

The Easy Path to Travel to Omniscience

A Practical Exposition of the Stages of the Path

ROOT TEXT BY
PANCHEN LOSANG CHÖKYI GYELTSEN

ETET
for Venerable Dagpo Rinpoché's Dharma Centres



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Translated by Rosemary Patton under
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Published by Venerable Dagpo Rinpoché's Committee for English
Transcribing, Editing, and Translating (ETET) for all his centres

The Easy Path to Travel to Omniscience: A Practical Exposition of the Stages
of the Path

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Third edition: June 2020 – ETET (E/R-EP-CG/3)

Second edition: December 2018 – Ganden Ling (A/EP-/2)

First edition: July 2009 – Institut Guépèle (A/EP-)

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Editor's Note

The structure of headings and subheadings incorporated in the text is part of the original Tibetan text. The translator and editors of this English edition have inserted additional section numbers, bracketed text, and centred headings in larger font to facilitate ease of use.

Note on Tibetan Pronunciation

The Tibetan and Himalayan Library (THL) phonetic system is used here to render Tibetan words using the Latin alphabet. The THL system mostly follows standard English pronunciation, though there are several unique distinctions of pronunciation.

Consonants or combinations:

sh = *sh* in *shin* (high pitch);

zh = between the *sh* in *shawl* and the *s* in *pleasure* (low pitch);

s = *s* in *sit* (high pitch);

z = *s* in *south* (low pitch);

j = *j* in *jolly* (low pitch).

Vowels:

a = vowel sound in *hut*;

e = vowel sound in *help*;

é = like the *é* sound in the end of the words *résumé* or *café*;

i = vowel sound in *keep*; but depending on the letters following it, the sound may shorten to the vowel in *kin*;

o = vowel sound somewhere between *on* and *bone*;

ö = vowel sound in *fur*; also like the vowel sound in the French *jeu*; to produce it, make a tight “O” shape with the lips and say the *e* sound (as above);

u = *oo* vowel sound in *too*;

ü = similar to the *ew* sound in *pew*; more like the *ue* sound in the French word *rue*; to produce it, form a tight “O” shape with pursed lips and pronounce the *i* sound (as above).



Panchen Losang Chökyi Gyeltsen

The Easy Path to Travel to Omniscience

A Practical Exposition of the Stages of the Path

Preliminaries



AT THE FEET OF THE VENERABLE AND HOLY MASTERS, indivisible from Shakyamuni-Vajradhara, I pay homage continuously. I pray you to care for me out of your great compassion.

This exposition of the stages of the path to enlightenment, the profound method leading fortunate beings to buddhahood, has two parts:

- I. How to rely on spiritual masters, the root of the path
- II. Having relied on them, how to progressively train your mind.

Reliance on Spiritual Masters

I. The first [**how to rely on spiritual masters, the root of the path**] has two parts:

- I.1. How to conduct the actual meditation session
- I.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

I.1. The first [**how to conduct the actual meditation session**] has three parts:

I.1.1. The preliminaries

I.1.2. The actual meditation

I.1.3. The conclusion.

I.1.1. For the first, **the preliminaries**, having sat on a comfortable seat in a place you find pleasant, in the eight-point position or in whatever position is comfortable, examine your mind well. Then, in an especially virtuous state of mind, think,

In space in front of me, on a precious throne both high and wide, borne by eight great lions, on a seat formed by a multicoloured lotus and by moon and sun discs, is my main spiritual master, so kind, in the form of the Conqueror Shakyamuni. The colour of his body is that of pure gold. On his head is the crown protuberance. He has one face, two hands. The right presses the earth; the left, in meditation posture, holds a monk's bowl full of nectar. Elegantly he wears the three saffron-coloured monastic robes. In a flood of light emanating from his body, made of pure light and adorned with the major and minor marks of a buddha, he is seated in vajra posture. He is surrounded by an assembly of personal and lineage spiritual masters, tutelary deities, buddhas and bodhisattvas, heroes, heroines and pledged Dharma protectors. In front of him, on exquisite stands, are his own teachings in the form of books of light. The members of the merit field look upon me with contentment. I, in turn, at the thought of their compassion and virtue, feel great faith in them.

Then think,

I and all sentient beings, my mothers, from beginningless time until now have continuously undergone all the sufferings of cyclic existence in general, and those of the three lower realms in particular. It is nevertheless still difficult to fathom the depth and breadth of this misery. Now that I have attained a choice human life, so difficult to attain and so meaningful once acquired, if I do not realize supreme liberation in which all the sufferings of samsara are overcome, guru-buddhahood, then once again I will have to experience the various torments of cyclic existence in general and those of the three lower realms in particular. As I now have before me the masters and the Three Jewels who can protect me from this pain, for the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, I will do all I can to realize precious, perfect and consummate buddhahood. To this end, from the depths of my heart, I take refuge in the spiritual masters and the Three Jewels.

Having thus first meditated refuge, the spirit of enlightenment and the four immeasurable qualities, reflect upon the following, reciting it seven, twenty-one times, and so forth.

In particular, for the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, by all means, I will quickly, very quickly, realize perfect, consummate buddhahood. To that end, I will now meditate on the stages of the path to enlightenment by means of the profound practice of master-deity yoga.

Then visualize and recite from,

In space in front of me, on a precious throne both high and wide, borne by eight great lions, on a seat formed by sun and moon discs and by a multicoloured lotus, is my main spiritual master, so kind, in the form of the

Conqueror Shakyamuni. The colour of his body is that of pure gold,

up to,

He is seated in vajra posture. Above and behind him on a seat formed by a multicoloured lotus and by moon and sun discs is Victorious Vajradhara surrounded by the masters of the Blessed Practice Lineage. On his right is Venerable Maitreya surrounded by the masters of the Vast Activities Lineage. On his left is Venerable Mañjughosha surrounded by the masters of the Profound View Lineage. In front of him is my main spiritual master, so kind, surrounded by the masters with whom I have a spiritual relationship. Surrounding them is the assembly of tutelary deities, buddhas and bodhisattvas, heroes, heroines and pledged Dharma protectors. In front of them, on exquisite stands, are their own teachings in the form of books of light. The central figure and his entourage send out in the ten directions an extraordinary array of emanations in forms that are appropriate to taming others. The top of the head of each figure is marked with a white OM, the throat with a red AH, the heart with a blue HUNG, the navel with a yellow SVA, and the secret place with a green HAH, which emit light rays of the five colours. Guru Munindra sends out light from the syllable HUNG at his heart in all ten directions inviting from their natural abodes wisdom beings resembling those meditated.

Once they have dissolved into their specific commitment being, think that by nature each includes all objects of refuge. Offer the seven-part prayer along with the mandala and be sure to supplicate them according to the masters' instructions, with great sincerity. Next Guru-

Munindra sends out light from the syllable HUNG at his heart which reaches the great multitude of peaceful and wrathful beings surrounding him. It dissolves into light and is absorbed into Munindra. Munindra in turn dissolves into your main master on your head, transforming him completely. On your head upon a lion-throne, lotus, and moon and sun discs, visualize from “the one who in nature is my main spiritual master, so kind, in the form of the Conqueror Shakyamuni...”, present him the abbreviated version of seven-part prayer and a mandala offering, and then think that together all sentient beings, your mothers, present around you in one voice supplicate him.

Extraordinary master-deity by nature the four bodies,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Master-deity, by nature the truth body free of
 obstructions,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Master-deity by nature the blissful enjoyment body,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Master-deity by nature various emanation bodies,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all masters,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all tutelary
 deities,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all buddhas,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all dharmas,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all sanghas,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all [dakas
 and] dakinis,

O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!
 Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all dharma
 protectors,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!

Especially,

Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of
 refuge,
 O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!

As I and all other sentient beings have been born in
 samsara and endlessly subjected to intense suffering
 because we have failed to rely on our spiritual masters
 correctly in both thought and deed, O master-deity,
 please bless me and all sentient beings that from now on
 we may correctly rely on our spiritual masters in thought
 and in deed!

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of
 the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It
 penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings,
 purifying you of all sins and obstructions accumulated since
 beginningless time, and especially purifying you of all the illnesses,
 bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with you correctly
 relying on your masters in thought and deed. Your bodies become
 translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan,
 merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a
 special realization that enables you to correctly rely on your spiritual
 masters in thought and deed has arisen in your mindstream and in
 others'.

1.1.2. The actual meditation:

1.1.2.a) How to rely [on masters] in thought

I.1.2.b) How to rely on them in deed.

Reliance in Thought

I.1.2.a) The first [**how to rely on masters in thought**] has two parts:

I.1.2.a)1. Cultivating faith, the root

I.1.2.a)2. Having recalled their kindness, developing reverence for them.

I.1.2.a)1. For the first [**cultivating faith, the root**], visualize that the masters with whom you have a direct spiritual connection appear from Guru-Munindra's heart and place themselves in space in front of you.

Think,

These spiritual masters of mine are true buddhas. The complete and perfect Buddha, in his precious collection of tantras, said that in degenerate times the Conqueror Vajradhara would work for the benefit of sentient beings by appearing in the form of spiritual masters. Accordingly, these spiritual masters of mine have simply shown an alternate physical form [but in fact] are the Conqueror Vajradhara showing the form of spiritual masters to guide those who do not have the good fortune to meet our Buddha directly. I request the masters and deities to kindly bless me and all sentient beings, my mothers, that we may perceive our spiritual masters directly as Munindra-Vajradhara.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad

spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with directly perceiving these masters of yours as Munindra-Vajradhara; all your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization—the direct perception of these spiritual masters as Munindra-Vajradhara—has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

If the thought occurs, “But a buddha has eliminated all faults and has all good qualities. These spiritual masters of mine have such and such faults inspired by the three mental poisons,” it is due to a false impression. In the past Lekpa’i Karma, due to his mistaken view, saw all the activities of our Guide, the Buddha, as pure deceit. Asanga saw Venerable Maitreya as a she-dog. Maitripa saw the Lord of Yogis, Shavaripa, kill pigs and commit great wrongdoing.

[Think,]

Similarly, do these spiritual masters of mine really have these flaws or do I simply have the impression they do? It is a false conception. I request the masters and deities to kindly bless me and all sentient beings, my mothers, so that the view of flaws in our masters may never occur, even for an instant, and that great faith that allows us to see only goodness in all they do may easily arise in us.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all the illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with you not seeing flaws in the spiritual masters, even for an instant, and impede the great faith that allows you to see only goodness in all they do from easily arising within you. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that in you and others the view of flaws in

the spiritual masters no longer arises, even for an instant, and that you have easily achieved the realization of great faith that allows you to see only goodness in all they do.

1.1.2.a)2. [**Having recalled their kindness, developing reverence for them:**] Visualizing clearly the spiritual masters in space before you, think,

These spiritual masters have been very kind to me. My having understood the profound path that easily confers supreme liberation, ending all the sufferings of cyclic existence and those of the lower realms, and complete, perfect and precious buddhahood is due to these spiritual masters' kindness. I request the masters and deities to kindly bless me and all sentient beings, my mothers, so that from the awareness of these spiritual masters' kindness, great reverence for them may easily arise in us.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with great reverence for the spiritual masters easily arising in you from the awareness of their kindness. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that in you and in others the realization of great reverence for these spiritual masters has easily arisen from the awareness of their kindness.

Reliance in Deed

1.1.2.b) **How to rely on them in deed:** Visualizing clearly the spiritual masters before you, think,

For the sake of these spiritual masters, who are true buddhas, I will give my body, life, belongings, and so forth, without hesitation, and I will especially please them with the offering of practising according to their words. I request the masters and deities to kindly bless me that I may do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with delighting the spiritual masters by means of the three kinds of pleasing actions. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that in you and others the realization of delighting the spiritual masters by means of the three kinds of pleasing actions has arisen in you.

1.1.3. **What to do to conclude:** Meditating the master-deity on your head, you supplicate him, recite mantras, and with intense aspiration for the fulfilment of your own and others' temporary and ultimate goals, dedicate the virtue attained by the above.

1.2. **What to do between meditation sessions:** Between sessions you should also read canonical and exegetic works that explain how to rely on spiritual masters. You should use remembrance and watchfulness to control the doors of the senses, eat with moderation, strive at the

yoga of sleeplessness and when you sleep, do so in the proper manner. You should energetically practise the yogas of washing and eating.

II. Having relied on [a spiritual master], how to progressively train your mind has two parts:

II.1. Encouragement to take full advantage of a [human] rebirth with freedom

II.2. How to take full advantage of it.

Precious Human Rebirth

II.1. The first [**encouragement to take full advantage of a human rebirth with freedom**] has two parts:

II.1.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.1.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.1.1. [**What to do in the actual meditation session:**]

II.1.1.a) The preliminaries

II.1.1.b) The actual meditation

II.1.1.c) The conclusion.

II.1.1.a) **The preliminaries** are as before, up to: “Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of refuge, O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!”

Then reflect,

That I and all other sentient beings have been born in samsara and have been endlessly subjected to intense suffering is due to our having failed to gain a superior realization of the great potential of freedom and fortune and of the difficulty of attaining them. O master-deity, please bless me and all sentient beings that we may gain

a superior realization of the great potential of freedom and fortune and of the difficulty of attaining them!

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings, purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all the illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with attaining a superior realization of the great potential of freedom and fortune and of the difficulty of attaining them. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of the great potential of freedom and fortune and of the difficulty of attaining them has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

II.1.1.b) **The actual meditation:**

II.1.1.b)1. Contemplating the great potential of freedom and fortune

II.1.1.b)2. Contemplating the difficulty of attaining them.

The Great Potential of this Life

II.1.1.b)1. [**Contemplating the great potential of freedom and fortune:**] While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

Freedom is the opportunity to practise the perfect teaching; fortune is the presence of all inner and outer favourable conditions for spiritual practice. In short, the life with freedom and fortune that we have attained carries great potential because on its basis we can produce the causes of a high rebirth with an excellent body and resources: generosity, ethical discipline,

patience, and so forth, and in particular because on its basis once we have generated the three kinds of vows, in a short life of this degenerate age we have the capacity to easily accomplish buddhahood. For these reasons, may I not waste in useless activities this life complete with freedom and fortune that is difficult to attain and carries great potential; instead may I take full advantage of it! I supplicate the master-deity that I may do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with attaining a superior realization of the great potential of freedom and fortune. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of the great potential of freedom and fortune has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

The Difficulty of Attaining Such a Life

II.1.1.b)2. **Contemplating the difficulty of attaining them:** While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

The freedom and fortune that I have attained not only carry great potential, they are also extremely difficult to achieve. The majority of sentient beings, humans, and so on, for the most part engage in the ten non-virtues, and so forth, which are obstacles to attaining freedom and fortune. To attain an excellent rebirth complete with

freedom and fortune you must have as a base pure ethical discipline, supplement it with generosity, and so forth, and complete these with stainless prayers, and the like. Since such causes are very rarely produced, compared to the probability of attaining a low rebirth as an animal, and so on, attaining a plain high rebirth is barely conceivable. Compared to plain happy rebirths, lives complete with freedom and fortune are as rare as stars visible during the day. For that reason, I must not waste in meaningless activities the difficult to attain and once attained very meaningful life complete with freedom and fortune that I have found just this once. Instead I must take full advantage of it. The way to take full advantage of it is to rely on my spiritual masters, inseparable from the Buddha, and apply the core instructions of the supreme vehicle that they teach. May I thereby in one life easily attain buddhahood! I request the master-deity to kindly bless me that I may do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with attaining a superior realization of the difficulty of attaining freedom and fortune. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of the difficulty of attaining freedom and fortune has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.1.1.c) **The way to conclude** is as before.

II.1.2. **Between meditation sessions**, as before, you should read canonical and exegetic works that explain the topic of freedom and fortune, and so on.

II.2. How to draw full advantage from it:

II.2.1. Training the mind on the stages of the path shared with lesser beings

II.2.2. Training the mind on the stages of the path shared with intermediate beings

II.2.3. Training the mind on the stages of the path of great beings.

Stages of the Path Shared with Lesser Beings



II.2.1. The first [**training the mind on the stages of the path shared with lesser beings**] has two parts:

II.2.1.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.1.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.1.1. [**What to do in the actual meditation session:**]

II.2.1.1.a) The preliminaries

II.2.1.1.b) The actual meditation

II.2.1.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.1.1.a) **The preliminaries** are as before, up to: “Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of refuge, O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!”

Then [reflect],

That I and all other sentient beings have been born in samsara and endlessly subjected to intense suffering is due to our having failed to contemplate death and impermanence, to take refuge from the depths of our hearts in the Three Jewels out of fear of the suffering of the lower realms, and having generated faith in the form of conviction in karma and its effects to correctly reject black deeds and perform white ones. O master-deity, please bless me and all sentient beings that in us may arise the awareness of death and impermanence, that we may take refuge from the depths of our hearts in the Three Jewels out of fear of the suffering of the lower realms, and having generated faith in the form of conviction in karma and its effects that we may correctly reject sin and practise virtue!

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with attaining a superior realization of the stages of the path shared with lesser beings. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of the stages of the path shared with lesser beings has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.1.1.b) **The actual meditation:**

- II.2.1.1.b)1. Contemplating death and impermanence
- II.2.1.1.b)2. Contemplating the suffering of the lower realms
- II.2.1.1.b)3. Training in taking refuge in the Three Jewels
- II.2.1.1.b)4. Cultivating faith in the form of conviction in karma and its effects.

Death and Impermanence

II.2.1.1.b)1. [**Contemplating death and impermanence:**] While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

This life with freedom and fortune, so difficult to attain and once attained so meaningful, will soon be destroyed; death is certain to occur. Furthermore, no inner or outer conditions can prevent it. I cannot add to my lifespan, which in fact shortens unceasingly. I am sure to die without having had the time to practise the teaching while alive. Not only do I have to die, the time of my death is uncertain. Because the lifespan of sentient beings from

Jambudvipa is uncertain, the causes of death numerous and those of life few, and our bodies are as fragile as water bubbles, the time of our death is uncertain. At the time of death everything but the teaching is useless. No matter how great the affection of my circle of loved ones for me, I cannot take a single one of them with me. No matter how great a collection of fine belongings I have, I cannot bring the tiniest portion of them with me. I must even lose the very flesh and bones I was born with. Therefore, what purpose does attachment to the good things of this life serve? The Lord of Death is sure to come but it is unsure when that will occur. Since I run the risk of dying this very day, truly I must do something to prepare for death. By way of preparation, may I practise the teaching purely, free of attachment to any of this life's excellence! I request the master-deity to kindly bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with you henceforth practising the teaching purely, free of attachment to all of this life's good things. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of the ability to practise the teaching purely henceforth, free of attachment to any of this life's excellence, has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

Suffering of Lower Realms

II.2.1.1.b)2. [**Contemplating the suffering of the lower realms:**] While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

This life-basis, complete with freedom and fortune that is so difficult to attain and once attained, so meaningful, will soon end. After its destruction, I will not cease to exist but will be obliged to take rebirth. There are only two possible places of rebirth, a happy realm or a miserable one. If I were to take rebirth in a miserable realm, as a hell-being I would undergo inconceivable sufferings of heat, cold, and the like; as a hungry spirit the sufferings of hunger, thirst, and so on; and as an animal the sufferings of ignorance, stupidity, and of eating one another. I am not capable of bearing the likes of the lower realms' suffering! Now that I have attained a life-basis complete with freedom and fortune that is so difficult to attain and once attained, so meaningful, may I achieve guru-buddhahood that ends all the sufferings of the lower realms! I request the master-deity to kindly bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with you henceforth achieving guru-buddhahood that ends all the sufferings of the lower realms. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization allowing you to attain

guru-buddhahood that ends all the sufferings of the lower realms has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Refuge

II.2.1.1.b)3. [**Training in taking refuge in the Three Jewels:**] All parts of the master-deity’s body on your head emit an assembly consisting of spiritual masters, tutelary deities, the Three Jewels, heroes and heroines, dharma protectors and guardians that fills space. Visualize clearly the objects of refuge surrounding the master-deity on your head. Keeping in mind the good qualities of their body, speech, mind and activity, think,

Henceforth please protect me and all other sentient beings from the fears of cyclic existence as a whole and from those of the lower realms in particular.

With intense aspiration, say,

I take refuge in the masters, the tutelary deities and in the Three Jewels.

A stream of nectar flows from the Three Jewels and dissolves into you and other sentient beings. It purifies you of your bad karma, sins and obstructions. The Three Jewels’ blessings enter your mind and enhance your lifespan, merit, qualities of scriptural knowledge and realization. In this way take refuge a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand times, and so forth. Understanding the temporary and ultimate benefits of taking refuge in the Three Jewels, train thoroughly in the refuge precepts.

Karma

II.2.1.1.b)4. [**Cultivating faith in the form of conviction in karma and its effects:**] While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

The Conqueror's scriptures say that from the cause that is the practice of virtue can occur only a result of happiness, not one of suffering; from the cause that is non-virtuous conduct can arise only a result of suffering, not one of happiness; although one may perform only minor virtue or sin, when either fails to encounter an obstacle, it gives rise to a result of great magnitude; if you perform neither virtue nor sin you will experience neither happiness nor suffering; if the virtue or sin performed encounters no obstacle, the action performed is not lost; it is certain to produce either happiness or misery. Furthermore, depending on its object, the thinking behind it, its nature and basis, it will be [more or less] powerful. Having generated faith in the form of conviction in this, may I strive to do good starting with minor virtue, the ten virtues, and so on, and may my three doors of action not be sullied by even the slightest non-virtue such as the ten non-virtues!

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with generating faith in the form of conviction in karma and its effects, and with correctly accomplishing good deeds and abstaining from bad ones. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities,

lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that having cultivated faith in the form of conviction in karma and its effects, a superior realization of abstention from sin and correct practice of virtue has arisen in your mindstream and in others'. Although you may strive in this manner, if due to the feebleness of your antidotes and the strength of your kleshas you are sullied by non-virtue, do your utmost to confess it by means of the four remedial forces and abstain from it in the future.

II.2.1.1.c) **The way to conclude** is as before.

II.2.1.2. **Between meditation sessions** as before you should read canonical and exegetic works that explain the topics common to lesser beings, and so on.

This concludes the explanation of training the mind on the stages of the path shared with lesser beings.

Stages of the Path Shared with Intermediate Beings



II.2.2. Training the mind on the stages of the path shared with intermediate beings has two parts:

II.2.2.1. Developing the aspiration to liberation

II.2.2.2. Establishing the nature of the path leading to liberation.

The Aspiration to Liberation

II.2.2.1. The first [**developing the aspiration to liberation**] has two parts:

II.2.2.1.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.2.1.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.2.1.1. [**What to do in the actual meditation session:**]

II.2.2.1.1.a) The preliminaries

II.2.2.1.1.b) The actual meditation

II.2.2.1.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.2.1.1.a) **The preliminaries** are as before, up to: “Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of refuge, O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!”

Then reflect,

That I and all other sentient beings have been born in samsara and endlessly subjected to intense suffering is due to our having failed to understand that cyclic existence is by nature pure suffering, and generate a strong wish to be free of it. O master-deity, please bless me and all sentient beings that, having understood that

cyclic existence is by nature pure suffering, we may have the strong wish to be free of it.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with understanding that cyclic existence is by nature pure suffering and with having the strong wish to be free of it. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that having understood that cyclic existence is by nature pure suffering, the strong wish to be free of it has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.2.1.1.b) **The actual practice** has two parts:

II.2.2.1.1.b)1. Contemplating the general sufferings of samsara

II.2.2.1.1.b)2. Contemplating specific sufferings.

General Sufferings of Samsara

II.2.2.1.1.b)1. [**Contemplating the general sufferings of samsara:**]

While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

Although by correctly practising the ethic of abstention from the ten non-virtues I may attain a happy rebirth and avoid the sufferings of a bad rebirth, unless I attain a state of liberation that eradicates suffering, I will never know a moment of [true] happiness. It is like great criminals who are to be executed in a month’s time and meanwhile undergo torture daily, being clubbed and burnt with

drops of hot sealing wax. Some through their connections, and so on, are able to avoid the torture of being clubbed. They are nevertheless aware that the painful moment of execution approaches daily and so know not a moment's peace. Similarly, if I do not reach liberation that eradicates suffering definitively, no matter what kind of happy rebirth I may have, once the good karma that propelled me into it has run out, I will fall into one of the three kinds of lower rebirths and be subjected to various atrocious sufferings for extremely long periods of time. Moreover, once born in cyclic existence under the sway of my karma and kleshas, I cannot avoid a condition that is by nature suffering. My enemies become friends, and my friends become enemies—there is no certainty regarding harm and help. When enjoying samsaric pleasures, not only is it impossible to ever feel fully satisfied, I also enhance my attachment, which elicits endless and abundant sufferings. No matter how wonderful a body I attain, repeatedly I am forced to abandon it—there is no certainty regarding the bodies I get. Since beginningless time, again and again, I have taken birth—there is no apparent end to birth. No matter how wonderful the samsaric excellence I achieve, in the end I am sure to be compelled to give it up—there is no certainty regarding excellence achieved. I am forced to move on to the next life alone, without my friends—there is no certainty regarding friends. Consequently, now that I have attained a life with freedom and fortune, so difficult to attain and so meaningful once gained, may I, by all means, achieve the precious condition of the Guru-Buddha that ends all samsaric suffering once and for all!

I request the master-deity to kindly bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with achieving by all means the precious condition of the Guru-Buddha that ends all samsaric suffering once and for all. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization allowing you to attain precious guru-buddhahood that ends all samsaric suffering once and for all has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Specific Sufferings of Samsara

II.2.2.1.1.b)2. **Contemplating specific samsaric sufferings:** While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

Once appropriated aggregates have been produced, I cannot avoid what is by nature suffering. This is evident for the three lower realms. Having attained human appropriated aggregates, I must experience the sufferings of hunger and thirst, having to seek my livelihood, the loss of my dear friends, meeting inimical enemies, not getting what I want despite seeking it, unwanted events occurring, birth, ageing, sickness, death, and the like. Having attained a demigod’s appropriated aggregates, I have to experience the mental

torment of jealousy that cannot bear the thought of the gods' wealth, which in turn leads to being subjected to physical suffering. Having attained the appropriated aggregates of a desire realm god, I suffer having my limbs chopped off, my body cut up and being killed in doing battle with demigods, unwillingly being afflicted with the signs of my impending death, and knowing that I will lose my divine wealth and be subjected to the torments of the lowers realms. Even if I attain the appropriated aggregates of the two kinds of gods of the higher realms, I will not gain the freedom to keep them. Consequently, when the good karma that propelled me there runs out, I experience the endless suffering of the lower realms. In brief, appropriated aggregates are the bases for birth, ageing, illness, death, and the like, in this life, and lead to manifest suffering and to the suffering of change both in the present life and in future lives. When appropriated aggregates are produced, their production is by nature composition conditioned by karma and kleshas. For that reason may I, by all means, attain guru-buddhahood that frees me from samsara, which by nature consists of appropriated aggregates!

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with achieving by all means guru-buddhahood that frees you of samsara, which by nature consists of appropriated aggregates. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think that a superior realization enabling you to attain by all means guru-buddhahood that frees you of samsara, which

by nature consists of appropriated aggregates, has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.2.1.1.c) **The way to conclude** is as before.

II.2.2.1.2. **Between meditation sessions** as before, you should read canonical and exegetic works that explain how cyclic existence in its entirety is by nature suffering, and so on.

The Path to Liberation

II.2.2.2. **Establishing the nature of the path leading to liberation:**

II.2.2.2.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.2.2.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.2.2.1. [**What to do in the actual meditation session:**]

II.2.2.2.1.a) The preliminaries

II.2.2.2.1.b) The actual meditation

II.2.2.2.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.2.2.1.a) **The preliminaries** are as before, up to: “Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of refuge, O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!”

Then [reflect],

That I and all other sentient beings have been born in samsara and endlessly subjected to various kinds of intense suffering is due to our having failed to correctly cultivate the three higher trainings, once we had developed the aspiration to liberation. O master-deity, please bless me and all sentient beings that we may

cultivate correctly the three higher trainings once we have developed the aspiration to liberation.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly cultivating the three higher trainings, once you have developed the aspiration to liberation. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Having developed the aspiration to liberation, think that a superior realization of correct cultivation of the three higher trainings has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.2.2.1.b) **The actual meditation:** While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

Although perception on its own is by nature neutral, first in relation to “I” and “mine” arises the thought that they are naturally established. Then, on the basis of this mode of apprehension of the “I”, various kinds of wrong thinking such as attachment to what is on my side, anger towards what is on the other side and the pride that feels superior to others arise. On their basis arise doubt and wrongs views that deny the existence of the Guide who taught selflessness, and of his teaching—karma and its effects, the four truths, the Three Jewels, and so on—and on their basis the other kleshas develop. Having created karma under their influence, I am obliged to experience a great variety of sufferings in cyclic existence. Therefore, ultimately the root of all suffering is ignorance. May I, by all means, attain guru-buddhahood that frees me from

the root of all of samsara's suffering! For that purpose, may I correctly train in the qualities that are the three precious higher trainings! In particular may I correctly guard the ethical disciplines to which I have committed myself, even at the cost of my life, since guarding them is beneficial and failing to do so extremely harmful. Since ignorance is a door to transgressions, as its antidote, may I hear and learn about the precepts! Since disrespect is a door to transgressions, by way of its antidote, may I respect the Guide, the precepts he established, and those of pure conduct, my companions who train well in the precepts! Since carelessness is a door to transgressions, by way of its antidote, may I cultivate recollection, watchfulness, a sense of shame and consideration, and be conscientious! Since an abundance of kleshas is a door to transgressions, having meditated ugliness as the remedy to attachment, love as the remedy to anger, dependant arising as the remedy to ignorance, may I correctly train so as to make my ethical discipline pure and unsullied by transgressions!

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly developing the qualities that are the three trainings, once you have generated the aspiration to liberation. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Having generated the aspiration to liberation, think that a superior realization of correct cultivation of the qualities, the three trainings, has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

II.2.2.2.1.c) **The way to conclude** is as before.

II.2.2.2.2. **Between meditation sessions** as before, you should read about the precepts of the vows of individual liberation category, and so forth.

Stages of the Path of Great Beings



II.2.3. Thirdly, **training the mind on the stages of the path of great beings** has two parts:

II.2.3.1. How to develop the spirit of enlightenment

II.2.3.2. Having developed the spirit of enlightenment, how to train in bodhisattva practice.

II.2.3.1. [**How to develop the spirit of enlightenment:**]

II.2.3.1.1. Developing the spirit of enlightenment as such

II.2.3.1.2. The way to maintain the spirit of enlightenment through ritual.

Developing the Spirit of Enlightenment

II.2.3.1.1. [**Developing the spirit of enlightenment as such:**]

II.2.3.1.1.1. How to train your mind according to the seven-point instruction, causes and effect

II.2.3.1.1.2. How to train your mind in equalizing and exchanging self and others.

The Seven Point Instruction, Causes and Effect

II.2.3.1.1.1. [**How to train your mind according to the seven-point instruction, causes and effect:**] Having first developed equanimity towards all sentient beings, you then meditate the recognition of them as your mothers up to the spirit of enlightenment for which there are two steps.

II.2.3.1.1.1.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.3.1.1.1.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.3.1.1.1.1. [What to do in the actual meditation session:]

- II.2.3.1.1.1.1.a) The preliminaries
- II.2.3.1.1.1.1.b) The actual meditation
- II.2.3.1.1.1.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.3.1.1.1.1.a) **The preliminaries** are as before, up to: “Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of refuge, O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!”

[Reflect,]

O master-deity, please bless us that in my mind and in the minds of all sentient beings, my mothers, a superior realization of equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger towards all sentient beings, recognition of them as our mothers, recollection of their kindness and the wish to repay it, love, compassion and the spirit of enlightenment may arise!

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with the cultivation of equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger, and so forth, towards all sentient beings. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger, and so forth, towards all sentient beings has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.3.1.1.1.1.b) **The actual meditation:** While meditating the master-deity on your head, visualize clearly before you a neutral sentient being, who has neither helped nor harmed you. Think,

Since she wants to be happy and does not want to suffer, may I develop **equanimity** towards her, free of bias, attachment and anger, without at times feeling close to her and helping her, and at other times feeling distant and harming her! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with the cultivation of equanimity free of bias, attachment and anger, towards this neutral being. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger, towards this neutral being has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Once you have levelled your feelings towards this being, visualize clearly before you someone you find very appealing and cultivate equanimity towards him. Think,

It is out of attachment that I lack equanimity for this person. In the past it was out of craving for attractive things that I was born in samsara,

and meditate so as to halt your attachment.

Once you have levelled your feelings towards this being, visualize clearly before you someone you know and find very unappealing and develop equanimity towards him. Think,

My lack of equanimity for this person is due to my apprehending him to be very offensive, due to which I feel

angry with him. If I do not level my feelings, I will never be able to generate the spirit of enlightenment,

and meditate so as to halt your anger.

Once you have levelled your feelings towards this being, visualize clearly before you a very attractive being like your mother and a very unattractive one like an enemy. Think,

From their side, they are equal in their desire for happiness and their wish to avoid suffering. From my side, since beginningless time in samsara the one that I now hold dear has been my worst enemy countless times. Since beginningless time in samsara the one that I now consider an enemy too has cared for me lovingly innumerable times. To whom should I be attached? With whom should I be angry? May I develop equanimity towards them, free of bias, attachment and anger! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with the cultivation of equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger, towards both categories, loved ones and enemies. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger, towards the two categories, loved ones and enemies, has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

Once you have levelled your feelings towards them, meditate to level your feelings towards all sentient beings. The way to do it is to think,

All sentient beings from their side are equal in their desire for happiness and their wish to avoid suffering. From my side, since all sentient beings are my friends, may I avoid splitting them into two groups—holding some dear and helping them, and feeling distant from others and harming them—and instead develop equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with the cultivation of equanimity free of bias, attachment and anger in relation to all sentient beings. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger, towards all sentient beings has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Next, to meditate from **recognition of them as your mothers** up to the spirit of enlightenment, while meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

What are the reasons given for stating that all sentient beings are my friends? Since there is no beginning to cyclic existence, my series of lives is also beginningless. I have been moving from one life to the next and there is no single land or location in which I have never been

born. My past lives are countless. There is no single kind of sentient being's body that I have not had, and I have had each of them innumerable times. There is no single sentient being who has not been my mother, and each of them has been so innumerable times. There is no single sentient being who has not been my mother in my human lives, each of them has been so innumerable times and will continue to do so. Consequently, all have been my mothers and have cared for me.

If you wonder, "Since sentient beings are innumerable, how could they all have been my mothers?" think,

That they are innumerable does not preclude that they have all been my mothers for just as sentient beings are innumerable so too are my past lives. Thus, all sentient beings are indeed my mothers!

If you imagine that they cannot be your mothers as you do not recognize one another, think,

That we do not recognize one another does not preclude that they have been my mothers as it happens that even within one lifetime a mother and her child do not know one another.

Furthermore, if you consider that although all sentient beings were your mothers in past lives, those are over and there is no reason to see them as your mothers now, think,

Yesterday's mother does not cease to be my mother today just because that moment is past. Moreover, yesterday's mother and today's mother are no different; they are the same. There is no difference between them in that they

have both shown me kindness. Similarly, there is no difference between my mothers of my past lives and my mother of this life—they are both my mothers and there is no difference between the kindness they have all shown me. Thus, all sentient beings are certainly my mothers.

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, **reflect on their kindness**. While meditating the master-deity on your head, imagine before you your mother of this life, picturing her not as she was when she was young but as she was when she was old, and reflect as follows,

My mother not only in this life but in my past lives since beginningless time has been my mother countless times. In this life she first cared for me lovingly while carrying me in her womb. After I was born, she placed me on a soft bed. She lifted me up on the tips of her fingers. She held me close to her warm body. She greeted me with kind smiles and looked at me with loving eyes. She wiped my nose with her mouth and my filth with her hand. For her the anxiety that my being a little sick caused her was far greater than that produced by the thought of losing her own life. All the food and riches she produced by the sweat of her brow, without taking into account the sin, suffering, ill-repute and risk to her own life that it involved, she lovingly gave to me. She achieved endless benefits and happiness for me according to her ability. She protected me from endless harm and suffering. Thus, the kindness she has shown me is boundless.

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, meditate the same in relation to other loved ones, your father, and so on. For this visualize clearly your father and the others and think,

In my past lives since beginningless time he has been my mother countless times. When he was my mother, just as my mother in this life cared for me, so too did he look after me. His kindness to me is boundless!

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, meditate the same in relation to all neutral sentient beings. For this visualize clearly before you neutral sentient beings and think,

Now it seems that there is not much connection between them and me. Nevertheless they too in my past lives since beginningless time have been my mothers countless times. When they were my mothers, just like my mother of this life has cared for me, so too did they look after me. Their kindness to me is boundless!

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, meditate the same in relation to your enemies. For this visualize your enemies clearly before you and think,

Now what is the point of seeing them as my enemies? In my past lives since beginningless time they were my mothers countless times. When they were my mothers they achieved endless benefits and happiness for me. They protected me from endless harm and suffering. Above all, I couldn't bear to be separated from them even briefly and they couldn't bear to be separated from me even for a short time. We were intimate countless times. If we now find ourselves in the present situation it is due to our bad karma. At other times they were my kind mothers!

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, contemplate the kindness of all sentient beings. For this think,

All sentient beings of the ten directions in my past lives since beginningless time have been my mothers countless times. When they were my mothers, just as my mother of this life has cared for me, so too did they care for me. Their kindness to me is boundless!

Having in this way reflected on kindness, to meditate the **wish to repay their kindness**, while visualizing the master-deity on your head, think as follows,

The minds of these mothers who have cared for me since beginningless time are troubled by the demons of the kleshas. As they have achieved no control over their thoughts, they are crazed. They are blind to the path to high rebirth and certain goodness, and lack spiritual masters—guides for the blind. At every moment and with every step they commit wrongful deeds. It would be absolutely shameless to abandon those on the precipice of samsara in general and of the terrifying lower realms in particular. So, to repay their kindness to me, may I free them from samsara's suffering and establish them in the joy of liberation! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with [the wish to] free them from samsara's suffering and establish them in the joy of liberation. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of [the wish] to free them from

samsara's suffering and establish them in the joy of liberation has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

To meditate **love**, visualize someone close to you like your mother and think as follows,

Without talking of uncontaminated happiness, she does not even enjoy any contaminated happiness. What she now mistakenly takes for happiness will become suffering. Wanting happiness and making all sorts of effort to achieve it, she does nothing but create the causes for future suffering in the lower realms. In the present life as well, worn out and exhausted, she knows only misery and is totally deprived of genuine happiness. Thus, would it not be wonderful if she had happiness and all the causes of it? May she have happiness and the causes of happiness! I shall ensure that she achieves happiness and the causes of happiness. Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with ensuring that this mother gains happiness and the causes of happiness. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of [the intention to] ensure that this mother achieves happiness and the causes of happiness has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, meditate as before taking as your object other loved ones, your father and so forth, then neutral sentient beings, next enemies and finally all sentient beings.

To meditate **compassion**, while visualizing the master-deity on your head, first imagine a miserable being in the throes of suffering like a sheep being slaughtered by a butcher. To do so first clearly picture the image of the being before you, its limbs bound, its chest sliced open, the butcher plunging his hand inside its chest, it knowing perfectly well that its life is at stake, and it goggling at the butcher's face. Having contemplated the way this torment creates great anguish in it, think,

Would it not be wonderful if it were free of suffering and the causes of suffering? May it be free of suffering and all its causes! I shall ensure that it is free of suffering and all its causes. Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with ensuring that this mother is free of suffering and all its causes. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of [the intention to] ensure that this mother is free of suffering and of all the causes of suffering has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, meditate taking as your object beings who have not hesitated to commit various sins and non-virtues—those who have used the Sanghas' belongings carelessly, observed ethics badly, abandoned the teaching, upheld false views and harmed sentient beings. For this, visualize them clearly before you and think,

Now given their acts and conduct they are unhappy in the present life and without doubt as soon as they die, they will be born in lower realms. Once there, they will have to endure various kinds of intense suffering for extremely long periods of time. So, I wish they were free of suffering and of the causes of suffering! May they be free of suffering and of the causes of suffering! I shall ensure that they are free of suffering and of all its causes. Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with ensuring that these mothers are free of suffering and all its causes. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of [the intention to] ensure that these mothers are free of suffering and of all the causes of suffering has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, meditate visualizing clearly before you loved ones—your mother and so on—and think,

Having made all kinds of effort for the sake of this life’s concerns and labelled others as their friends and enemies, they are subjected to both manifest suffering and the suffering of change. As such they never have a moment’s peace. Being involved in wrongdoing in this life, virtuous states of mind never arise in them. As a result, the moment they die, they will take rebirth in lower realms and be obliged to undergo various kinds of

intense suffering for long periods of time. Thus, I wish they were free of suffering and of the causes of suffering! May they be free of suffering and of the causes of suffering! I shall ensure that they are free of suffering and all its causes. Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with ensuring that these mothers are free of suffering and all its causes. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of [the intention to] ensure that these mothers are free of suffering and of all the causes of suffering has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Once you have had a spiritual experience of this, meditate the same in relation to neutral beings, enemies and finally all sentient beings as before.

Once in this way you have had a transformational experience of love and compassion, to meditate the **superior intention**, while visualizing the master-deity on your head, think,

I shall ensure that all sentient beings undergoing suffering and deprived of happiness are free of suffering and of the causes of suffering. I shall ensure that they find happiness and the causes of happiness. Especially I shall ensure that all sentient beings, my mothers, attain complete and perfect buddhahood in which the two kinds of obstructions have been rejected, along with their

imprints. Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with ensuring that all sentient beings, your mothers, attain complete and perfect buddhahood in which the two kinds of obstructions having been rejected, along with their imprints. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of [the intention to] ensure that all sentient beings, your mothers, attain complete and perfect buddhahood, that rejects the two kinds of obstructions along with their imprints, has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Next, to meditate the **spirit of enlightenment**, while meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

If I were to ask myself whether I now have the ability to establish all sentient beings in complete and perfect buddhahood, I would have to admit that I do not have the ability to establish even a *single* sentient being in a state of complete and perfect buddhahood. Moreover, even if I attained one of the two states of arhatship, my work for others’ welfare would be partial and I would lack the ability to lead all sentient beings to buddhahood. Who has that ability? Complete and perfect buddhas do. They have physical qualities—being perfectly adorned with the major and minor marks; verbal qualities—a melodious voice with sixty characteristics that with a single discourse can explain the dharma effortlessly to all

sentient beings in each of their languages; and mental qualities—direct perception of all knowable entities on both the conventional and ultimate levels of existence, impartial compassion for all sentient beings, like a mother’s for her unique child, that never abandons the task of taming them even for an instant, and spontaneous and effortless activity such that every light ray they emit from their body, speech and mind can establish innumerable sentient beings in the state of omniscience, and the like. In sum, since only a buddha possesses every kind of good quality and is free of every kind of flaw, to complete both my own goals and others’, I must attain buddhahood. For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, by all means, I will quickly, very quickly, realize complete, perfect and precious buddhahood. Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

From the master-deity’s body onto your head comes a second body, as one butter lamp is lit by another, which dissolves into you. Imagine yourself on a precious throne both high and wide, borne by eight great lions, on a seat formed by sun and moon discs and a multicoloured lotus, in the form of Victorious Shakyamuni with a body the colour of pure gold, a crown protuberance on your head, one face and two hands. The right presses the earth; the left, in meditation posture, holds a monk’s bowl full of nectar. You are elegantly dressed in the three saffron-coloured monastic robes. You sit in vajra posture in a flood of light, which emanates from your body, made of pure light and adorned with the major and minor marks of a buddha. Visualizing yourself thus as Munindra, emanate your body, belongings, along with your virtue in the form of light and nectar of the five colours and offer them to all sentient beings. Imagine that all sentient beings thereby attain the excellent happiness of high rebirth and certain goodness.

II.2.3.1.1.1.1.c) **The way to conclude** is as before.

II.2.3.1.1.2. As before **between meditation sessions** you should read canonical and exegetic works that explain the topics of love, compassion, the spirit of enlightenment, and so forth.

Equalizing and Exchanging Self and Others

II.2.3.1.1.2. **How to train your mind in equalizing and exchanging self and others:**

II.2.3.1.1.2.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.3.1.1.2.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.3.1.1.2.1. [**What to do in the actual meditation session:**]

II.2.3.1.1.2.1.a) The preliminaries

II.2.3.1.1.2.1.b) The actual meditation

II.2.3.1.1.2.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.3.1.1.2.1.a) **The preliminaries** are as before, up to: “Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of refuge, O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!”

Then,

O master-deity, please bless me and all sentient beings
that in us may arise the precious spirit of enlightenment
by which we cherish others more than ourselves!

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with generating the precious spirit of enlightenment by which you cherish others more than yourselves. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of

light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of the precious spirit of enlightenment by which you cherish others more than yourselves has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.3.1.1.2.1.b) **The actual meditation:** Having first developed equanimity that levels your feelings towards all sentient beings, and meditated the three—recognizing them all as your mothers, recalling their kindness [and wishing to repay it]—visualize clearly all sentient beings around you and ask yourself, “In my heart, which of the two do I cherish most—myself or others?” When you discover that you naturally tend to cherish yourself and abandon others, reflect in the following terms,

It is unsuitable to cherish myself and abandon others as we are equal in our desire for happiness and our wish to avoid suffering. Hence, I need to cherish others as I cherish myself for just as being treasured by others pleases me, so will others be pleased when I treasure them. Moreover, wanting to achieve excellent results for myself since beginningless time in samsara, I have cherished myself and accomplished nothing for others’ sake. As a result, I have experienced only a myriad of misery. Since cherishing myself has been the source of all my misfortunes—the sufferings of samsara, those of the lower realms, and so forth—I shall bar self-cherishing that has yet to arise in me and overcome what has arisen. Since cherishing others is the source of all good qualities, I shall generate a new attitude of cherishing others not yet generated, and intensity the one I have. Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It

penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with generating the precious spirit of enlightenment by which you cherish others more than yourselves. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of the precious spirit of enlightenment by which you cherish others more than yourselves has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

[Reflect,]

In short Munindra achieved complete buddhahood by abandoning himself, cherishing others and devoting himself exclusively to their welfare. By following his example, I too very soon will achieve buddhahood. Not having done so, until now I have wandered in samsara. Now as long as I continue to harbour self-cherishing within me, I will not be able to cultivate cherishing others, or if I do, I will not be able to maintain it. Thus, may the thought to cherish myself and abandon others not arise in me, even for an instant! May I give up my selfish concerns and treasure others, take upon myself other sentient beings' suffering and sin in their entirety and offer others all my happiness and goodness! May I in this way ensure that all sentient beings are free of suffering and attain a high degree of happiness! Presently I lack the ability needed to achieve this. If you ask who has it, it is a complete and perfect buddha. So, may I attain the state of complete and perfect buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated him, from the master-deity's body onto your head comes a second body, as one butter lamp is lit by another, which dissolves into you. Imagine yourself on a precious throne both high and wide, borne by eight great lions, on a seat formed by sun and moon discs and a multicoloured lotus, in the form of Victorious Shakyamuni...*up to*...You are sitting in vajra posture in a flood of light, which emanates from your body, made of pure light and adorned with the major and minor marks of a buddha. Visualizing yourself as Munindra in this way, emanate your body and belongings, along with your virtue in the form of light and nectar of the five colours and offer them to all sentient beings. Imagine that all sentient beings thereby attain the excellent happiness of high rebirth and certain goodness.

II.2.3.1.1.2.1.c) [**The conclusion.**]

Maintaining the Spirit of Enlightenment through Ritual

II.2.3.1.2. **The way to maintain the spirit of enlightenment through ritual:**

II.2.3.1.2.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.3.1.2.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.3.1.2.1. [**What to do in the actual meditation session:**]

II.2.3.1.2.1.a) The preliminaries

II.2.3.1.2.1.b) The actual meditation

II.2.3.1.2.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.3.1.2.1.a) **The preliminaries** are as before, up to: "Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of refuge, O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!"

Then,

O master-deity, please bless me and all sentient beings so that once we have generated the aspiration to supreme enlightenment in its aspirational and engaging forms we may train in their precepts.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with training in the precepts, once you have generated the aspiration to supreme enlightenment in its aspirational and engaging forms. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that once you have generated the aspiration to supreme enlightenment in its aspirational and engaging forms, a superior realization of training in the precepts has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.3.1.2.1.b) **The actual practice** has two parts:

II.2.3.1.2.1.b)1. How to take vows for the first time

II.2.3.1.2.1.b)2. Once taken, how to keep them from declining.

How to Take Vows for the First Time

II.2.3.1.2.1.b)1. [**How to take vows for the first time:**] Although the lamrim teaches taking aspirational and engaging bodhicitta vows sequentially, it is simpler to take them simultaneously according to Shantideva’s tradition. The way to do so is as follows.

First follow the usual preliminary steps. In particular, in a heartfelt fashion, perform the actual meditations from the way to rely on the

spiritual master up to the spirit of enlightenment. Then, while visualizing the master-deity on your head, think,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, from now until I attain the essence of enlightenment, I shall keep the conqueror's sons' vows, train in their vast activities, and for the sake of all sentient beings achieve buddhahood. May I maintain this intention until indeed I realize buddhahood!

Imagining that you repeat the words after Guru-Munindra, say,

I pray all buddhas and bodhisattvas,
Please heed me!
Just as the tathagatas of the past
Generated the spirit of enlightenment
And progressively trained
In bodhisattva precepts,
I too for the sake of sentient beings
Shall generate the spirit of enlightenment
And train progressively
In bodhisattva precepts.

Having repeated these verses three times, think that you have attained the bodhisattva vows.

Next to generate delight say,

Now my life has become fruitful.
I have well attained a human life.
I have been born in the buddha family
And become a son of the buddhas.
From now on whatever I do
Shall be in harmony with that family,

The flawless ethical family
 In this way I shall never tarnish.

Once Taken, How to Keep Them from Declining

II.2.3.1.2.1.b)2. **Once taken, how to keep them from declining:** While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, while reflecting on the benefits of the spirit of enlightenment, three times a day and three times a night, I shall keep my promise to maintain the spirit of enlightenment. No matter how sentient beings behave and what they do, I shall never banish a single one of them from my heart. To reinforce the spirit of enlightenment I have generated, I shall strive to accumulate the two collections by making offerings to the Three Jewels, and so forth. Furthermore, I shall refrain from the causes of the spirit of enlightenment's decline, such as the four black deeds: misleading my gurus, and so forth, with lies, be it in jest or in play; causing others to regret the good they have done; out of anger, speaking unpleasantly to the bodhisattvas who have entered the great vehicle; being hypocritical and dissimulating without a higher intention. I shall also train well in what reinforces the spirit of enlightenment: relying on the four white deeds, and so forth. In brief, until I achieve the essence of enlightenment, even at the cost of my life, I shall thoroughly respect the bodhisattva vows and never let them be tainted by the eighteen major

and forty-six secondary transgressions. I pray the master-deity to bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with training in the precepts, once you have generated the aspiration to supreme enlightenment in its aspirational and engaging forms. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that once you have generated the aspiration to supreme enlightenment in its aspirational and engaging forms, a superior realization of training in the precepts has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.3.1.2.1.c) [**The conclusion.**]

II.2.3.2. Having developed the spirit of enlightenment, how to train in bodhisattva practice:

II.2.3.2.1. How to train in the practices of conquerors' children in general

II.2.3.2.2. How to train in the last two perfections in particular.

How to Train in Bodhisattva Practice in General

II.2.3.2.1. [How to train in the practices of conquerors' children in general:]

II.2.3.2.1.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.3.2.1.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.3.2.1.1. [**What to do in the actual meditation session:**]

- II.2.3.2.1.1.a) The preliminaries
- II.2.3.2.1.1.b) The actual meditation
- II.2.3.2.1.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.3.2.1.1.a) **The preliminaries** are as before, up to: “Extraordinary master-deity who embodies all objects of refuge, O Munindra-Vajradhara, I supplicate you!”

Then,

O master-deity, please bless me and all sentient beings that we may be able to train correctly in both aspects of very powerful bodhisattva deeds, vast and profound.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with training correctly in both aspects of very powerful bodhisattva deeds, vast and profound. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of training correctly in both aspects of very powerful bodhisattva deeds, vast and profound, has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.3.2.1.1.b) **The actual practice** has two parts:

- II.2.3.2.1.1.b)1. How to train in the six perfections to ripen your mind
- II.2.3.2.1.1.b)2. How to train in the four ways of gathering a following to ripen others’ minds.

Training in the Six Perfections

II.2.3.2.1.1.b)1. [**How to train in the six perfections to ripen your mind:**] While meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, may I correctly train in the three kinds of generosity: without taking into consideration personal gain, honours, reputation and so forth, giving the Dharma by explaining the perfect teaching as well as I can to sentient beings lacking the teaching; giving non-fear by protecting frightened sentient beings from harm inflicted by humans, non-humans, the elements, and so forth; giving materially by providing whatever is appropriate to poor and deprived sentient beings, while overcoming miserliness, hope for reward and maturation effects. In brief, for the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, may I give my body, belongings and virtues to all sentient beings without stinginess! Master-deity please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly training in the practice of the three kinds of generosity. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a

superior realization of correct training in the practice of the three kinds of generosity has arisen in your mindstream and in others'. The practice of generosity consists of developing the intention to give.

Next, for the practice of **ethical discipline**, while meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, may I give up wrongful deeds that conflict with whatever vows I have taken, such as abstaining from the ten non-virtues! Having done so, may I generate in my mind the six perfections, generosity and so forth, and excellent virtues such as ethical discipline that I have yet to achieve, and may those that I have generated be enhanced! May I lead all sentient beings to the excellent virtue of ethical discipline, and so on, and then establish them in the path of progress and liberation! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly training in the practice of the three kinds of ethical discipline. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of correct training in the practice of the three kinds of ethical discipline has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

Next, for the practice of **patience**, while meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, even if all sentient beings rise against me, may I not feel even a moment's anger and in response to their harm may I benefit them! In others and in me may the Buddha's teaching, the perfection of patience, and so forth, be completed! Moreover, when unwanted misfortune suddenly befalls me like lacking food, wealth, beds and so forth, and falling ill, as these experiences of suffering are the consequences of bad karma that I produced in the past, and in this way many bad karmas are purified, there is no call to reject them; and especially given that putting up with the hardship that spiritual practice involves brings us closer to the path to omniscience, may I accept it all! May the course of samsaric suffering and that of the lower realms cease in me and in others! Furthermore, since the effects of being convinced of the inconceivable power of the maturation effects of black and white karma, of the blessings of the Three Jewels, of great beings—buddhas and bodhisattvas—and being convinced of unsurpassed enlightenment, the twelve kinds of scriptures, and the different points of bodhisattva precepts, are extremely vast, once convinced of them, for the purpose of achieving unsurpassed enlightenment may I correctly train in the different points of bodhisattva precepts, the content of the twelve categories of scriptures! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad

spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly training in the practice of the three kinds of patience. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of correct training in the practice of the three kinds of patience has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Next, for the practice of **joyous perseverance**, while meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood. For that purpose, even if I must achieve buddhahood by remaining in Unrelenting Torment for a hundred thousand aeons to produce each buddha-quality, the signs and marks, and so on, and to accomplish each bodhisattva practice, generosity, and so forth, without losing my perseverance, may I delight in it, having brought together all vast and profound virtues in me, and having established others in the path of virtue, may I attain unsurpassed enlightenment! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly training in the practice of the three kinds of joyous perseverance. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of correct training in the practice of the three kinds of joyous perseverance has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

Next, for the practice of **concentration**, while meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, may I train in all aspects of bodhisattva concentration: from the angle of their natures—mundane and super-mundane concentrations; from the angle of their features—meditative serenity and special insight, and the concentration that unites the two; from the angle of their functions—the concentration that abides in physical and mental bliss, the concentration that serves as a basis for all good qualities, and the concentration for accomplishing sentient beings' welfare! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly training in the practice of the three kinds of concentration. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of correct training in the practice of the three kinds of concentration has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

Next, for the practice of **wisdom**, while meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, may I train in all aspects of bodhisattva

wisdom: the wisdom realizing the ultimate—understanding reality; the wisdom realizing the relative—the five sciences; and the wisdom realizing the way to accomplish sentient beings' welfare! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly training in the practice of the three kinds of wisdom. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of correct training in the practice of the three kinds of wisdom has arisen in your mindstream and in others'.

Training in the Four Ways of Gathering a Following

II.2.3.2.1.1.b)2. For the practice of **the four ways of gathering a following to ripen others' minds**, while meditating the master-deity on your head, reflect in the following manner,

For the sake of all sentient beings, my mothers, may I quickly attain complete and perfect buddhahood! For that purpose, may I gather followers by [1] *being generous*, [2] *speaking pleasantly*: correcting and caring for them, explaining the teaching to them, [3] *fulfilling their goals*: having them practise the content of the teaching, and [4] *behaving consistently*: practising according to what I teach others! Thanks to these good ways of helping others, may I lead all sentient beings to the path of progress and

liberation! Master-deity, please bless me that I may be able to do so.

Having supplicated the master-deity, a stream of light and nectar of the five colours flows from all parts of his body onto your head. It penetrates your mind and body and those of all sentient beings. It purifies you of all the sins and obstructions you have accumulated since beginningless time, and especially rids you of all illnesses, bad spirits, sins and obstructions that interfere with correctly training in the practice of the four ways of gathering followers. Your bodies become translucent, of the nature of light. All your good qualities, lifespan, merit, and so forth, expand and increase. Think in particular that a superior realization of correct training in the practice of the four ways of gathering followers has arisen in your mindstream and in others’.

II.2.3.2.1.1.c) **The way to conclude** is as before.

II.2.3.2.1.2. **Between meditation sessions**, as before you should read canonical and exegetic works that explain powerful bodhisattva deeds—vast and profound.

How to Train in the Last Two Perfections in Particular

II.2.3.2.2. **Training in the last two perfections in particular** has two parts:

II.2.3.2.2.1. How to train in meditative serenity (*shamatha*), the essence of concentration

II.2.3.2.2.2. How to train in special insight (*vipashyana*), the essence of wisdom.

Training in Meditative Serenity

II.2.3.2.2.1. [How to train in meditative serenity (*shamatha*), the essence of concentration:]

II.2.3.2.2.1.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.3.2.2.1.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.3.2.2.1.1. [What to do in the actual meditation session:]

II.2.3.2.2.1.1.a) The preliminaries

II.2.3.2.2.1.1.b) The actual meditation

II.2.3.2.2.1.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.3.2.2.1.1.a) [**The preliminaries:**] They consist of common preliminaries and specific ones, which are to train in the thinking of lesser and intermediate beings, and in a favourable, secluded environment, including good companions whose views are in harmony with yours, to maintain pure ethical discipline, give up associating with many beings and coarse thoughts of attraction to objects of desire, sustain few desires and be content with less, sit on a comfortable seat, with your body straight, legs in vajra posture, hands in the meditative absorption position, calm down your breathing, and so on.

II.2.3.2.2.1.1.b) Having thus prepared the conditions conducive to meditative serenity, for **the actual meditation**, although [the Buddha] taught many possible objects for achieving serenity, the main object and the ideal one is the recollection of the Buddha. It is good to visualize a deity's form for it serves many purposes—preparing you for meditation of tantric deity-yoga, and so on. For this you think that the master-deity on your head emits from his heart a light ray like a spider's thread on the tip of which, in space in front of you at the level of your navel, “on a seat formed by sun and moon discs and by a multicoloured lotus, is your main spiritual master, so kind, in the form of the Conqueror Shakyamuni. The colour of his body is that of pure

gold” up to “made of pure light and adorned with the major and minor marks of a buddha,” the size of a kidney bean and meditate on him one-pointedly. Alternatively, you think that from the master-deity on your head comes a second master-deity, as one butter lamp is lit by another, who dissolves into you. [You visualize yourself] “on a precious throne both high and wide, borne by eight great lions, on a seat formed by sun and moon discs and by a multicoloured lotus, [as] the Conqueror Shakyamuni” up to “adorned with the major and minor marks of a buddha,” who like a rainbow in the sky, appears but lacks intrinsic nature, and you meditate on this one-pointedly.

At this point, if you wish to meditate a yellow object and it appears red, you wish it seated and it appears standing, you wish it solitary and it appears multiple, you are not to follow these appearances but meditate one-pointedly, maintaining the original object. Although at first it will not appear clearly, made of light, when the mental image of about half the body parts of the form are clear, you are to meditate, focusing your mind one-pointedly. Moreover, you should generate a firm aspiration, thinking,

During this session, of such a duration, I will not let laxity or excitement arise, and if perchance they should, I shall immediately identify them and reject them.

You then focus one-pointedly on the object, not forgetting it and reinforcing your remembrance of it from time to time. Maintaining that awareness continually is the excellent method for beginners to achieve the [nine] mental states.

In short, if you are to meditate genuine concentration, as it says [in Maitreya’s *Madyanta-vibhaga-karika*], “The eight applications reject the five faults/ Relying on them will cause it to arise,” you must achieve it by relying on the eight applications, the antidotes that exclude the five faults.

The fault that arises when starting to concentrate is laziness. It has four antidotes: faith that perceives the qualities of concentration,

aspiration that is drawn to concentration, joyous perseverance that strives after concentration, and pliancy, the fruit of effort. When striving for concentration, “forgetting the instruction” is a fault, the antidote to which is recollection. It is not enough that recollection does not forget the object, for the mind focused one-pointedly on the object must ascertain it intensely and tightly. When absorbed in concentration there are two faults, laxity and excitement, whose antidote is watchfulness. Watchfulness thoroughly verifies whether laxity or excitement have arisen. The most skilful are able to detect and reject laxity and excitement when they are imminent; those with average skill, as soon as they appear; those with lesser skill must reject laxity and excitement not long after they have appeared. How then does lethargy differ from laxity and excitement? Lethargy is characterized by physical and mental heaviness; its object is unclear. It is as if darkness had descended on the mind. In the case of coarse laxity, although the mind does not move towards another object, it lacks limpidity and clarity and recollection is weak. In the case of subtle laxity, limpidity and clarity are present but the tightness of the ascertainment of the object has declined slightly. As an antidote to it, apply the instruction to recall the Three Jewels’ good qualities, bring to mind images of light, and [imagine that] your winds and mind have merged with the sky. In the case of subtle excitement, the mind does not remain steadfast on the object but scatters slightly. The antidote is to meditate while relying on recollection and watchfulness. In the case of coarse excitement [the mind] is unstable and scatters to objects of attachment despite relying on recollection and watchfulness. The antidote is to apply the instruction to meditate on impermanence, the sufferings of the three lower realms and of samsara, and halt excitement forcefully. When both laxity and excitement occur, non-application [of their antidotes] is a fault. The antidote is to deploy application and reject them as soon as you have become aware of their presence.

Stressing the intensity of the mind's strong grip of the meditational object may enhance the clarity aspect but increases excitement, thereby making it difficult to achieve the stability aspect. Holding it loosely instead of tightly may enhance stability but increases laxity, thereby making it difficult to achieve the clarity aspect. So based on your personal experience, when you have the impression that by heightening [your grip of the object], excitement will arise, you should loosen it a degree. When you sense that by leaving things as they are, laxity will occur, you raise it a degree. Then you will achieve a balance. Between the two, bring the mind back from scattering and excitement and seek stability. Each time you achieve stability, watch out for laxity and generate clarity with intense perception. Meditate the two alternately and you will achieve faultless concentration. Do not count on just limpidity that lacks clarity and ascertainment's intense mode of apprehension. When you have stopped laxity and excitement and are remaining continually in concentration, application [of remedies] is a fault. Consequently, the antidote is non-application of the antidotes to laxity and excitement, and leaving the concentration as it is. By training well in concentration in this fashion, you will progressively achieve the nine mental states and generate meditative serenity with physical and mental pliancy.

II.2.3.2.2.1.1.c) **The way to conclude** is as before.

II.2.3.2.2.1.2. **Between meditation sessions**, as before you should read canonical and exegetic works that explain the system of meditative serenity.

Training in Special Insight

II.2.3.2.2.2. **How to train in special insight (*vipashyana*), the essence of wisdom:**

II.2.3.2.2.2.1. What to do in the actual meditation session

II.2.3.2.2.2.2. What to do between meditation sessions.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1. [**What to do in the actual meditation session:**]

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.a) The preliminaries

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b) The actual meditation

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.c) The conclusion.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.a) [**The preliminaries:**] They are as explained in the context of meditative serenity. More specifically, while correctly relying on knowledgeable spiritual masters, you should receive instruction on special insight from them, ardently supplicate the masters indissociable from the deity, strive to purify [sins], accumulate [virtue], and so on. Combining the three is the indispensable prerequisite to the realization of views.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b) **The actual practice** has two parts:

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)1. The way to meditate once the selflessness of persons is established

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2. The way to meditate once the selflessness of phenomena is established.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)1. [**The way to meditate once the selflessness of persons is established:**] Although in his discourses, the Conqueror taught innumerable logical reasonings to establish selflessness, for beginners establishing it through the four key points is easier. The way to do so is as follows.

The thought, “Me, me!” that our mind tightly hold on to in the depths of our hearts, even when plunged in deep sleep, is the innate apprehension of self. When someone accuses us falsely of making a mistake that we have not made, we think, “I am being accused of a mistake I didn’t make!” When the strong apprehension of our “I” appears from deep within us, it is clear how the innate conception of self apprehends the “I”. At that point a subtle part of our consciousness should examine the “I” that the mind apprehends and the way it

apprehends it. If the [analytical] mind is too strong, the former perception will disappear, there will be nothing left [to examine], and we will fail. The major part of the mind should consistently be aware of the “I” and only a small portion of it examine it. When analyzing it, the bases on which the innate conception of the “I” apprehends the “I” are the five aggregates, or body and mind, and nothing else. It does not do it on the basis of any of the five aggregates individually nor on the basis of the body or mind individually. It is on a global basis—the collection of five aggregates or the collection of the body and mind—that the innate apprehension of the “I” grasps the “I” as having always existed on its own, and not as a simple imputation by conception on this basis. The “I” that is its object of apprehension is the object of negation to be refuted. It must be ascertained not by understanding someone else’s explanation or by simple verbal images but from within yourself, palpably. This is the **first key point**, the key point of ascertaining the way the object to be negated appears.

Regarding the **second key point**, ascertaining the range [of possibilities], reflect,

If the “I” apprehended tightly in the depths of my heart, by the perception that thinks of the “I”, exists in relation to the five aggregates, is it one with them or distinct from them? There is absolutely no third possible mode of existence other than these two. Any existent, whatever it is, must have either an aspect of unity or an aspect of multiplicity,

and draw the conclusion that there is absolutely no third possible mode of existence other than these two.

Regarding the **third key point**, ascertaining the lack of inherent unity, if you imagine that the “I” thus apprehended is [inherently] one with the five aggregates, since a living being has five aggregates, the “I” too would have to have five distinct continua. Or, since the “I” is one, the five aggregates too would have to be one, partless, and so on.

In other terms, it raises many problems. Consequently, conclude that the “I” thus apprehended is not [inherently] one with the five aggregates.

Moreover, if the “I” thus apprehended were established as one with the five aggregates, since the five aggregates arise and disintegrate, the “I” established by the perception aware of it standing on its own would also have to arise and disintegrate. If that were the case, would the “I” that arises and disintegrates be one with or distinct from its previous moment of existence and its subsequent moment of existence? If it were considered to be one with them, all three “I”s, that of the previous life, the present life and the subsequent life, would be one and partless. If they were distinct, although generally speaking what is distinct is not necessarily unconnectedly distinct, since whatever is inherently distinct must be distinct and utterly unconnected, the “I” of the previous, the present and the subsequent lives would be utterly unconnected. This poses many problems: you would experience the results of karmas that you had not accomplished, accomplished karma would be lost, and so forth. As the previous and subsequent moments of such an “I” are not [inherently] distinct, conclude that the “I” as apprehended by that perception is not distinct from the aggregates.

In addition, if the “I” thus apprehended were one with the aggregates, since they would be inherently one, they would have to be completely and utterly one. In that case, it would conflict with the “I” or self being the appropriator of the five aggregates, the five aggregates being what is appropriated by the “I” or self, and so forth. Therefore, conclude that the “I” thus apprehended is not one with the five aggregates.

Regarding the **fourth key point**, ascertaining the lack of inherent plurality, although the “I” thus ascertained is not established as one with the five aggregates, if you think perhaps it is established as distinct from the aggregates, just as once you have eliminated each of the [four] aggregates, the aggregate of form, and so on, the aggregate of consciousness that can be recognized distinctly remains, once you

have eliminated each of the [five] aggregates, that of form, and so on, you should be able to distinctly identify an “I” thus apprehended, but that is not possible. Consequently, conclude that the “I” thus apprehended is not established as distinct from the five aggregates.

Having analyzed the four key points, once you have ascertained that the “I” as apprehended by the innate conception of “I” does not exist, meditate that ascertainment continually and one-pointedly, free of laxity and excitement.

If the ascertainment weakens slightly, as before beginners should revert to an analysis of the four key points and induce an ascertainment of the lack of inherent existence. Those with higher faculties will analyze whether the “I” as it appears to the innate conception of “I” exists or not. On that basis they can elicit an ascertainment of non-inherent existence in a way similar to the analysis of the four key points. At that point, the way to meditate space-like concentration is to meditate one-pointedly the combination of the two: from the angle of confirmation, a firm ascertainment of non-inherent existence, and from the angle of appearances, an ascertainment of the void that is the simple absence of the object of negation, inherent existence. Subsequent to it, meditate the illusion-like display of the “I” and so forth; in other terms, of all phenomena. In addition, by the strong ascertainment of non-inherent existence in meditative absorption, train in inducing subsequently the appearance of the false and illusion-like display according to which all that manifests, although appearing, lacks inherent existence.

II.2.3.2.2.1.b)2. The way to meditate once the selflessness of phenomena is established:

II.2.3.2.2.1.b)2.1. The way to meditate once composite phenomena’s lack of true nature is established

II.2.3.2.2.1.b)2.2. The way to meditate once non-composite phenomena’s lack of true nature is established.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2.1. The first [**the way to meditate once composite phenomena's lack of true nature is established**] includes:

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2.1.1. Matter

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2.1.2. Consciousness

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2.1.3. Non-associated compositional factors.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2.1.1. [**Matter:**] For the first, take the example of a body. On the basis of a body that is a simple collection of five limbs made of tangible flesh and bones, what appears to us unmistakably is a whole body that stands on its own and does not exist as a simple imputation by conception. This is how the object to be negated appears. If such a body existed in relation to the body that is simply a collection of five limbs made of tangible flesh and bones, would it be one with or distinct from the body that is simply a collection of five limbs made of tangible flesh and bones? If it were one with it, as the body that is a simple collection of five limbs made of tangible flesh and bones was produced by the parents' sperm and egg, the drop of [the combined] sperm and egg that was the basis into which the consciousness entered would be the [coarse] body that is a simple collection of five limbs made of tangible flesh and bones. Moreover, just as it has the five limbs, so too would the body that is a collection of five parts be multiplied by five [one for each limb]. If they were distinct, once you had eliminated each limb, the head and so forth, you should be able to point to a body, but you cannot. Having generated the ascertainment that thinks, "In no way does such a body exist," meditate on it.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2.1.2. [**Consciousness:**] Take today's consciousness as an example. If today's consciousness did not exist as a simple imputation by conception on the bases of the consciousness of this morning and the consciousness of this afternoon, would it be one with or distinct from the consciousness of this morning and the consciousness of this afternoon? If it were one with them, on the basis of this morning's consciousness you would find this afternoon's consciousness. If they were distinct, after eliminating this morning's

consciousness and this afternoon's consciousness, you should be able to indicate today's consciousness, but you cannot. Having generated the ascertainment that thinks, "There is no such consciousness", as before meditate on it.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2.1.3. [**Non-associated compositional factors:**] Take the example of a time period such as a year. If there were a year that existed from its own side and not as a simple imputation by a conception on a year's bases of denomination, twelve months, would it exist as one with the twelve months or as distinct from them? If they were one, just as there are twelve months, so would there have to be twelve years. If they were distinct, having eliminating each of the twelve months you should be able to indicate a year, but you cannot. Having generated the ascertainment that thinks, "There is no such year", as before meditate on it.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.b)2.2. **The way to meditate once non-composite phenomena's lack of true nature is established:** Take the example of space. As space has many parts, directional and inter-directional, analyze whether it is one with them or distinct from them and having generated the ascertainment of non-inherent existence, meditate on it as before.

In short, on the one hand there is space-like absorption one-pointedly focused on an ascertainment that all samsaric and non-samsaric phenomena—the "I", aggregates, mountains, fences, houses, and so on, do not have so much as a particle's worth of self-produced existence that is not an imputation by conception, and on the other hand, there is the ensuing illusion-like [concentration] that subsequently understands that all that appears [to exist inherently] and arises from a collection of causes and conditions does not exist inherently and is therefore by nature false. Special insight is defined as the absorption associated with the bliss of mental and physical pliancy induced by analysis through training well in these two yogas.

II.2.3.2.2.2.1.c) **The way to conclude** is as before.

II.2.3.2.2.2.2. **Between meditation sessions**, as before you should read canonical and exegetic works that explain the system of special insight, and so forth.

Vajrayana

Having in this way trained your mind in the common path, it is absolutely necessary to enter the Vajrayana, for thanks to that path you will easily complete the two collections without having to take three countless aeons to do so. Moreover, having received an experiential explanation on the way to rely on a spiritual master up to meditative serenity and special insight, meditate daily in four sessions, or in a minimum of one, and gain a transformational experience of the stages of the path, for this is the best method to take full advantage of your life with freedom and fortune.