

The Original Sutra on the Four Powers

Our first reading is meant to demonstrate that the teaching on removing our old bad karma was taught by Lord Buddha himself, and so is an authentic instruction that we can believe in and try ourselves. What follows next is the entire text of the work which is the original source of the Four Powers; it comes from the Kangyur, or collection of Lord Buddha's teachings translated into Tibetan from the original Sanskrit. Note that what is later called the "power of stopping" is here referred to as the "power of restoring."

In Sanskrit, the name of this book is *Arya Chatur Dharma Nirdesha Nama Mahayana Sutra*.

In Tibetan, its name is *Pakpa Chushi Tenpa Shejawa Tekpa Chenpoy Do*.

[In English, its name is *An Exalted Sutra of the Greater Way entitled "The Teaching on the Four Practices."*]

I bow down to each and every Enlightened Being, and every bodhisattva.

One time I heard the Buddha give this teaching.

The Conqueror was staying among the worldly gods of the Land of the Thirty- Three, at the great gathering place of the gods known as Excellence. Together with him was a great gathering of 500 monks, along with mass of great bodhisattvas such as Loving One and Gentle Voice.

And the Conqueror spoke the following words to that great bodhisattva, Loving One:

"O Loving One, if a great bodhisattva keeps four practices, then he or she can never be overwhelmed by bad deeds that they have both committed and collected.

"And what are these four practices? They are the activity of destruction, and the activity of an antidote, and the power of restoring, and the power of the foundation.

"Here the 'activity of destruction' refers to having many regrets about a negative deed that you have committed.

"The 'activity of an antidote' refers to making great efforts in positive deeds, despite the fact that one has performed a negative action.

"The 'power of restoring' refers to making a commitment to restrain oneself, and then succeeding in not breaking this commitment.

"The 'power of the foundation' means never giving up the act of taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Community; and never giving up the wish for enlightenment. Any person who

maintains these kinds of power can never be overwhelmed by a negative deed that they may have done.

"O Loving One, any great bodhisattva who keeps these four practices can, rather, overwhelm any negative deed that they may have committed and collected.

"You great bodhisattvas should always read this sutra. Recite it out loud as well. Think upon its meaning. Meditate upon it. And then repeat these over and over. If you do, then whatever harmful thing you might have done in the past will never be able to bear its fruit."

Thus did the Conqueror speak; and then the great bodhisattva Loving One, and all the monks, and all the bodhisattvas, and all the divine youths—Hundred Gifts and the like, and all the rest of the assembly present took joy in what the Conqueror had spoken, and sang the praises of his words.

This then concludes *An Exalted Sutra of the Greater Way entitled "The Teaching on the Four Practices."*