



From chapter 2 of: "Valid Congition"

9. The Truth of the Cessation

PROVING LIBERATION AND OMNISCIENCE

The truth of the cessation

The meaning of the words

*This is not permanent,
because the impediment of the cause and so on is possible.*

Consider the ordinary aggregates, they are not a permanent continuum that cannot be stopped, because a powerful impediment that hinders their cause and the incompleteness of favorable conditions and so on are possible.

A detailed analysis

1. The way to prove liberation
2. The way to prove omniscience

The way to prove liberation

If, for its specific cause, there is something powerful that damages it, it follows that through a powerful antidote its own type of continuum can be eliminated.

For example, if you see something powerful that damages cold contact,

you see that the continuum of the cold experience stops. Equally, you see that there is something powerful that damages the cause of ordinary aggregates.

This is a correct reason of the nature of things. Its pervasion is established by a valid direct cognition.

Establishing the property of the subject:

what engages in a way contrary to the nature of a given thing, necessarily for the type, is a powerful damage of its type.

For example, like the projection that conceives the absence of fire in a place where there is smoke, the conception of self of person engages in the opposite way of the reality of the thing.

When you see that the conception of self of person has a powerful damager, you establish the existence of what damages the cause of suffering, through the certainty of the valid cognition that the two are cause and result.

In what way?

According to what is taught (219-220 *Valid Cognition*)

"In those who see the self, the concept of the self will always arise. Because of the concept of the "I" attachment for happiness arises. This attachment obscures the defects and by seeing the qualities it completely attaches itself. They appropriate what supports "my". As long as they are attached to the i they will continue to exist in samsara."

Someone seeing a self directly develops the thought that attaches itself to not wanting to separate itself from the self, by the very force of the conception that one grasps onto a person's self, and from this arises attach-

ment to one’s own happiness and from this arises attachment to the sensory powers and so on that provide one’s own happiness, and attachment to food, clothing and so on that are outside (arises).

Because of this he acts by performing the formative actions to achieve his own happiness. From this arises the suffering of not satisfying one’s desires and getting what one doesn’t want. This is attested by valid direct cognition.

By generating the direct valid cognition that the suffering of this life and the conception grasping to a self are cause and result, through the inference of the nature of things one will obtain the certainty that from attachment at the moment of death there will be its following type. Since the term suffering is also affixed to this, one obtains the certainty of cause and result of the suffering of the following life through the inference of the nature of things.

(translated by Fabrizio Pallotti/Atisha Mathur)

Verse 89
extracted from chapter 5
of the Bodhisattvacharyavatara

The vast and profound should not be taught to lesser
beings Nor to a woman unaccompanied by a man.
Out of respect for the Dharmas of lesser and
supreme beings as equal, I should utilize all.

From "Clear Words" Chapter 24

17. *Effects and the very causes,
agent, action and object,
production and cessation and
it damages also the effect.*

(It damages also effects) What does it mean?

If the vase was intrinsically existent, and one would cognize it as such, in that case what would be the need of it having causes, conditions and so forth such as clay. Therefore it doesn't exist like that.

Also, what we call vase is not feasible to be an effect without causes. If it was without those, then the potter maker, the vase making wheel and so forth and the action of making the vase could not exist. Without the existence of these also production and cessation would not exist, and if production and cessation don't exist it would contradict results and so forth and everything else.

Therefore, for you positing intrinsically existent things nothing would be possible. Whereas for us asserting emptiness, all these (you are saying) are impossible.

How so?

18. *Everything that arises by dependent relation
Has been explained as emptiness.
That is designated in dependence and
This is the Middle Way*

In dependence of causes and conditions, whatever arises by dependent relation, sprout, consciousness, and so forth, all these arise without intrinsic production, and whatever is non intrinsic production is emptiness.

The Baghawan said:

*“What is produced from conditions is not produced
Is not intrinsically produced from them.
What comes from conditions is explained as empty.
The one who understands emptiness is mindful”.*

This was taught.

The Descent from Lanka extensively teaches:

*“Mahamati, it is with the intention of non intrinsically
existent production that I teach that all phenomena
are without production”.*

Also from the Superior hundred and fifty verses:

*“Teaching that all phenomena are empty is in the modality of
non intrinsic existence. Whatever is emptiness is designated in
dependence. The very emptiness defines distinctively what is
called designated in dependence”.*

A chariot is designated upon the wheels and so forth, the parts of the chariot. The very fact that it is designated in dependence upon its parts is the non intrinsically existent production and whatever is not intrinsically produced is emptiness. The emptiness characterized by lack of intrinsic production is what is explained as “Middle Way”.

In this way, whatever is not inherently produced, doesn't have existence.

Whatever is not intrinsically produced, because it doesn't disintegrate, it is not non-existent.

Because it is free from the two extremes of existence and non-existence, the emptiness which is characterized by non-being inherently produced is the middle way, and is known as the Middle Path.

Therefore, in this way emptiness, designated in dependence and middle way are different names for arising by dependent relation.

(translated by Fabrizio Pallotti/Atisha Mathur)

Verse extracted from:

A prayer for the beginning, the middle and the end
by Je Tzong Khapa

Serkong Rinpoche, during the first day of teachings “Rising employee and emptiness” of May 17, requested the recitation of this verse during the teachings

དེ་ཡང་རྗེ་བདག་ཉིད་ཆེན་པོས་ཐོག་མཐའ་མ་ལས།

ཇི་ལྟར་ཐོས་པའི་དོན་ལ་རིགས་པ་བཞིས། །ཉིན་དང་མཚན་དུ་ཚུལ་བཞིན་རབ་
བརྟགས་ནས། །བསམ་བྱའི་གནས་ལ་བསམ་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡི། །རྣམ་དཔྱོད་སྒོ་
ཡིས་ཐེ་ཚོམ་ཚོད་པར་ཤོག །

Having examined day and night,

With the four reasonings all that I have heard,

May I banish every doubt with the discerning understanding,

That arises from such contemplation.

A Prayer for the Beginning, Middle, and End of Practice by Je Tzong Khapa

Thog tha ma

I bow before the conquering buddhas, bodhisattvas, and arhats of all directions and of all times.

I offer this boundless prayer with the purest of minds to free countless beings from cycles of existence.

By the power of the unfailing Three Jewels
And of great *rishis* possessed of the force of truth,
May these sincere words bear fruit.

Life after life, may I never be born into realms
Of great suffering or unfavorable circumstance,
But gain always a precious human form
Blessed with every conducive provision.

From the moment of birth may I never
Be lured by the pleasures of existence,
But, guided by renunciation intent on freedom,
Be resolute in seeking the pure life.

May there be no hindrance to becoming a monk,
From friends, family, or possessions,
And for every conducive circumstance,
By mere thought may it appear.

Once a monk, may I be untainted as long as I live,
By breach of vow or natural fault, as promised in the presence
of my preceptor.

I pray that on such pure foundation,
And for every mother sentient being,
I devote myself with hardship for countless eons
To every aspect, profound and vast, of the Mahayana.

May I be cared for by true spiritual friends,
Filled with knowledge and insight,
Senses stilled, minds controlled, loving, compassionate,
And with courage untiring in working for others.

As Sada Prarudita devoted himself to Dharma Arya,
May I sincerely please my spiritual master
With body, life, and wealth,
Never disappointing him for an instant.

I pray that the Perfection of Wisdom, forever profound,
A bringer of peace, unbound by identification,
Be taught to me as taught to Sada Prarudita,
Unsullied by the muddy waters of false views.

May I never fall under the sway
Of false teachers and misleading friends,
Their flawed views of existence and nonexistence
Well outside the Buddha's intention.

With sail hoisted of the sincerest of minds,
Driven by winds of unflagging effort,

On this well-built ship of study, thought, and meditation,
May I bring living beings from samsara's ocean.

As much as I excel in learning,
As much as I give to others,

As pure as my morality grows,
As much as I become wise,
By as much may I be empty of pride.

I pray that I listen insatiably
To countless teachings at the feet of a master,
Single-handedly with logic unflawed,
Prizing open scriptures' meanings.

Having examined day and night
With fourfold logic all that I have heard,
May I banish every doubt
With the discerning understanding
That arises from such contemplation.

With conviction in dharmas profound
Gained from understanding born of contemplation,
I pray that I retreat to solitude, with a perseverance severing life's
 attachments,
To devote myself to proper practice.

When the Buddha's thoughts dawn upon me
Through study, thought, and meditation,
I pray that things of this life forever bonded to samsara
And thoughts of my happiness alone never arise in my mind.

Unattached to my possessions
I pray that I destroy parsimony,
Gathering disciples around me
By giving first of material wealth to satisfy them with Dharma.

With a mind renounced, may I never transgress
Even the smallest precept,
Though it may cost my life,
Flying forever, therefore, the flag of freedom.

When I see, hear, or think of those
Who struck, beat, or maligned me,
May I be without anger, speak of their virtues,
And meditate upon patience.

I pray I will apply myself to enthusiasm,
Achieving virtues unachieved, improving those attained,
Banishing utterly threefold debilitating laziness.

I pray to abandon the meditative absorption
That lacks the power of insight to quell samsara,
That is divorced from the moist compassion to quash nirvana's
passivity,
And that mostly throws one back to cycles of existence,
But develop instead the meditative absorption
That unites compassion and insight.

I pray that I banish false views of emptiness,
Mentally fabricated and partially known,

Born from fear of the most profound truth, cherished as supreme,
And that I realize all phenomena to be forever empty.

May I bring to faultless morality
Those so-called practitioners with their wayward ethics,
Shamelessly empty of pure practice,
Rashly pursuing paths shunned by the wise.

May I bring to the path praised by the buddhas,
Those lost and fallen onto wrong paths,
Swayed by deluded teachers and misleading friends.

I pray that my lion-like roar of teaching, argument, and composition
Flattens the pride of fox-like false orators,
And, gathering well-trained disciples about me,
I fly the banner of the teachings forever.

In whatever life I may drink the nectar of Buddha's teachings,
I pray to be born into a good family
And be of handsome build, wealthy, powerful, and wise,
Blessed with long life and sound health.

May I develop the unique love of a mother
For those who malign me
And harbor ill designs upon my life,
My body, or my possessions.

By growing within myself
The pure and extraordinary bodhi-mind,
Whose nature is to cherish others more than self,
May I soon give them unsurpassable enlightenment.

Whoever hears, sees, or calls these verses to mind,
May they be undaunted in fulfilling
The powerful prayers of the bodhisattvas.

By the power of these vast prayers
Made with the purest intention,
May I attain the perfection of prayer
And fulfill the hopes of every living being.

Colophon:

Translated by Gavin Kilty from Je Tsongkhapa’s A Prayer for the Beginning, Middle, and End of Practice (thog ma dang bar dang tha mar dge ba’i smon lam; thog mtha’ ma) in The Splendor of an Autumn Moon: The Devotional Verse of Tsongkhapa, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001, 193–207. Reprinted here with permission from the publisher.

Dedication prayer (of Lam-Rim)

བསྐྱེད་པ་རིན་ཆེན་མཚོ་ཀླ་གྱིས་མ་ལུབ་པའམ།
གྲུབ་གྲུང་ཉམས་པར་
གྱུར་པའི་སྤྱོད་པ་དེར་ནི།
སྤྱིང་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོས་ཡིད་རབ་བསྐྱེད་པ་ཡིས།
ཕན་བདེའི་གཏེར་དེ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པར་ཤོག།

TÄN PA RIN CHHEN CHHOG GI MA KHYAB PAM

With my heart going out with great compassion

KHYAB KYANG NYAM PAR GYUR WÄI CHHOG DER NI

In whatever direction the most precious teachings

NYING JE CHHEN PÖ YI RAB KYÖ PA YI

Have not yet spread, or once spread have declined

PHÄN DEI TER DE SÄL WAR JE PAR SHOG

May I reveal this treasure of happiness and aid.

The 37 Factors of Enlightenment

The 37 Factors of Enlightenment are:

1. The four applications of mindfulness
2. The four right abandonments
3. The four supports of miraculous abilities
4. The five powers
5. The five strengths
6. The seven elements of enlightenment
7. The eight elements of an Arya path (i.e., the noble eightfold path)

The Four Applications of Mindfulness

The *four applications of mindfulness* are:

- (1) Application of mindfulness to the body
- (2) Application of mindfulness to feelings
- (3) Application of mindfulness to the mind
- (4) Application of mindfulness to phenomena

The meaning of an *application of mindfulness* is: a path consciousness pertaining to the mental factor of either mindfulness or wisdom that observes a body, feeling, mind or phenomenon and examines it by way of its specific or general characteristics.

Lama Tsongkhapa says in his ***Golden Rosary*** that the body refers to (a) internal forms which are sense powers such the eye sense power, the ear sense power, etc., (b) external forms which are the five sense objects, and (c) forms that are neither external nor internal, i.e. the physical sense organs such as the eye-balls, and so forth.

Feelings refer to pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings; the mind refers to the six main minds (the five sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness), and phenomena refer to (a) all mental factors other than feeling, (b) all impermanent phenomena that are neither form nor consciousness (such as karmic imprints, a person, etc.), and (c) permanent phenomena.

Gyaltsab Je explains in his ***Ornament of the Essence of the Presentation of the Abhisamayalamkara and its Commentary***:

“To examine the *specific characteristics* of those four objects means to thoroughly analyze the fact that the body is impure, feelings are [in the nature of] suffering, the mind is impermanent, and phenomena are selfless.

To examine the *general characteristics* means to thoroughly analyze impermanence, suffering, being empty, selflessness, and the lack of true existence.

The four types of application of mindfulness thoroughly analyze those characteristics with wisdom and focus on them again and again with mindfulness.

The purpose of such analysis is to cause us to engage in meditation on the four noble truths once we have understood the four truths.

When applying mindfulness to the body, we engage in meditation on *true suffering* since we come to understand that the body is in the nature of pervasive conditioned suffering and thus generate the wish to be free from the body.

Through applying mindfulness to feelings, we engage in meditation on the *true origin* because we come to see that feelings give rise to craving and hence generate the wish to eliminate craving.

When applying mindfulness to the mind, we engage in meditation on *true cessation* since we come to realize that, being without a self, the mind is generated and ceases in each moment. Thereby, we will lose our fear of the absence of a self and generate the wish to actualize [*true*] *cessations*.

When applying mindfulness to phenomena, we engage in meditation on the *true path* because we come to realize that thoroughly afflicted phenomena (i.e., *true sufferings* and *true origins*) are to be abandoned, whereas completely pure phenomena (i.e., *true cessations* and *true paths*) are to be relied upon. Thus, we will generate the wish to meditate [on true paths].

The reason for observing the body first is that childish beings think: the body is an entity that serves as the abode of the self; feelings are enjoyed by the self; the mind is an entity that is the self; and phenomena are the basis of a thoroughly afflicted self and a completely pure self.

From the small path of accumulation onwards, Bodhisattvas meditate on the four applications of mindfulness. When these four are brought to completion they become an aspect of the omniscient mind of a Buddha.

Therefore, there are many purposes for positing the applications of mindfulness here: the main purpose is (a) to understand that the 37 Factors of Enlightenment arise in the continuum of Bodhisattvas; (b) to understand that if the different classes of spiritual realizations are divided with regard to the person on which they are based, the 37 Factors of Enlightenment belong in the class of Hearer realizations; (c) to understand that Bodhisattvas meditate on the 37 Factors that are concordant with the 37 Factors of Hearers and that upon completion of that meditation the 37 Factors become the omniscient mind of a Buddha; and (d) to realize thereby that an omniscient mind has aspects that are similar to those of Hearers.”

The Four Right Abandonments

The *four right abandonments* are:

- (1) Right abandonment that abandons a non-virtue that has arisen
- (2) Right abandonment that does not give rise to a non-virtue that has not yet arisen
- (3) Right abandonment that increases a virtue that has arisen
- (4) Right abandonment that gives rise to a virtue that has not yet arisen

The meaning of a *correct abandonment* is: a path consciousness which is the mental factor of effort taking delight in averting what is to be abandoned and in adopting what is an antidote.

Gyaltsab Je explains in his *Ornament of the Essence of the Presentation*:

“The explanation of the *applications of mindfulness*, is followed by an explanation of the paths that have arisen from effort – the *four right abandonments*. The reason for presenting these [eight factors] in this particular order is that now one needs to give rise to [a type of] effort that takes delight in averting what is to be abandoned and in

adopting what is an antidote so that one can start to engage in averting and adopting with regard to the four noble truths.

There are four kinds of *right abandonment*, which are [the types of] effort that are the cause of: (1) rightly abandoning a thoroughly afflicted non-virtue that has arisen, (2) not giving rise to [a thoroughly afflicted non-virtue] that has not yet arisen, (3) increasing a completely pure virtue that has arisen, and (4) giving rise to a completely pure virtue that has not yet arisen.

In the sutra it is said that in order to (1) abandon non-virtuous phenomena that have arisen, (2) not give rise to [non-virtuous phenomena] that have not yet arisen, (3) increase virtuous phenomena that have arisen, and (4) give rise to [virtuous phenomena] that have not yet arisen, one should cultivate aspiration, endeavor, making efforts, correct perception by the mind, and firmly settling of the mind.

Aspiration is the foundation of effort (since it precedes effort). Endeavor refers to effort that mentally takes up the attributes of calm abiding, correct perception, and equanimity.

Making efforts refers to generating the antidotes to laxity and excitement: the direct antidotes [to laxity and excitement] are *correct perception by the mind* and *settling the mind*. When laxity arises in the mind, one should generate correct perception of the qualities of the Buddha, thinking about which gives rise to a pure faith that elevates the mind. When excitement arises, one should think about the disadvantages of cyclic existence; this produces a sense of weariness that enables one to gather the scattered mind back inside and settle it on a focal object.

Right abandonment is presented [here] as arising on the middling path of accumulation. This is in order to lead to the understanding that on that level *right abandonment* attains a special strength and [that the *right abandonment* presented here] is the result of meditating on the *application of mindfulness*. However, a fully qualified *right abandonment* arises also on the small path of accumulation."

The Four Supports of Miraculous Abilities

The *four supports of miraculous abilities* are:

- (1) A support of miraculous abilities that is aspiration
- (2) A support of miraculous abilities that is effort
- (3) A support of miraculous abilities that is reflection
- (4) A support of miraculous abilities that is analysis

The meaning of a *support of miraculous abilities* is: a path consciousness that is the mental factor of concentration endowed with the eight formatives abandoning the five faults.

The eight formatives are:

1. Aspiration
2. Exertion
3. Faith
4. Pliancy
5. Mindfulness
6. Introspection
7. Reflection
8. Equanimity

The five faults are:

- 1) Laziness
- 2) Forgetting the instructions
- 3) Laxity and excitement
- 4) Non-application of antidotes when they are needed
- 5) Application of antidotes when they are not needed

Gyalsab Je explains in his *Ornament of the Essence of the Presentation*:

Next comes the paths that completely devote themselves to concentration – the four *supports of miraculous abilities*. The reason for explaining them after the four *right abandonments* is that once one possesses effort taking delight in averting what is to be abandoned and in adopting what is an antidote, one needs to make the mind serviceable through concentration.

Supports of miraculous abilities are of four types: they refer to a concentration that is endowed with the eight formatives eliminating the five faults and that (1) connects one-pointedly with the object of meditation in dependence on aspirational concentration; (2) connects one-pointedly with the object of meditation in dependence on effort; (3) connects one-pointedly with the object of meditation in dependence on reflective concentration acquired at birth from having meditated on concentration in a previous [life]; or that (4) connects one-pointedly with the object of meditation in dependence on analytical concentration that meticulously discerns the Dharma taught by others.

The eight formatives abandoning [the five faults] are: aspiration, exertion, faith, pliancy, mindfulness, introspection, reflection, and equanimity.

Among the five faults the first one is (1) laziness that impedes meditation. The direct antidote removing laziness is exertion. The foundation of exertion is aspiration. The cause of aspiration is faith. The result of exertion is pliancy.

[Another] fault is (2) forgetting the instructions when meditating on concentration. Its antidote is mindfulness.

(3) Laxity and excitement are faults when one engages in the actual practice. Although mindfulness is their main antidote, one needs an introspection that checks [whether] laxity or excitement [are present].

If laxity or excitement have arisen, it is a fault (4) not to apply an antidote. The antidote to [not applying an antidote] is reflection.

It is also a fault (5) to apply antidotes when concentration is operating naturally without any need for exertion. The antidote [to such an unnecessary application] is equanimity free from exertion.

Since the [four types of] concentration are the main basis for cultivating miraculous abilities, they are called *supports of miraculous abilities*.

In order to understand that the three [groups] of paths (i.e., the *applications of mindfulness*, the *right abandonments*, and the *supports of miraculous abilities*) enhance one another, the supports of miraculous abilities are presented as arising on the great path of accumulation. However, we should understand that they also arise on the small path of accumulation.”

The Five Powers

The *five powers* are:

- (1) The power that is faith
- (2) The power that is effort
- (3) The power that is mindfulness
- (4) The power that is concentration
- (5) The power that is wisdom

The definition of a *power* that is part of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment is: a path consciousness consisting of any of the five mental factors of faith and so forth that independently cultivates an Arya path and is attained from the heat level of the path of preparation onward.

Gyaltsab Je explains in his ***Ornament of the Essence of the Presentation***:

The explanation of the *supports of miraculous abilities* is followed by an explanation of the paths that prepare [the mind] for a clear realization of the truth – the *five powers*. The reason for presenting them in this sequence is that the heat and peak levels of the path of preparation, which control the clear realization of the truth, arise after having thoroughly trained the mind in concentration.

Regarding the subject, a *power* that has the nature of the heat and peak levels [of the path of preparation], it is fivefold, because it consists of a power that is (1) faith that believes in the truth, (2) effort that delights in averting what is to be averted and in adopting what is to be adopted, (3) mindfulness that does not forget the observed objects and their aspects, (4) concentration single-pointedly focused [on its object], and (5) wisdom that discerns the mode of existence of phenomena.”

The five strengths

The *five strengths* are:

- (1) The strength that is faith
- (2) The strength that is effort
- (3) The strength that is mindfulness
- (4) The strength that is concentration
- (5) The strength that is wisdom

The meaning of a *strength* that is part of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment is: a path consciousness pertaining to any of the five mental factors of faith and so forth that cannot be suppressed by its opposing factors¹ and is attained from the forbearance level of the path of preparation onward.

Gyaltsab Je explains in his ***Ornament of the Essence of the Presentation***:

The explanation of the *five powers* is followed by an explanation of the paths associated with the clear realizations – the *five strengths*. The reason for presenting them in this sequence is that the levels of forbearance and supreme Dharma that are in the nature of the *strengths* arise [after] one has attained the heat level etc. that is in the nature of the *powers*. This is because [after one has attained the heat and peak

¹ The opposing factors are: non-faith, laziness, forgetfulness, distraction, and distorted discernment.

levels, the five mental factors of] faith and so forth that are in the nature of the levels of forbearance and supreme Dharma arise.

The *five strengths* are: (1) faith that believes in the truth, (2) effort [that exerts itself] to quickly realize the truth, (3) mindfulness that does not forget the observed objects and their aspects, (4) concentration single-pointedly focused [on its object], and (5) wisdom that discerns the mode of existence of phenomena.

These *five strengths* are [like] a master that controls the clear realization of the truth. The difference between them and the previous [*powers*] is that while one is meditating [on the *five strengths*] one undermines the manifestation of non-faith, laziness, forgetfulness, distraction, and distorted discernment. Therefore, even during the subsequent time, when one is no longer meditating on faith and so forth, non-faith etc. will hardly ever arise.

On the heat and peak level, when the *five powers* are active, their opposing factors do not arise either, but they manifest during the subsequent time.

The seven elements of enlightenment

The *seven elements of enlightenment* are:

- (1) The element of enlightenment that is mindfulness
- (2) The element of enlightenment that is discernment of phenomena
- (3) The element of enlightenment that is effort
- (4) The element of enlightenment that is joy
- (5) The element of enlightenment that is pliancy
- (6) The element of enlightenment that is concentration
- (7) The element of enlightenment that is equanimity

The meaning of an *element of enlightenment* is: a path consciousness, in the continuum of an Arya, that is the cause of its result, enlightenment.

Gyaltsab Je explains in his *Ornament of the Essence of the Presentation*:

The explanation of the *powers* and *strengths* is followed by an explanation of the paths that are a clear realization of the truth – the *seven elements of enlightenment*. The reason for this sequence is that the paths that directly see the truth and are in the nature of the *elements of enlightenment* arise after realizing and attaining [the paths of] the heat level etc. that are in the nature of the *power* [s and the *strengths*.

The *seven elements of enlightenment* are: (1) mindfulness that is an abiding element² observing the truth without distraction, (2) discernment of phenomena that is an element of nature newly and directly realizing selflessness, (3) effort that is an element of definite release, (4) joy that is a beneficial element benefitting body and mind, (5) pliancy that is an element of a basis free from afflictions, (6) concentration that is an abiding element that is free from afflictions, (7) equanimity that is an element of an entity that is free from afflictions.

With the *element of enlightenment that is right mindfulness* one observes (a) [true] *sufferings*, after which one seeks to be free from them and remains in this [state] mindfully without forgetfulness; (b) [true] *origins*, after which one seeks to be without desirous attachment and to remain thus; (c) [true] *cessations*, after which

² Mindfulness is an *abiding element* in the sense that it remains focused on its object without distraction.

one seeks to actualize them and remain thus; and (d) [true] *paths* that remove suffering, after which one seeks to meditate on those paths and remains thus mindfully without forgetfulness. We should understand that this is also the way to meditate on the remaining [*elements of enlightenment*].

Thereby one observes the four noble truths by means of the elements of enlightenment, which is why we should understand that these seven factors are causes accomplishing the respective enlightenment of beings who are endowed with the Hearer lineage and so forth. Yet here [in the context of the fourth chapter of the *Abhisamayalamkara*] they are mainly meditated on by Bodhisattvas.”

The Eight Elements of an Arya Path

The *eight elements of an Arya path* (i.e. the noble eightfold path) are:

- (1) Right view
- (2) Right intention
- (3) Right speech
- (4) Right action
- (5) Right livelihood
- (6) Right exertion
- (7) Right mindfulness
- (8) Right concentration

The meaning of an *element of an Arya path* is: a path in the continuum of an Arya being, which is a cause of its resultant Arya path.

Gyaltsab Je explains in his ***Ornament of the Essence of the Presentation***:

The explanation of the *elements of enlightenment* is followed by an explanation of the pure means to definite deliverance – the *eight elements of an Arya path*. The reason [for this sequence is] that a path of meditation arises after having directly and newly realized the truth.

The *eight elements of an Arya path* are: (1) right view, that during the period of subsequent attainment, thoroughly analyses the suchness that was [previously] realized by a meditative equipoise, (2) right intention, that motivates speech which teaches what one has realized to others, (3) pure speech that is [a path facilitating] a verbal action which teaches what one has realized to others, (4) right action that is [a path facilitating] a pure physical action such as giving up killing, and so forth, (5) right livelihood that is [a path facilitating] pure physical and verbal actions such as giving up hypocrisy, flattery, and so forth, (6) right exertion that exerts itself in [cultivating] the antidotes which abandon the objects of abandonment on the path of meditation, (7) right mindfulness that does not forget the attributes of calm abiding, right perception, and equanimity, and (8) right concentration that meditates in order to accomplish special qualities such as clairvoyance and so forth.

The *eight elements of an Arya path* can be condensed into: (1) the element that thoroughly analyses, (2) the element that creates understanding, (3) the element that creates belief, and (4) the element that is an antidote to opposing factors. It can also be condensed into (a) the training in ethics, (b) the training in concentration, and (c) the training in wisdom.

The Four Noble Truths

- 1) True sufferings (or) the truth of suffering
- 2) True origins (or) the truth of the origin
- 3) True cessations (or) the truth of cessation
- 4) True paths (or) the truth of the path

The 16 Aspects (or Characteristics) of the Four Noble Truths

The four aspects of *true sufferings*

1. Impermanent
2. Suffering
3. Empty
4. Selfless

The four aspects of the *true origins* (of suffering)

5. Cause
6. Origin
7. Strong producer
8. Condition

The four aspects of the *true cessations* (of suffering)

9. Cessation
10. Pacification
11. Satisfying state
12. Definite release

The four aspects of the *true paths* (that lead to the cessation of suffering):

13. Path
14. Appropriate means
15. Actualizing means
16. Means for a definite eradication

The 16 aspects of the four noble truths counteract the following 16 wrong views:

The 16 Wrong Views

The 16 wrong views can be divided into four categories:

- a) The four wrong views with regard to *true sufferings*
- b) The four wrong views with regard to *true origins*
- c) The four wrong views with regard to *true cessations*
- d) The four wrong views with regard to *true paths*

The four wrong views with regard to *true sufferings*:

1. The wrong view that *true sufferings* such as the contaminated aggregates are pure
2. The wrong view that *true sufferings* such as the contaminated aggregates are in the nature of happiness
3. The wrong view that *true sufferings* such as the contaminated aggregates are permanent
4. The wrong view that *true sufferings* such as the contaminated aggregates have a self

The four wrong views with regard to *true origins*:

5. The wrong view that suffering has no origin
6. The wrong view that suffering has only *one* cause
7. The wrong view that suffering is generated by a creator god
8. The wrong view positing something that is permanent by nature but occasionally changes

The wrong views with regard to *true cessations*:

9. The wrong view that there is no liberation from cyclic existence
10. The wrong view that contaminated states are liberation from cyclic existence
11. The wrong view that states which are in the nature of suffering are liberation from cyclic existence
12. The wrong view that although the elimination of suffering is possible, it can also be reversed

The wrong view with regard to *true paths*:

13. The wrong view that that there is no path to liberation from cyclic existence
14. The wrong view that the mind that has familiarized itself with selflessness is not an appropriate path to liberation
15. The wrong view that the worldly meditative concentrations are paths to liberation
16. The wrong view that there is no path that eradicates suffering

The 16 aspects, the 16 wrong views and the persons who hold those views

Please note that the understanding of the first aspect of the four noble truths, **impermanence**, counteracts the wrong view that *true sufferings* are permanent. The understanding of the second aspect, **suffering**, counteracts two wrong views: the wrong view that *true sufferings* are pure and the wrong view that they are in the nature of happiness. The understanding of the third aspect, **empty**, and the fourth aspect, **selfless**, counteracts the wrong view that apprehends a non-existent self (i.e., a permanent, partless, independent self and a substantially existent, self-sufficient I).

The understanding of each of the remaining aspects corresponds to a single wrong view.

True sufferings:**(1) Impermanent:**

True sufferings such as the contaminated aggregates are **impermanent**, because they arise temporarily and change from moment to moment.

The understanding that the contaminated aggregates are impermanent counteracts the wrong view that the contaminated aggregates are everlasting and do not change moment by moment.

(2) **Suffering:**

True sufferings such as the contaminated aggregates are in the nature of **suffering**, because they are under the control of contaminated karma and craving.

The understanding that the contaminated aggregates are in the nature of suffering counteracts the wrong view that the contaminated aggregates are pure and in the nature of happiness.

With regard to the persons who hold the three wrong views that are counteracted by the first two aspects: in general, non-Buddhist Indian philosophers do not hold that the five contaminated aggregates are permanent, pure, and in the nature of happiness. According to some scholars, the first three wrong views are held instead by ordinary people who innately apprehend the psycho-physical aggregates to be unchanging, pure and in the nature of happiness.

The following wrong views are held mainly by the proponents of the different non-Buddhist Indian philosophical systems.

(3) **Empty:**

True sufferings such as the contaminated aggregates are **empty**, because there is no self of a different nature that controls them.

The understanding that the contaminated aggregates are empty counteracts the wrong view that there is a permanent, partless, independent self.

Most followers of the different non-Buddhist Indian philosophical systems, such as the Samkyas (Tib: *grangs can pa*), Vaisheshikas (Tib: *bye brag pa*), Mimamsakas (Tib: *spyod pa ba*) and so forth, assert a self the characteristics of which are not compatible with the characteristics of the five aggregates, in that the self is said to be permanent while the aggregates are impermanent; to be partless, while the aggregates possess parts; and to exist independently of the aggregates.

Since most of the non-Buddhist Indian philosophers accept past and future lives, they are interested in what it is that travels from one life to the next. They understand the ever-changing nature of the five aggregates, and posit a self that is more stable than the psycho-physical complex. Hence, many of them assert the existence of a self that is static and unchanging (*permanent*), does not have spatial and temporary parts (*partless*), and that exists independent of the five aggregates (*independent*). Such a self is compared to a pea in a jar, the jar being the psycho-physical aggregates and the pea being the self residing within the aggregates until the aggregates disintegrate at death, at which point the self goes on to its next rebirth.

(4) **Selfless:**

True sufferings such as the contaminated aggregates are **selfless**, because they are free from an independent self.

The understanding that the contaminated aggregates are selfless counteracts the wrong view that there is a substantially existent, self-sufficient I.

Most followers of the non-Buddhist Indian philosophical systems assert also the existence of such a self. The misapprehension of that type of self is slightly subtler than the misapprehension of a permanent, partless, independent self. It conceives the existence of a self to which the mind and body belong, an owner or governor of them, something which has a different character to them and possesses, controls, and utilizes them, thinking, "Mine". Furthermore, there is a sense that it is possible to apprehend that self without having to apprehend any of the five aggregates, and that one's own mind and body could be exchanged with another person's mind and body, i.e. that one's self could become the owner of another person's psycho-physical aggregates.

True origins:

(5) **Cause:**

True origins such as contaminated karma and craving are **causes**, because they are the root of suffering.

The understanding that contaminated karma and afflictions are causes of suffering counteracts the wrong view that suffering does not have a cause.

For instance, the followers of the non-Buddhist Indian Charvaka (Tib: *rgyang 'phen pa*) or Nihilist system assert that the sharpness of thorns, the roundness of peas, the colorful pattern on peacock feathers, and so forth were not produced by causes since they hold that such causes cannot be perceived. Also, they do not accept the concomitance of a cause and its effect because they observe, for example, that some misers become wealthy and some donors of charity become poor. Therefore, they do not assert that suffering has a cause but that it arises naturally.

(6) **Origin:**

True origins such as contaminated karma and craving are **origins**, because they generate all kinds of suffering, again and again.

The understanding that the contaminated karma and afflictions are origins of suffering counteracts the wrong view that suffering has only *one* cause.

The followers of the non-theistic Samkya system, for example, assert that all physical phenomena, mind, suffering, and so forth are manifestations of and thus results of a single entity, called "the fundamental nature" (Skt: *mulaprakrti*, Tib: *rtsa ba'i rang bzhin*).

(7) **Strong producer:**

True origins such as contaminated karma and craving are **strong producers**, because they generate suffering forcefully.

The understanding that contaminated karma and afflictions are strong producers counteracts the wrong view that suffering is generated by a creator god.

For instance, the followers of the non-Buddhist Indian Shaiva (Tib: *dbang phyug pa*) and Vaisheshika systems believe that the world, living beings, happiness, suffering, and so on are created by the god Ishvara. They believe that Ishvara's mind forcefully (or mainly) gives rise to these phenomena which is why understanding that contaminated karma and afflictions forcefully create suffering counteracts that wrong view.

(8) **Condition:**

True origins such as contaminated karma and craving are **conditions**, because they are the cooperative conditions of suffering.

The understanding that contaminated karma and afflictions are conditions counteracts the wrong view that a phenomenon can be permanent by nature and yet occasionally change.

For example, the Samkyas hold the wrong view that the *fundamental nature* is permanent by nature but that it nonetheless changes as it manifests physical phenomena, suffering etc.

Understanding that contaminated karma and afflictions serve as cooperative conditions of suffering counteracts that wrong view, for if something is a result of particular conditions, its cause cannot be permanent and must have the potential to give rise to that particular result.

True cessations:

(9) **Cessation:**

A *true cessation* such as a separation that has completely removed suffering by means of antidotes is a **cessation**, because it is a separation that has eliminated suffering.

The understanding that an elimination of suffering is a cessation counteracts the wrong view that there is no liberation from cyclic existence.

The followers of the non-Buddhist Indian Charvaka and Mimamsaka (Tib: *spyod pa ba*) systems, for instance, assert that liberation is impossible.

The Charvakas hold that the mind was produced from the elements and thus there is no reincarnation or liberation from afflicted states of mind. The Mimamsaka assert reincarnation but they believe that the obstructions to liberation such as attachment, anger, and so forth are in the nature of the mind and therefore cannot be removed.

(10) **Pacification:**

A *true cessation* such as a separation that has completely removed suffering by means of antidotes is a **pacification**, because it is a separation that has eliminated the afflictions.

The understanding that an elimination of suffering is a pacification counteracts the wrong view that certain contaminated states constitute liberation from cyclic existence.

For example, the non-Buddhist philosophers of the Jain (Tib: *gcer bu pa*) system believe that liberation refers to a place on top of the different worlds that resembles an upside-down umbrella. This is where a person goes when they have consumed all previous karmic actions and no longer accumulate new karma.

(11) **Satisfying state:**

A *true cessation* such as a separation that has completely removed suffering by means of antidotes is a **satisfying state**, because it is a liberation that brings benefit and happiness.

The understanding that an elimination of suffering is a satisfying state counteracts the wrong view that certain states of suffering are liberation from cyclic existence.

The liberation asserted by the Samkyas, for instance, is such a state. The Samkyas hold that in reliance on meditative concentration, a person attains the divine eye and uses it to observe the *fundamental nature*. Subsequently, all manifestations of the *fundamental nature* dissolve back into it and it separates from the self. The self that is left behind is asserted to be attainment of liberation.

(12) **Definite release:**

A *true cessation* such as a separation that has completely removed suffering by means of antidotes is a **definite release**, because it is an irrevocable liberation.

The understanding that an elimination of suffering is a definite release counteracts the wrong view that although the elimination of suffering is possible, that elimination is reversible.

For example, if Samkyas with some clairvoyant abilities become aware that after they supposedly attained liberation they are taking rebirth again in cyclic existence, they come to believe that liberation is reversible and that one can lose one's spiritual attainments.

True Paths:

(13) **Path:**

A *true path* such as the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is a **path**, because it is a path that proceeds to liberation.

The understanding that the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is a path counteracts the wrong view that there is no path to liberation from cyclic existence.

As mentioned above, Charvakas and Mimamsakas hold that liberation is impossible and therefore believe that there is no path to liberation.

(14) **Appropriate means:**

A *true path* such as the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is an **appropriate means**, because it serves as the direct antidote to the afflictions.

The understanding that the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is an appropriate means counteracts the wrong view that a mind that has familiarized itself with selflessness is not an appropriate path to liberation.

Since the followers of the major non-Buddhist Indian philosophical systems assert a permanent, partless, independent self, they do not accept selflessness and thus do not hold that meditation on selflessness leads to liberation.

(15) **Actualizing means:**

A *true path* such as the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is an **actualizing means**, because it is a pristine wisdom that directly realizes the final mode of existence of the mind.

The understanding that the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is an actualizing means counteracts the wrong view that the ordinary meditative concentrations of the form and formless realms are paths to liberation.

For instance, the Samkyas assert that the ordinary meditative concentrations of the form and formless realms are means to attaining liberation.

(16) **Means for a definite eradication:**

A *true path* such as the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is a **means for a definite eradication**, because it is an antidote that irrevocably eliminates suffering.

The understanding that the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is a means for a definite eradication counteracts the wrong view that there is no path that eradicates suffering.

Since the Charvakas and the Mimamsakas do not accept liberation they do not hold that there is a path that eliminates suffering.

**Reasoning related
to the day 21 May 2020**

*Because [ignorance] is the opposite of knowledge,
And because of being a mental factor it must have an object,
Because [scriptures] say it apprehends mistakenly,
It is not reasonable [that the view of perishable aggregates]
is other than [ignorance].*

QUESTION: Ignorance is a mental factor that has the aspect of not seeing clearly. The view of [self in] the perishable aggregates is a mental factor that has the aspect of actively apprehending, so it is unacceptable that those have one nature.

ANSWER: Ignorance is an opposing factor to the wisdom realizing no-self. Therefore, among the three [types of opposing conditions], ignorance is neither the opposing factor of nescience nor merely some other opposing factor, because by the very fact that ignorance is a mental factor, it must necessarily apprehend an aspect of an object.

Therefore, it is not reasonable that the view of perishable aggregates, which is defined as the view of "I" and "mine," be other than ignorance because the Sutras say that the affliction that is ignorance sees its object as directly opposite of to the wisdom realizing no-self.

The Candrapradipa Sutra says,

"What is it that is devoid from ignorance? Whatever is devoid from superimposing on the true, ultimate nature of dharmas."

Accordingly, it also says in the Dasabhumika Sutra:

"All wrong actions arising in the world originate from attachment to the self. If there is no attachment to the self, they will not occur."



By Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa
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