits are thus unbounded
As the Wise and Loving Lord[56] explained to Sudhana.

15.

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[51] "Those who go in bliss" (Tib. bde gshegs, Skt. sugata): a title of the Buddhas.

[52] "The word dharmakāya (Tib. chos sku, Skt. dharmakāya) means "dharma body." According to the commentarial tradition, two interpretations are possible. The term may be taken to mean simply "the body of the Dharma of realization and transmission" (which is the interpretation of Kunzang Pelden and other authorities), with the result that the first line of the poem is a salutation to the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. On the other hand, it may be understood as referring to the dharmakāya or "truth body," the ultimate aspect of a Buddha, as contrasted with the rūpakāya or "form body" (further subdivided into the sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya).

[53] "The "heirs" of the Buddhas are the Bodhisattvas. We have preferred this translation, which is gender-inclusive and corresponds more closely to Shāntideva's obvious intention than the literal rendering of "sons" (Tib. *sras*) as this is likely to be understood by a modern Western readership. This interpretation is in fact supported by one of the earliest known Tibetan commentaries on the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* (composed by Sonam Tsemo, 1142–1182), where sras is glossed as gdung 'tshob (inheritor, successor). In the present context, reference is actually being made to "noble" Bodhisattvas, so-called because their realization corresponds to the Mahāyāna path of seeing and beyond, in other words, who are abiding on the Bodhisattva *bhūmis* or grounds, and who are therefore sublime objects of refuge.

[54] In order to progress toward enlightenment, it is necessary to possess eight forms of ease or freedom, and ten forms of wealth or endowment. The former are the freedoms of not being born (1) in one of the hells; (2) as a *preta* or hungry ghost; (3) as an animal; (4) in the realms of the gods; (5) among barbarians who are ignorant of the teachings and practices of the Buddhadharma; (6) as one with wrong views concerning karma and so forth; (7) in a time and place where a Buddha has not appeared; and (8) as mentally or physically handicapped.

The ten forms of wealth or endowment are subdivided into five considered intrinsic and five considered extrinsic to the personality. The five intrinsic endowments are (1) to be born a human being; (2) to inhabit a "central land," i.e., where the Dharma is proclaimed; (3) to be in possession of normal faculties; (4) to be one who is not karmically inclined to great negativity; and (5) to have faith in the Dharma. The five extrinsic endowments are the facts that (1) a Buddha has appeared in the universe in which one is living, and at an accessible time ; (2) that he has expounded the Doctrine; (3) that his Doctrine still persists; (4) that it is practiced; and (5) that one has been accepted as a disciple by a spiritual master.

[55] The Tibetan consistently uses the expression *thub pa* or *thub dbang* (able one, powerful one) to translate the Sanskrit *muni* (sage, ascetic). The translation "mighty Sages," as a synonym of "Buddhas," is an amalgam of these two ideas.

[56] The reference is to Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, as recounted in the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*.

Bodhichitta, the awakened mind,
Is known in brief to have two aspects:
First, aspiring, bodhichitta in intention;Then active bodhichitta, practical engagement.
16.
As corresponding to the wish to go
And then to setting out,
The wise should understand respectively
The difference that divides these two.
17.
From bodhichitta in intention
Great results arise for those still turning in the wheel of life;
Yet merit does not rise from it in ceaseless streams
As is the case with active bodhichitta.
18.
For when, with irreversible intent,
The mind embraces bodhichitta,
Willing to set free the endless multitudes of beings,
In that instant, from that moment on,
19.
A great and unremitting stream,
A strength of wholesome merit,
Even during sleep and inattention,
Rises equal to the vastness of the sky.
20.
This the Tathāgata,[57]
In the sūtra Subāhu requested,
Said with reasoned argument
For those inclined to lesser paths.
21.If with kindly generosity
One merely has the wish to soothe
The aching heads of other beings,
Such merit knows no bounds.
22.
No need to speak, then, of the wish
To drive away the endless pain
Of each and every living being,
Bringing them unbounded excellence.
23.
Could our father or our mother
Ever have so generous a wish?
Do the very gods, the ṛiṣhis,[58] *even Brahmā*[59]
Harbour such benevolence as this?
24.
For in the past they never,
Even in their dreams,
Wished something like this even for themselves.
How could they do so for another's sake?
25.
This aim to bring the benefit of beings,
A benefit that others wish not even for themselves,
This noble, jewel-like state of mind
Arises truly wondrous, never seen before.
26.
This pain-dispelling draft,
This cause of joy for those who wander through the world,[60]
This precious attitude, this jewel of mind—How shall we calculate its merit?
27.
If the simple thought to be of help to others
Exceeds in worth the worship of the Buddhas,
What need is there to speak of actual deeds
That bring about the weal and benefit of beings?
28.
For beings long to free themselves from misery,
But misery itself they follow and pursue.
They long for joy, but in their ignorance
Destroy it, as they would their foe.
29.
But those who fill with bliss
All beings destitute of joy,
Who cut all pain and suffering away
From those weighed down with misery,
30.
Who drive away the darkness of their ignorance—
What virtue could be matched with theirs?
What friend could be compared to them?
What merit is there similar to this?
31.
If someone who returns a favour
Is deserving of some praise,
Why need we speak of Bodhisattvas,
Those who do good even unsolicited?
32.
People praise as virtuous donorsThose who with contempt support
A few with plain and ordinary food:
A moment's gift that feeds for only half a day.
33.
What need is there to speak of those
Who long bestow on countless multitudes
The peerless joy of blissful Buddhahood,
The ultimate fulfilment of their hopes?
34.
All those who harbour evil in their minds
Against such lords of generosity, the Buddha's heirs,
Will stay in hell, the mighty Sage has said,
For ages equal to the moments of their malice.
35.
But joyous and devoted thoughts
Will yield abundant fruits in greater strength.
Even in great trouble, Bodhisattvas
Never bring forth wrong; their virtues naturally increase.

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[57] Tathāgata (Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa*): literally, "one thus gone"; a synonym for Buddha.

[58] According to ancient Indian tradition, the ṛiṣhis were sages who perceived the sound of the Vedas and transmitted them to the world. They form a class by themselves between gods and humans.

[59] Brahmā, the creator of the universe according to the Vedas.

[60] "Those who wander through the world" is a translation of the Tibetan *'gro ba* (lit. one who moves), a common epithet for sentient beings who migrate helplessly from one saṃsāric state to another.

36.
To them in whom this precious jewel of mind
Is born—to them I bow!
I go for refuge to those springs of happiness
Who bring their very enemies to perfect bliss.

2 Confession

1.
To the Buddhas, those thus gone,
And to the sacred Dharma, spotless and supremely rare,
And to the Buddha's offspring, oceans of good qualities,
That I might gain this precious attitude, I make a perfect offering.[61]
2.
I offer every fruit and flower,
Every kind of healing draft,
And all the precious gems the world contains,
With all pure waters of refreshment;
3.
Every mountain wrought of precious jewels,
All sweet and lonely forest groves,
The trees of paradise adorned with blossom,
Trees with branches bowed with perfect fruit;
4.
The perfumed fragrance of divine and other realms,
All incense, wishing trees, and trees of gems,
All crops that grow without the tiller's care,
And every sumptuous object worthy to be offered;
5.
Lakes and meres adorned with lotuses,
Delightful with the sweet-voiced cries of waterbirds,
And everything unclaimed and free
Extending to the margins of the boundless sky.
6.
I hold them all before my mind, and to the mighty Sage,
the greatest of our kind,
And to his heirs, I make a perfect offering.
Sublime recipients, compassionate lords,
O think of me with love; accept these gifts of mine!
7.
For, destitute of merit, I am very poor;
I have no other wealth. And so, protectors,
You whose wise intentions are for others' good,
In your great power, receive them for my sake.
8.
Enlightened ones and all your Bodhisattva heirs,
I offer you my body throughout all my lives.
Supreme courageous ones accept me totally.
For with devotion I will be your slave.
9.
For if you will accept me, I will be
Undaunted by saṃsāra and will act for beings' sake.
I'll leave behind the evils of my past,
And ever after turn my face from them.
10.
A bathing chamber excellently fragrant,
With even floors of crystal, radiant and clear,And graceful pillars shimmering with gems,
All hung about with gleaming canopies of pearls—
11.
There the blissful Buddhas and their heirs
I'll bathe with many a precious vase,
Abrim with water fragrant and delightful,
All to frequent strains of melody and song.
12.
With cloths of unexampled quality,
With spotless, perfumed towels I will dry them,
And offer splendid scented clothes,
Well-dyed and of surpassing excellence.
13.
With different garments, light and supple,
And a hundred beautiful adornments,
I will grace sublime Samantabhadra,[62]
Mañjughoṣha, Lokeshvara, and their kin.
14.
And with a sumptuous fragrance which
Pervades a thousand million worlds,
I will anoint the bodies of the mighty Sages,
Gleaming bright like burnished gold refined and cleansed.
15.
I place before the mighty Sages, perfect objects of my worship,
Glorious flowers like lotus and mandāravā,
The utpala, and other fragrant blossoms,
Worked and twined in lovely scented garlands.
16.
I will offer swelling clouds of frankincense,
Whose ambient perfume ravishes the mind,
And various foods and every kind of drink,
All delicacies worthy of the gods.
17.
I will offer precious lamps
Arranged in rows on lotuses of gold,
A carpet of sweet flowers scattering
Upon the level, incense-sprinkled ground.
18.
To those whose very nature is compassion
I will give vast palaces, resounding with fair praise,
All decked with precious pearls and beauteous pendant
gems,
Gleaming jewels that deck the amplitude of space.
19.
Fair and precious parasols adorned with golden shafts,
All bordered round with hems of precious jewels,
Upright, well-proportioned, pleasing to the eye,
Again, all this I give to all the Buddhas.
20.
May a host of other offerings,
And clouds of ravishing sweet melody
That solaces the pain of living beings
Arise and constantly abide.

[61] The actual confession, from which this chapter takes its name, begins at stanza 27. It is preceded by the traditional formulas of homage and offering. See note 48.

[62] Samantabhadra is the Bodhisattva associated with prayer and unlimited offerings; Mañjughoṣha (also known as Mañjushrī) is the Bodhisattva personifying wisdom; Lokeshvara, "Lord of the World," otherwise known as Avalokiteshvara (Tib. spyan ras gzigs), is the Bodhisattva of compassion.

21.
May rains of flowers and every precious gem
Fall down in an unceasing streamUpon the Jewels of Sacred Dharma,[63]
Images and all supports for offering.
22.
Just as Mañjughoṣha and the like
Made offering to all the Conquerors,
I do likewise to all the Buddhas our protectors,
And to all their Bodhisattva children.
23.
To these vast oceans of good qualities
I offer praise, a sea of airs and harmonies.
May clouds of tuneful eulogy
Ascend unceasingly before them.
24.
To Buddhas of the past, the present, and all future time,
And to the Dharma and Sublime Assembly,
With bodies many as the grains of dust
Upon the earth, I will prostrate and bow.[64]
25.
To shrines and all supports
Of bodhichitta I bow down;
To abbots who transmit the vows, to every learned master,
And to all sublime practitioners of Dharma.
26.
Until the essence of enlightenment is reached,
I go for refuge to the Buddhas.
Also I take refuge in the Dharma
And in all the host of Bodhisattvas
27.
To perfect Buddhas and to Bodhisattvas,
In all directions where they may reside,
To them who are the sovereigns of great mercy,
I press my palms together, praying thus:
28.
"In this and all my other lives,
While turning in the round without beginning,
Blindly I have brought forth evil,
And incited others to commit the same.
29.
"Deceived and overmastered by my ignorance,
I have taken pleasure in such sin,[65]
And seeing now the blame of it,
O great protectors, I confess it earnestly!
30.
"Whatever I have done against the Triple Gem,
Against my parents, teachers, and the rest,
Through force of my defilements,
In my body, speech, and mind,
31.
"All the evil I, a sinner, have committed,
All the wicked deeds that cling to me,
The frightful things that I contrived
I openly declare to you, the teachers of the world.
32.
"It may be that my death will come to me
Before my evil has been cleansed.
How then can I be freed from it?
I pray you, quickly grant me your protection!"
33.
We cannot trust the wanton Lord of Death.
The task complete or still to do, he will not wait.
In health or sickness, therefore, none of us can trust
Our fleeting, momentary lives.
34.
And we must pass away, forsaking all.
But I, devoid of understanding,
Have, for sake of friend and foe alike,
Provoked and brought about so many wrongs.
35.
But all my foes will cease to be,
And all my friends will cease to be,
And I will also cease to be,
And likewise everything will cease to be.
36.
All that I possess and use
Is like the fleeting vision of a dream.
It fades into the realms of memory,
And fading, will be seen no more.
37.
And even in the brief course of this present life,
So many friends and foes have passed away,
Because of whom, the evils I have done
Still lie, unbearable, before me.
38.
The thought came never to my mindThat I too am a brief and passing thing.
And so, through hatred, lust, and ignorance,
I have committed many sins.
39.
Never halting night or day,

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[63] The expression "Jewels of Sacred Dharma" refers to the Dharma of realization and the Dharma of transmission, i.e., the scriptures. The latter is divided into twelve categories: (1) *sūtra* (Tib. *mdo sde*), condensed discourses covering a single topic; (2) geya (Tib. dbyangs bsnyad), poetic epitome (of more detailed teachings in prose); (3) *vyākaraṇa* (Tib. *lung bstan*), prophecies; (4) gāthā (Tib. tshigs bcad), discourses in verse; (5) udāna (Tib. ched du brjod pa), teachings not requested by anyone but spoken intentionally by the Buddha in order to propagate the Dharma; (6) nidāna (Tib. gleng gzhi), instructions following specific incidents (e.g., the rules of Vinaya); (7) avadāna (Tib. rtogs brjod), life stories of certain contemporaries of the Buddha; (8) itivṛittaka (Tib. de lta bu byung ba), historical accounts; (9) jātaka (Tib. skyes rabs), previous lives of the Buddha; (10) vaipulya (Tib. shin tu rgyas pa), long expositions of vast and profound teachings; (11) adbhūtadharma (Tib. rmad byung), extraordinary unprecedented teachings; (12) upadesha (Tib. gtan dbab), topics of specific knowledge that clinch the meaning of the Vinaya and the Sūtras. The latter are the classifications of saṃsāric phenomena (aggregates, elements, āyatanas); the outline of the phenomena of the path (grounds and paths of realization, various concentrations); and the enumeration of the phenomena of the result (the kāyas, wisdoms, etc.).

[64] In the traditional practice of prostration, it is normal to imagine that one possesses innumerable bodies, all prostrating at the same time.

[65] Western readers sometimes object to the use of the word sin in translations of Buddhist texts, on the grounds that it carries too many Judeo-Christian associations. They apparently fail to realise that the same principle might equally apply to a host of other terms, such as love, compassion, vow, monk, cause, meditation, etc., whose meanings, in the cultural, philosophical, and religious setting in which they evolved, are notably different from the ideas that they are expected to convey in a Buddhist context. When used to express Buddhist ideas, many common English words require careful redefinition in order to remove exclusively Jewish or Christian connotations. In the case of the word sin, once the associations connected with the doctrine of the Fall, divine punishment, etc., are discounted, its standard meaning (an evil act, whether by nature or by virtue of being a transgression of a vow or precept, that will provoke deadly consequences if not purified by confession) corresponds closely with the sense of sdig pa (Skt. pāpa) as used by Shāntideva. See V. and A. Wallace, p. 24.

My life drains constantly away,
And from no other source does increase come.
How can there not be death for such as me?
40.
There I'll be, prostrate upon my bed,
And all around, my family and friends.
But I alone shall be the one to feel
The cutting of the thread of life.
41.
And when the heralds of the Deadly King[66] have gripped me,
What help to me will be my friends and kin?
For then life's virtue is my one defence,
And this, alas, is what I shrugged away.
42.
O protectors! I, so little heeding,
Hardly guessed at horror such as this—
And all for this brief, transient existence,
I have done so many evil things.
43.
The day they take him to the scaffold,
Where they will tear off his limbs,
A man is changed, transfigured by his fear:
His mouth is dry, his eyes start from his brow.44.
No need to say how stricken I shall be
When overcome and sick with dreadful fear,
I'm seized by forms so horrible to see,
The frightful servants of the Lord of Death.
45.
Who can give me safe protection
From this horror, from this frightful dread?
And then I'll search the four directions,
Seeking help, with panic-stricken eyes.
46.
But in those four directions no protection shall I find.
And I shall sink into despairing woe.
No refuge will there be for me;
At such a time, what shall I do?
47.
Thus, from this day forward I take refuge
In the Buddhas, guardians of beings,
Who labor to protect all wanderers,
Those mighty ones who scatter every fear.
48.
And in the Dharma they have realised in their hearts,
Which drives away the terrors of saṃsāra,
And in all the host of Bodhisattvas
Likewise I will perfectly take refuge.
49.
Gripped by dread, beside myself with anguish,
To Samantabhadra I will give myself;
My body I myself will giveTo Mañjughoṣha, gentle and melodious.
50.
To him whose deeds of mercy never fail,
My lord Avalokita,
I cry out from depths of misery,
"Protect me now an evildoer!"
51.
Now to the noble one, Ākāshagarbha,
And to Kṣhitigarbha, from my heart I call.[67]
To all protectors, great, compassionate,
I cry to them in search of refuge.
52.
To Vajrapaṇi I shall fly,
For at the sight of him
All vengeful things like Yama's host
Escape in terror to the four directions.
53.
Formerly your words I have transgressed,
But having seen these terrors all around,
I come to you for refuge praying:
Swiftly drive away my fear!
54.
For if, alarmed by common ailments,
I must implement the doctor's words,
What need to speak of when I'm constantly brought low
By ills like lust and faults a hundredfold?
55.
And if, by one of these alone,The dwellers in the world are all thrown down,
And if no other remedy exists,
No other healing elsewhere to be found
56.
Than words of the all-knowing doctor,
Which uproot our every ill,
The thought to turn on him deaf ears
Is abject and contemptible stupidity.
57.
Along a small and ordinary cliff
If I must pick my way with special care,
What need to speak of that long-lasting chasm
Plunging to the depths a thousand leagues?
58.
"Today, at least, I shall not die."
So rash to lull myself with words like these!
My dissolution and my hour of death
Will come to me, of this there is no doubt.
59.
Who can give me fearlessness,
What sure escape is there from this?
It's certain that I'm going to die,
So how can I relax, my mind at ease?
60.
Of life's experience, all seasons past,
What's left to me, what now remains?
By clinging to what now is here no more,
My teacher's precepts I have disobeyed.
61.
And when this life is left behind,
And with it all my kith and kin,

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[66] Yama, the King of Death—not a sentient being but a symbol and personification of death.
[67] Ākāshagarbha and Kṣhitigarbha are two of the eight major Bodhisattvas known as the Buddha's "eight close sons.

I must set out on strange paths all alone:
Why make so much of all my friends and foes?[68]
62.
How instead can I make sure
To rid myself of evil, only cause of sorrow?
This should be my one concern,
My only thought both night and day.
63.
The wrongs that I have done
Through ignorant stupidity:
All actions evil by their nature[69]
And transgressions of the precepts,
64.
Fearing all the pains to come
I join my palms and ceaselessly prostrate,
And everything I will confess
Directly in the sight of my protectors.
65.
I pray you, guides and guardians of the world,
To take me as I am, a sinful man.
And all these actions, evil as they are,
I promise I will never do again.

[68] The happiness or suffering of postmortem states can arise only as the fruit of past actions. At the moment of death, we are helped or harmed only by the virtue or evil contained in our own mind-streams. We can be neither helped nor harmed through the actions of others. By what criterion, then, are we to distinguish, at the moment of death, between friend and foe?

[69] There are two kinds of negative actions: those that are evil by their nature and those that are evil because they contravene an injunction of the Buddha or violate a promise or vow. The former category comprises the ten non-virtuous actions: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, idle chatter, covetousness, harmful intent, and false views. The second category comprises acts that contravene commitments of Buddhist vows and precepts, thus preventing the practitioner from progressing on the path.

3 Taking Hold of Bodhichitta

1.
With joy I celebrate the virtue that relieves all beings
From the sorrows of the states of loss,[70]
Exulting in the happy states enjoyed
By those who yet are suffering.[71]
2.
I revel in the stores of virtue,
Cause of gaining the enlightened state,
And celebrate the freedom won
By living beings from the round of pain.
3.
And in the Buddhahood of the protectors I delight
And in the grounds of realization[72] *of the Buddhas' heirs.*
4.
Their enlightened attitude, an ocean of great good,
That seeks to place all beings in the state of bliss,
And every action for the benefit of beings:
Such is my delight and joy.
5.And so I join my hands and pray
The Buddhas who reside in every quarter:
Kindle now the Dharma's light
For those who grope, bewildered, in the dark of pain!
6.
I join my hands beseeching the enlightened ones
Who wish to pass into nirvāṇa:
Do not leave us wandering in blindness,
Stay among us for unnumbered ages!
7.
Through these actions now performed[73]
And all the virtues I have gained,
May all the pain of every living being
Be wholly scattered and destroyed!
8.
For all those ailing in the world,
Until their every sickness has been healed,
May I myself become for them
The doctor, nurse, the medicine itself.
9.
Raining down a flood of food and drink,
May I dispel the ills of thirst and famine.
And in the aeons marked by scarcity and want,[74]
May I myself appear as drink and sustenance.
10.
For sentient beings, poor and destitute,
May I become a treasure ever-plentiful,
And lie before them closely in their reach,
A varied source of all that they might need.
11.
My body, thus, and all my goods besides,
And all my merits gained and to be gained,
I give them all and do not count the cost,
To bring about the benefit of beings.
12.
Nirvāṇa is attained by giving all,
Nirvāṇa is the object of my striving;
And all must be surrendered in a single instant,
Therefore it is best to give it all to others.
13.
This body I have now resigned
To serve the pleasure of all living beings.
Let them ever kill, despise, and beat it,
Using it according to their wish.
14.
And though they treat it like a toy,
Or make of it the butt of every mockery,
My body has been given up to them.
Why should I make so much of it?
15.
And so let beings do to me
Whatever does not bring them injury.
Whenever they may think of me,
Let this not fail to bring them benefit.
16.
And if in my regard they have
A thought of anger or respect,
May these states always be the causeWhereby their good and wishes are fulfilled.
17.
All those who slight me to my face
Or do to me some other evil,
Even if they blame or slander me,
May they attain the fortune of enlightenment!
18.
May I be a guard for those who are protectorless,
A guide for those who journey on the road.
For those who wish to cross the water,
May I be a boat, a raft, a bridge.
19.

[70] According to the Buddhist teachings, the experience of beings in saṃsāra falls into six broad categories, states, or realms. Birth in these worlds is the fruit of past karma or action. There are three states (the states of loss referred to in this verse) in which suffering predominates over every other experience: that of animals, hungry ghosts, and beings in the hells. There are three fortunate realms where suffering is mitigated by temporary pleasures, namely, the heavens of the gods, the realms of the asuras or demigods, and the human condition. The misery of beings in the lower realms is compounded by the fact that their ability to create the positive energy necessary to propel them into higher existences is very weak, while negativity abounds.

[71] Shāntideva rejoices in the condition of beings in the higher saṃsāric realms of human beings, asuras (demigods), and gods. In all these states, the experience of happiness and pleasure is possible even though they are never beyond the possibility of suffering.

[72] From the moment when, through a direct realization of emptiness, the path of seeing is entered, and throughout the path of meditation until the point where perfect Buddhahood is attained, the progress of the Bodhisattva passes through ten bhūmis or "grounds" of realization. Bodhisattvas residing on these grounds are considered noble beings (Tib. 'phags pa), who have passed beyond the world in the sense that henceforth they can no longer fall back into the ordinary condition of saṃsāra. This two-line stanza does not appear in the extant Sanskrit version. For an explanation of the five paths of accumulation, joining, seeing, meditation, and no more learning, see Treasury of Precious Qualities, pp. 301–304.

[73] The reference here is to the seven traditional actions of accumulating merit, often expressed in a verse formula known as the "seven-branch prayer." These actions are homage, offering, confession, rejoicing in all good actions, the request for teaching, the request that the teachers remain in the world and not pass into nirvāṇa, and dedication. The first three actions formed the content of the previous chapter; the remaining four are expressed here in the opening stanzas of chap. 3. See Crosby and Skilton, pp. 9–13, for a description of the "sevenfold supreme worship.

[74] "A reference to the *antarakalpa*, an age of extreme decline figuring in the ancient Indian conception of temporal sequences, in which the quality of human life is gradually reduced until the age of ten years marks the summit of growth and capacity. It is a time of extreme instability and famine.

May I be an isle for those who yearn for land,
A lamp for those who long for light;
For all who need a resting place, a bed;
For those who need a servant, may I be their slave.
20.
May I be the wishing jewel, the vase of wealth,
A word of power and the supreme healing,
May I be the tree of miracles,
For every being the abundant cow.
21.
Just like the earth and space itself
And all the other mighty elements,
For boundless multitudes of beings
May I always be the ground of life, the source of varied sustenance.
22.Thus for everything that lives,
As far as are the limits of the sky,
May I be constantly their source of livelihood
Until they pass beyond all sorrow.
23.
Just as all the Buddhas of the past
Have brought forth the awakened mind,
And in the precepts of the Bodhisattvas
Step-by-step abode and trained,
24.
Likewise, for the benefit of beings,
I will bring to birth the awakened mind,
And in those precepts, step-by-step,
I will abide and train myself.
25.
Those who thus with clear intelligence
Take hold of the awakened mind with bright and lucid joy,
That they may now increase what they have gained,
Should lift their hearts with praises such as these:
26.
"Today my life has given fruit.
This human state has now been well assumed.
Today I take my birth in Buddha's line,
And have become the Buddha's child and heir.
27.
May gods and demigods and all the rest rejoice!"
"In every way, then, I will undertake
Activities befitting such a rank.
And I will do no act to mar
Or compromise this high and faultless lineage.
28.
"For I am like a blind man who has found
A precious gem inside a heap of dust.
For so it is, by some strange chance,
That bodhichitta has been born in me.
29.
"This is the supreme draft of immortality
That slays the Lord of Death, the slaughterer of beings,
The rich unfailing treasure-mine
To heal the poverty of wanderers.
30.
"It is the sovereign remedy
That perfectly allays all maladies.
It is the tree that gives relief
To those who wander wearily the pathways of existence.
31.
"It is the universal bridge that saves
All wandering beings from the states of loss,
The rising moon of the enlightened mind
That soothes the sorrows born of the afflictions.
32.
"It is the mighty sun that utterly dispels
The misty ignorance of wandering beings,
The creamy butter, rich and full,
That's churned from milk of holy teaching.
33.
"Living beings! Wayfarers upon life's paths,
Who wish to taste the riches of contentment,
Here before you is the supreme bliss.
Here, O ceaseless travellers, is your fulfilment!
34.
"And so, today, within the sight of all protectors,
I summon beings, calling them to Buddhahood.
And, till that state is reached, to every earthly joy!

4. Carefulness

1.
The children of the Conqueror who thus
Have firmly grasped this bodhichitta,
Should never turn aside from it,
Strive never to transgress its disciplines.
2.
Whatever was begun without due heed,
And all that was not properly conceived,
Although a promise and a pledge were given,
It is right to reconsider: Shall I act or not?
3.
Yet what the Buddhas and their heirs
Have scrutinised in their great wisdom,
I myself have probed and scrutinised.
Why should I now procrastinate?
4.
For if I bind myself with promises
But fail to carry out my words in deed,
Then every being will have been betrayed.
What destiny must lie in store for me?
5.
If in the teachings it is said
That those who in their thoughts intend
To give a small and paltry thing but then draw back
Will take rebirth as hungry spirits,
6.
How can I expect a happy destiny
If from my heart I summon
Wandering beings to the highest bliss,
But then deceive and fail them?
7.
As for those who, losing bodhichitta,
Lead others nonetheless to liberation,
Karmic law is inconceivable
And only understood by the Omniscient.[75]
8.
This failure, for the Bodhisattva,
Is the gravest of all downfalls.
For should it ever come to pass,
The good of every being is thrown down.
9.
And anyone who, for a single instant,
Halts the merit of a Bodhisattva
Wanders endlessly in evil states,
Because the welfare of all beings is reduced.
10.
Destroy a single being's joy
And you will work the ruin of yourself.
No need to speak of bringing low
The joy of beings infinite as space itself!
11.
And those who circle in saṃsāra,
Mixing powerful downfalls
With the power of bodhichitta back and forth,
Will long be hindered from the Bodhisattva grounds.
12.
And so, according to my promise,
I will act attentively.
From this day forth, if I now fail to strive,
I'll fall from low to even lower states.
13.
Striving for the benefit of all that lives,
Unnumbered Buddhas have already lived and passed away.
But I, by virtue of my sins, have failed
To come within the compass of their healing works.[76]
14.
And this will always be my lot
If I continue to behave like this,
And I will suffer pains and bondage,
Wounds and laceration in the lower realms.
15.
The appearance of the Buddhas in the world,
True faith and the attainment of a human form,
An aptitude for good: all these are rare.
When will they come to me again?
16.
Today, indeed, I'm hale and well,
I have enough to eat and I am not in danger.
But this life is fleeting, unreliable,
My body is like something briefly lent.
17.
And yet the way I act is such
That I shall not regain a human life!
And losing this, my precious human form,
My evils will be many, virtues none.[77]
18.
Here is now my chance for wholesome deeds,
But if I fail to practice virtue,
What will be my lot, what shall I do,
Bewildered by the sorrows of the lower realms?
19.

[75] The celebrated case of this was that of the Buddha's disciple Shāriputra, as recorded in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, the *Lotus Sūtra*. It is said that Shāriputra was a practitioner of the Mahāyāna who had progressed far along the path. One day a demon appeared to him and, wishing to put him to the test and if possible contrive his downfall, asked him for his right hand. Shāriputra cut it off and gave it to the demon. But the demon was angry and refused to accept it, complaining that Shāriputra had impolitely offered it to him with his left! At this point, it is said that Shāriputra lost hope of ever being able to satisfy the desires of beings, and turned from the Mahāyāna to pursue the path to arhatship.

[76] The ability to perceive and benefit from the teachings of a Buddha requires the correct karmic disposition and implies the presence of a considerable degree of merit in the mind-stream of the beings concerned. The fact that one has not been liberated through the teachings of the Buddhas of the past serves to underline the importance of the present moment, when one has encountered the Dharma, and throws into relief the great significance of a relationship with an accomplished spiritual master.

[77] According to Buddhist teachings (see remarks in the introduction), karmic results follow ineluctably upon the perpetration of acts, irrespective of conscious attitude or moral conscience (although the quality and force of the act may be significantly affected thereby). Thus beings in the lower realms, animals for example, do indeed accumulate karma and must sooner or later experience the consequences of their actions, even though these may be performed under the irresistible influence of instinct. And the karmic situation is compounded, rather than mitigated, by an unconsciousness of the Dharma. The strength of instinctual habit and the ignorance of what behaviour is to be adopted and what behaviour is to be abandoned are among the principal miseries of existence in states other than that of the precious human condition.

Never, there, performing any virtue,
Only ever piling up my sins,
And for a hundred million ages,
I'll not even hear of happy destinies.[78]
20.
This is why Lord Buddha has declared
That like a turtle that perchance can place
Its head within a yoke adrift upon the mighty sea
This human birth is difficult to find!
21.
If through the evil action of a single instant
I must spend an aeon in the hell of Unrelenting Pain,
The evils in saṃsāra stored from time without beginning
—No need to say that they will keep me from the states of bliss!
22.
And mere experience of such pain
Does not result in being freed from it.
For in the very suffering of such states,
More evil will occur, and then in great abundance.
23.
Thus, having found this moment of reprieve,
If I now fail to train myself in virtue,
What greater folly could there ever be?
How more could I betray myself?
24.
If having understood all this,
I'm stupidly despondent still,
Then at the moment of my death,
My sorrows will be black indeed.
25.
And when my body burns so long
In fires of hell so unendurable,
My mind, there is no doubt, will also be tormented,
Burned in fires of unendurable regret.
26.
For it's as if by chance that I have gained
This state so hard to find, wherein to help myself.
If now, while having such discernment,
I am once again consigned to hell,
27.
I am as if benumbed by sorcery,
As if reduced to total mindlessness.
I do not know what dulls my wits.
O what is it that has me in its grip?
28.
Anger, lust, these enemies of mine,
Are limbless and devoid of faculties.
They have no bravery, no cleverness;
How then have they reduced me to such slavery?
29.
They dwell within my mind
And at their pleasure injure me.
All this I suffer meekly, unresenting—
Thus my abject patience, all displaced!
30.
If all the gods and demigods besides
Together came against me as my foes,
They would be powerless to throw me down
To fires of hell of Unrelenting Pain.
31.
And yet the mighty fiend of my afflictions
Flings me in an instant headlong down
To where the mighty lord of mountains[79]
Would be burned, its very ashes all consumed.
32.
O my enemy, afflictive passion,
Endless and beginningless companion!
No other enemy indeed
Is able to endure so long!
33.
All other foes that I appease and wait upon
Will show me favours, give me every aid,
But should I serve my dark defiled emotions,
They will only harm me, draw me down to grief.
34.
If thus my ancient and unceasing foes,
The wellspring only of my growing pain,
Can lodge so safe within my heart,
How can I live so blithe and fearless in this wheel of life?
35.
And if the jail guards of the prisons of saṃsāra,
The butchers and tormentors of infernal realms,
All lurk within me in the web of craving,
What joy can ever be my destiny?
36.
I will not leave the fight until, before my eyes,
These enemies of mine are all destroyed.
For if, aroused to fury by the merest slight,
Incapable of sleep until the scores are settled,
37.
Proud but wretched rivals, destined all to suffer when they die,
Will draw the battle lines and do their best to win,
And careless of the pain of cut and thrust,
Will stand their ground refusing to give way,
38.
No need to say that I will not lose heart,
Regardless of the hardships of the fray.
From this day forth I'll strive to crush
These foes whose very nature is to bring me pain.
39.
The wounds inflicted by the enemy in futile wars
Are flaunted by the soldier as a prize.
So in the high endeavour, for so great a thing,
Why should I be dismayed by hurt or injury?
40.
When fishers, butchers, farmers, and the like,
Intending just to gain their livelihood,

[78] See note 68.
[79] Mount Sumeru, the axis of the universe according to traditional Hindu-Buddhist cosmology.

Will suffer all the miseries of heat and cold,
Why, for beings' happiness, should those like me not bear the same?
41.
When I pledged myself to free from their afflictions
Beings who abide in every region,
Stretching to the limits of the sky,
I was myself not free from such defilements.
42.
To speak like that, not knowing my capacity,
Were these not, truly, but a madman's words?
More reason then for never drawing back
Abandoning the fight against defiled affliction.[80]
43.
This shall be my all-consuming passion.
Filled with rancour I will wage my war!
Defilement of this kind will halt defilement
And for this reason it shall not be spurned.
44.
Better if I perish in the fire,
Better that my head be severed from my body
Than ever I should serve or reverence
My mortal enemies, defiled emotions.
45.
Common foes, when driven from the state,
Retreat and base themselves in other lands,
And muster all their strength the better to return.
But enemy afflictions are without such stratagems.
46.
Miserable defilements, scattered by the eye of wisdom!
Where will you now run, when driven from my mind?
Whence would you return to do me harm?
But oh, my mind is feeble. I am indolent!
47.
Defilements are not in the object,
Nor within the faculties, nor somewhere in between.
And if not elsewhere, where is their abode,
Whence they inflict their havoc on the world?
They are simple mirages, and so take heart!
Banish all your fear and strive to know their nature.
Why suffer needlessly the pains of hell?
48.
This is how I should reflect and labor,
That I might apply the precepts thus set forth.
What invalids in need of medicineIgnored their doctor's words and gained their health?

[80] The point being made is that pledges should be honoured. In order to liberate others it is necessary to be free oneself; and Shāntideva is saying that the purification of one's own defilements is the best way of helping others. It is the indispensable first step

5. Vigilant Introspection

1.
Those who wish to keep the trainings
Must with perfect self-possession guard their minds.
Without this guard upon the mind,
The trainings cannot be preserved.
2.
Wandering where it will, the elephant of mind,
Will bring us down to torment in the hell of Unrelenting Pain.
No worldly beast, however wild and crazed,
Could bring upon us such calamities.
3.
If, with mindfulness' rope,
The elephant of mind is tethered all around,
Our fears will come to nothing,
Every virtue drop into our hands.
4.
Tigers, lions, elephants, and bears,
Snakes and every hostile foe,
Those who guard the prisoners in hell,
Ghosts and ghouls and every evil wraith,
5.
By simple binding of this mind alone,
All these things are likewise bound.
By simple taming of this mind alone,
All these things are likewise tamed.
6.
For all anxiety and fear,
And pain in boundless quantity,
Their source and wellspring is the mind itself,
As He who spoke the truth declared.
7.
The hellish instruments to torture living beings—
Who invented them for such intent?
Who has forged this burning iron ground;
Whence have all these demon-women sprung?[81]
8.
All are but the offspring of the sinful mind,
This the mighty Sage has said.
Throughout the triple world[82] *therefore*
There is no greater bane than mind itself.
9.
If transcendent giving is
To dissipate the poverty of beings,
In what way—since the poor are always with us—
Have former Buddhas practiced it?
10.
Transcendent giving, so the teachings say,
Consists in the intention to bestow on every being All one owns, together with the fruits of such a gift.It is indeed a matter of the mind itself.
11.
Where could beings, fishes, and the rest,
Be placed to keep them safe from being killed?
Deciding to refrain from every harmful act
Is said to be transcendent discipline.
12.
Harmful beings are everywhere like space itself.
Impossible it is that all should be suppressed.
But let this angry mind alone be overthrown,
And it's as though all foes had been subdued.
13.
To cover all the earth with sheets of leather—
Where could such amounts of skin be found?
But with the leather soles of just my shoes
It is as though I cover all the earth!
14.
And thus the outer course of things
I myself cannot restrain.
But let me just restrain my mind,
And what is left to be restrained?
15.
A clear intent can fructify
And bring us birth in such as Brahmā's realm.
The acts of body and of speech are less—
They do not generate a like result.
16.
Recitations and austerities,Long though they may prove to be,
If practiced with distracted mind,
Are futile, so the Knower of Reality has said.
17.
All those who fail to understand
The secret of the mind, the greatest of all things,
Although they wish for joy and sorrow's end,
Will wander to no purpose, uselessly.
18.
Therefore I will take in hand
And well protect this mind of mine.
What use to me are many disciplines,
If I can't guard and discipline my mind?
19.
When in wild, unruly crowds,
I'm careful and attentive of my wounds;
Likewise, when in evil company,
This wound, my mind, I'll constantly protect.
20.
For if I carefully protect my wounds
Because I fear the pain of minor injuries,
Why should I not protect the wound that is my mind,

[81] As a spur for the practice of pure ethics, and as an object for meditation on compassion, the Buddhist teachings describe the various experiences of the hell realms in considerable detail. The torments that beings undergo there, as well as the topography of the hells themselves, are, as in any other realm of saṃsāra, ultimately unreal—the hallucinatory, dreamlike result of actions committed in the past. The karmic fruit of sexual misconduct is the situation in which beings find themselves upon the infernal hill of shālmali trees. There they see a vision of the former object of their passion. Climbing the hill, cutting themselves all the while on the razor-sharp leaves of the trees, they find that their former lovers turn into horrible monsters (a demoness in the case of the heterosexual male) who begin to devour them. See Patrul Rinpoche's *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (Altamira edition), p. 67, for a vivid description of this encounter.

[82] The triple world comprises the three worlds of saṃsāra: the desire realm (Skt. *kāmadhātu*), the form realm (Skt. *rūpadhātu*), and the realm of formlessness (Skt. ārūpyadhātu). The desire realm consists of the six states of saṃsāra from the hells up to and including the six levels of the desire-realm gods. The form and formless realms are celestial existences superior to those of the desire realm. See *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, p. 414.

For fear of being crushed beneath the cliffs of hell?[83]

21.
If this is how I act and live,
Then even in the midst of evil folk,
Or even with fair women, all is well.
My steady keeping of the vows will not decline.

22.
My property, my honour—all can freely go,
My body and my livelihood as well.
And even other virtues may decline,
But never will I let my mind regress.

23.
All you who would protect your minds,
Maintain your mindfulness and introspection;
Guard them both, at cost of life and limb,
I join my hands, beseeching you.

24.
Those disabled by ill health
Are helpless, powerless to act.
The mind, when likewise cramped by ignorance,
Is impotent and cannot do its work.

25.
For those who have no introspection,
Though they hear the teachings, ponder them, or meditate,
Like water seeping from a leaking jar,
Their learning will not settle in their memories.

26.
Many are endowed with joyful diligence.
They're learned also and imbued with faith,
But through the fault of lacking introspection,
They will not escape the stain of sin and downfall.

27.
Lack of introspection is a thief;
It slinks behind when mindfulness abates.
And all the merit we have gathered in
It steals; and down we go to lower realms.

28.
Defilements are a band of robbers
Looking for their chance to injure us.
They steal our virtue, when their moment comes,
And batter out the lives of happy destinies.

29.
Therefore from the gateway of my mind
My mindfulness shall not have leave to stray.
And if it wanders, it shall be recalled
By thoughts of anguish in the lower worlds.

30.
Through fear, and by the counsels of their abbots,
And staying ever in their teacher's company—
In those endowed with fortune and devotion
Mindfulness is cultivated easily.

31.
"The Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas both
Possess unclouded vision, seeing everything:
All lies open to their gaze,
And likewise I am always in their presence."

32.
One who has such thoughts as these
Will gain devotion and a sense of fear and shame.
For such a one, the memory of Buddha
Rises frequently before the mind.

33.
When mindfulness is stationed as a sentinel,
A guard upon the threshold of the mind,
Introspection will be likewise there,
Returning when forgotten or dispersed.

34.
If at the outset, when I check my mind,
I find that it is tainted with some fault,
I shall be still and self-possessed,
Unmoving like a piece of wood.

35.
I shall never, vacantly,
Allow my gaze to wander all around,
But rather with a focused mind
Will always go with eyes cast down.

36.
But that I may relax my gaze,
I'll sometimes raise my eyes and look around.
And if there are some people standing in my sight,
I'll look at them and greet them with a friendly word.

37.
And yet, to spy the dangers on the road,
I'll scrutinise the four directions one by one.
And when I stop to rest, I'll turn around
And look behind me, back along my way.

38.
I will survey the land, in front, behind,
And carry on or else retrace my steps.
In every time and place therefore
I'll know my needs and act accordingly.

39.
"My body shall remain like this."
Embarking thus upon a given course,
From time to time I'll verify
Inquiring how my body is disposed.

40.
This rampant elephant, my mind,
Once tied to that great post, reflection on the Teachings,
Must now be watched with all my strength
That it might never slip away.

41.
Those who strive to master concentration
Should never for an instant be distracted.
They should always watch their minds, inquiring,
"Where is now my mind engaged?"

42.
When this becomes impossible,

[83] These are the cliffs and mountains that repeatedly rush together and overwhelm the beings caught between them. See Patrul Rinpoche's The Words of My Perfect Teacher, p. 64.

In case of danger or festivity, I'll act as it seems best.
For it is taught that rules of discipline
May be relaxed in times of generosity.[84]
43.
When something has been planned and started on,
Attention should not drift to other things.
With thoughts fixed on the chosen target,
That and that alone should be pursued.
44.
Behaving in this way, all tasks are well performed,
And nothing is achieved by doing otherwise.
If thus we act, the secondary defilement,
Lack of introspection, will not grow.
45.
And if you find yourself engaged
In different kinds of pointless conversation
And curious sights, the like of which abound—
Be rid of all delight and taste for them.
46.
And if you find you're grubbing in the soil,
Or pulling up the grass or tracing idle patterns on the ground,
Remembering the precepts of the Blissful One,
In fear, restrain yourself at once.
47.
And when you feel the wish to move about,
Or even to express yourself in speech,
First examine what is in your mind.
For steadfast ones should act correctly.
48.
When the urge arises in your mind
To feelings of desire or angry hate,
Do not act! Be silent, do not speak!
And like a log of wood be sure to stay.
49.
And when your mind is wild or filled with mockery,
Or filled with pride and haughty arrogance,
Or when you would expose another's secret guilt,
To bring up old dissensions or to act deceitfully,
50.
Or when you want to fish for praise,
Or criticise and spoil another's name,
Or use harsh language, sparring for a fight,
It's then that like a log you should remain.
51.
And when you yearn for wealth, attention, fame,
A circle of retainers serving you,
And when you look for honours, recognition,
It's then that like a log you should remain.
52.
And when you are inclined to overlook another's need
And want to get the best thing for yourself,
And when you feel the urge to speak,
It's then that like a log you should remain.
53.
Impatience, indolence, faintheartedness,
And likewise arrogance and careless speech,
Attachment to your side—when these arise,
It's then that like a log you should remain.
54.
Examine thus yourself from every side.
Take note of your defilements and your pointless efforts.
For thus the heroes on the Bodhisattva path
Seize firmly on such faults with proper remedies.
55.
With perfect and unyielding faith,
With steadfastness, respect, and courtesy,
With conscientiousness and awe,
Work calmly for the happiness of others.
56.
Let us not be downcast by the warring wants
Of childish persons quarrelling.
Their thoughts are bred from conflict and emotion.
Let us understand and treat them lovingly.
57.
When acting irreproachably,
For our sake or the sake of others,
Let us always bear in mind the thought
That we are self-less, like an apparition.
58.
This supreme freedom of a human life,
So long awaited, now at last attained!
Reflecting always thus, maintain your mind
As steady as Sumeru, king of mountains.
59.
If, O mind, you will not be aggrieved,
When vultures with their love of flesh
Are tugging at this body all around,
Why are you so besotted with it now?
60.
Why, O mind, do you protect this body,
Taking it to be your own?
You and it are each a separate entity;
How ever can it be of use to you?
61.
Why, O foolish mind,
Don't you appropriate a clean form carved in wood?
How is it fit to guardAn unclean engine for the making of impurity?
62.
First, with mind's imagination,
Shed the covering of skin,
And with the blade of wisdom, strip
The flesh from off the bony frame.
63.
And when you have divided all the bones,
And searched right down amid the very marrow,
You yourself should ask the question:
Where is the essential core?
64.
If, persisting in the search,

[84] In other words, when monks are engaged in charitable work, it is not necessary for them to stick rigidly to all the minutiae of monastic observance.

You see no underlying essence,
Why do you protect with such desire
The body that you now possess?
65.
Its filth you cannot eat, O mind;
Its blood likewise is not for you to drink;
Its innards, too, unsuitable to suck—
This body, what then will you make of it?
66.
And yet it may indeed be kept
As food to feed the vulture and the fox.
The value of this human form
Lies only in the use you make of it.
67.
Whatever you may do to guard and keep it,
What will you do when
The ruthless Lord of Death
Will seize and throw it to the dogs and birds?
68.
If servants who cannot be set to work
Are not rewarded with supplies and clothing,
Why do you sustain with such great pains
This body, which, though nourished, will abandon you?
69.
So pay this body due remuneration,
And then be sure to make it work for you.
But do not lavish everything
On what will not bring perfect benefit.
70.
Regard your body as a vessel,
A simple boat for going here and there.
Make of it a thing that answers every wish
To bring about the benefit of beings.
71.
Be the master of yourself
And have an ever-smiling countenance.
Rid yourself of scowling, wrathful frowns,
And be a true and honest friend to all.
72.
Do not, acting inconsiderately,
Move chairs and furniture so noisily around.
Likewise do not open doors with violence.
Take pleasure in the practice of humility.
73.
Herons, cats, and burglars
Achieve what they intend
By going silently and unobserved.
Such is the constant practice of a sage.
74.
When useful admonitions come unsought
From those with skill in counselling their fellows,
Welcome them with humble gratitude,
And always strive to learn from everyone.
75.
Praise all whose speech is worthy.
Say, "Your words are excellent!"
And when you notice others acting well,
Encourage them in terms of warm approval.
76.
Extol their qualities discreetly;
When they're praised by others, praise them too.
But when the qualities they praise are yours,
Reflect upon their skill in recognising qualities.
77.
The goal of every act is happiness itself,
Though, even with great wealth, it's rarely found.
So take your pleasure in the excellence of others.
Let them be a heartfelt joy to you.
78.
By acting thus, in this life you'll lose nothing;
In future lives, great bliss will come to you.
Wrongdoing brings not joy but pain,
And in the future dreadful torment.
79.
Speak coherently, appropriately,
Clear in meaning, pleasantly.
Rid yourself of craving and aversion;
Speak gently with moderation.
80.
When you look at others think
That it will be through them
That you will come to Buddhahood.
So look on them with frank and loving hearts.
81.
Always fired by highest aspiration,
Labouring to implement the antidotes,[85]
You will reap great virtues in the field of excellence
And in the fields of benefits and sorrow.[86]
82.
Acting thus with faith and understanding,
You should always undertake good works.
And in whatever actions you perform,
You should not be dependent on another.
83.
The perfections,[87] *giving and the rest,*
Progress in sequence, growing in importance.
The great should never be abandoned for the less,
And others' good should be regarded as supreme.
84.
Therefore understand this well,And always labor for the benefit of beings.
The Compassionate One farsightedly permits,
To this end, even what has been proscribed.[88]

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[85] For example, meditation on patience as an antidote to anger, or on the disgusting aspects of the body as an antidote to desire.

[86] The expression "field of excellence" refers to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; the "field of benefits" refers to all those who bring benefits—parents, friends, and so on; the "fields of sorrow" (or, more usually, the "field of compassion") refers to all other beings who suffer or who are in some way disadvantaged, e.g., the sick, wayworn travellers, and others.

[87] The six perfections (Skt. pāramitā) form the essential practice of the Mahāyāna. They are generosity, ethical discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and wisdom.

[88] According to Mahāyāna teaching, in extreme circumstances and when the motives are exclusively those of compassion, actions of body and speech (though not of mind), normally proscribed in the list of ten non-virtues (see note 67) may be performed.

85.
Eat only what is needful;
Share with those who have embraced the discipline,
With those who are defenceless or have fallen into evil states.
Give everything except the three robes of religion.
86.
The body, used to practice sacred teachings,
Should not be harmed in meaningless pursuits.
By acting thus the wishes of all beings
Will swiftly and completely be attained.
87.
They should not give up their bodies
Whose compassionate thoughts are not yet pure.
But let them be surrendered when, both now and in their futures lives,
Great benefit is thereby gained.
88.
Do not teach the Dharma to the disrespectful:
To those who, though not sick, wrap cloths around their heads,
To those who carry weapons, staffs, or parasols,
To those who are with covered heads.
89.
To those upon the lower paths do not explain the vast and deep,[89]
Nor tutor women unaccompanied by men.
And every Dharma, high or low,[90]
Expound with equal reverence.
90.
Those suited to the teachings of great scope
Should not be introduced to lesser paths.
The rules of conduct you should not neglect
Nor lead astray with talk of sūtras and of mantras.[91]
91.
When you spit and throw away
Your tooth sticks, you should cover them.[92]
And it is wrong to foul with urine and with other filth
The fields and water fit for public use.
92.
When eating, do not gobble noisily,
Nor stuff and cram your gaping mouth.
And do not sit with legs outstretched,
Nor coarsely rub your hands together.
93.
Do not travel, sit, or stay alone
With women of another house.[93]
And all that you have seen, or have been told,
To be a cause of scandal—that you should avoid.
94.
Not rudely pointing with your finger,
But rather with a reverent gesture showing
With the whole right hand outstretched—
This is how to indicate the road.
95.
Do not wave your arms with uncouth gestures.
Express yourself instead with unobtrusive signs,
With gentle sounds and finger snaps.[94]
For acting otherwise is impolite excess.
96.
Lie down to sleep in the preferred direction,
In the posture of the Buddha when he passed into nirvāṇa.
And first with vigilance decide
That you'll be quick to rise again.
97.
The actions of the Bodhisattva
Are unbounded, so the Teachings say.
Of these, until the goal is won,
Embrace the practices that purify your mind.
98.
Reciting thrice by day and thrice by night,
The Sūtra in Three Sections,[95]
Relying on the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas,
Purify the rest of your transgressions.
99.
Wherever and whenever and whatever you are doing,
For your sake or the sake of others,
Implement with diligence
The teachings given for that situation.
100.
There is indeed no field of knowledge
That the Buddhas' offspring should not learn.For those who are well-versed in all these ways,
There is no action destitute of merit.
101.
Directly, then, or indirectly,
Do nothing that is not for others' sake.
And solely for their welfare dedicate
Your every action to the gaining of enlightenment.
102.
Never, at the cost of life or limb,
Forsake your virtuous friend, your teacher,
Learned in the doctrine of the Mahāyāna,
Supreme in Bodhisattva discipline.
103.
Learn how to attend upon your guru

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[89] In other words, the doctrine of the Mahāyāna—"vast" in activities and skilful means, and "deep" in wisdom of emptiness.

[90] A reference to the Mahāyāna and Shrāvakayāna respectively.

[91] Making the person believe, for example, that tantric practice is alone worthwhile, and giving to understand that study and the rules of ethical discipline may be neglected.

[92] A tooth stick or "tooth-wood" is an implement for cleaning the teeth. In his journal, the Chinese traveler I-Tsing recorded the elaborate rules of etiquette laid down in the monasteries of medieval India to regulate the use and disposal of these utensils. See I-Tsing, trans. J. Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malaya Archipelago AD 671–695* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1998), pp. 24, 33–35.

[93] According to the literal precepts of the Vinaya discipline (originally conceived within the context of traditional Indian society), it is an infraction for monks and nuns to be alone with members of the opposite sex to whom they are unrelated by family ties.

[94] In India and Tibet, contrary to the West, the snapping of the fingers is considered a polite way of attracting attention.

[95] *The Sūtra in Three Sections*, the *Triskandhaka-sūtra*, consists of confession before the thirty-five Buddhas, verses in praise of virtue, and a dedication of merits.

As described in Shrī Sambhava's life.[96]
This and other teachings of the Buddha
You should understand by reading in the sūtras.
104.
Indeed within these sūtras all the practices are found;
Therefore read and study them.
The Sūtra of the Essence of the Sky[97]
Is the text that should be studied first.
105.
All that must be practiced constantly
Is clearly and extensively explained
Within the Digest of All Disciplines,[98]
So this is something you should read repeatedly.
106.From time to time, for sake of brevity,
Consult the Digest of the Sūtras.[99]
By merely reading in the doctor's treatises?
And those two works peruse with diligence
That noble Nāgārjuna has composed.
107.
Whatever in these works is not proscribed
Be sure to undertake and implement.
And what you find enjoined there, perfectly fulfil,
And so protect the minds of worldly beings.
108.
Examining again and yet again
The state and actions of your body and your mind—
This alone defines in brief
The maintenance of watchful introspection.
109.
But all this must be acted out in truth,
For what is to be gained by mouthing syllables?
What invalid was ever helped

[96] The Biography of the Glorious Sambhava, the Shrīsambhava-vimokṣha, is in fact a chapter of the Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra, in which the following passage is to be found:
If you would pay due homage to the spiritual master, let your mind be like the earth, never tiring of the burden of supporting everything; like a diamond, indestructible in its intent; like a rampart, wherein suffering can find no breach; like a slave, never jibbing at all that must be done; like a faithful beast of burden, never restive; like a ferryboat, always willing to go back and forth; and like a perfect son who drinks in with his eyes the countenance of his spiritual father.
O noble child, look upon yourself as a sick man, upon your spiritual master as a physician, his teaching as a healing draft, and your sincere practice as the path to health.

[97] The *Ākāshagarbha-sūtra*.

[98] The Shikṣhāsamucchaya. See references to Shāntideva, appendix 1, and in the bibliography.

[99] According to Kunzang Pelden, *Shikṣhāsamucchaya* and *Sūtrasamucchaya* are the names of two treatises composed by Shāntideva and two treatises composed by Nāgārjuna. Whereas Shāntideva's *Shikṣhāsamucchaya* still exists, his *Sūtrasamucchaya* has been lost. By contrast, the existence of Nagarjuna's *Sūtrasamucchaya* is attested to in the Madhyamakashāstra-stuti attributed to Chandrakīrti (see Ruegg, p. 8.), whereas the *Shikṣhāsamucchaya*, attributed to him here, seems to be unknown in other sources.

6. Patience

1.
All the good works gathered in a thousand ages,
Such as deeds of generosity,
And offerings to the Blissful Ones—
A single flash of anger shatters them.
2.
No evil is there similar to anger,
No austerity to be compared with patience.
Steep yourself, therefore, in patience,
In various ways, insistently.
3.
Those tormented by the pain of anger,
Never know tranquillity of mind—
Strangers they will be to every pleasure;
They will neither sleep nor feel secure.
4.
Even those dependent on their lord
For gracious gifts of honours and of wealth
Will rise against and slay
A master who is filled with wrath and hate.
5.
His family and friends he grieves,
And is not served by those his gifts attract.
No one is there, all in all,
Who, being angry, lives at ease.
6.
All these ills are brought about by wrath,
Our sorrow-bearing enemy.
But those who seize and crush their anger down
Will find their joy in this and future lives.
7.
Getting what I do not want,
And all that hinders my desire—
In discontent my anger finds its fuel.
From this it grows and beats me down.
8.
Therefore I will utterly destroy
The sustenance of this my enemy,
My foe who has no other purpose
But to hurt and injure me.
9.
So come what may, I'll not upset
My cheerful happiness of mind.
Dejection never brings me what I want;
My virtue will be warped and marred by it.
10.
If there's a remedy when trouble strikes,
What reason is there for dejection?
And if there is no help for it,
What use is there in being glum?
11.
Pain, humiliation, insults, or rebukes—
We do not want them
Either for ourselves or those we love.
For those we do not like, it's the reverse!
12.
The cause of happiness is rare,
And many are the seeds of suffering!
But if I have no pain, I'll never long for freedom;
Therefore, O my mind, be steadfast!
13.
The Karna folk and those devoted to the Goddess,[100]
Endure the meaningless austerities
Of being cut and burned.
So why am I so timid on the path of freedom?
14.
There's nothing that does not grow light
Through habit and familiarity.
Putting up with little cares
I'll train myself to bear with great adversity!
15.
Don't I see that this is so with common irritations:
Bites and stings of snakes and flies,
Experiences of hunger and of thirst,
And painful rashes on my skin?
16.
Heat and cold, the wind and rain,
Sickness, prison, beatings—
I'll not fret about such things.
To do so only aggravates my trouble.
17.
There are some whose bravery increases,
At the sight of their own blood,
While some lose all their strength and faint
When it's another's blood they see!
18.
This results from how the mind is set,
In steadfastness or cowardice.
And so I'll scorn all injury,
And hardships I will disregard!
19.
When sorrows fall upon the wise,
Their minds should be serene and undisturbed.
For in their war against defiled emotion,
Many are the hardships, as in every battle.
20.
Thinking scorn of every pain,
And vanquishing such foes as hatred:
These are exploits of victorious warriors.
The rest is slaying what is dead already!
21.
Suffering also has its worth.
Through sorrow, pride is driven out
And pity felt for those who wander in saṃsāra;
Evil is avoided; goodness seems delightful.

[100] A reference to the devotees of the Hindu goddess Durgā, whose cult demanded the practice of extreme austerities.

22.
I am not angry with my bile and other humours—
Fertile source of suffering and pain!
So why should living beings give offence,
They likewise are impelled by circumstance?[101]
23.
Although they are unlooked for, undesired,
These ills afflict us all the same.
And likewise, though unwanted and unsought,
Defilements nonetheless insistently arise.
24.
Never thinking, "Now I will be angry,"
People are impulsively caught up in anger.
Irritation, likewise, comes
Though never plans to be experienced!

25.
All defilements of whatever kind,
The whole variety of evil deeds
Are brought about by circumstances:
None is independent, none autonomous.
26.
Conditions, once assembled, have no thought
That they will now give rise to some result.
Nor does that which is engendered
Think that it has been produced.
27.
The primal substance, as they say,
And that which has been called the self,
Do not arise designedly,
And do not think, "I will become."
28.
For that which is not born does not exist,
So what could want to come to be?
And permanently drawn toward its object,
It can never cease from being so.[102]
29.
Indeed! This self, if permanent,
Is certainly inert like space itself.
And should it meet with other factors,
How could they affect it, since it is unchanging?

30.
If, when conditions act on it, it stays just as it was before,
What influence have these conditions had?
They say that these are agents of the self,
But what connection could there be between them?[103]
31.
All things, then, depend on other things,
And these likewise depend; they are not independent.
Knowing this, we will not be annoyed

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[101] In the next nine stanzas, Shāntideva discusses and undermines the ordinary common sense attitude to enemies and other irritants. The argument proceeds as follows. First, in stanzas 22–26, Shāntideva affirms that there is no such thing as an independent agent, i.e., one acting in the absence of conditioning factors. Usually it is thought reasonable to resent the hostile behaviour of another being, while it is generally recognised that anger against an inanimate object is futile and somehow irrational, since the object in question only harms us under the influence of other forces. But Shāntideva argues that this is equally true of animate sources of our suffering. They too are impelled by the extrinsic factors of negative emotion. It is as irrational to hate a human aggressor, victim in turn of his or her own defilements, as it is to hate a tree that has been blown over by the wind and has flattened our car. Anger against enemies cannot be justified, says Shāntideva, because ultimately they are not "themselves" to blame. The point is repeated in stanza 41.

Of course, there is an obvious objection to this. Even admitting the power of emotion, it seems wrong to place animate and inanimate entities in the same category. A human aggressor, unlike a tree, is after all an accountable agent; and a person's actions cannot be defined simply in terms of other factors—as a mere interplay of impersonal forces. According to this line of reasoning, there must surely exist a proper object of resentment, namely, the aggressors "themselves"—or, to put it another way, the "selves" of the aggressors.

This raises a specifically metaphysical question, and even though much greater attention is paid to it in the course of the ninth chapter, Shāntideva is obliged here to focus briefly (stanzas 27–30) on the ideas of "primal substance" (Skt. pradhāna) and the "self" (Skt. ātman), as upheld variously by the different schools of non-Buddhist Indian philosophy. For all these schools, it was axiomatic that the self and the primal substance were (1) independent entities and (2) permanent or immutable. But Shāntideva points out that if there were such a thing as an independent, permanent self, temporary emotional states such as hostility could never be said to arise in it without denying the self's permanence. "That which was not hostile" and "that which is now hostile" are not the same entity. Consequently, if the self is unchanging, it can never premeditate and actualise hostility (stanzas 27.3–4 and 28.1–2) and thus cannot be held responsible for an act of aggression. In other words, a theory of the self can never rationally justify resentment and retaliation against an aggressor. However abstruse these arguments may seem, it should be noted that their purpose is entirely practical. The knowledge that attackers are driven by other forces, and are not themselves enemies, is a powerful aid in controlling and eliminating one's own aggressive response.

[102] Lines 3 and 4 of stanza 28 are a brief reference to the Sāṃkhya theory of puruṣha and prākṛiti. If the self is permanent and immutable, it follows that its apprehension of an object must be permanent also. A succession of different perceptions is impossible. Thus the self of another being cannot become hostile. If it is hostile now, it must always have been so and will remain so permanently—which is absurd. According to Buddhist teaching, when a thing is said to be permanent, this means that it is both exempt from gross impermanence and is eternal (for it cannot be broken or destroyed), also that, throughout its existence, it escapes the effects of subtle impermanence and remains completely immutable. From the Buddhist point of view, no such phenomenon exists.

[103] Stanzas 29 and 30 refer to the Nyāya-Vaisheṣhika school. According to this theory, and in contrast with that of the Sāṃkhya school and the Vedānta after it, the (permanent) self—as distinct from the mind—is regarded as knowable. In other words, it is the object, rather than the subject, of consciousness. It is believed to enter into relation with the mind and subsequently to identify experiences as its own. Here again, belief in the permanence of the self entails insuperable difficulties. If the self is permanent, how could it ever be said to meet with new factors and assimilate them? In holding that the self is conscious or unconscious, respectively, the Sāṃkhya and Nyāya-Vaisheṣhika schools occupy, from the Madhyamaka point of view, two extremes of the metaphysical spectrum. When these two views are refuted, all intermediary positions are disposed of at the same time. This is doubtless why Shāntideva juxtaposes the two theories here, as he does again in the ninth chapter.

At things that are like magical appearances.
32.
"Resistance," you may say, "is out of place,
For what will be opposed by whom?"
The stream of sorrow is cut through by patience;
There is nothing out of place in our assertion!
33.
Thus, when enemies or friendsAre seen to act improperly,
Remain serene and call to mind
That everything arises from conditions.
34.
If things could be according to their wish,
No suffering would ever come
To anyone of all embodied beings,
For none of them wants pain of any kind.
35.
Yet carelessly, all unaware,
They tear themselves on thorns;
And ardent in pursuit of wives and goods,
They starve themselves of nourishment.
36.
Some hang themselves or leap into the void,
Take poison or consume unhealthy food,
Or by their evil conduct
Bring destruction on themselves.
37.
For when affliction seizes them,
They even slay themselves, the selves they love so much.
So how can they not be the cause
Of others' bodily distress?
38.
Although we almost never feel compassion
For those who, through defilement,
Bring about their own perdition,
What purpose does our anger serve?
39.
If those who are like wanton children
Are by nature prone to injure others,
There's no reason for our rage;
It's like resenting fire for being hot.
40.
And if their faults are fleeting and contingent,
If living beings are by nature mild,
It's likewise senseless to resent them—
As well be angry at the sky when it is full of smoke!
41.
Although it is their sticks that hurt me,
I am angry at the ones who wield them, striking me.
But they in turn are driven by their hatred;
Therefore with their hatred I should take offence.
42.
In just the same way in the past
I it was who injured living beings.
Therefore it is right that injury
Should come to me their torturer.
43.
Their weapons and my body—
Both are causes of my torment!
They their weapons, I my body brandished;
Who then is more worthy of my rage?
44.
This body—running sore in human form—
Merely touched, it cannot stand the pain!
I'm the one who grasped it in my blind attachment,
Whom should I resent when pain occurs?
45.
We who are like children
Shrink from pain, but love its causes.
We hurt ourselves through our misdeeds!
So why should others be the object of our rage?
46.
And who indeed should I be angry with?
This pain is all my own contriving—
Likewise all the janitors of hell
And all the groves of razor trees![104]
47.
Those who harm me rise against me—
It's my karma that has summoned them.
And if through this these beings go to hell,
Is it not I who bring their ruin?
48.
Because of them, and through my patience,
All my many sins are cleansed and purified.
But they will be the ones who, thanks to me,
Will have the long-drawn agonies of hell.
49.
Therefore I am their tormentor!
Therefore it is they who bring me benefit!
Thus with what perversity, pernicious mind,
Will you be angry with your enemies?
50.
If a patient quality of mind is mine,
I shall avoid the pains of hell.
But though indeed I save myself,
What of my foes, what fate's in store for them?
51.
If I repay them harm for harm,
Indeed they'll not be saved thereby.
My conduct will in turn be marred,
Austerity of patience brought to nothing.
52.
Because the mind is bodiless
It cannot be destroyed by anyone.
Because of mind's attachment to the body,
This body is oppressed by pain.
53.
Scorn and hostile words,
And comments that I do not like to hear—
My body is not harmed by them.

[104] The groves of razor trees are one of the four "neighboring hells." There is a fourfold group of these "neighboring hells" in each of the cardinal points around the hot hells. See Words of My Perfect Teacher, p. 67.

What reason do you have, O mind, for your resentment?
54.
The enmity that others show me,
Since in this or future lives
It cannot actually devour me,
Why should I be so averse to it?
55.
Perhaps I turn from it because
It hinders me from having what I want.
But all my property I'll leave behind,
While sins will keep me steady company.
56.
Better far for me to die today,
Than live a long and evil life.
However long the days of those like me,
The pain of dying will be all the same.
57.
One man dreams he lives a hundred years
Of happiness, but then he wakes.
Another dreams an instant's joy,
But then he likewise wakes.
58.
And when they wake, the happiness of both
Is finished, never to return.
Likewise, when the hour of death comes round,
Our lives are over, whether brief or long.
59.
Though we be rich in worldly goods,
Delighting in our wealth for many years,
Despoiled and stripped as though by thieves,
We must go naked and with empty hands.
60.
Perhaps we'll claim that by our wealth we live,
And living, gather merit, dissipating evil.
But if we are aggressive for the sake of profit,
Won't our gains be evil, all our merits lost?
61.
And if the aim for which we live
Is thereby wasted and undone,
What use is there in living thus,
When evil is the only consequence?
62.
And if, when people slander us,
We claim our anger is because they injure others,
How is it we do not resent
Their slander when it's aimed at someone else?
63.
And if we bear with this antipathy
Because it's due to other factors,
Why are we impatient when they slander us?
Defilement, after all, has been the cause of it.
64.
Even those who vilify and undermine
The Sacred Doctrine, images, and stūpas
Are not proper objects of our anger.
Buddhas are themselves untouched thereby.
65.
And even if our teachers, relatives, and friends
Are now the object of aggression,
All derives from factors, as we have explained.
This we should perceive and curb our wrath.
66.
Beings suffer injury alike
From lifeless things as well as living beings.
So why be angry only with the latter?
Rather let us simply bear with harm.
67.
Some do evil things because of ignorance,
Some respond with anger, being ignorant.
Which of them is faultless in such acts?
To whom shall error be ascribed?
68.
Instead, why did they act in times gone by
That they are now so harmed at others' hands?
Since everything depends on karma,
Why should I be angry at such things?
69.
This I see and therefore, come what may,
I'll hold fast to the virtuous path
And foster in the hearts of all
An attitude of mutual love.
70.
Now when a building is ablaze
And flames leap out from house to house,
The wise course is to take and fling away
The straw and anything that spreads the fire.
71.
And so, in fear that merit might be all consumed,
We should at once cast far away
Our mind's attachments:
Tinder for the fiery flames of hate.
72.
Is it not a happy chance if when, condemned to death,
A man is freed, his hand cut off in ransom for his life?
And is it not a happy chance if now, to escape hell,
I suffer only the misfortunes of the human state?
73.
If even these, my present pains,
Are now beyond my strength to bear,
Why do I not cast off my anger,
Cause of future sorrows in infernal torment?
74.
For sake of gaining all that I desired,
A thousand times I underwent
The tortures of the realms of hell—
Achieving nothing for myself and others.
75.
The present aches are nothing to compare with those,
And yet great benefits will come from them.
These troubles that dispel the pain of wanderers—
It's only right that I rejoice in them.
76.
When others take delight
In giving praise to those endowed with talents,

Why, O mind, do you not find
A joy likewise in praising them?
77.
The pleasure that is gained therefrom
Itself gives rise to blameless happiness.
It's urged on us by all the holy ones,
And is the perfect way of winning others.
78.
"But they're the ones who'll have the happiness," you say.
If this then is a joy you would resent,
Abandon paying wages and returning favours.
You will be the loser—both in this life and the next!
79.
When praise is heaped upon your qualities,
You're keen that others should be pleased thereby.
But when the compliment is paid to others,
You feel no inclination to rejoice as well.
80.
You who want the happiness of beings
Have wished to be enlightened for their sake.
So why should others irk you when
They find some pleasure for themselves?
81.
And if you claim to wish that beings
Be enlightened, honoured by the triple world,
When petty marks of favour come their way,
Why are you so discomforted?
82.
When dependents who rely on you,
To whom you are obliged to give support,
Find for themselves the means of livelihood,
Will you not be happy, will you once again be angry?
83.
If even this you do not want for beings,
How could you want Buddhahood for them?
And how can anyone have bodhichitta
Who is angry when another prospers?
84.
If someone else receives a gift,
Or if that gift stays in the benefactor's house,
In neither case will it be yours—
So, given or withheld, why is it your concern?
85.
All your merit and the faith of others,
All your sterling qualities—why throw them all away?
Not holding onto what might bring you riches,
Tell me, why are you not angry at yourself?
86.
Not only do you feel no sorrow
For the evils you have done,
You even wish to match yourself
With those whose merit has been earned!
87.
If unhappiness befalls your enemies,
Why should this be cause for your rejoicing?
The wishes of your mind alone,
Will not in fact contrive their injury.
88.
And if your hostile wishes were to bring them harm,
Again, what cause of joy is that to you?
"Why, then I would be satisfied!"—are these your thoughts?
Is anything more ruinous than that?
89.
Caught upon the hook, unbearable and sharp,
Cast by the fisherman, my own defilements,
I'll be flung into the cauldrons of the pit,
And surely boiled by all the janitors of hell!
90.
Veneration, praise, and fame
Serve not to increase merit or my span of life,
Bestowing neither health nor strength
And nothing for the body's ease.
91.
If I am wise in what is good for me,
I'll ask what benefit these bring.
For if it's entertainment I desire,
I might as well resort to alcohol and cards![105]
92.
I lose my life, my wealth I squander,
All for reputation's sake.
What use are words, and whom will they delight
When I am dead and in my grave?
93.
Children can't help crying when
Their sand castles come crumbling down.
My mind is so like them
When praise and reputation start to fail.
94.
Short-lived sound, devoid of intellect,
Can never in itself intend to praise me.
I say that it's the joy that others take in me,
It's this that is the cause of my delight.
95.
But what is it to me if others take delight
In someone else, or even in myself?
Their pleasure's theirs and theirs alone.
No part of it is felt by me.
96.
If I am happy at the joy of those who take delight,
Then everyone should be a source of joy to me.
When people take delight in others
Why am I not happy at their pleasure?
97.
The satisfaction that is mine
From thinking, "I am being praised,"
Is unacceptable to common sense
And nothing but the antics of a silly child.
98.
Praise and compliments distract me,
Sapping my revulsion with saṃsāra.

[105] In other words, for Shāntideva, a monk, the enjoyment of honours and reputation is as inappropriate as gambling and drink.

I start to envy others their good qualities
And thus all excellence is ruined.
99.
Those who stay close by me, then,
To damage my good name and cut me down to size —
Are surely there protecting me
From falling into realms of grief.
100.
For I am one who strives for freedom.
I must not be caught by wealth and honours.
How could I be angry with the ones
Who work to free me from my fetters?
101.
They, like Buddha's very blessing,
Bar my way, determined as I am
To plunge myself headlong in sorrow:
How can I be angry with them?
102.
I should not be irritated, saying,
"They are obstacles to my good deeds."
For is not patience the supreme austerity,
And should I not abide by this?
103.
And if I fail to practice patience,
Hindered by my own shortcomings,
I myself create impediments
To merit's causes, yet so close at hand.
104.
If something does not come to be when something else is absent,
And does arise, that factor being present,
That factor is indeed its cause.
How can it, then, be said to hinder it?
105.
The beggars who arrive at proper times
Are not an obstacle to generosity.
We cannot say that those who give the vows
Are hindrances to ordination!
106.
The beggars in this world are numerous;
Assailants are comparatively few.
For if I do no harm to others,
Others do no injury to me.
107.
So, like a treasure found at home,
That I have gained without fatigue,
My enemies are helpers in my Bodhisattva work
And therefore they should be a joy to me.
108.
Since I have grown in patience
Thanks to them,
To them its first fruits I should give,
For of my patience they have been the cause.
109.
And if I say my foes should not be honoured
Since they did not mean to stimulate my patience,
Why do I revere the Sacred Dharma,
Cause indeed of my attainment?
110.
"These enemies conspired to harm me," I protest,
"And therefore should receive no honours."
But had they worked to help me like a doctor,
How could I have brought forth patience?
111.
Thanks to those whose minds are full of malice
I engender patience in myself.
They therefore are the causes of my patience,
Fit for veneration, like the Dharma.
112.
And so the mighty Sage has spoken of the field of beings
As well as of the field of Conquerors.
Many who brought happiness to beings,
Have passed beyond, attaining to perfection.
113.
Thus the state of Buddhahood depends
On beings and on Buddhas equally.
What kind of practice is it then
That honours only Buddhas but not beings?
114.
Not in the qualities of their minds
But in the fruits they give are they alike.
In beings, too, such excellence resides,
And therefore beings and Buddhas are the same.
115.
Offerings made to those with loving minds
Reveal the eminence of living beings.[106]
Merit that accrues from faith in Buddha
Shows in turn the Buddha's eminence.
116.
Although not one of them is equal
To the Buddhas, who are oceans of perfection,
Because they have a share in bringing forth enlightenment,
Beings may be likened to the Buddhas.
117.
If of such a gathering of supreme excellence
A tiny part appeared in certain beings,
The three worlds made in offering to them
Would be a very little thing.
118.
Since there lies in beings a share
In bringing forth the supreme and enlightened state,
By virtue of this parity alone
It's right that I should reverence them.
119.
The Buddhas are my true, unfailing friends.
Boundless are the benefits they bring to me.
How else may I repay their goodness
But by making living beings happy?
120.

[106] Kunzang Pelden explains this verse as follows. A person who has perfect love for others becomes an excellent object of reverence, and offerings made to such a person are productive of extremely positive karmic results. But the perfect love of a saint only comes about in relation to other beings, which in turn reveals the value and importance of the latter.

By helping beings we repay the ones
Who sacrifice their lives for us and plunge into the hell of Unrelenting Pain.
Should beings therefore do great harm to me,
I'll strive to bring them only benefit.
121.
For those who have become my lords,
At times, took care not even of their bodies.
Why should I, a fool, behave with such conceit?
Why should I not become the slave of others?
122.
Buddhas are made happy by the joy of beings.
They sorrow, they lament when beings suffer.
By bringing joy to beings, then, I please the Buddhas also;
By wounding them, I wound the Buddhas too.
123.
Just as there's no sensual delight
To please the mind of one whose body burns in fire,
There is no way to please the great compassionate ones
While we ourselves are causes of another's pain.
124.
The damage I have done to beings
Saddens all the Buddhas in their great compassion.
Therefore, all these evils I confess today
And pray that they will bear with my offences.
125.
That I might rejoice the Buddhas' hearts,
Henceforth I will be master of myself, the servant of the world.
I shall not seek revenge though crowds may trample on my head or kill me.
Let the Guardians of the world rejoice!
126.
The great compassionate lords consider as themselves[107]
All beings—there's no doubt of this.
Those whom I perceive as beings are Buddhas in themselves;
How can I not treat them with respect?
127.
This very thing is pleasing to the Buddhas' hearts
And perfectly secures the welfare of myself.
This will drive away the sorrows of the world,
And therefore it will be my constant work.
128.
Imagine that the steward of a king
Does injury to multitudes of people.
Those with clear, farseeing eyes
Do not respond with violence even if they can.
129.
For stewards, after all, are not alone.
They are supported by the kingly power.
Therefore I will not despise
The feeble beings tormenting me.
130.
Their allies are the guardians of hell
And also the compassionate Buddhas.
Therefore living beings I will gratify
As subjects might placate a wrathful king.
131.
And yet, the pains of hell to be endured
Through making living beings suffer—
Could these ever be unleashed on me
By all the ire of such a king?
132.
And even if that king were pleased,
Enlightenment he could not give to me.
For this will only be achieved
By bringing happiness to beings.
133.
No need to mention future Buddhahood,
Achieved through bringing happiness to beings.
How can I not see that glory, fame, and pleasure
Even in this life will likewise come?
134.
For patience in saṃsāra brings such things
As beauty, health, and good renown.
Its fruit is great longevity,
The vast contentment of a universal king.

[107] This idea is further developed in the course of chapter 8. See the commentary in appendix 2.

7. Diligence

1.
Thus with patience I will strive with diligence.
For in such diligence enlightenment is found.
If no wind blows, then nothing stirs,
And neither is there merit without diligence.
2.
Diligence means joy in virtuous ways.[108]
Its contraries have been defined as laziness,
An inclination for unwholesomeness,
Defeatism and self-contempt.
3.
A taste for idle pleasure
And a craving for repose and sleep,
No qualms about the sorrows of saṃsāra:
Laziness indeed is born from these.
4.
Snared by the trapper of defiled emotion,
Enmeshed and taken in the toils of birth,
Again you've strayed into the maw of Death.
What is it? Have you still not understood?
5.
Don't you see how, one by one,
Death has come for all your kind?
And yet you slumber on so soundly,
Like a buffalo beside its butcher.
6.
All the paths of flight are blocked,
The Lord of Death now has you in his sights.
How can you take such pleasure in your food,
And how can you delight to rest and sleep?[109]
7.
Death will swoop on you so swiftly.
Gather merit till that moment comes!
For even if you then throw off your indolence,
What will you do when there is no more time?
8.
"This I have not done, and this I'm only starting.
And this—I'm only halfway through . . ."
Then is the sudden coming of the Lord of Death,
And oh, the thought "Alas, I'm finished!"
9.
You'll look upon the faces of your hopeless friends,
Their tearstained cheeks, their red and swollen eyes
(For such will be the depths of their distress),
And then you'll see the heralds of the Deadly Lord.
10.
The memory of former sins will torture you,
The screams and din of hell break on your ears.
With very terror you will foul yourself.
What will you do in such delirium?
11.
If, like a living fish that twists and writhes,
You are so terrified while still alive,
What need to speak of pain unbearable
In hells created by past evil deeds?
12.
How can you remain at ease like this
When you have done the deeds that lead
To contact on your tender baby-flesh
Of boiling liquids in the hell of Extreme Heat?
13.
So testy and thin-skinned, you want results without endeavour—
Many are the troubles now in store for you!
Though in the grip of death, you are behaving like a god,[110]
And suffering, alas, will beat you down!
14.
So take advantage of this human boat.
Free yourself from sorrow's mighty stream!
This vessel will be later hard to find.
The time that you have now, you fool, is not for sleep!
15.
You turn your back upon the Sacred Doctrine,
Supreme joy and boundless source of bliss.
Why delight in mere excitement,
In distractions that will cause you misery?
16.
Do not be downcast, but marshal all your powers;
Make an effort; be the master of yourself!
Practice the equality of self and other;
Practice the exchange of self and other.[111]
17.
"Oh, but how could I become enlightened?"
Don't excuse yourself with such despondency!
The Buddha, who declares the truth,
Has truly spoken and proclaimed
18.
That if they bring forth strength of perseverance,
Even bees and flies
And gnats and grubs will gain
Supreme enlightenment so hard to find.
19.
And if, by birth and lineage of human kind,
I'm able to distinguish good from ill
And do not leave aside the Bodhisattva deeds,
Why should I not attain the state of Buddhahood?

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[108] The Tibetan word translated here as "diligence" is brtson 'grus, a rendering of the Sanskrit vīrya. While expressing a sense of strong endeavour, the Tibetan, according to Shāntideva, suggests a sense of joy and enthusiasm, features that are brought out powerfully in the course of the present chapter. The Sanskrit term carries with it a sense of indomitable strength and courage, and is connected with our words "virile," "virago," as well as "virtue." The general sense is one of great courage and perseverance: fearlessness in the face of adversity.

[109] The Tibetan word for "sleep" here is gnyid log. Judging from the translations of Crosby and Skilton, V. and A. Wallace, and Berzin, the Sanskrit term can be construed as referring also to sexual intercourse. Sleep and sexual activity are of course natural human functions. But the question "How can you take pleasure in sleep and sex?" expressed in such a matter of fact way and without further comment, is a strange one to put to an audience of celibate monks. The second syllable of the Tibetan term could perhaps be interpreted as an abbreviation for log g.yem (sexual misconduct), in which case, the question in the given context would have some point. However, the commentary of Kunzang Pelden does not advert to this and understands gnyid log simply as "sleep."

[110] In other words, as though one's death were an event far off in the future. According to Buddhist teaching, the worldly gods, although not actually immortal, enjoy an immense longevity. Compared with them, the length of human life is the merest flicker.

[111] These practices are discussed at length in chapter 8. See also appendixes 2 and 3.

20.
"That I must give away my life and limbs
Alarms and frightens me"—if so you say,
Your terror is misplaced. Confused,
You fail to see what's hard and what is easy.
21.
For myriads of ages, measureless, uncounted,
Your body has been cut, impaled,
Burned, torn—for times past numbering!
Yet none of this has brought you Buddhahood.
22.
The hardships suffered on the path to Buddhahood
Are limited in their extent
And likened to the pain of an incision
Made to cure the harms of inward ills.
23.
And all our doctors cure disease
By means of bitter remedies.
Likewise, to destroy a vast amount of pain,
We should be patient with our little hurts.
24.
And yet the Supreme Healer does not use,
Like them, these common remedies.
With ways of extreme tenderness
He soothes away intense and boundless suffering.
25.
Our guide instructs us to begin
By giving vegetable greens or other little things,
That later, step-by-step, the habit once acquired,
We may be able to donate our very flesh.
26.
For when we truly feel
Our bodies are no different from the given herbs,
What hardship can there be
In giving up, relinquishing, our very flesh?
27.
Sin has been abandoned, thus there is no pain;
Through having wisdom there is no more sorrow.
For so it is that mind and body both
Are injured by false views and sinfulness.
28.
Merit is the true cause of the body's ease,
While happiness of mind is had through understanding.
What can sadden those who have compassion,
Who remain within saṃsāra for the sake of beings?
29.
For through their power of bodhichitta,
Former sins are totally consumed,
And merit, ocean-vast, is gathered in,
It's therefore said that they excel the Shrāvakas.[112]
30.
Mounted on the horse of bodhichitta,
Which puts to flight all mournful weariness,
What lucid person could be in despair
Proceeding in this way from joy to joy?
31.
The forces that secure the good of beings,
Are aspiration, steadfastness, relinquishment, and joy.
Aspiration grows through fear of suffering
And contemplation of the benefits to be attained.
32.
Therefore leaving everything that is adverse to it,
I'll labor to increase my diligence,
Through aspiration and self-confidence, relinquishment and joy,
By strength of earnest application and exertion of control.
33.
The boundless evils of myself and others—
I must bring them all to nothing,
Even though a single of these ills
May take unnumbered ages to exhaust!
34.
And if I find within myself
No sign that faults are even starting to be cleansed,
Why does my heart not burst asunder,
Destined as I am for boundless pain?
35.
Good qualities for my and others' sake,
Though they be many, I must now accomplish,
Even though for each of them
I must endeavour for unnumbered ages.
36.
Acquaintance I have never gained
With even part of such great qualities.
It is indeed amazing that I render meaningless
This life that somehow I have gained.
37.
Offerings to the Buddhas I have never made;
No feasts were ever held through my donations;
No works have I accomplished for the Teachings;
The wishes of the poor I left unsatisfied.
38.
I have not saved the frightened from their fear;
The wretched I have not consoled.
My mother's pain, her womb's discomfort:
These alone are my accomplishments.
39.
My failure to aspire to Dharma
Now and in the past
Has brought me to my present dereliction.
Who therefore would spurn such aspiration?
40.
Aspiration, so the Sage asserted,
Is the root of every kind of virtue.
Aspiration's root in turn
Is constant meditation on the fruits of action.
41.
The body's pains, anxieties of mind,
And all my fears of various kinds,

[112] Shrāvaka (Tib. nyan thos, lit. "hearers") is the name given to the Hīnayāna disciples of the Buddha. They aim to free themselves from saṃsāra and attain the perfect cessation of all suffering. They lack, however, the attitude of universal compassion and responsibility, which is bodhichitta. The fruit of their path is arhatship, not Buddhahood.

To be deprived of what I want—
Such is the harvest of my sinful deeds.
42.
But if my acts are good, sincerely intended,
Then no matter where I turn my steps,
The merit gained will honour me
With its resulting benefits.
43.
But if, through seeking happiness, my deeds are wrong,
No matter where I turn my steps,
The knives of misery will cut me down,
The wage and retribution of a sinful life.
44.
Through virtue I will rest within the cool heart of a fragrant spreading lotus,
With splendour nurtured by the sweet words of the Conqueror.
Then from the lotus opened in the Sage's light, in supreme form I will arise
To dwell, the blissful Buddha's heir, in presence of Victorious Ones.[113]
45.
Or else as wages of my many sins, my skin completely flayed, I shall be utterly brought low
By creatures of the Lord of Death, who on my body pour a liquid bronze all melted in the dreadful blaze.
And pierced by burning swords and knives, my flesh
Dismembered in a hundred parts will fall upon the white-hot iron ground.
46.
Therefore I will aspire and tend to virtue,
And steep myself in it with great devotion.
And with the method stated in the Vajradhvaja,[114]
I will train in confident assurance.
47.
Let me first consider my reserves—
To start or not to start accordingly.
It might be better not to start,
But once begun, I should not then withdraw.
48.
For if I do such things, the pattern will return
In later lives, and sin and pain will grow.
And other actions will be left undone
Or else will bear a meagre fruit.
49.
Action, the afflictions, and ability:
Three things to which my pride should be directed.[115]
"I will do this, I myself, alone!"
These words define my pride of action.
50.
Overpowered by their minds' afflictions,
Worldly folk are helpless to secure their happiness.
Compared with those who wander, I am able!
This therefore shall be my task.
51.
When others give themselves to low behaviour,
What shall be my stance in their regard?
In any case, I'll not be arrogant;
My best way is to give up such conceit.
52.
When they find a dying serpent,
Even crows behave like soaring eagles.
Therefore if I'm weak and feeble-hearted,
Even little faults will strike and injure me.[116]
53.
But if, depressed, I give up trying,
How can I gain freedom from my abject state?
But if I stand my ground with proud resolve,
It will be hard for even great faults to attack me.
54.
Therefore with a steadfast heart
I'll get the better of my weaknesses.
But if my failings get the upper hand,
My wish to overcome the triple world is laughable indeed.
55.
"I will be victor over all,
And nothing shall prevail and bring me down!"
The offspring of the Lion, the Conqueror,
Should constantly abide in this self-confidence.[117]
56.
Those whom arrogance destroys
Are thus defiled; they lack self-confidence.
Those who have true confidence escape the foe,
While others fall into the power of an evil pride.
57.
When arrogance inflates the mind,
It draws it down to states of misery—
Or ruins happiness, should human birth be gained.
Thus one is born a slave, dependent for one's sustenance,
58.
Or feebleminded, ugly, without strength,
The butt and laughingstock of everyone.

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[113] This is a description of the way Bodhisattvas are born in Sukhāvatī (Tib. bde ba can), the pure land of the Buddha Amitābha. A pure land or buddhafield (Skt. Buddha-kṣhetra, Tib. rgyal ba'i zhing) is a dimension or world manifested through the enlightened aspirations of a Buddha or Bodhisattva in conjunction with the meritorious karma of sentient beings. Those born in a buddhafield are able to progress swiftly to enlightenment.

[114] The Vajradhvaja-sūtra, The Diamond Banner Sūtra, is in fact a subsection of the larger Avataṃsaka-sūtra. The following passage is taken from it: "When the sun shines, O Devaputra, it illuminates the entire world, regardless of the blindness of beings and the mountain shadows. In the same way, Bodhisattvas appear for the liberation of beings, regardless of the obstacles that these may present."

[115] In other words, one should confidently undertake the action of applying the antidotes, courageously decide not to fall under the power of the afflictions, and have self-assurance in affirming one's ability to abandon evil behaviour and cultivate wholesome qualities.

[116] Following the terms of the comparison, the crows are the faults; one's weakness is the dying serpent.

[117] Here, and in the following verses, a distinction is drawn between two kinds of pride. On the one hand, there is the positive quality of confidence leading to courage and perseverance and, on the other, the negative quality of arrogance and conceit, resulting in the overweening behaviour that is often the mask of weakness and self-doubt. Using the same term in both senses, Shāntideva plays on the word "pride" in a way that might at first be confusing. For the sake of clarity in the translation, the two kinds of pride are more pointedly distinguished.

These "ascetics" puffed up with conceit!
If these you call the proud, then tell me who are wretched?
59.
Those who uphold pride to vanquish pride, the enemy,
Are truly proud, victorious, and brave.
And they who stem the increase of that evil pride,
Perfect, according to their wish, the fruit of victory for beings.
60.
When I am beleaguered by defilements,
I will stand and face them in a thousand ways.
I'll not surrender to the host of the afflictions
But like a lion I will stand amid a crowd of foxes.
61.
However great may be their peril,
People will by reflex guard their eyes.
And likewise I, whatever dangers come,
Must not fall down beneath defilement's power.
62.
Better for me to be burned to death,
And better to be killed, my head cut off!
At no time will I bow and scrape
Before that foe of mine, defiled emotion.[118]
62a.
Thus in every time and place
I will not wander from the wholesome path.
63.
Like those who take great pleasure in their games,
Whatever task the Bodhisattvas do,
Let them devote themselves without reserve,
With joyfulness that never knows satiety.
64.
People labor hard to gain contentment
Though success is very far from sure.
But how can they be happy if they do not do
Those deeds that are the source of joy to them?
65.
And since they never have enough of pleasure,
Honey on the razor's edge,
How could they have enough of merit,
Fruits of which are happiness and peace?
66.
The elephant, tormented by the noonday sun,
Will dive into the waters of a lake,
And likewise I must plunge into my work
That I might bring it to completion.
67.
If impaired by weakness or fatigue,
I'll lay the work aside, the better to resume.
And I will leave the task when it's complete,
All avid for the work that's next to come.
68.
As seasoned fighters face the swords
Of enemies upon the battle line,
I'll lightly dodge the weapons of defilement,
And strike my enemy upon the quick.
69.
If, in the fray, the soldier drops his sword,
In fright, he swiftly takes it up again.
So likewise, if the arm of mindfulness is lost,
In fear of hell, I'll quickly get it back!
70.
Just as poison fills the body,
Borne on the current of the blood,
Likewise evil, when it finds its chance,
Will spread and permeate the mind.
71.
I will be like a frightened man, a brimming oil-jar in his hand,
And menaced by a swordsman saying,
"Spill one drop and you shall die!"
This is how practitioners should hold themselves.
72.
Just as a man would swiftly stand
If in his lap a serpent were to glide,
If sleep and lethargy beset me,
I will speedily repulse them.
73.
Every time, then, that I fail,
I will reprove and chide myself,
Thinking long that by whatever means
Such faults in future shall no more occur.
74.
At all times and in any situation,
How can I make mindfulness my constant habit?
Thinking thus I will desire
To meet with teachers and fulfil the proper tasks.
75.
By all means, then, before I start some work,
That I might have the strength sufficient to the task,
I will recall the teachings upon carefulnessAnd lightly rise to what is to be done.
76.
Just as flaxen threads waft to and fro,
Impelled by every breath of wind,
So all I do will be achieved,
Controlled by movements of a joyful heart.

[118] This stanza does not appear in the Sanskrit text that is now available to us. Some commentators have, moreover, questioned the authenticity of the half-stanza 62a. It is, however, generally included.

8. Meditative Concentration

1.
Cultivating diligence as just described,
In concentration I will place my mind.
For those whose minds are slack and wandering
Are caught between the fangs of the afflictions.
2.
In solitude, the mind and body
Are not troubled by distraction.
Therefore leave this worldly life
And totally abandon mental wandering.
3.
Because of loved ones and desire for gain,
We fail to turn away from worldly things.
These, then, are the first things to renounce.
The prudent should conduct themselves like this.
4.
Penetrative insight joined with calm abiding
Utterly eradicates afflicted states.
Knowing this, first search for calm abiding,
Found by people who are happy to be free from worldly ties.
5.
Beings, brief, ephemeral,
Who strongly cling to what is also transient,
Will catch no glimpse of those they love
For many thousands of their future lives.
6.
Not seeing them, their minds will have no joy,
They therefore will not rest in equanimity.
But even if they see them, they are not content—
And as before, the pain of longing stays.
7.
If I crave for other beings,
A veil is cast upon the perfect truth.
Wholesome disillusion[119] melts away,
And finally there comes the sting of pain.
8.
My thoughts are all for them,
And thus my life is frittered by.
My family and friends all change and pass, for whom
The changeless Dharma is cast out.
9.
For if I act like childish beings,
Sure it is that I shall fall to evil destinies.
So why do I keep company with infants,
Who lead me to a state so far from virtue?
10.
One moment friends,
The next, they're bitter enemies.
Even pleasant things arouse their discontent:
Ordinary people—it is hard to please them!
11.
A beneficial word and they resent it,
Turning me instead from what is good.
And when I close my ears to what they say,
Their anger makes them fall to lower states.
12.
Jealous of superiors, they vie with equals,
Proud to those below, they strut when praised.
Say something untoward, they seethe with rage.
What good was ever had from childish folk?
13.
Keep company with them and what will follow?
Self-aggrandisement and scorn for others,
Talk about the "good things" of saṃsāra—
Every kind of vice is sure to come.
14.
Only ruin can result
From such a link between myself and others.
For they will bring no benefit to me,
And I in turn can do them nothing good.
15.
Therefore flee the company of childish people.
Greet them, when you meet, with smiles
That keep on terms of common courtesy,
Without inviting intimate relations.
16.
Like bees that get their honey from the flowers,
Take only what will serve the practice of the Dharma.
Treat everyone like new acquaintances
And keep yourself from close familiarity.
17.
"Oh I am rich and well respected;
Lots of people take delight in me."
Nourish such complacency and later,
After death, your fears will start!
18.
Indeed, O foolish and afflicted mind,
You want and crave for all and everything.
All this together will rise up
As pain itself, increased a thousandfold.
19.
Since this is so, the wise have no attachments;
From such cravings fear and anguish come.
And fix this firmly in your understanding:
All that may be wished for will by nature fade to nothing.
20.
For people may have gained great wealth of riches,
Enjoying reputation, sweet renown.
But who can say where they have gone to now,
With all the baggage of their gold and fame?
21.
Why should I be pleased when people praise me?
Others there will be who scorn and criticise—
And why despondent when I'm blamed,
Since there'll be others who think well of me?
22.
So many are the leanings and the wants of beings
That even Buddha could not please them all—

[119] "Wholesome disillusion" (Tib. skyo ba or skyo shes) indicates a sense of revulsion and weariness with the futile sufferings of saṃsāra.

Of such a wretch as me no need to speak!
I'll give up such concerns with worldly things.
23.
People scorn the poor who have no wealth,
They also criticise the rich who have it.
What pleasure can derive from keeping company
With people such as these, so difficult to please?
24.
In kindness childish beings take no delight
Unless their own desires are satisfied.
A childish person, thus, is no true friend.
This the Tathāgatas have declared.
25.
In woodlands, haunt of stag and bird,
Among the trees where no dissension jars,
It's there I would keep pleasant company!
When might I be off to make my dwelling there?
26.
When shall I depart to make my home
In cave or empty shrine or under spreading tree,
With, in my breast, a free, unfettered heart,
Which never turns to cast a backward glance?
27.
When might I abide in such a place,
A place unclaimed and ownerless,
That's wide and unconfined, a place where I might stay
At liberty, without attachment?
28.
When might I be free of fear,
Without the need to hide from anyone,
With just a begging bowl and few belongings,
Dressed in garments coveted by none?
29.
And going to the charnel ground,
When shall I compare
My body with the dry bones there,
So soon to fall to nothing, all alike?
30.
This form of mine, this very flesh
Is soon to give out such a stench
That even jackals won't come close—
And that indeed is all it will become.
31.
This body, now so whole and integral,
This flesh and bone that life has knit together,
Will drift apart, disintegrate,
And how much more will friend depart from friend?
32.
Alone we're born, alone we come into the world,
And when we die, alone we pass away.
No one shares our fate, and none our suffering.
What need have I of "friends" who hinder me?
33.
Like those who journey on the road,
Who pause and lodge along the way,
Beings on the pathways of existence
Seize upon the lodging of their birth.
34.
Until the time comes round
When four men carry me away,
Amid the grief of worldly folk—
Till then, I will away and go into the forest.
35.
There, with no befriending or begrudging,
I will stay alone in solitude,
Considered from the outset as already dead,
Thus, when I die, a source of pain to none.
36.
Then there will be no one standing by
In tears and mourning, thus to trouble me.
And no one will be there distracting me
From thinking of the Buddha and the practice.
37.
Therefore in these lovely gleaming woods,
With joy that's marred by few concerns,
Where mental wandering will cease,
I will remain in blissful solitude.
38.
Relinquishing all other aspirations,
Focusing myself on one intent alone,
I'll strive to still my mind
And, calming it, to bring it to subjection.
39.
In this and in the worlds to come,
Desire's the parent of all woe:
In this world, killing, bonds, and wounds,
And in the next, the hells and other pains.
40.
You send your go-betweens, both boy and maid,[120]
With many invitations for the prize,
Avoiding, in the quest, no sin,
No deed that brings an ill renown,
41.
Nor acts of frightful risk,
Nor loss and ruin of possessions—
All for pleasure and the perfect bliss,
That utmost penetrating kiss
42.
Of what in truth is nothing but a heap of bones
Devoid of self, without autonomy!
Is this the only object of desire and lust?
Sooner pass beyond all suffering and grief!
43.
What pains you went to just to lift her face,
Her face that modestly looked down,
Which, looked upon or not before,
Was always with a veil concealed.
44.
That face for which you languished so …
Well, here it is, now nakedly exposed.
The vultures have uncovered it for you to see.

[120] The context here and in the following stanzas is that of the complicated rituals of courtship and marriage in Indian society. In brutal contrast with the delights of romantic attachment and physical love, Shāntideva forces on us a general contemplation of the physical realities of life and death.

What's this? You run away so soon?
45.
That which once you jealously protected,
Shielded from the eyes of other men,
Why, miser that you are, don't you protect it,
Now that it's the food of graveyard birds?
46.
Look, this mass of human flesh,
Is now the fare of carrion beasts—
And you would deck with garlands, sandalwood, and jewels,
The food and provender of others?
47.
Look again, this heap of bones—
Inert and dead. Why, what are you so scared of?
Why did you not fear it when it walked around,
Just like a risen corpse propelled by some strange influence?
48.
You loved it once, when clothed and draped it was.
Well, now it's naked, why do you not want it?
Ah, you say, your need is no more there,
But why did you embrace it, all bedecked and covered?
49.
From food, a single source, come equally
The body's filth and nectar of the mouth.
So why are you delighted by saliva,
And yet repelled by excrement?
50.
Taking no delight in pillows
Made of cotton soft to touch,
You claim the human form emits no stench.
Befooled by lust, its filth you do not recognise!
51.
Lustful one, befuddled by desire,
Because you cannot copulate with it,
You angrily find fault with cotton,
Soft though it may be to touch!
52.
And if you have no love of filth,
How can you coddle on your lap
A cage of bones tied fast with sinews,
Plastered over with the mud of flesh?
53.
In fact you're full of filth yourself;
You wallow in it constantly.
It is indeed just filth that you desire,
And therefore long for other sacks of it!
54.
"But it's the skin and flesh I love
To touch and look upon."
Then why do you not wish for flesh alone,
Inanimate and in its natural state?
55.
The mind that you perhaps desire,
You cannot hold or look upon.
Whatever you can hold or see is not the mind—
Why copulate with something it is not?
56.
To fail to grasp the unclean nature
Of another's flesh is not perhaps so strange.
But not to see the filthy nature
Of oneself is very strange indeed!
57.
Why does the mind, intent on filthiness,
Neglect the fresh young lotus blossom,
Opened in the sunlight of a cloudless sky,
To take joy rather in a sack of dirt?
58.
And since you're disinclined to touch
A place or object grimed with excrement,
Why do you wish to touch the body
Whence such excrement has come?
59.
And if you have no craving for impurity,
Why will you now embrace and kiss
What comes from such an unclean place,
Engendered likewise from an unclean seed?[121]
60.
The tiny fetid worms that come from filth—
You have no love of them.
And yet you're lusting for a human form,
From filth arisen and replete with it.
61.
Toward your own impurity
Disgust you do not feel;
And yearning and athirst for filth,
You long for other sacks of it!
62.
Pleasant substances like camphor,
Rice, and fresh green herbs—
Put them in your mouth and spit them out:
The earth itself is fouled thereby!
63.
If still you doubt such filthiness,
Though it is very plain for all to see,
Go off into the charnel grounds;
Observe the fetid bodies there abandoned.
64.
When their skins are peeled away,
You feel great horror and revulsion.
Now that you have understood,
How can you still take joy in such a thing?
65.
The scent that now perfumes the skin
Is sandalwood and nothing else.
Yet how is it that one thing's fragrance
Causes you to long for something else?
66.
Is it not best to have no lust
For something that by nature stinks?
The worldly crave beside their purpose—
Why do they anoint their flesh with pleasant scents?

[121] In other words, the uterus and the generative substances.

67.
For if this scent is sandalwood,
How can it be the perfume of the body?
How is it that the fragrance of a thing
Induces you to crave for something else?
68.
With lanky hair, with long nails overgrown,
With dirty teeth all reeking with the stink of slime,
This body, naked, as it is, untended—
Is indeed a horror to behold!
69.
Why go to such excess to clean and polish
What is but a weapon that will injure you?
The cares that people squander on themselves in ignorance
Convulse the universe with madness.
70.
When you saw the heaps of human bones,
You felt revulsion in the charnel ground.
And will you take delight in cities of the dead
Frequented by such skeletons that live and move?
71.
What's more, possession of another's filth
Is not to be acquired free of charge.
All is at a price: exhaustion in this life,
And in the next, the suffering of hell!
72.
To gather riches young boys are unable,
And what can they enjoy when they're full grown?
The whole of life is spent in gaining wealth,
But then they're old—too old to satisfy their lust!
73.
Some are wretched in their great desire,
But worn out by their daylong work,
They go home broken by fatigue
To sleep the slumbers of a corpse.
74.
Some, wearied by their travels far from home,
Must suffer separation from their wives
And children whom they love and long to see.
They do not meet with them for years on end.
75.
Some, ambitious for prosperity,
Not knowing how to get it, sell themselves.
Happiness eludes their grasp and pointlessly
They live and labor for their masters.
76.
Some sell themselves, no longer free,
In bondage, slavery to others.
And, destitute, their wives give birth
With only trees for shelter, in the wild.
77.
Fools deceived by craving for a livelihood
Decide that they will make their fortune
In the wars, though fearful for their lives.
And seeking gain, it's slavery they get.
78.
Some, as the result of craving,
Have their bodies slashed, impaled on pointed stakes.
Some are wounded, run through by the lance,
While some are put to death by fire.
79.
The pain of gaining, keeping, and of losing all!
See the endless hardships brought on us by property!
For those distracted by their love of wealth
There is no chance for freedom from the sorrows of existence.
80.
They indeed, possessed of many wants,
Will suffer many troubles, all for very little:
They're like the ox that pulls the cart
And catches bits of grass along the way.
81.
For sake of such a paltry thing,
Which is not rare, which even beasts can find,
Tormented by their karma, they destroy
This precious human life so hard to find.
82.
All that we desire is sure to perish,
On which account we fall to hellish pain.
For what amounts to very little
We must suffer constant and exhausting weariness.
83.
With but a millionth part of such vexation
Enlightenment itself could be attained!
Those who crave are plagued far more than those engaged upon the path,
Yet Buddhahood is not what they attain!
84.
Reflect upon the pains of hell and other evil states!
Weapons, fires, and poisons,
Yawning chasms, hostile foes—
None is on a level with our cravings.
85.
So, revolted by our lust and wanting,
Let us now rejoice in solitude,
In places empty of all conflict and defilement:
The peace and stillness of the forest.
86.
Happy those intent on others' good,
Who roam in pleasant places formed of massive stone,
Refreshed by moonlight's sandal-scented beams,
By gentle woodland breezes soothed!
87.
In caves, beneath the trees, in houses left abandoned,
May we linger long as we might wish.
Relinquishing the pain of guarding our possessions,
Let us live in freedom, unconfined by cares.
88.
To have such liberty unmarred by craving,
Loosed from every bond and tie—
A life of such contentment and such pleasure,
Even Indra would be pressed to find!

89.
Reflecting in such ways as these
Upon the excellence of solitude,
Pacify completely all discursiveness
And cultivate the mind of bodhichitta.
90.
Strive at first to meditate
Upon the sameness of yourself and others.[122]
In joy and sorrow all are equal;
Thus be guardian of all, as of yourself.
91.
The hand and other limbs are many and distinct,
But all are one—the body to be kept and guarded.
Likewise, different beings, in their joys and sorrows,
Are, like me, all one in wanting happiness.
92.
This pain of mine does not afflict
Or cause discomfort to another's body,
And yet this pain is hard for me to bear
Because I cling and take it for my own.
93.
And other beings' pain
I do not feel, and yet,
Because I take them for myself,[123]
Their suffering is mine and therefore hard to bear.
94.
And therefore I'll dispel the pain of others,
For it is simply pain, just like my own.
And others I will aid and benefit,
For they are living beings, like my body.
95.
Since I and other beings both,
In wanting happiness, are equal and alike,
What difference is there to distinguish us,
That I should strive to have my bliss alone?
96.
Since I and other beings both,
In fleeing suffering, are equal and alike,
What difference is there to distinguish us,
That I should save myself and not the others?
97.
Since the pain of others does no harm to me,
I do not shield myself from it.
So why to guard against "my" future pain,
Which does no harm to this, my present "me"?
98.
To think that "I will have to bear it"
Is in fact a false idea.
For that which dies is one thing;
What is born is something else.
99.
"It's for the sufferers themselves," you'll say,
"To shield themselves from injuries that come!"
The pain felt in my foot is not my hand's,
So why, in fact, should one protect the other?
100.
"True, it's inadmissible," you'll say,
"It happens simply through the force of ego-clinging."
But what is inadmissible for others and myself
Should be discarded utterly!
101.
Continua and gatherings, so-called,
Like garlands and like armies, are unreal.
So there is no one to experience pain
For who is there to be its "owner"?
102.
Suffering has no "possessor,"
Therefore no distinctions can be made in it.
Since pain is pain, it is to be dispelled.
What use is there in drawing boundaries?
103.
"But why dispel the pains of all?"
You cannot argue in this way!
If "my" pain is removed, so too should that of "others."
If theirs is not, then neither should be mine.
104.
"Compassion makes us feel such pain," you say,
"So why should we make efforts to engender it?"
But thinking of the sufferings of beings,
How can you regard as great the smart of your compassion?
105.
And if through such a single pain
A multitude of sorrows can be cured,
Such pain as this all loving people
Strive to foster in themselves and others.
106.
Thus Supuṣhpachandra,[124]
Knowing that the king would cause him harm,
Did nothing to escape from tribulation,
That the pains of many should be ended.
107.
Those whose minds are practiced in this way,
Whose joy it is to soothe another's ills,
Will venture into hell of Unrelenting Pain
As swans sweep down upon a lotus lake.
108.
The ocean-like immensity of joy
Arising when all beings will be freed,
Will this not be enough? Will this not satisfy?
The wish for my own freedom, what is that to me?
109.
The work of bringing benefit to beings
Will not, then, make me proud and self-admiring.
The happiness of others is itself my satisfaction;
I do not expect another recompense.
110.
Therefore just as I defend myself

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[122] See appendix 2.

[123] In other words, Shāntideva will help others in just the same way that he attends to the needs of his own body.

[124] The Bodhisattva Supuṣhpachandra was forbidden by the king Shūradatta to teach the Dharma on pain of death. Knowing, however, that many would benefit from his teaching, Supuṣhpachandra disobeyed and went cheerfully to his execution. The story is found in the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*.

From even slight disparagement,
In just the same way with regard to others,
I should likewise have a mind protective and compassionate.
111.
The drop of sperm and blood[125] belonged to others.
Yet, through strong habituation,I came to have in its regard a sense of "I,"
Though, in itself, it is devoid of entity.
112.
And so, why not identify
Another's body, calling it my "I"?
And vice versa, why should it be hard
To think of this my body as another's?
113.
Perceiving now the faults possessed by "I,"
The ocean of good qualities that are in "other,"
I shall lay aside all love of self
And gain the habit of adopting other beings.
114.
Just as hands and other limbs
Are thought of as the members of a body,
Can we likewise not consider others
As the limbs and members of a living whole?
115.
Just as in connection with this form, devoid of self,
My sense of "I" arose through strong habituation,
Why should not the thought of "I,"
Through habit, not arise related to another?
116.
Thus when I work for others' sake,
There'll be no sense of boasting self-congratulation.
It is just as when I feed myself—
I don't expect to be rewarded!
117.
Therefore just as I defend myself
From even slight disparagement,
Likewise for beings I shall now grow used
To have a mind protective and compassionate.
118.
This is why the Lord Avalokita
Out of great compassion blessed his name,
That those caught in the midst of multitudes
Might be released and freed from every fear.[126]
119.
And so we should be undeterred by hardships,
For through the influence of use and habit,
People even come to grieve
For those whose very names struck terror in their hearts!
120.
Those desiring speedily to be
A refuge for themselves and others
Should make the interchange of "I" and "other,"
And thus embrace a sacred mystery.
121.
Because of our attachment to our bodies,
Even little things alarm us.
This body, then, this source of so much terror—
Who would not detest it as the worst of foes?
122.
Wishing to relieve our bodies' ills,
Our hungry mouths, the dryness of our throats,
We steal the lives of fishes, birds, and deer
And lie in wait along the road.
123.
And for the sake of profit and position
Some there are who even kill their parents,
Or steal what has been offered to the Triple Gem,
Because of which, they'll burn in hell of Unrelenting Pain.
124.
Where are the wise and prudent then
Who cherish, guard, and serve the body?
Who would not perceive it as their foe,
And as their foe, regard it with contempt?
125.
"If I give this, what will be left for me?"
Thinking of oneself—the way of evil ghosts.
"If I keep this, what will be left to give?"
Concern for others is the way of heaven.[127]
126.
If to serve myself I harm another,
I'll suffer later in the realms of hell.
But if for others' sake I harm myself,
Then every excellence will be my heritage.
127.
Wanting what is best for me—
Stupidity, inferiority, and lower realms result!
Let this be changed, applied to others—
Honours and the realms of bliss will come!
128.
Enslaving others, forcing them to serve me,
I will come to know the state of servitude.
But if I labor for the good of others,
Mastery and leadership will come to me.
129.
All the joy the world contains
Has come through wishing happiness for others.
All the misery the world contains
Has come through wanting pleasure for oneself.
130.
Is there need for lengthy explanation?
Childish beings look out for themselves;
Buddhas labor for the good of others:
See the difference that divides them!
131.
If I do not interchange
My happiness for others' pain,
Enlightenment will never be attained,

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[125] "Blood" refers to the generative substance (ovum) of the mother.
[126] In the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, Avalokiteshvara says, "Let whoever stands before a crowd invoke my name three times and have no fear."
[127] In other words, the way of Dharma, leading to the realization of Buddhahood—not, of course, the heavens of the worldly gods.

And even in saṃsāra, joy will fly from me.
132.
Leaving future lives outside the reckoning,
Even this life's needs are not fulfilled:
The servants do not do their work,
And masters do not pay the wages earned.
133.
Casting far away abundant joys
That may be gained in this or future lives,
Because of bringing harm to other beings,
I ignorantly bring myself intolerable pain.
134.
All the harm with which this world is rife,
All fear and suffering that there is,
Clinging to the "I" has caused it!
What am I to do with this great demon?
135.
If this "I" is not relinquished wholly,
Sorrow likewise cannot be avoided.
If they do not keep away from fire,
People can't escape from being burned.
136.
To free myself from harm
And others from their sufferings,
Let me give myself to others,
Loving them as I now love myself.
137.
"For I am now beneath the rule of others,"
Of this you must be certain, O my mind.
And now no longer shall you have a thought
That does not wish the benefit of beings.
138.
My sight and other senses, now the property of others—
To use them for myself would be improper.
And it is likewise disallowed
To use my faculties against their owners!
139.
Thus sentient beings will be my chief concern.
And everything I see my body has
Will all be seized and offered
For the use and service of all other beings.
140.
Take others—lower, higher, equal—as yourself,[128]
Identify yourself as "other."
Then, without another thought,
Immerse yourself in envy, pride, and rivalry.
141.
He's the centre of attention. I am nothing.
And, unlike him, I'm poor without possessions.
Everyone looks up to him, despising me,
All goes well for him; for me there's only bitterness!
142.
All I have is sweat and drudgery,
While he's there, sitting at his ease.
He's great, respected in the world,
While I'm the underdog, a well-known nobody.
143.
What! A nobody without distinction?
Not true! I do have some good qualities.
Compared with some, he's lower down.
Compared with some, I do excel!
144.
My discipline, my understanding have declined,
But I am helpless, ruled by my defilements.
As much as he is able, he should cure me.
I will be submissive even to his punishments.
145.
The fact is he does nothing of the sort!
By what right, then, does he belittle me?
What use, then, are his qualities to me—
Those qualities of which he's so possessed?
146.
Indifferent to the plight of living beings,
Who tread the brink of evil destinies,
He makes an outward show of virtues,
And even wants to vie with sages.
147.
That I might excel, outstripping him—
Him, regarded as my peer and equal!
In contests I will certainly secure
My fame and fortune, public renown.
148.
By every means I'll advertise
My gifts to all the world,
Ensuring that his qualities
Remain unknown, ignored by everyone.
149.
My faults I will conceal, dissimulate.
For I, not he, will be the object of devotion;
I, not he, will gain possessions and renown,
I will be the centre of attention.
150.
I will take such satisfaction
In his evil deeds and degradation.
I will render him despicable,
The butt and laughingstock of everyone.
151.
People say this pitiful nonentity
Is trying to compete with me!
But how can he be on a par
With me, in learning, beauty, wealth, or pedigree?
152.
Just to hear them talk about my excellence,
My reputation on the lips of all,
The thrill of it sends shivers down my spine,
A pleasure that I bask and revel in!
153.
Even if he does have something,
I'm the one he's working for!
He can keep enough just to survive,
But with my strength I'll steal the rest away.
154.
I will wear his happiness away;

[128] Compare the sentiments of this and the following stanzas with stanza 12 of the same chapter. Also see appendix 2 for a full explanation.

I will always hurt and injure him.
He's the one who in saṃsāra
Did me mischiefs by the hundred!
155.
Countless ages, O my mind,
You spent, desiring to attain your aims.
And what great weariness it was,
While your reward was only misery!
156.
And therefore now most certainly
Apply yourself completely to the good of others.
The Buddha did not lie in what he said—
You'll see the benefits that come from it.
157.
If indeed, you had in former times
Embraced this work and undertaken it,
You could not still be lacking
In the perfect bliss of Buddhahood.
158.
Therefore, just as you identify
A drop of others' blood and sperm,
And cling to it as though it were yourself,
Now take sentient beings—others—as your self.
159.
Now for others you should spy
On everything your body seems to have.
Steal it, take it all away,
And use it for the benefit of others.
160.
I indeed am happy, others sad;
I am high and mighty, others low;
I am helped while others are abandoned:
Why am I not jealous of myself?
161.
Happiness, fulfilment: these I give away.
The pain of others: this I will embrace.
Inquiring of myself repeatedly
I will thus investigate my faults.
162.
When others are at fault, I'll take
And turn the blame upon myself,
And all my sins, however slight,Declare, and make them known to many.
163.
The fame of others I will magnify
That it might thus outshine my own.
Among them I will be as one who serves,
My lowly labor for their benefit.
164.
This ego is by nature rife with faults,
Its accidental gifts I should not praise.
Whatever qualities it has I'll so contrive
That they remain unknown to everyone.
165.
All the harm, in short, that ego does
To its advantage and to others' cost,
May all of it descend upon itself,
To its own hurt—to others' benefit.
166.
Do not let it strut about the place,
So arrogant, so overbearing.
But like a newly wedded bride,
Let it be demure and blushing, timorous and shy!
167.
"Do this!" "Be like that!" "Such things don't ever do!"
It's thus that you will bring it forcibly to heel.
And if it oversteps the mark,
Well then, apply the lash!
168.
And so, O mind, if still you will refuse,
Though you have been so lengthily advised,
Since every evil has its roots in you,
You are indeed now ripe for punishment!
169.
The time when you could do me harm
Is in the past and now is here no more.
Now I see you! Where will you escape?
I'll bring you down with all your haughty insolence.
170.
Let every thought of working for yourself
Be utterly rejected, cast aside!
Now that you've been sold to others,
Stop your whining, be of service!
171.
For if, through being inattentive,
I do not deliver you to others,
You will hand me over, it is certain,
To the guards and janitors of hell.
172.
For this is how so many times
You have betrayed me, and how long I've suffered!
Now my memory is full of rancour,
I will crush your selfish schemes!
173.
And so it is that if I want contentment,
I should never seek to please myself.
And likewise, if I wish to guard myself,
Of others I should always be the guard.
174.
To the extent this human form
Is cosseted and saved from hurt,
Just so, just so, to that degree,
It dwindles to a weak and fretful state.
175.
For those who sink to such a pass,
The earth and all it holds
Are powerless to satisfy.
For who can give them all they crave?
176.
Their hopeless craving brings them misery,
And evil schemes invade their minds,
While those with free, untrammelled hearts,
Will never know an end of excellence.
177.
Therefore for the increase of my body's wants,
I'll give no space, no opportunity.
And of possessions, those things are the best
That do not captivate by their attractiveness.

178.
Dust and ashes are the body's final state—
This body which, inert, is moved by other forces.
This form so frightening and foul—
Why do I so regard it as my "self"?
179.
Alive or dead what difference does it make?
What use is this machine to me?
What difference will divide it from a clod of earth?
Alas that I don't rid myself of pride!
180.
Through lavishing attention on this body,
Such sorrow have I brought myself so senselessly.
What use is all my wanting, all my hating,
For what indeed is like a log of wood?
181.
Whether I protect and pamper it,
Or whether it is eaten up by carrion birds,
This body feels no pleasure, no aversion.
Why then do I cherish it so much?
182.
Resentment when it is reviled,
Or pleasure when it is esteemed,
Neither of these two my body feels.
So why do I exhaust myself?
183.
If I say I do it since it's loved by other people,
Others whom I thus regard as friends,
Since all appreciate the bodies that they have,
Why do I not take pleasure in them too?[129]
184.
Therefore, free from all attachment,
I will give this body for the benefit of beings.
And though it is afflicted by so many faults,
I shall adopt it as my necessary tool.
185.
And so, enough of all my childish ways.
I'll follow in the footsteps of the wise;
Recalling their advice on carefulness,
I'll shun all sleep and mental dullness.
186.
Like the Buddhas' heirs, in their compassion,
I will bear with all that should be borne.
For if I do not labor night and day,
When will my sorrows reach their end?[130]
187.
Thus to banish all obscuring veils
I'll bend my mind from the mistaken path;
And constantly upon the perfect object
I shall rest my mind in even meditation.

[129] If I give the appreciation of others as the reason for the infatuated attention I give to my own body, it follows that I should be similarly attentive to the physical comfort of others, since their appreciation is equally applied to their own bodies.

[130] This stanza only occurs in the Tibetan translation; there is no equivalent in any extant Sanskrit version.

9. Wisdom

1.
All these branches of the Doctrine
The Enlightened Sage expounded for the sake of wisdom.[131]
Therefore they must cultivate this wisdom
Who wish to have an end of suffering.
2.
Relative and ultimate,
These the two truths are declared to be.
The ultimate is not within the reach of intellect,
For intellect is said to be the relative.[132]
3.
In light of this, within the world, two kinds of people are observed:
Those with yogic insight and the common run of people.
In this regard, the views of ordinary folk
Are undermined by yogis who themselves are in the world[133]
4.
(Within whose ranks
The lower, in degrees of insight, are confuted by the higher)
By means of the examples that the yogis and the worldly both accept.
And for the sake of the result, analysis is left aside.
5.
When ordinary folk perceive phenomena,
They look on them as real, and not illusory.
This, then, is the subject of debate
Where ordinary and yogis differ.
6.
Forms and so forth, which we all perceive,
Exist by general acclaim but not by valid reasoning.
They're false just like, for instance, unclean things
Regarded in the common view as pure.
7.
But that he might instruct the worldly,
Our Protector spoke of "things."
But these in truth lack even momentariness.
Now if you say it's wrong to claim the momentary as relative,
8.
There is no fault. For momentariness
Is relative for yogis, but for worldly beings, ultimate.
Were it otherwise, the common view
Could fault the yogic insight into corporal impurity.
9.
"Through a Buddha, who is but illusion, how does merit spring?"
As if the Buddha were existing truly.
"But," you ask, "if beings are like illusions,
How, when dying, can they take rebirth?"
10.
As long as the conditions are assembled,
Illusions, likewise, will persist and manifest.
Why, through simply being more protracted,
Should sentient beings be regarded as more real?
11.
If one kills or harms the magical illusion of a man,
There is no mind in such a thing and therefore there's no sin.
But beings do indeed have mirage-like minds;
Sin and merit will, in consequence, arise.
12.
There is no power in things like spells,
So mirage-like minds do not occur through them.
Illusions spring from various causes;
Thus illusions are of different kinds.
13.
A single cause for everything
There never was!
"If ultimately, beings are in nirvāṇa," you will say,
"But relatively circle in saṃsāra,
14.
"Even Buddhahood reverts to the saṃsāric state.
So why," you ask, "pursue the Bodhisattva path?"
As long as there's no cutting of the causal stream,
There is no halting even of illusory displays.
15.
But when the causal stream is severed,
Even relative phenomena do not appear.

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[131] As already stated in the introduction, the ninth chapter of the Bodhicharyāvatāra is an extremely concise exposition of the Madhyamaka view, recapitulating its various stages of development and polemical interaction with other schools, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. It is worth bearing in mind that on that famous occasion when Shāntideva recited his text from the lofty throne at Nālandā, he did so to a public already deeply versed in both the content and history of Madhyamaka. And his ninth chapter was no doubt intended as a brilliant and perhaps even lighthearted exposition of a highly recondite subject to a specialist audience of philosophers and academics. As it stands, the ninth chapter is scarcely comprehensible to the unassisted reader, and an extensive commentary is indispensable. Those of Kunzang Pelden and Minyak Kunzang Sönam are already available in translation, and the interested student will also derive much assistance from the other commentaries listed in the Bibliography. In an attempt to render the root text at least intelligible, almost all translators have resorted to the expedient of indicating in parentheses the different points of view (Sāṃkhya, Nyāya-Vaisheṣhika, Ābhidharmika, and so on) referred to as the chapter progresses. But it is doubtful whether, in the absence of an extensive commentary, these additions do any more than complicate the issue and increase the dismay of the bewildered reader. In any case, they tend to obscure the fact that the ninth chapter, like the rest of the book, is composed in seamless verse, and is in fact a fast-moving, scintillating tour de force. With regard to the present translation, the aim has been to facilitate comprehension as much as possible, and a certain latitude of expression seemed justifiable, mainly in the way of explanatory paraphrase where possible and appropriate. The interpretation given in the commentary of Kunzang Pelden, and by implication that of his teachers Patrul Rinpoche and Mipham Rinpoche, has been consistently followed. See also Crosby and Skilton, p. 111, for a helpful breakdown of the subject matter of this chapter.

[132] Tibetan habitually uses two expressions to refer to the relative truth: kun rdzob and tha snyad. Although they are often employed interchangeably as synonyms, these terms have slightly different connotations. Kun rdzob kyi bden pa literally means the "all-concealing truth." It refers to phenomena as they are encountered in everyday life, and to the fact that their appearance (as independently existing entities) conceals their true nature (i.e., their emptiness of such independent and intrinsic being). In so far as the things and situations encountered in life are accepted as genuine in the common consensus (as contrasted with magical illusions, mirages, etc.), they are "true," but only relatively so, since the way they appear does not correspond with their actual status. We have therefore systematically translated kun rdzob kyi bden pa as "relative truth." Tha snyad, on the other hand, means "name," "conventional expression." Tha snyad kyi bden pa (which we have translated as "conventional truth") refers to phenomena insofar as they can be conceived by the ordinary mind and spoken of within the limits of conventional discourse.

[133] This refers to Buddhist thinkers and practitioners who with varying degrees of success have acquired an understanding of the true status of phenomena. In terms of the five paths, which in Buddhism are used to map out the progress of the mind toward the attainment of omniscience or complete enlightenment, the yogis in question are on the first and the second, namely, "accumulation" and "joining." They have not yet attained the path of seeing, where the mind enjoys a direct experience of the emptiness of phenomena, at which point it is said to pass beyond the world, that is, saṃsāra. For although the yogis on the path of seeing have yet to achieve Buddhahood, they can never fall back into saṃsāric existence.

"If even that which is deceived does not exist,
What is it," you will ask, "that sees illusion?"
16.
But if, for you, these same illusions have no being,
What, indeed, is there to be perceived?
"But objects have another mode of being," you will say,
"That very mode is but the mind itself."
17.
But if the mirage is the mind itself,
What is then perceived by what?
The Guardian of the World himself has said
That mind cannot be seen by mind.
18.
In just the same way, he has said,
The sword's edge cannot cut the sword.
"But," you say, "it's like the flame
That perfectly illuminates itself."
19.
The flame, in fact, can never light itself.
And why? Because the darkness never dims it!
"The blueness of a thing by nature blue," you say,
"Depends, unlike a crystal, upon nothing else.
20.
"Likewise some perceptions
Come from other things, while some do not."
But something that's by nature blue has never of itself imposed
A blueness on its non-blue self.
21.
The phrase "The lamp illuminates itself"
The mind can know and formulate.
But what is there to know and say
That "mind is self-illuminating?"
22.
The mind, indeed, is never seen by anything.
And therefore, whether it can know, or cannot know, itself,
Is like the beauty of a barren woman's daughter:
Something that it's pointless to discuss.
23.
"But if," you ask, "the mind is not self-knowing,
How does it remember what it knew?"
We say that, like the poison of the water rat,
It's through the link with things experienced that memory occurs.
24.
"In certain cases," you will say, "the mind
Can see the minds of others, how then not itself?"
But through the application of a magic balm,
The eye may see the treasure, but the salve it does not see.
25.
It's not indeed our purpose to disprove
Experiences of sight or sound or knowing.Our aim is here to undermine the cause of sorrow:
The thought that such phenomena have true existence.
26.
"Illusions are not other than the mind," you say,
And yet you don't consider them the same.
How could they not be different if the mind is real?
And how can mind be real if you deny a difference?
27.
Although it is unreal, a mirage can be seen;
And that which sees is just the same.
"But saṃsāra must be based on something real," you say,
"Or else it is like empty space."
28.
But how could the unreal be causally effective,
Even if it rests on something real?
This mind of yours is isolated and alone,
Alone, in solitude, and unaccompanied.
29.
If the mind indeed is free of objects,
All beings must be Buddhas, Thus-Gone and enlightened.
And so, what purpose can there be
In saying thus, that there is "Only Mind"?
30.
"Even if we know that all is like illusion,
How," you ask, "will this dispel afflictive passion?
Magicians may indeed themselves desire
The mirage-women they themselves create."
31.
The reason is they have not rid themselves
Of habits of desiring objects of perception;
And when they gaze upon such things,
Their aptitude for emptiness is weak indeed.
32.
By training in this aptitude for emptiness,
The habit to perceive real things will be relinquished.
By training in the thought "There isn't anything,"
This view itself will also be abandoned.
33.
"There is nothing"—when this is asserted,
No thing is there to be examined.
How can a "nothing," wholly unsupported,
Rest before the mind as something present?
34.
When something and its nonexistence
Both are absent from before the mind,
No other option does the latter have:
It comes to perfect rest, from concepts free.
35.
As the wishing jewel and tree of miracles
Fulfil and satisfy all hopes and wishes,
Likewise, through their prayers for those who might be trained,
The physical appearance of the Conquerors occurs.
36.
The healing shrine of the garuḍa,
Even when its builder was long dead,
Continued even ages thence
To remedy and soothe all plagues and venom.
37.

Likewise having gained the "shrine of victory"
In accordance with their deeds for sake of Buddhahood,
Though Bodhisattvas pass beyond all grief,
They yet can satisfy all ends.
38.
"But how," you ask, "can offerings made
To beings freed from all discursiveness give fruit?"
It's said that whether Buddhas live or pass beyond,
The offerings made to them are equal in their merit.
39.
Whether you assert them in the ultimate or relative,
Merit, so the scriptures say, arises,
Just as there will be results
When Buddhas are considered truly real.
40.
"We're free," you say, "through seeing the (Four) Truths—
What use is it to us, this view of emptiness?"
But as the scriptures have themselves proclaimed,
Without this path there can be no enlightenment.
41.
You say the Mahāyāna has no certainty.
But how do you substantiate your own tradition?
"Because it is accepted by both parties," you will say.
But at the outset, you yourself lacked proof!
42.
The reasons why you trust in your traditionMay likewise be applied to Mahāyāna.
Moreover, if accord between two parties shows the truth,
The Vedas and the rest are also true.
43.
"Mahāyāna is at fault," you say, "because it is contested."
But Buddhist texts are questioned by extremists,
While Buddhists also vie among themselves;
And so your own tradition you must now abandon.
44.
The true monk is the root of Dharma,
And to be a monk is difficult indeed.
It's hard for minds enmeshed in thoughts
To pass beyond the bonds of suffering.
45.
You say there's liberation in the instant
That defilements are entirely forsaken.
Yet those who from defilements are set free
Continue to display the influence of karma.
46.
"Only for a while," you say. "For it is certain
That the causes of rebirth, their cravings, are no more."
They have no craving, granted, through defilement,
But like their ignorance, why should they not have craving undefiled?
47.
This craving is produced by virtue of sensation,
And sensation, this they surely have.
Concepts linger still within their minds;
And it is to these concepts that they cling.
48.
The mind that has not realised voidness,
May be halted, but will once again arise,
Just as from a non-perceptual absorption.
Therefore one must train in emptiness.
49.
If all the words recorded in the sūtras
You admit to be the Buddha's perfect speech,
Why don't you now accept the greater part of Mahāyāna,
With which your sūtras are in perfect harmony?[134]
50.
If due to just a single jarring element,
The whole is held to be at fault,
Why should a single sūtra in agreement with your texts
Not vindicate the rest as Buddha's teaching?
51.
Mahākāshyapa[135] *himself and others*
Could not sound the depths of such a teaching.
Who will therefore say that they're to be rejected
Just because they are not grasped by you?
52.
To linger and abide within saṃsāra,
Freed from every craving and from every fear,
In order to achieve the good of those who ignorantly suffer:
Such is the fruit that emptiness will bear.
53.
Therefore it is incorrect
To find fault with this view of emptiness.
And so, with every doubt abandoned,
We should meditate on it!
54.
Afflictive passion and the veil upon cognition—
The cure for their obscurity is emptiness.
How then shall they not meditate on this
Who wish for swift attainment of omniscience?
55.
Whatever is the source of suffering,
Let that be the object of our fear.
But voidness will allay our every grief,
How could it be for us a thing of dread?
56.
If such a thing as "I" exists indeed,
Then terrors, granted, will torment it.
But since no self or "I" exists at all,
What is there left for fears to terrify?
57.
The teeth, the hair, the nails are not the "I,"
And "I" is not the bones or blood,

[134] According to the Sanskrit commentary of Prajñākaramati, stanzas 49 to 51 have been misplaced and are not in their correct position. According to the commentary of Gyalse Thogme Zangpo, they could be inserted between verses 43 and 44. Here we have followed the positioning of Kunzang Pelden and Mipham Rinpoche.

[135] Mahākāshyapa became, after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa, the leader of the Saṅgha and played an important role in the preservation of the teachings.

The mucus from the nose and phlegm are not the "I,"
And neither is it made of lymph or pus.
58.
The "I" is not the body's grease or sweat,
The lungs and liver likewise do not constitute it.
Neither are the inner organs "I,"
Nor yet the body's excrement and waste.
59.
The flesh and skin are not the "I,"
And neither are the body's warmth and breath.
The cavities within the frame are not the "I,"
And "I" is not accounted for in sixfold consciousness.
60.
If the hearing consciousness is permanent,
It follows that it's hearing all the time.
And if there is no object, what does it cognise?
On what grounds do you call it consciousness?
61.
If something that's unconscious knows,
It follows that a stick has knowledge also.
Therefore in the absence of a thing to know,
It's clear that consciousness will not arise.
62.
If the selfsame consciousness detects a form,
At that time, why does it not hear?
Perhaps you say the sound's no longer there.
Then neither is there consciousness of sound.
63.
How could that which has the nature of a sound-perceiver
Ever be transformed into a form-perceiver?
"A single man," you say, "can be both son and father."
But these are merely names; his nature is not so.
64.
And likewise "pain," "neutrality," and "pleasure"
Are neither fatherhood nor sonship;
And we indeed have never yet observed
A consciousness of form perceiving sound.
65.
"But like an actor," you reply, "it takes a different role and sees."
If so, this consciousness is not a constant thing.
And if its later mode is still the first,
That's identity indeed and never seen before!
66.
"But its different modes," you say, "are quite unreal."
Its essence therefore you must now describe.
You say that this is simply knowing.
It follows that all beings are a single thing.
67.
What has mind and what does not have mind
Are thus identical, for both are equal in existing.
If the different kinds of mind are all unreal,
What common basis can there be for them?
68.
Something destitute of mind, we hold, is not a self.
For mindlessness means matter, like a vase.
"But," you say, "the self has consciousness when joined to mind."
Then this refutes its nature of unconsciousness.
69.
If the self, moreover, is immutable,
What change in it could mingling with the mind produce?
And selfhood we might equally affirm
Of empty space, inert and destitute of mind.
70.
"If self does not exist," you say,
"There is no link connecting actions with results.
If when the deed is done, the doer is no more,
Who is there to reap the karmic fruit?"
71.
The bases of the act and fruit are not the same,
In both a self is without scope for action.
This is valid both for you and us;
What point is there, therefore, in our debate?
72.
"A cause coterminous with its result"
Is something quite impossible to see.
And only in the context of a single mental stream
Can it be said that one who acts will later reap the fruit.
73.
The thoughts now passed, and those to come, are not the self;
They are no more, or are not yet.
Is then the self the thought which now is born?
If so, it sinks to nothing when the latter fades.
74.
For instance, we may take banana trees—
Cutting through the fibres, finding nothing.
Likewise analytical investigation
Will find no "I," no underlying self.
75.
"If beings," you will say, "have no existence,
Who will be the object of compassion?"
Those whom ignorance imputes,
For whose sake we have pledged ourselves.
76.
"If," you ask, "there are no beings, who will gain the fruit?"
It's true! It is through ignorance that they are said to be!
But for the total vanquishing of sorrow,
The goal, which ignorance conceives, should not be spurned.
77.
The source of sorrow is the pride of saying "I,"
It's fostered and increased by false belief in self.
To this you may believe that there is no redress,
But meditation on no-self will be the supreme way.
78.
What we call the body is not feet or shins;
The body, likewise, is not thighs or loins.
It's not the belly nor indeed the back,

And from the chest and arms the body is not formed.
79.
The body is not ribs or hands,
Armpits, shoulders, bowels, or entrails.
It is not the head, and it is not the throat.
What is the "body," then, in all of this?
80.
If the "body" spreads itself
And with the members coincides,
Its parts indeed are present in those parts.
But where does "body," in itself, abide?
81.
But if the "body," single and entire
Is present in the hands and other members,
However many parts there are, the hands and all the rest,
You'll find an equal quantity of "bodies."
82.
If "body" is not outside or within its parts,
How is it, then, residing in its members?
And since it is not other than its parts,
How can you say that it exists at all?
83.
Thus there is no "body." It is through illusion,
With regard to hands and other parts, that "body" as a notion is conceived—
Just as on account of its specific shape
A pile of stones is taken for a man.
84.
As long as the conditions are assembled,
The body will appear to be a man.
As long as all the parts are likewise present,
A body will appear therein.
85.
Likewise, since it is a group of fingers,
The hand itself does not exist as such.
And so it is with fingers, made of joints—
And joints themselves consist of many parts.
86.
These parts themselves will break down into particles,
And particles divide according to direction.
These fragments, too, lack partless parts; they are like space.
Thus even particles have no existence.
87.
All form, therefore, is like a dream,
And who will be attached to it, who thus investigates?
The body, in this way, has no existence;
What, therefore, is male and what is female?
88.
If suffering itself is truly real,
Why is joy not altogether quenched thereby?
If pleasure's real, then why will pleasant tastes
Not comfort and amuse a man in agony?
89.
If the feeling fails to be experienced,
Through being overwhelmed by something stronger,
How can "feeling" rightly be ascribed
To that which lacks the character of being felt?
90.
Perhaps you say that only subtle pain remains,
Its grosser form has now been overmastered—
Or rather it is felt as "mere pleasure."
But what is subtle still remains itself.
91.
If, because its opposite is present,
Discomfort fails to manifest,
Is not the claim that it's a "feeling"
No more than a mental imputation?
92.
Since so it is, the antidote
Is meditation and analysis.
Absorption grown in fields of their investigation
Is indeed the food and sustenance of yogis.
93.
If between the sense power and a thing
There is a space, how will the two terms meet?
And if there is no space, they form a unity,
And therefore what is it that meets with what?
94.
No penetration can there be of particle by particle,
For they are both the same in lacking volume.
But if they do not penetrate, they do not merge;
And if they do not merge, there's no encounter.
95.
For how could anyone accept
That what is partless could be said to meet?
And you must show me, if you ever saw,
A contact taking place between two partless things.
96.
Consciousness is immaterial,
And so one cannot speak of contact with it.
A combination, too, has no reality,
Just as we have previously shown.
97.
If therefore there's no touch or contact,
Whence is it that feeling takes its rise?
What purpose is there, then, in all our toil,
For what is it, indeed, that torments what?
98.
Since there is no subject for sensation,
And sensation, too, lacks all existence,
How is craving not arrested
When all this is clearly understood?
99.
What we see and what we touch
Is stuff of dreams and mirages.
If feeling is coincident with consciousness,
It follows that it is not seen thereby.

100.
If the one arises first, the other after,
Memory occurs and not direct sensation.
Sensation is without perception of itself
And likewise, by another it is not perceived.
101.
The agent of sensation has no real existence,
Thus sensation, likewise, has no being.
What damage, therefore, can sensation do to it—
This aggregate deprived of self?
102.
The mind within the senses does not dwell,
It has no place in outer things like form.
And in between, the mind does not abide:
Not out, not in, not elsewhere, can the mind be found.
103.
It is not in the body, yet is nowhere else.It does not merge with it nor stand apart—
Something such as this does not exist, not even slightly.
Beings by their nature are beyond the reach of suffering.
104.
If consciousness precedes the cognized object,
With regard to what does it arise?
If consciousness arises at the same time as its object,
Again, regarding what does it arise?
105.
If consciousness comes later than its object,
Once again, from what does it arise?
Thus the origin of all phenomena
Exceeds the reach of understanding.
106.
“If this is so,” you say, “there is no relative,
And then the two truths—what becomes of them?
Moreover, if the relative derives from beings’ minds,
How can they pass beyond their sorrows?”
107.
But that is just the thought of others;
It is not what I mean by the relative.
If subsequently there are thoughts, the relative’s still there;
If not, the relative has ceased indeed.
108.
The analysing mind and what is analysed
Are linked together, mutually dependent.
It is on the basis of conventional consensus
That all investigation is expressed.
109.
“But when,” you say, “the process of analysis
Is made, in turn, the object of our scrutiny,
This investigation likewise may be analysed,
And thus we find an infinite regress.”
110.
If phenomena are truly analysed,
No basis for analysis remains.
And when the object is removed, the subject too subsides.
That indeed is said to be nirvāṇa.
111.
Those who say that both are true,
Are hard-pressed to maintain their case.
If consciousness reveals the truth of things,
On what grounds, in its turn, does consciousness exist?
112.
If knowledge objects show that consciousness exists,
What is it that shows that they exist?
If both subsist through mutual dependence,
Both will thereby lose their true existence.
113.
If, without a son, a man cannot be father,
Whence, indeed, will such a son arise?
There is no father in the absence of a son.
Just so, the mind and object have no true existence.
114.
“The plant arises from the seed,” you say,
“And through it is the seed deduced.It’s just the same with consciousness arising from its object.
How can it fail to show the thing’s existence?”
115.
A consciousness that’s different from the plant itself
Deduces the existence of the seed.
But what will show that consciousness exists,
Whereby the object is itself established?
116.
In everyday perception
There’s a cause for everything.
The different segments of the lotus flower
Arise from a variety of causes.
117.
“But what gives rise,” you ask, “to such variety of causes?”
An even earlier variety of causes, we declare.
“And how,” you ask, “do causes give their fruits?”
Through power, we answer, of preceding causes.
118.
If Īshvara is held to be the cause of beings,
You must now define for us his nature.
If, by this, you simply mean the elements,
No need to tire ourselves disputing names!
119.
Yet earth and other elements are many,
Impermanent, inert, without divinity.
Trampled underfoot, they are impure,
And thus they cannot be a God Omnipotent.

120.
The Deity cannot be space—inert and unproductive.
He cannot be the self, for this we have refuted.
He's inconceivable, they say—then likewise his creator-ship.
Is there any point, therefore, to such a claim?
121.
What is it that he wishes to create?
Has he made the self and all the elements?
But are not self and elements and he himself eternal?
And consciousness, we know, arises from its object.
122.
Pain and pleasure have, from all time, sprung from karma,
So tell us, what has his Divinity produced?
And if there's no beginning in the cause,
How can there be beginnings in its fruits?
123.
Why are creatures not created constantly,
For Īshvara relies on nothing but himself?
And if there's nothing that he has not made,
What remains on which he might depend?
124.
If Īshvara depends, the cause of all
Is but the meeting of conditions and not Īshvara.
When these obtain, he cannot but create;
When these are absent, he is powerless to make.
125.
If Almighty God does not intend,
But yet creates, another thing has forced him.
If he wishes to create, he's swayed by his desire.
So even though Creator, what of his omnipotence?
126.
Those who hold the permanence of particles
Were indeed refuted earlier.
The Sāṃkhyas are the ones who hold
That permanent prakṛiti is the cause of the evolving world.
127.
"Pleasure," "pain," "neutrality," so-called,
Are qualities which, when they rest
In equilibrium are termed "prakṛiti."
The universe arises when this balance is disturbed.
128.
Three natures in a unity are disallowed,
And thus prakṛiti is without existence.
These qualities likewise do not exist,
For each of them indeed is three.
129.
If these qualities have no existence,
A thing like sound is very far from plausible!
And cloth and other mindless objects
Cannot be the seat of feelings such as pleasure.
130.
"But," you say, "these things possess the nature of their cause."
But have we not investigated "things" already?
For you the cause is "pleasure" and the like,
And yet from pleasure, cloth has never sprung!
131.
Pleasure, rather, is produced from cloth.
If this is nonexistent, pleasure likewise.
As for permanence of pleasure and the rest—
Well, there's a thing that's never been observed!
132.
If pleasure and the rest are manifestly present,
How comes it that they're not perceived?
And if you claim they take on subtle form,
How is it that they are both gross and subtle?
133.
If coarseness is abandoned, subtlety assumed,
Subtlety and grossness both lack permanence.
So why not grant that, in this way,
All things possess the character of transience?
134.
If the coarser aspect is none other than the pleasure,
It's clear that pleasure is itself impermanent.
If you claim that what does not exist in any sense
(Because it has no being) cannot manifest,
135.
Although you have denied the birth of things
That did not previously exist, it's this that you're now saying!
But if results exist within their cause,
Those who eat their food consume their excrement.
136.
And likewise with the money they would spend on clothing,
Let them rather buy the cotton grains to wear!
"But," you say, "the world is ignorant and blind.
For this is taught by 'those who know the truth.'"
137.
This knowledge must be present in the worldly too!
And if they have it, why do they not see?
If now you say that what the worldly see has no validity,
This means that what they clearly see is false.
138.
"If," you ask, "there's no validity in valid knowledge,
Is not all that it assesses false?
And therefore it becomes untenable
To meditate on voidness, ultimate reality."
139.
If there is no object for analysis,
There can be no grasping of its nonexistence.
And so deceptive objects of whatever kind
Will also have a nonexistence equally deceptive.

140.
When therefore in one's dream a child has died,
The state of mind that thinks it is no more
Supplants the thought that it is living still.
And yet both thoughts are equally deceptive.
141.
Therefore, as we see through such investigation,
Nothing is that does not have a cause;
And nothing is existent in its causesTaken one by one or in the aggregate.
142.
It does not come from somewhere else,
Neither does it stay nor yet depart.
How will what confusion takes for truth
In any sense be different from a mirage?
143.
Things, then, bodied forth by magic spells,
And that which is displayed by dint of causes—
Whence have these arisen? we should ask;
And where they go to, that we should examine!
144.
What is seen when circumstances meet
And is not seen in absence of the same
Is not real; it is like an image in a mirror.
How can true existence be ascribed to it?
145.
What need is there for cause
In something that's already real?
But then, what need is there for cause
In something that does not exist?
146.
Even through a hundred million causes,
No change takes place in nonexistent things,
For in that state of "non-thing," how could "things" occur?
And into what could nonexistent things transform?
147.
Since things cannot become when they are nonexistent,
When could such existent things occur?
For insofar as entities do not arise,
Nonentities themselves will not depart.
148.
And if nonentity is not dispersed,
No chance is there for entity to manifest.
And entity cannot be changed into nonentity,
For otherwise it has a double nature.
149.
Thus there are no entities
And likewise there's no ceasing of the same.
And therefore beings, each and every one,
Are without origin and never cease.
150.
Wandering beings, thus, resemble dreams,
And also the banana tree, if you examine well.
In ultimate reality there's no distinguishing
Between the states of sorrow and beyond all sorrow.
151.
With things that in this way are empty
What is there to gain and what to lose?
Who is there to pay me court and honors,
And who is there to scorn and to revile me?
152.
Pleasure, sorrow—whence do these arise?
What is there to give me joy and pain?
And if I search their very suchness,
Who is craving? What is craved?
153.
Examine now this world of living beings:
Who is there therein to pass away?
What is there to come, and what has been?
And who, indeed, are relatives and friends?
154.
May beings like myself discern and grasp
That all things have the character of space!
But those who seek their happiness and ease,
Through disputes or enjoyments,
155.
All are deeply troubled, or else thrilled with joy.
They suffer, strive, contend among themselves,
Slashing, stabbing, injuring each other:
They live their lives engulfed in evil and travail.
156.
From time to time they surface in the states of bliss,
Abandoning themselves to many pleasures.
But dying, down they fall to suffer torment,
Long, unbearable, in realms of sorrow.
157.
Many are the chasms and abysses of existence,
Where the truth of suchness is not found.
All is contradiction, all denial;
Suchness in this world is not like this.
158.
Here, exceeding all description,
Is the shoreless sea of pain unbearable.
Here it is that strength is low,
And lives are flickering and brief.
159.
All activities for sake of life and health,
Relief of hunger and of weariness,
Time consumed in sleep, all accident and injury,
And sterile friendships with the childish—
160.
Thus life passes quickly, meaningless.
True discernment—hard it is to have!
How therefore shall we ever find the means
To curb the futile wanderings of the mind?
161.
Further, evil forces work and strain
To cast us down into the states of woe;
Manifold are false, deceptive trails,
And it is hard to dissipate our doubts.

162.
Hard it is to find again this state of freedom,
Harder yet to come upon enlightened teachers,
Hard, indeed, to turn aside the torrent of defilement!
Alas, our sorrows fall in endless streams!
163.
Alas indeed that living beings,
Carried on the flood of bitter pain,
However terrible their plight may be,
Do not perceive they suffer so!
164.
They are like those who bathe themselves repeatedly
And then proceed to scorch themselves with fire.
They suffer greatly in this way,
Yet there they stay, proclaiming loud their bliss.
165.
Likewise there are some who live and act
As though old age and death will never come to them.
But first they're slain and then there comes
The dreadful fall into the states of loss.
166.
When shall I be able to allay and quench
The dreadful heat of suffering's blazing fires
With plenteous rains of my own bliss
That pour torrential from my clouds of merit?
167.
My wealth of merit gathered in,
With reverence but without conceptual target,
When shall I reveal this truth of emptiness
To those who go to ruin through belief in real existence?

10. Dedication

1.
By all the virtue I have now amassed
By composition of this book, which speaks
Of entry to the Bodhisattva way,
May every being tread the path to Buddhahood.
2.
May beings everywhere who suffer
Torment in their minds and bodies
Have, by virtue of my merit,
Joy and happiness in boundless measure.
3.
As long as they may linger in saṃsāra,
May their joy be undiminished;
May they taste of unsurpassed beatitude
In constant and unbroken continuity.
4.
Throughout the spheres and reaches of the world,
In hellish states as many as there are,
May beings who abide there taste
The bliss and peace of Sukhāvatī.[136]
5.
May those caught in the freezing ice be warmed,
And from great clouds of Bodhisattvas
Torrents rain in boundless streams
To cool those burning in infernal fires.
6.
May forests where the leaves are blades and swords
Become sweet groves and pleasant woodland glades.
And may the trees of miracles appear,
Supplanting those upon the hill of Shālmali.[137]
7.
And may the very pits of hell be sweet
With fragrant pools all perfumed with the scent of lotuses,
And lovely with the cries of swan and goose
And waterfowl so pleasing to the ear.
8.
May fiery coals turn into heaps of jewels,
The burning ground become an even crystal floor,
May crushing hills become sublime abodes:
Offering temples, dwellings of the Buddhas.
9.
May the hail of weapons, lava, fiery stones
Become henceforth a rain of flowers.
And all the mutual woundings with sharp blades
Be now a rain of flowers thrown in play.
10.
And those engulfed in fiery Vaitaraṇī,
Their flesh destroyed, their bones bleached white as kunda flowers,
May they, through all my merits' strength, have godlike forms
And sport with goddesses in Mandākinī's peaceful streams.[138]
11.
"What fear is it," they'll ask, "that grips the henchmen of the Deadly Lord, the frightful vultures, and the carrion crows?
What noble strength is it that brings us joy and drives away our dreadful night?"
And looking skyward they will see the shining form of Vajrapāṇi.
Then may their sins be quenched in joy and may they go to him.
12.
And when they see the seething lava-flood of hell
Extinguished in a rain of blossoms, drenched in fragrant streams,
At once fulfilled in bliss, they'll ask, "How can this be?"
May then the denizens of hell behold the One Who Holds the Lotus.[139]
13.
"Friends, throw away your fears and quickly gather here.
For who is it who comes to us to banish dread, this gleaming youth with bound-up hair,
This loving Bodhisattva saving and protecting every being,
Whose power relieves all pain, bestowing joy?
14.
"Behold the hundred gods who lay their crowns before his lotus feet,
The rain of flowers that falls upon his head, his eyes moist with compassion,
The splendour of his house that echoes praises of a thousand goddesses!"
May those in hell thus cry on seeing Mañjughoṣha.
15.
And likewise, through my roots of virtue,
Seeing Bodhisattvas like Samantabhadra, free from stain,
Those clouds of bliss all laden with a cooling scented rain,
May all those languishing in hell come now to perfect joy.
16.
And may the stooping animals be freed
From fear of being preyed upon, each other's food.
And may the famished spirits have such joy
As those who dwell within the northern continent.[140]
17.
And may they be replete and satisfied

[136] Sukhāvatī, the pure land of Buddha Amitābha.

[137] See note 79.

[138] Vaitaraṇī: name of a river in hell. Mandākinī: name of a river in heaven.

[139] The One Who Holds the Lotus (Skt. padmapāṇi, Tib. phyag na pad ma): a title of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

[140] The northern continent (Skt. uttarakuru, Tib. sgra mi snyan): the continent to the north of Mount Sumeru, according to traditional Buddhist cosmology. (Our world, Jambudvīpa, is the southern continent.) The northern continent is said to be a place of great harmony and prosperity.

By streams of milk that pour
From noble Lord Avalokita's hand,
And bathing in it, may they be refreshed and cooled.
18.
And may the blind receive their sight,
And may the deaf begin to hear,
And women near their time bring forth,
Like Māyādevī,[141] free from all travail.
19.
And may the naked now be clothed,
And all the hungry eat their fill.
And may those parched with thirst receive
Pure waters and delicious drink.
20.
May the poor and destitute find wealth,
The haggard and the careworn, joy.
May those now in despair be whole in mind,
Endowed with sterling constancy.
21.
May every being ailing with disease
Be freed at once from every malady.
May every sickness that afflicts the living
Be wholly and forever absent from the world.
22.
May those who go in dread have no more fear.
May captives be unchained and now set free.
And may the weak receive their strength.
May living beings help each other in kindness.
23.
May travellers upon the road
Find happiness no matter where they go,
And may they gain, without the need of toil,
The goals on which they set their hearts.
24.
May those who put to sea in boat or ship,
Attain the ports that they desire,
And may they safely come to shore
And sweet reunion with their kith and kin.
25.
May those who lose their way and wander
In the wild find fellow travellers.
And safe from threat of thieves and savage beasts,
May they be tireless and their journey light.
26.
May children and the aged, and all those without protection
Wandering in the fearful, pathless wastes,
Who fall asleep unconscious of their peril,
Have pure celestial beings as their guardians.
27.
May all be freed from states of bondage,
May they be possessed of wisdom, faith, and love.
With perfect sustenance and conduct,
May they always have remembrance of their former lives.
28.
May everyone have unrestricted wealth
Just like the treasury of space,
Enjoying it according to their wish,
Without a trace of harm or enmity.
29.
May beings destitute of splendour,
Be magnificent and bright.
And those who suffer from deformity
Acquire great beauty and perfection.
30.
May all the women of the world
Attain the strength of masculinity.[142]
And may the lowly come to excellence,
The proud and haughty lose their arrogance.
31.
And thus by all the merit I have gained,
May every being, leaving none aside,
Abandon all their evil ways
Embracing goodness now and ever more.
32.
From bodhichitta may they never separate,
And constantly engage in Bodhisattva actions.
May they be accepted as disciples by the Buddhas,
Drawing back from what is demons' work.
33.
And may these beings, each and every one,
Enjoy an unsurpassed longevity.
Living always in contentment,
May the very name of death be strange to them.
34.
In all the ten directions and on every side
May groves of wish-fulfilling trees abound,
Resounding with the sweetness of the Teachings,
Spoken by the Buddhas and their Bodhisattva heirs.
35.
And may the earth be wholesome everywhere,
Free from boulders, cliffs, and chasms,
Flat and even like a level palm,
And smooth like lapis lazuli.
36.
For many circles of disciples,
May multitudes of Bodhisattvas
Live in every land,
Adorning them with every excellence.
37.
From birdsong and the sighing of the trees,
From shafts of light and from the sky itself,
May living beings, each and every one,
Perceive the constant sound of Dharma.
38.

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[141] Māyādevī: the mother of Buddha Shākyamuni.

[142] Shāntideva simply says, "May all women in the world become men." It is obvious that he does not mean this literally since this would involve the extinction of the human race. We have translated freely, following the commentary of Kunzang Pelden: "May all the women in the world—who are lacking in physical strength, who have to suffer the pain of bearing children, and who are tormented with the thirty-two special kinds of sickness that afflict women—acquire the same advantages as those who have a male body."

And always may they come into the presence of the Buddhas,
And meet with Bodhisattvas, offspring of the same.
With clouds of offerings unbounded,
May the teachers of the world be worshipped.
39.
May kindly spirits bring the rains on time,
For harvests to be rich and plentiful.
May princes rule according to the Dharma;
May the world be blessed with all prosperity.
40.
May medicines be full of strength;
May secret words of power be chanted with success.
May spirits of the air that feed on flesh
Be kind, their minds imbued with pity.
41.
May beings never suffer anguish.
Let them not be sick nor evilly behave.
May they have no fear, nor suffer insults.
Always may their minds be free from sorrow.
42.
In monasteries, temples, and the like,
May reading and reciting widely flourish.
May harmony prevail among the Saṅgha;
May its purposes be all fulfilled.
43.
May ordained monks, intent upon the practice,
Find perfect places for retreat in solitude,
Abandon every vagrant thought,
And meditate with trained and serviceable minds.
44.
May nuns have all their wants supplied;
May quarrelling and spite be strange to them.
Let all who have embraced monastic life
Uphold a pure and unimpaired observance.
45.
May those who break their discipline repent,
And always may they strive to cleanse away their faults.
And thus may they acquire a fortunate rebirth,
Wherein to practice stainless discipline.
46.
May wise and learned beings be revered,
And always be sustained by alms.
May they be pure in mind,
And may their fame spread far and wide.
47.
May beings never languish in the lower realms,
May pain and hardship be unknown to them.
With bodies greater than the gods,
May they attain enlightenment without delay.
48.
May beings time and time again
Make offerings to all the Buddhas.
And with the Buddha's unimagined bliss
May they enjoy undimmed and constant happiness.
49.
May all the Bodhisattvas now fulfil
Their high intention for the sake of wanderers.
May sentient beings now obtain
All that their Guardians wish for them.
50.
And may the Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas[143]
Gain their perfect happiness.
51.
And till, through Mañjughoṣha's perfect kindness,
I attain the ground of Perfect Joy,[144]
May I remember all my lives
And enter into the monastic state.
52.
Thus may I abide, sustained
By simple, ordinary fare.
And in every life obtain
A dwelling place in perfect solitude.
53.
Whenever I desire to gaze on him
Or put to him the slightest question,
May I behold with unobstructed sight
My own protector Mañjughoṣha.
54.
To satisfy the needs of beings
Dwelling in the ten directions, to the margins of the sky,
May I reflect in all my deeds
The perfect exploits of Mañjushrī.
55.
And now as long as space endures,
As long as there are beings to be found,
May I continue likewise to remain
To drive away the sorrows of the world.
56.
The pains and sorrows of all wandering beings—
May they ripen wholly on myself.
And may the virtuous company of Bodhisattvas
Always bring about the happiness of beings.
57.
May the Doctrine, only cure for sorrow,
Source of every bliss and happiness,
Be blessed with wealth, upheld with veneration,
And throughout a vast continuance of time, endure!
58.
And now to Mañjughoṣha I prostrate,
Whose kindness is the wellspring of my good intent.
And to my virtuous friends I also bow
Whose inspiration gave me strength to grow.

[143] A Pratyekabuddha or "solitary realiser" is a practitioner of the Hinayana level who attains the cessation of suffering without relying on a teacher.
[144] Perfect Joy (Skt. pramuditā-bhūmi, Tib. sa rab tu dga' ba): name of the first of the ten Bodhisattva bhūmis or grounds of realization. See note 70.

Appendix 1 The Life of Shāntideva

Generally speaking, our main sources for the life of Shāntideva are the Tibetan historians Butön[145] and Jetsün Tāranātha.[146] In addition, a short account (apparently a combination and abbreviation of the previous two) is to be found in the writings of the eighteenth-century Tibetan scholar Yeshe Peljor,[147] and more recent scholarship has brought to light a short Sanskrit life of Shāntideva preserved in a fourteenth-century Nepalese manuscript. The following account is taken from The Nectar of Mañjushrī's Speech, a commentary on The Way of the Bodhisattva by Kunzang Pelden, who has followed Butön closely, preferring him to Tāranātha, whose account, however, he must have known.[148]

The author of the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* was the learned master and noble Bodhisattva Shāntideva, who possessed in perfect measure the three qualifications necessary for the composing of shāstras.[149] His life was marked by seven extraordinary events, in particular the fact that he was accepted and blessed by his supreme yidam deity, the venerable Mañjughoṣha. The seven extraordinary events are listed as follows:

The pleasing of his supreme yidam deity;
The perfect deeds at Nālandā;[150]
The healing of a conflict; and the taking as disciples those of strange opinions,
As well as beggars, unbelievers, and a king.

The great being Shāntideva was born in the southern country of Saurāṣhṭra.[151] He was the son of the king, Kalyāṇavarman, and went by the name of Shāntivarman. From his youth he was devoted to the Buddhas of earlier ages, and having a natural affinity for the Mahāyāna, he held the teachers of religion and the monastic order in great respect. He was a benefactor to all, masters and servants alike, and he cared most tenderly for the lowly, the sick, and the destitute. With his heart fixed solely upon the ways of enlightenment, he became expert in every art & science. In particular, he requested the *Tīkṣhṇamañjushrī-sādhana*[152] from a certain ascetic mendicant. He practiced this and beheld the yidam deity.

When at length his father the king died, it was decided that the royal power should be conferred on Shāntivarman, and a great throne made of precious substances was duly set in place. But in his dreams that night, the prince saw Mañjughoṣha sitting on the very throne that he himself was to ascend the following day. Mañjughoṣha spoke to him and said:

My dear and only son, this is my throne,
And I Mañjushrī am your spiritual guide.
It is not right that you and I should take
An equal place and sit upon one seat.

With that, Shāntivarman woke from his dream and understood that it would be wrong for him to assume the kingship. Feeling no desire for the great wealth of the realm, he departed and entered the glorious monastery of Nālandā where he received ordination from Jayadeva, the chief of its five hundred paṇḍitas, taking the name of Shāntideva.[153]

Regarding his inner spiritual life, he received the teachings of the entire Tripiṭaka from the Noble One [Mañjushrī]. He meditated on them and condensed their precious contents into two shāstras: the *Digest of All Disciplines (Shikṣhāsamucchaya)* and the *Digest of the Sūtras (Sūtrasamucchaya)*. But though he gained boundless qualities of elimination and realization,[154] the other monks knew nothing of this; and since to all outward appearances his behaviour seemed to be restricted to the activities of eating (*bhuj*), sleeping (*sup*), and strolling around (*kuṭīṃ gata*), they gave him the nickname of Bhusuku. Such was their estimate of his outward conduct. "This man," they complained, "performs none of the three duties[155] required of the

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145 Butön (Bu ston), 1290–1364, an adherent of the Sakya school and a major scholar of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He established and compiled the Scriptural Canon.

146 Tāranātha, alias Kunga Nyingpo (Kun dga' snying po), 1575–1608, a celebrated Tibetan scholar and member of the Jonangpa school.

147 Yeshe Peljor (ye shes dpal 'byor), 1704–1777?, author of Paksam Jönzang (dpag bsam ljon bzang), translated and edited by Shri Sarat Chandra Das with the title The History of the Rise, Progress and Downfall of Buddhism in India. See Amalia Pezzali, Śāntideva: Mystique bouddhiste des VIIe et VIIIe siècles.

148 The accounts of Butön and Tāranātha are the most elaborate and detailed of the four cited. They do not, however, agree on a number of particulars, most importantly in the chronological presentation of events. Tāranātha places the incident of "Mañjushrī's sword" and recognition of Shāntideva as an accomplished master before his entry into monastic life at Nālandā. Butön does the reverse. Pezzali opts for the order given by Tāranātha, considering it incomprehensible that Shāntideva should have become a royal bodyguard after being a monk at Nālandā. In so doing, she is perhaps betraying a Western prejudice, assuming, possibly on the basis of Christian precedents, that it would be normal for monastic renunciation to come at the end of a worldly career. But from the point of view of Indian Buddhism, and also Tibetan Buddhism (where the same tendency is observable to this day), the order of events given by Butön, and followed by Kunzang Pelden, is more plausible, namely a moment of renunciation followed by a period of training in the monastery (admittedly of an extraordinary kind), culminating in the abandonment of clerical restrictions and the embracing of the lifestyle of a wandering siddha. Indeed, the story of Busukhuwa, in Songs and Histories of the Eighty-Four Buddhist Siddhas, seems clearly to refer to Shāntideva; and the tantric aspect of the lives of the siddhas will perhaps explain the presence in the Tibetan Tengyur of tantric commentaries attributed to Shāntideva.

149 Shāstra (Tib. bstan bcos), a commentary specifically illustrating the meaning of the Buddha's words. The three qualifications for composing shāstras are perfect realization of the ultimate reality, the vision of the yidam deity, and a complete knowledge of the five sciences.

150 Nalanda'i bkod pa phun tshogs (the perfect conduct at Nālandā). This refers to Shāntideva's activities at Nālandā, the most obvious of which was the teaching of the Bodhicharyāvatāra, but also includes Shāntideva's secret studies, meditations, and visions.

151 Now in modern Gujarat.

152 Tib. 'jam dpal rnon po'i sgrub thabs, a sādhana, or meditative practice, based on the Bodhisattva Mañjushrī, performed with a view to the development of intelligence and sharp faculties. The fact that Shāntideva had a vision of Mañjushrī means that he became fully accomplished in the sādhana.

153 According to tradition, still observed today, Shāntideva assumed an element of the name of his ordaining abbot.

154 Spiritual qualities that shine forth in proportion as the emotional and cognitive veils are removed from the mind. See Treasury of Precious Qualities, pp. 125–134.

155 I.e., study, meditation, and activities such as printing books, making medicines, etc.

monks of this monastery. He has no right to enjoy the food and alms offered in religion to the Saṅgha. We must drive him away!"

Their plan was to take it in turns to expound the scriptures so that, when Shāntideva's turn came round, he would be embarrassed and run away. They repeatedly urged him to preach, but on each occasion he refused, saying that he didn't know anything. So they asked the abbot to order him, and when he did so, Shāntideva immediately promised to give a teaching. At this, a few of the monks began to have misgivings, not knowing what to think. In order to put him to the test, they arranged a great quantity of offerings on the ground outside the monastery. They invited a large congregation of people and set up an enormously high lion throne in their midst. They then sent for Shāntideva; and most of the monks were thrown into a confusion when they suddenly caught sight of him sitting high up on the throne, not knowing how he had managed to get there.

"Would you like me to recite some well-known teaching of the Buddha?" Shāntideva asked. "Or would you prefer something you have never heard before?"

Everyone was thunderstruck. "Please tell us something completely new," they said.

Now the *Shikṣhāsamucchaya* is too long, but on the other hand the *Sūtrasamucchaya* is too short. So Shāntideva expounded the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*, which, though vast in meaning, is quite brief. The noble Mañjushrī appeared, seated in the sky, and many of the people saw him and had great faith. Even more remarkable, when Shāntideva came to the beginning of stanza 34 of the ninth chapter, "When something and its nonexistence both are absent from before the mind…," he and Mañjushrī began to rise higher and higher into the sky until at last they disappeared. Shāntideva's voice, however, continued to resound so that the transmission was completed.

Those in the congregation who possessed extraordinary powers of memory wrote down the teaching as they had recalled it; but they produced texts of varying length: some of seven hundred stanzas, some of a thousand, and some of even more. The paṇḍitas of Kashmir produced a text of seven hundred stanzas in nine chapters, while those of central India (Magadha) came up with a text of a thousand stanzas in ten chapters. Disagreement and uncertainty reigned. Moreover, they did not know the texts that Shāntideva was referring to when he mentioned that they should read the *Shikṣhāsamucchaya* repeatedly, and occasionally consult the shorter *Sūtrasamucchaya*.[156]

After a time, it was discovered that Shāntideva was living in the south, at the stūpa of Shrīdakṣhiṇa. Two of the paṇḍitas who had supernormal powers of memory went to see him, intending to invite him back. But when they met him, it proved inconvenient for Shāntideva to return. Nevertheless, in answer to their inquiries, he affirmed that the correct version corresponded to what the scholars of Magadha had produced. As for the *Shikṣhāsamucchaya* and the *Sūtrasamucchaya*, he said that they would find both texts written in a fine scholarly hand and hidden in the roof beam of his monastic cell at Nālandā. He then instructed the two paṇḍitas, giving them explanations and transmission.

Shāntideva later traveled to the east where, through a demonstration of miraculous power, he resolved a serious conflict, creating harmony and happiness between the contending parties.

He also accepted as his disciples a group of five hundred people living not too far west of Magadha, who were holders of strange, non-Buddhist beliefs. For there had occurred a great natural disaster, and the people were tormented by famine. They told Shāntideva that if he could save their lives, they would respect his teachings. The master took his begging bowl with cooked rice received in alms and, blessing it with profound concentration, fed and satisfied them all. Turning them from their uncouth superstitions, he introduced them to the Buddha's Doctrine.

Some time afterward, in the course of another terrible famine, he restored to life and health at least a thousand beggars who were emaciated and dying of starvation.

Later, Shāntideva became a bodyguard of King Arivishana, who was threatened by Machala in the east (i.e., in Magadha).[157] Meditating upon himself as inseparable from Mañjughoṣha, he took a wooden sword with its scabbard and imbued it with such tremendous power of Dharma that, so armed, he was able to subdue any and every onslaught. He brought about such harmony that he became the object of universal respect. Some people were, however, intensely jealous of him and protested to the king. "This man is an imposter!" they cried. "We demand an inquiry. How could he possibly have defended you? He has no weapon other than a wooden sword!"

The king was moved to anger and the weapons were examined one by one. When Shāntideva was ordered to take out his sword, he replied that it would be wrong to do so since it would injure the king.

"Even if it harms me," said the king, "take it out!"

Going off with him to a solitary place, Shāntideva requested the king to cover one of his eyes with his hand and to look with the other. With that, the sword was drawn, and its brightness was so intense that the king's eye shot from his brow and fell to the ground. He and his escort were overcome with terror and begged Shāntideva for forgiveness, asking him for refuge. Shāntideva placed the eye back into its socket,

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[156] See chap. 5, stanzas 105–106.

[157] This reference to the threats of Machala is unclear. We have been unable to verify the Sanskrit names given here. We have taken the liberty of following Butön, whose account Kunzang Pelden has, in all other respects, followed closely.

and through his blessings, the king's sight was painlessly restored. The whole country was inspired with faith and embraced the Dharma.

Later on, Shāntideva went to Shrīparvata in the south. There he took to the life of the naked Ucchuṣhma beggars and sustained himself on the water thrown away after the washing of dishes and cooking pots. It happened that Kachalahā, a serving woman of King Khatavihāra, once saw that if any of the washing water splashed on Shāntideva as she was pouring it out, it was as if it had fallen on red hot iron. It would boil and hiss.

Now, at that time, a Hindu teacher called Shaṅkaradeva appealed to the king and issued the following challenge. He said that he would draw the maṇḍala of Maheshvara in the sky and that if the Buddhist teachers were unable to destroy it, then all Buddhist images and writings should be consigned to the flames, and everyone obliged to accept the tenets of his religion. The king convoked the Buddhist Saṅgha and informed them of the challenge. But nobody could undertake to destroy the maṇḍala. The king was deeply troubled, but when the serving woman told him what she had seen, he ordered that Shāntideva be summoned. They searched high and low and eventually found him sitting under a tree. When they explained the situation, he announced that he was equal to the challenge but that he would need a jug filled with water, two pieces of cloth, and fire. Everything was prepared according to his instructions.

On the evening of the following day, the Hindu yogi drew some lines on the sky and departed. Everyone began to feel afraid. But early next morning, as the maṇḍala was being drawn, no sooner was the eastern gate finished than Shāntideva entered into a profound concentration. At once there arose a tremendous hurricane. The maṇḍala was swept away into the void; and the crops, trees, and even the villages were on the brink of destruction. The people were scattered; the Hindu teacher was caught up in the wind like a little bird and swept away, and a great darkness fell over the land. But a light shone out from between Shāntideva's eyebrows showing the way for the king and queen. They had been stripped of their clothes and were covered with dust. And so with the fire he warmed them, with the water he washed them, and with the cloth he dressed and comforted them. When, through his power of concentration, the people had been gathered together, washed, anointed, clothed, and set at ease, Shāntideva introduced many of them to the Buddha's teaching. He caused heathen places of worship to be demolished and centres of the Buddhist teaching to flourish, spread, and remain for a long time. As a result, the country came to be known as the place where the non-Buddhists were defeated.

Historical Note

In his *Tattvasiddhi*,[158] Shāntarakṣhita, the celebrated Indian master invited to Tibet by King Trisong Detsen, quotes an entire stanza from the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* (1.10). This shows that Shāntideva must have been well-known before 763 when Shāntarakṣhita first visited Tibet. Thus we have a final date, while an initial date is supplied by the seventh-century Chinese pilgrim I-Tsing, who compiled an exhaustive list of all the most important Madhyamaka masters of his time. He makes no mention of Shāntideva (or, for that matter, Jayadeva), thus indicating that the author of the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* had not yet been born, or at least was still unknown, by the year 685, when I-Tsing returned to China. We can therefore say with a fair degree of certainty that **Shāntideva flourished in the first half of the eighth century.**

It is interesting to reflect also that was the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* both widely acclaimed in India (Butön says that more than a hundred commentaries were composed on it in Sanskrit alone),[159] and it was translated almost immediately into Tibetan by Kawa Peltsek.[160] This is in itself a remarkable circumstance and indicates the speed with which the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* had established itself as a text of major importance. It will be remembered that, like Shāntideva, Shāntarakṣhita was also from the monastery of Nālandā; and we may justifiably speculate that he looked upon the work of his illustrious confrere as a valuable tool in the propagation of the Mahāyāna in Tibet. Moreover, the historical proximity between the Indian master and his Tibetan translator makes it quite plausible that accurate details of Shāntideva's life might have passed into Tibetan tradition. Admittedly, Butön wrote at a distance of four centuries, and his account is brief and hagiographical, but he must have had his sources. And if these derive from ancient Tibetan records, it is at least reasonable to conclude that details in his biography of Shāntideva may not be as fanciful as modern scholarship tends to suppose.

In any case, certain indisputable facts emerge and are confirmed elsewhere. We know that Shāntideva was a monk, at least for part of his life and certainly at the time when he composed the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*. There is no reason to doubt that he was ordained at Nālandā, the principal seat of Madhyamaka philosophy. We know too that he composed three works: his masterpiece the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*, the *Shikṣhāsamucchaya*, and the *Sūtrasamucchaya*.[161] The tantric trajectory of Shāntideva's life should be

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[158] See B. Bhattacharya, *Foreword to the Tattvasamgraha* (Baroda, 1926). Here Bhattacharya announces his discovery of the *Tattvasiddhi*, a hitherto unknown tantric treatise in Sanskrit. The colophon declares and, according to Bhattacharya, the style of the document confirms, that the text was composed by Shāntarakṣhita.

[159] Perhaps an emblematic figure. Fourteen of these commentaries were translated into Tibetan. See bibliography.

[160] Kawa Peltsek (ka ba dpal brtsegs), one of the earliest and greatest of Tibetan translators. He was probably one of the "seven who were tried," i.e. the first Tibetans to take monastic vows (so called because their ordination was an experiment made to establish whether Tibetans were capable of monastic commitment.) Kawa Peltsek's name does not always figure in the list of the seven (there are various accounts), but there is little reason to doubt that he was ordained by Shāntarakṣhita.

[161] The i still exists in Sanskrit, and a Tibetan translation (Tib. bslab btus) is preserved in the Tengyur. The *Sūtrasamucchaya* (Tib. mdo btus) has been lost. Indeed, the existence of a *Sūtrasamucchaya* by Shāntideva, distinct from the work of the same name attributed to Nāgārjuna, has been questioned by Western scholarship. See Pezzali.

noted. Granted, there is no hint of tantric teaching in either the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* or *Shikṣhāsamucchaya*, but the gist of the traditional account, which is credible enough, tends to support the attribution to Shāntideva of a certain number of tantric texts translated into Tibetan and preserved in the Tengyur.

Appendix 2 Equalising Self and Other

The following passage is taken from The Nectar of Mañjushrī's Speech*, by Kunzang Pelden. It explains stanzas 90 to 98 of chapter 8,* ***giving the metaphysical basis for the meditation on equality of self and other, and thus the whole practice of compassion according to Mahāyāna Buddhism. At the same time it throws interesting light on the teachings on reincarnation and karma (subjects frequently misunderstood), and shows how these are in agreement with the view that neither persons nor things possess an essential core that is solid and unchanging.***

90.
Strive at first to meditate
Upon the sameness of yourself and others.
In joy and sorrow all are equal;
Thus be guardian of all, as of yourself.
91.
The hand and other limbs are many and distinct,
But all are one—the body to be kept and guarded.
Likewise, different beings, in their joys and sorrows,
Are, like me, all one in wanting happiness.

[90] **Two things are to be practiced on the level of relative bodhichitta: meditation on the equality of self and other, and meditation on the exchange of self and other. Without training in equality, the exchanging is impossible. This is why Shāntideva says that we should first meditate strenuously on equality of self and other; for without it, a perfectly pure altruistic attitude cannot arise.**

All beings, ourselves included, are in exactly the same predicament of wanting to be happy and not wanting to suffer. For this reason we must vigorously train in ways to develop the intention to protect others as much as ourselves, creating happiness and dispelling suffering. We may think that this is impossible, but it isn't.

Although they have no ultimate grounds for doing so, all beings think in terms of "I" and "mine." Because of this, they have a conception of "other," fixated on as something alien; although this too has no basis in reality. Because they are merely mental imputations, "I" and "other" are totally unreal. They are both illusory. Moreover, when the nonexistence of "I" is realised, the notion of "other" also disappears, for the simple reason that "other" is only posited in relation to the thought of "I." Just as it is impossible to cut the sky in two with a knife, when the space-like quality of egolessness is realised, it is no longer possible to make a separation between "I" and "other," and there arises an attitude of wanting to protect others as oneself and of taking them as one's own. As it is said, "Whoever casts aside the ordinary, trivial view of self, will discover the profound meaning of great Selfhood."[162] Thus, **for the realization of the equality of "I" and "other," it is essential to grasp that "I" and "other" are merely labels without any basis in reality.** This vital point of egolessness is difficult to understand, difficult even for a person of high intelligence. Thus, as the teachings say, **it is of great importance that egolessness be clearly demonstrated and assimilated.**

[91] The way to reflect upon equality is as follows. We can distinguish the various parts of our bodies: hands, feet, head, inner organs, and so on. Nevertheless, in a moment of danger, we protect them all, not wanting any of them to be hurt, considering that they all form a single body. We think, "This is my body," and we cling to it and protect it as a whole, regarding it as a single entity. In the same way, the whole aggregate of beings in the six realms, who in their different joys and sorrows are all like us in wanting to be happy and not wanting to suffer, should be identified as a single entity, our "I." We should protect them from suffering in just the same way as we now protect ourselves.

Suppose we were to ask someone how many bodies he had. "What are you talking about?" he would reply. "I have nothing but this one body!" "Well," we continue, "are there many bodies that you should take care of?" "No," he will say, "I take care only of this one body of mine." This is what he may say, but the fact is that when he talks about "his body," he is doing no more than applying a name to a collection of different items. The word *body* does not at all refer to a single indivisible whole. In other words, there is no reason why the name *body* should be attached here [to these items] and why it is inappropriate to attach it elsewhere. **The word body is fastened, without ultimate justification, to what is merely a heap of component items. It is the mind that says "my body," and it is on the basis of this idea of a single entity that it is possible to impute the notions of "I," "mine," and all the rest. To claim, moreover, that it is reasonable to attach the name "I" to "this aggregate," and not to "another aggregate," is quite unfounded. It is taught that the name "I" can be applied to the whole collection of suffering beings. It is possible for the mind to think, "They are myself." And if, having identified them in this way, it habituates itself to such an orientation, the idea of "I" with regard to other sentient beings will in fact arise, with the result that one will come to care for them as much as one now cares for oneself.**

[162] I.e., the state in which the duality of self and other is totally transcended.

92.
This pain of mine does not afflict
Or cause discomfort to another's body,
And yet this pain is hard for me to bear
Because I cling and take it for my own.
93.
And other beings' pain
I do not feel, and yet,
Because I take them for myself,
Their suffering is mine and therefore hard to bear.

[92] **But how is it possible for such an attitude to arise, given that others do not feel my pain, and I do not feel theirs? The meaning of the root text may be interpreted as meaning that, while these sufferings of mine have no effect upon the bodies of other living beings, they are nevertheless the sufferings of my "I." They are unbearable to me because I cling to them as mine.**

[93] **Although the pains of others do not actually befall me, because I am a Bodhisattva and consider others as myself, their pains are mine as well, and are therefore unbearable to me.**

How is it that when suffering comes to me, the pain affects only myself and leaves others untouched? In my present incarnation, just as from beginningless time until now, my mind entered amid the generative substances of my parents as they came together. Subsequently, **there came into being what I now identify as "my body."** And it is precisely because **I seize on it as myself that I am unable to tolerate its being injured.** But within suffering itself, **there is no separation between "my suffering" and "another's suffering." Therefore, although another's pain does not actually afflict me now, if that other is identified as "I" or "mine," his or her suffering becomes unbearable to me also.**[163] Maitriyogin, the disciple of the Lord Atīsha, did indeed feel the suffering of other beings as his own.[164] **This was the experience of one who had attained the Bodhisattva grounds of realization.** However, even on the level of ordinary people, we can take the example of a mother who would rather die than that her dear child should fall sick. Because she identifies with her baby, the child's suffering is actually unbearable for *her*. Other people who do not identify with the child are for this very reason unaffected by its pain. If they did identify with it, the child's suffering would be intolerable for them as well.

Moreover, a long period of habituation is not necessary for this kind of experience to occur. Take the example of a horse that is being put up for sale. Right up to the moment when the deal is struck, if the horse lacks grass or water, or if it is ill, or if it has any other discomfort; all this will be unbearable for its owner, while it will not at all affect the client. But as soon as the transaction takes place, it is the buyer who will be unable to stand the horse's suffering, while the seller will be completely indifferent. Within the horse itself, there is no basis whatever for the distinction "this man's horse" or "that man's horse." It is identified as being this man's or that man's according to how it is labeled by thought.

In the same way, **there is not the slightest reason for saying that the notion of "I" must be applied to me and not to another. "I" and "other" are no more than a matter of conceptual labelling. The "I" of myself is "other" for someone else, and what is "other" for myself is "I" for another. The notions of "here" and "there" are simply points of view, designated by the mind in dependence on each other. There is no such thing as an absolute "here" or an absolute "there."** In just the same way, **there is no absolute "I" and no absolute "other." It is just a matter of imputation.** And so, on account of this crucial point, **the Dharma teaches that when "I" is ascribed to others, namely, sentient beings, the attitude of accepting and taking them as one's own will naturally arise.**

This is how Buddhas and Bodhisattvas claim sentient beings as their own selves in the way explained above, **so that even the slightest pain of others is for them as if their entire body were on fire.** And they do not have the slightest hesitation in doing so, just as when the Buddha claimed as his own

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[163] The whole force of this argument is rooted in the fundamental Buddhist axiom that, **however closely they are associated, the material body and the immaterial mind are entities of a completely different nature**. Certain conclusions follow from this, which may be illustrated by the example of a physical illness. A cancerous organ, let us say, is not actually painful in itself. It is simply a piece of flesh, the cellular structure of which has mutated beyond its normal condition. Insofar as the organ belongs to a body enlivened by the animating presence of a mind, however, the organ is recognised as the seat of sensations that are identified as pain. And the painful feelings may be aggravated by emotions such as anxiety and fear deriving from the mind's identification of the malaise as its own. In this way, suffering arises, and the misery of thinking, for example, "I am in pain; I have cancer; my life is ruined; I am going to die." In any given illness, however, the mind, being immaterial, does not (and cannot) directly feel the purely physical state of its material support. Nevertheless, the abnormal condition of the body becomes the mind's suffering to the extent that the former is identified with, clung to, and accepted by, the latter. If, as Kunzang Pelden believes, clinging to the body as "mine" (and therefore adopting its ailments as "my suffering") is a matter of psychological orientation and habit, it follows that by a strenuous process of mental training, it can be redirected. **The mind may be taught to identify as its own pain, both its present physical support, and also that of the bodies of others. When the object of identification and clinging is changed, the experience of suffering and pain, and the scope of that experience, will also change**

[164] It is recorded that once, when Maitriyogin was teaching, someone threw a stone at a barking dog so that the animal was badly injured. Maitriyogin gave a scream of pain and fell from the throne on which he was sitting. To the astonishment and embarrassment of the disciples, who had been inclined to dismiss the master's behaviour as an exaggerated theatrical performance, Maitriyogin pulled up his shirt so that they could see a great wound on his side, in exactly the same place where the dog had been struck.

the swan that Devadatta had shot down with an arrow.[165] Similarly, Machig[166] said that in the centuries after her, perverted practitioners of *chöd* would with violent means subjugate the wealth-gods, ghosts, and demons, whom she had taken with the crook of her compassion; meaning by this that she had taken these gods and spirits to herself as beings whom she cherished.

As we have said, taking sentient beings as one's own does not require lengthy training. For example, if you tell someone that you will give him an old horse, no sooner are the words out of your mouth than the other person has already appropriated the horse and cannot bear it if the horse is in distress. Still it might be thought that, because one has drifted into such bad mental habits, the thought of taking others as oneself will never arise. But the **Lord Buddha has said that in all the world, he never saw anything easier to educate than the mind itself, once it is set on the right path and steps are taken to subjugate it.** On the other hand, **he also said that there is nothing more difficult to govern than an untrained mind.** Therefore, **if we do not let our minds stray onto wrong paths but train them, it is perfectly possible to bring them into submission. Conversely, if we fail to subdue our minds, it will be impossible for us to overcome anything else. This is why the teachings say that we should strive to subdue our minds.**

[94] Shāntideva's justification for the necessity of eliminating suffering is presented in the form of a probative argument.[167] His thesis is that he will eliminate all the sufferings of others, that is, the sufferings that will not bring them any ultimate benefit. His reason is that their suffering does them no good and, by way of example, he says that he will remove it just as he removes his own discomforts of hunger, thirst, and so on. By a similar procedure, he says that he will benefit others and make them happy, because they are living beings, and, once again by way of example, he will do this in the same way that he attends to the comfort of his own body.

94.
*And **therefore I'll dispel the pain of others,***
For it is simply pain, just like my own.
And others I will aid and benefit,
For they are living beings, like my body.
95.
Since I and other beings both,
In wanting happiness, are equal and alike,
What difference is there to distinguish us,
That I should strive to have my bliss alone?
96.
Since I and other beings both,
In fleeing suffering, are equal and alike,
What difference is there to distinguish us,
That I should save myself and not the others?
97.
Since the pain of others does no harm to me,
I do not shield myself from it.
So why to guard against "my" future pain,
Which does no harm to this, my present "me"?

[95] **Since there is not the slightest difference between ourselves and others (in that all want to be happy), what reason could we possibly have for not working for the happiness of others? It does not make sense that we should work only in our own interest**.

[96] **In the same way, there is not the slightest difference between ourselves and others in that no one wants to experience suffering. Therefore what reason do we have for failing to protect others from suffering? It does not make sense that we should strive only to protect ourselves.**

[97] Now suppose someone were to object saying, "Yes, I am affected by my own suffering, and therefore I have to protect myself. But when suffering happens to someone else, nothing at that moment is actually hurting me, therefore another's suffering is not something I have to protect myself from." But major and obvious sufferings (from the sufferings of the next life in the hell realms to the pains that will come tomorrow or next month), or the more subtle kinds of suffering occurring from moment to moment; **all such discomforts, great or small (due to lack of food, clothing, or whatever), *are located in the***

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[165] It is recorded in the Mahābhiniṣhkramaṇa that Devadatta, the cousin of prince Siddhārtha, took a bow and arrow and shot down a swan. The creature was grounded but not killed. The future Buddha took the bird upon his knees and comforted it. Devadatta sent to claim his prize, no doubt intending to kill it, but the Buddha refused to hand it over, saying that the swan was his. An exquisite description of the incident is to be found in *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold, p.11.

> … Then our Lord
> Laid the swan's neck beside his own smooth cheek
> And gravely spake, "Say no! the bird is mine,
> The first of myriad things that shall be mine
> By right of mercy and love's lordliness …

[166] This is a reference to Machig Labdrön, the great Tibetan yoginī and disciple of the Indian master Padampa Sangye. She is particularly celebrated as the propagator of chöd, a meditative practice in which an offering is made of one's own body as sustenance for malevolent spirits.

[167] Khenpo Kunpel considers that Shāntideva has constructed stanza 94 in the form of a probative argument (Skt. prayoga, Tib. 'byor ba, sometimes, though less satisfactorily, translated as "syllogism"). According to the rules of Indian logic, a probative argument consists of a thesis or statement, made up of a subject and predicate, supported by a valid sign or reason, and illustrated by an example. The standard model of a probative argument runs as follows. "This hill has fire on it (thesis) because there is smoke there (sign or reason), just as we find in a kitchen (example)." Following the same format, Shāntideva's argument runs: "I will eliminate the sufferings of others (thesis) because suffering does not benefit them (reason), just as I remove my own discomforts (example)." Given that probative arguments are normally understood to effect a demonstration or proof of something, to describe the statement in stanza 94 in such terms seems rather forced. But it is important to realise that **for Shāntideva, the decision to benefit others is a matter of impersonal, logical necessity; it is not a question of moralistic sentiment and the need to feel that one is "being good."**

***future*. They are not actually harming us in the present moment. If these future pains are not tormenting us now, what do we have to protect ourselves from? It makes no sense to do so.**

98.
To think that "I will have to bear it"
Is in fact a false idea.
For that which dies is one thing;
What is born is something else.

[98] But we may think that these sufferings are not the same as those of other beings. For even though such sufferings are not affecting us now, we protect ourselves nevertheless because we will experience them in the future. But to cling, on the gross level, to the aggregates of this life and the next life as constituting a single entity, and to cling also, on the subtle level, to the aggregates of one instant and the next as being the same thing, is a mistaken conception, nothing more.

When we reflect about our present and future lives in the light of such arguments, [we can see that] the entity that dies and passes out of life is not the same as that which is born in the succeeding existence. Conversely, that which takes birth in the next life, wherever that may be, is not the same thing as that which has perished in the previous existence.

The length of time spent in the human world is the result of past karma. When this is exhausted, as the final moment of the human consciousness ends, it creates the immediate cause [of the new life], while the karma that brings about birth in a hell realm, or whatever, constitutes the cooperative cause. Wherever people are subsequently born, whether in hell or elsewhere, they have at death a human body, whereas at birth, they will have the body of a hell being and so on. In other words, **the previous consciousness now terminated is that of a human, while at the moment of the later birth, the consciousness is that of a hell being. The two are thus distinct. When the mind and body of a human come to an end, the mind and body of the following life come into being. It is not that there is a movement or transmigration of something from a former to a subsequent state.** As it is said:

Like recitation, flame, and looking glass,
Or seal or lens, seed, sound, astringent taste,
The aggregates continue in their seamless course,
Yet nothing is transferred, and this the wise should know.

For example, **when one uses a lamp to light another lamp, the later flame cannot be lit without dependence on the first; but at the same time, the first flame does not pass into the second one.**

However, if the earlier entity is terminated and the later one arises in such a way that the two are quite separate, it will be objected that, in that case, the effect of former actions is necessarily lost, while (in the course of the subsequent existence) karmic effects will be encountered that have not been accumulated. But **this is not so.** Phenomenal appearances (which arise inescapably through the interdependence of causal conditions) cannot withstand analysis,[168] they lie beyond the scope of both the eternalist and nihilist positions. The assertion that karmic effects are not lost is a special feature of the Buddhist teachings. It lies within the exclusive purview of an omniscient mind, and it is thus to be accepted through reliance on the word of the Conqueror.

As it is said:

What arises in dependence on another
Is not at all that thing itself—
But neither is it something else:
There is no break, there is no permanence.

All we have are relatively imputed terms. While being neither identical nor different, [earlier and later moments of consciousness] appear. Consciousness manifests in different ways according to karma, whether good or bad. But in itself, it consists of moments of mere knowing, clear and cognizant, arising uninterruptedly in like kind.[169] The notions of permanence or discontinuity do not apply to it. Thus the results of karma are not lost, and one never encounters karmic effects that have not been accumulated.

If, on a more subtle level, one considers the momentary nature of phenomena, everything in the outer or inner sphere consists of point-instants. The earlier moment ceases and the later one supervenes so that the one is distinct from the other. Likewise, when the karma for remaining in the human state provides the circumstances, and the final moment of consciousness [in that state] provides the cause, the following moment of consciousness comes to birth and arises in like kind. But the two moments are separate.

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[168] This means that, excluding mere randomness, they cannot be shown to be directly produced by their antecedents. In other words, **it is impossible for reason to explain the relation between a cause and its effect, even though the causal process never fails.**

[169] Tib. rigs 'dra rgyun mi chad pa. This means that when a moment of consciousness passes, a new one arises identical to it in nature (i.e., mere cognisance) but varying in "colour" according to karmic circumstances. There is simply a continuum of interlinked moments; there is no *subpositum*, no underlying entity, that endures as the "experiencer" of a stream of extrinsic events.

Appendix 3 Exchanging Self and Other

The following passage, also taken from the commentary of Kunzang Pelden, is an explanation of exchanging self and other. A commentary on stanzas 140 to 154 of chapter 8, it explains how one can, by a feat of sympathetic imagination, place oneself in the position of others. In so doing, one gains an appreciation of how one appears in their eyes and of how and why they feel the way they do.

The Exchange of Self and Other

140.
Take others—lower, higher, equal—as yourself,
Identify yourself as "other."
Then, without another thought,
Immerse yourself in envy, pride, and rivalry.

[140] **When you perform the meditation of exchange, take other beings, whether inferiors, superiors, or equals, and consider them as yourself, putting yourself in their position. When you have changed places, meditate without allowing any other thought to come in the way. Put yourself in the position of someone worse off than you and allow yourself to feel envy. Then put yourself in the position of someone on the same level and soak yourself in a sense of competitiveness and rivalry. Finally, taking the place of someone better off, allow yourself to feel pride and condescension.**

The Practice of Envy from the Point of View of Someone Less Well Off (Stanzas 141–146)

In this exchange, Shāntideva's poem uses "I" for the imagined person (contemptible, equal, superior person) and "he" for 'your former self' (imaginary 'rest of world' now regarded as 'someone else').
In the commentary text, 'you' has become the imagined person (contemptible, equal, superior person) and 'he' as above.

In each of these three meditations [following Shāntideva's lead], whenever the text says "he" or "this person," the reference is to your own "I" (now regarded as another person). When the text says "you," it is referring to this other person (better off, equal, or worse off in relation to yourself) with whom you have now identified.[170] You must now systematically generate the antidotes to pride, rivalry, and jealousy. The reason for doing this is that as soon as even the slightest virtue appears in the mind-stream, these three defilements follow in its trail. They are like demons that sap one's integrity; which explains the importance given to their antidotes.

Now, of the eight worldly concerns, honour, possessions, adulation, and happiness are the things that make you proud. So **perform the exchange, placing yourself in the position of someone contemptible, someone despised, a beggar or tramp. Imagine that you become the poor person and that the poor person becomes you. Now allow yourself to feel that person's envy**.

141.
He's the centre of attention. I am nothing.
And, unlike him, I'm poor without possessions.
Everyone looks up to him, despising me,
All goes well for him; for me there's only bitterness!
142.
All I have is sweat and drudgery,
While he's there, sitting at his ease.
He's great, respected in the world,
While I'm the underdog, a well-known nobody.

[141] **Looking up at your former self (your ego, now regarded as someone else), someone talented, think how happy "he" must be, praised and respected by all and sundry. You on the other hand are nothing, nobody, a complete down-and-out, despised and utterly miserable. The person you are looking at is rich, has plenty to eat, clothes to wear, money to spend; while you have nothing. He is respected for being learned, talented, well disciplined. You, on the other hand, are dismissed as a fool. He enjoys a wealth of every comfort and happiness; you by contrast are a pauper, your mind weighed down with worries, your body racked with disease, suffering, and the discomforts of heat and cold.**

[142] You have to work like a slave, digging, harvesting grass; while he can just sit back with nothing to do. As these thoughts pass through your mind, feel your envy. He even has servants and a private horse, on whom he inflicts a great deal of discomfort and suffering. He is not even aware that they are in distress, and there he is, oh so comfortable. And as if that weren't enough, he gets angry and lashes out, whipping and beating them. Put yourself in the position of his poor victims and take their suffering on yourself. If you manage to do this, it is said that you will come to recognise their sorrows. Compassion for them will grow and you will stop hurting them.

Once again, reflect that he is talented, of good family, wealthy, and surrounded by friends. You on the other hand are a complete nobody, well known to be good at nothing.

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[170] Throughout this description of the exchange of self and other, Shāntideva uses the contrasting pronouns "I" and "he." Following Tibetan usage, these same pronouns appear in the commentary without the meaning being obscured. We have found, however, that it is clearer to translate the Tibetan word bdag ("I") as "you," since the "speaker" in the commentary is Khenpo Kunpel, who is addressing the reader. Needless to say, these reflections are addressed to all readers regardless of sex, and so the third-person pronoun could just as well be "she" as "he." The constant repetition of both pronouns would be very tedious, so, in deference to Shāntideva's own personal situation (a man living in a community of monks), we have kept the masculine pronoun.

[143] But, even though you have nothing to show for yourself, you might well ask *him* what reason he has to be so arrogant. After all, the existence or nonexistence of good qualities and the concepts of high and low are all relative. **There are no absolute values. Even people who are lowdown like you can be found to have something good about them, relatively speaking. Compared with someone with even greater talent, *he* is not so great. Compared with someone even more disfavoured, feeble with age, lame, blind, and so forth, you are much better-off. After all, you can still walk on your own two feet; you can see with your eyes; you are not yet crippled with age. You have at least something.**

143.
What! A nobody without distinction?
Not true! I do have some good qualities.
Compared with some, he's lower down.
Compared with some, I do excel!
144.
My discipline, my understanding have declined,
But I am helpless, ruled by my defilements.
As much as he is able, he should cure me.
I will be submissive even to his punishments.

This stanza, which begins "What! A nobody without distinction?" could be understood in a different sense, namely, that you have it in you to acquire all the excellence of training, since you have all the qualities of the utterly pure *tathāgatagarbha*, the essence of Buddhahood, implicit in your nature. Thus you are far from being bereft of good qualities.

[144] If he retorts that you are despicable because your discipline and understanding are a disgrace, or that you have no resources and so forth, this is not because you are evil in yourself, or that you are just inept; it is because your afflictions of desire, ignorance, avarice, and so on are so powerful that you are helpless. And so you should retort, saying:

> All right, if you're such a great and wonderful Bodhisattva, you should help me as much as you can; you should encourage and remedy the poor condition of my discipline, view, and resources. If you do help me, I am even prepared to accept punishment from you (harsh words and beating) just like a child at school learning to read and write who has to take a beating from the teacher.
>
> [145] But the fact is that you, the great Bodhisattva, are doing nothing for me; you don't even give me a scrap of food or something to drink. So why are you passing yourself off as someone so great? You have no right to look down on me, no right to behave so scornfully to me and to people like me. And anyway, even if you *did* have any genuine virtues, if you can't give me any relief or help, what use are they to me? They're totally irrelevant.
>
> [146] After all, if you are a Bodhisattva but can stand by without the slightest intention of helping and saving me and those like me, who through the power of our evil karma are on our way to the lower realms like falling into the mouth of a ferocious beast; if you have no compassion, you are yourself guilty of something completely unspeakable! But not only do you not acknowledge this, you are all the time passing yourself off as someone wonderful. The fact is, however, that you have no qualities at all. In your arrogance, you want to put yourself on the same level as the real Bodhisattvas, those beings who are truly skilled and who in their compassion really do carry the burdens of others. Your behaviour is totally outrageous!

145.
The fact is he does nothing of the sort!
By what right, then, does he belittle me?
What use, then, are his qualities to me—
Those qualities of which he's so possessed?
146.
Indifferent to the plight of living beings,
Who tread the brink of evil destinies,
He makes an outward show of virtues,
And even wants to vie with sages.

This is how to meditate on envy and resentment as the chief antidote to pride. By appreciating the suffering involved in being a poor and insignificant person, without talents or honour, you come to realise how wrong it is to be arrogant and scornful. It dawns on you how unpleasant it is for someone in a humble position when you are proud and supercilious toward them. You should stop behaving like this and begin to treat people with respect, providing them with sustenance and clothing, and working to help them in practical ways.

The Practice of Jealous Rivalry from the Point of View of an Equal (Stanzas 147–150)

Next you should make the exchange by taking the place of someone similar to, or slightly better than, yourself; someone with whom you feel competitive, whether in religious or worldly affairs.

[147] Tell yourself that, however good he is in terms of reputation and wealth, you will do better. Whatever possessions he has, and whatever respect he has in other people's eyes, you will deprive him of them, whether in religious disputation or even by fighting; and you will make sure you get them all for yourself.

147.
That I might excel, outstripping him—
Him, regarded as my peer and equal!
In contests I will certainly secure
My fame and fortune, public renown.

[148] In every way possible, you will advertise far and wide your own spiritual and material gifts, while hushing up whatever talents he has, so that no one will ever see or hear about them.

148.
By every means I'll advertise
My gifts to all the world,
Ensuring that his qualities
Remain unknown, ignored by everyone.
149.
My faults I will conceal, dissimulate.
For I, not he, will be the object of devotion;
I, not he, will gain possessions and renown,
I will be the centre of attention.
150.
I will take such satisfaction
In his evil deeds and degradation.
I will render him despicable,
The butt and laughingstock of everyone.

[149] At the same time, you will cover up whatever faults you have, hiding them from the public gaze, while at the same time gossiping about all the shortcomings of your rival, making quite sure that everyone knows about them. Under the impression that you are beyond reproach, lots of people will congratulate you, while for him it will be just the opposite. From now on, you will be the wealthy one, the centre of attention. For him, there will be nothing.

[150] For a long time, and with intense satisfaction, you will gloat over the penalties he will have to suffer for breaking his vows of religion, or because he has misbehaved in worldly life. You will make him an object of scorn and derision, and in public gatherings you will make him despicable in the eyes of others, digging out and exposing all his secret sins.

By using a spirit of rivalry in this way as an antidote to jealousy, you will come to recognise your own faults in being competitive with others. Then you will stop behaving like this and instead do whatever you can to help your rivals with presents and honours.

The Practice of Pride from the Point of View of Someone Better-Off (Stanzas 151–154)

Now imagine yourself in the position of someone who is better-off, who looks down on you with pride and derision.

151.
People say this pitiful nonentity
Is trying to compete with me!
But how can he be on a par
With me, in learning, beauty, wealth, or pedigree?
152.
Just to hear them talk about my excellence,
My reputation on the lips of all,
The thrill of it sends shivers down my spine,
A pleasure that I bask and revel in!
153.
Even if he does have something,
I'm the one he's working for!
He can keep enough just to survive,
But with my strength I'll steal the rest away.
154.
I will wear his happiness away;
I will always hurt and injure him.
He's the one who in saṃsāra
Did me mischiefs by the hundred!

[151] [And from this vantage point] think that it has come to your notice that he, this tiresome nonentity, is trying to put himself on a par with you. But what comparison could anyone possibly make between you and him; whether in learning or intelligence, in good looks, social class, wealth, and possessions? The whole idea is ridiculous. It's like comparing the earth with the sky!

[152] Hearing everyone talking about your talents, about all your learning and so on, saying how it sets you apart from such an abject individual, all this is extremely gratifying. The thrill of it is so intense that your skin is covered with goose pimples. You should really enjoy the feeling!

[153] If, through his own hard work, and despite the obstacles he has to contend with, he manages to make some headway, you agree that, so long as he abases himself and works subserviently according to your instructions, this low-down wretch will get no more than the merest necessities in return: food to fill his stomach and enough clothes on his back to keep out the wind. But as for any extras, you, being the stronger, will confiscate them and deprive him.

[154] Every kind of pleasure that this inferior might have, you will undermine, and in addition, you will constantly attack him, piling on all kinds of unpleasantness. But why are you being so vicious? Because of all the many hundreds of times that this person [your own ego] has harmed you while you were wandering in saṃsāra.

Again, **this stanza could be explained as meaning that you will wear away the satisfaction of this self-cherishing mentality and constantly undermine it, because this self-centred attitude has brought you suffering so many hundreds of times in the hells and other places of saṃsāra. This is how Shāntideva shows the fault of not being rid of pride.**

In this way, use this meditation on pride as the principal antidote to jealous resentment. When people who are superior to you behave proudly and insult you with their overweening attitude, you will think to yourself: "Why are these people being so arrogant and offensive?" But instead of being envious and resentful, change places with them. Using the meditation on pride, place yourself in that position of superiority, and ask yourself whether you have the same feelings of pride and condescension. And if you find that you too are proud and condescending and have scorn and contempt for those lower down than yourself, you will be able to look at those who are now behaving arrogantly toward you and think, "Well, yes, I can see why they feel the way they do." And so you will serve them respectfully, avoiding attitudes of rivalry and contention.