

[The following selections are taken from *Sunlight on the Path to Freedom*, written by Choney Lama Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748) of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery. The original root text of the sutra by Lord Buddha is included in darker type.]

[The Diamond-Cutter Sutra, ff. 215a-216b
Sunlight for the Path, ff. 1b-4b]

*, , RDOR GCOD KYI 'GREL PA THAR PAR BGROD PA'I LAM BZANG ZAB
DON GSAL BA'I NYI MA ZHES BYA BA BZHUGS SO, ,

Herein contained is a commentary upon the *Diamond Cutter Sutra* entitled
Sunlight to See the Profound, the Excellent Path to Travel to Freedom.

*, ` , NA MO M{NYDZ}A{u2} {gh}O sh'A YA,

I bow down to Manjughosha.

,RAB YANGS SGRIB BRAL CHOS SKU'I MKHA' LA 'PHAGS, ,STONG NYID
ZAB MO'I 'BRUG SGRA'I DPAL GYIS MDZES, ,GDUL BYA'I ZHING SAR DON
GNYIS CHAR GYI RGYUN, ,'BEB MDZAD THUB DBANG CHU 'DZIN
DBANG POR 'DUD,

I bow down to the Lord of the Able Ones,
the king of sponge-like clouds
Floating high in the great expanse of the sky,
the dharma body, unobscured,
Stunning in the glory of his thunder,
the sound of emptiness profound,
Sending down to fields of students a stream
of rain—both of the goals.

,BRTAN PA'I 'KHOR LO DGRA BCOM RNAM ROL GYIS, ,ZAB DON 'DRI
ZHING LAN KUN LDON LA MKHAS, ,NYON MONGS MED PA'I MCHOG
TU LUNG BSTAN PA, ,'PHAGS PA RAB 'BYOR ZHABS LA GUS PHYAG
'TSAL,

I prostrate myself at the feet of Subhuti,
a realized being who is
The Wheel of Solid Earth, a destroyer of the
enemy in disguise,
Masterful in posing the questions

and replies of the profound,
Prophesied to be the supreme of those
who've finished all affliction.

,ZAB DON 'GREL PAR RGYAL BAS LUNG BSTAN PA, ,KLU SGRUB 'PHAGS
PA LHA DANG ZLA BA GRAGS, ,BLO BZANG RGYAL BA GNYIS PA YAB
SRAS SOGS, ,BSHES GNYEN RIM PAR BYON LA PHYAG 'TSAL LO,

I make obeisance to the spiritual friends who one by one appeared To clarify the
deepest teaching, as foretold by the Victors: Nagarjuna, and Aryadeva, and
Chandrakirti too, Lobsang the Victor come again-- father and sons--and the rest.

, 'DIR RDOR GCOD DU GRAGS PA SHER PHYIN SUM BRGYA PA'I 'GREL PA
JI LTAR 'TSAM PA

ZHIG DAD PAS BSHAD PAR BYA STE, GZHUNG 'DIS NI BDAG MED KYI
DON 'CHAD PA GTZO BOR MDZAD CING ZLOS TE GSUNGS PA MANG BA
DANG , 'DI LA RGYA 'GREL GCIG LAS BOD 'GREL MI SNANG BAS JI BZHIN
'CHAD DKA' BAR SNANG NA'ANG RANG BLOS JI LTAR NUS PA BZHIN
BSHAD PAR BYA'O,

Here I will, with great feelings of faith and in keeping with my own capacity,
offer a commentary in explanation of the Perfection of Wisdom in 300 Verses,
more commonly known as the Diamond-Cutter. It would seem that this text is
rather difficult to comment upon correctly, for a number of reasons. First of all,
the work is largely devoted to elucidating the meaning of the absence of a self-
nature. Moreover, Lord Buddha repeats himself quite a number of times during
the teaching. Finally, there appears to be but a single explanation of the work by
the masters of ancient India, and none by a Tibetan at all. Nonetheless, I will
undertake a commentary, to the best of my intellectual ability.

, 'DI LA GSUM, SNGON 'GRO, DNGOS GZHI, MJUG GI RIM PA'O, , DANG PO
LA GSUM, MTSAN BSGYUR ZHING DON BSHAD PA, 'GYUR GYI PHYAG,
GLEN GZHI'O, , DANG PO NI,

We will proceed in three steps: the preliminaries, the actual body of the text, and
the conclusion. The first part here has three sections of its own: a translation of
the title, along with an explanation of its significance; the translator's obeisance;
and setting the scene. Here is the first.

„ RGYA GAR SKAD DU, A'A{ry} BADZR TZTSE DA K'A NA MA PRA {DZNY}A' P'A RA MI TA H'A Y'A NA S'U TRA, BOD SKAD DU, 'PHAGS PA SHES RAB KYI PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA RDO RJE GCOD PA ZHES BYA BA THEG PA CHEN PO'I MDO,

In the language of India, this teaching is called the *Arya Vajra Chedaka Nama Prajnaya Paramita Mahayana Sutra*. In the language of Tibet, it is called the *Pakpa Sherab Kyi Paroltu Chinpa Dorje Chupa Shejawa Tekpa Chenpoy Do*. [In the English language, it is called *An Exalted Sutra of the Greater Way on the Perfection of Wisdom, entitled "The Diamond-Cutter."*]

RGYA GAR SKAD DU, A'A{ry} BADZR ZHES SOGS TE, DE BOD SKAD DU BSGYUR NA, A'A{ry} NI 'PHAGS PA, BADZR NI RDO RJE, TZTSE DA K'A NI GCOD PA, PRA {DZNY}A' NI SHES RAB, P'A RA NI PHA ROL TU, AI TA NI PHYIN PA, N'A MA NI ZHES BYA BA, MA H'A NI CHEN PO, , Y'A NA NI THEG PA, S'U TRA NI MDO ZHES PAR 'GYUR RO,

The root text here begins with "In the language of India, this text is called the **Arya Vajra...**" The Tibetan equivalents of the words in the title are as follows. **Arya** means **pakpa**, [or "exalted."] **Vajra** means **dorje**, [or "diamond."] **Chedaka** is **chupa**, [or "cutter."] **Prajnaya** is **sherab**, [or "wisdom."] **Para** is **paroltu**, [or "to the other side,"] while **ita** means **chinpa**, [or "gone," and the two together mean "perfection."]

Nama is for **shejawa**, [which means "entitled."] **Maha** stands for **chenpo**, [or "greater."] **Yana** means **tekpa**, [which is "way," or "vehicle."] **Sutra** translates as **do**, [or "sutra," meaning the teaching of an enlightened being.]

, 'DIR P'A RA MI TA ZHES 'BYUNG BA NI, P'A RA DANG AI TA'I BAR DU RNAM DBYE GNYIS PA'I AAM BYIN NAS AA PHYIS TE MA AI LA BYIN NAS MTSAMS SBYAR BAS MI TAR SONG BA'O,

How do we get this word **paramita**? The ending **am** is required between the words **para** and **ita**, to represent the second grammar case. In combination the **a** of the **am** drops out, and the resulting **m** is attached to the **ita**, which gives us **mita**.

, 'DI'I MTSAN DON BSHAD PA NI, BRGYA BYIN GYI LAG GI RDO RJE DE PHYI'I DNGOS PO GZHAN GYIS GZHIG PAR MI NUS SHING , DE RI BRAG SOGS KYI DNGOS PO GANG LA BSNUN KYANG THAL BAR BYED NUS PA

LTAR, GZHUNG 'DI'I BRJOD BYA DON GYI SHER PHYIN STONG NYID
RTOGS PA'I YE SHES DE LA MI MTHUN PHYOGS KYIS MI TSUGS SHING ,
DES NYON MONGS PA DANG SDUG BSNAL THAMS CAD RTZAD NAS
GCOD PA'I DON NO,

Here is the significance of the name. The worldly god named Hundred Gifts, or Indra, wields a diamond bolt, which no physical object in the entire world can destroy. A mere touch of this bolt though can reduce mountains of stone and other such entities to piles of dust. The subject of this work is the actual perfection of wisdom; that is, the wisdom with which one perceives emptiness. The point of the title is that the antithesis of this wisdom can never affect it in the least; and that the wisdom, on the other hand, cuts from the root everything involved with the mental afflictions, and each and every suffering.

, SANGS RGYAS DANG BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' THAMS CAD LA PHYAG
'TSAL LO,

I bow down to all Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

,GNYIS PA 'GYUR PHYAG GI DON NI SLA'O,

The import of the second point, the translator's obeisance, is self-evident.

, 'DI SKAD BDAG GIS THOS PA DUS GCIG NA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS MNYAN
DU YOD PA NA RGYAL BU RGYAL BYED KYI TSAL MGON MED ZAS SBYIN
GYI KUN DGA' RA BA NA DGE SLONG STONG NYIS BRGYA LNGA BCU'I
DGE SLONG GI DGE 'DUN CHEN PO DANG , BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'
SEMS DPA' CHEN PO RAB TU MANG PO DANG THABS CIG TU BZHUGS
TE,

These words once I heard. The Conqueror was residing at Shravasti, in the park of Anata-pindada at the gardens of Prince Jetavan. In convocation with him were a great gathering of 1,250 monks who were listeners, as well as an immense number of bodhisattvas who were great beings.

, GSUM PA GLENG GZHI NI, GZHUNG 'DI SKAD CES SDUD PA PO BDAG
GIS THOS PA NI DUS GCIG GI TSE NA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS MNYAN YOD
NA RGYAL BU RGYAL BYED KYI TSAL MGON MED ZAS SBYIN GYI KUN
DGA' RA BA NA, DGE SLONG GI DGE 'DUN CHEN PO NYAN THOS STONG
NYIS BRGYA LNGA BCU DANG , BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' RAB TU MANG

PO DAG DANG THABS GCIG STE LHAN CIG TU BZHUGS SO,

Third is the third preliminary, where the scene is set. The speaker is the person who compiled the **words** of this text, who says "I heard" the following. **Once**, meaning at a certain time, **the Conqueror was residing at Shravasti, in the park of Anapindada at the gardens of Prince Jetavan. In convocation with him**—that is, together with him—**were a great gathering of 1,250 monks who were listeners, as well as an immense number of bodhisattvas who were great beings.**

,DE YANG RGYA GAR NA MNYAN YOD SOGS GRONG KHYER CHEN PO
DRUG YOD PA LAS, MNYAN YOD 'DI RGYAL PO GSAL RGYAL GYI MNGA'
'OG TU GTOGS SHING , DER RGYAL BU RGYAL BYED CES BYA BA'I SKYED
MO'I TSAL PHUN SUM TSOGS PA SA GZHI BZANG BA ZHIG YOD DO,

In India there were six great cities, including the one known as "Shravasti." This particular city was located in the domain of King Prasenajita, and contained a particularly excellent site--the exquisite gardens of one known as Prince Jetavan.

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS SANGS RGYAS NAS LO CHA SHAS SONG BA'I SKABS
ZHIG NA KHYIM BDAG MGON MED ZAS SBYIN ZHES BYA BAS BCOM
LDAN 'DAS 'KHOR BCAS RGYUN DU BZHUGS PA'I GNAS GTZUG LAG
KHANG CHEN PO BZANG BA ZHIG 'DEBS PAR 'DOD NAS, RGYAL BU
RGYAL BYED LA TSAL DE GANG BA'I GSER SRANG STONG PHRAG DU
MA BYIN NAS RGYAL BYED KYI TSAL DE NYOS SO,

There came a time, several years after the Conqueror attained his enlightenment, when a certain householder by the name of Anapindada resolved that he would construct a large, wondrous temple where Lord Buddha and his retinue could reside on a regular basis. To this end he approached Prince Jetavan and purchased his gardens by paying him many thousands of gold coins, enough in fact to fill the gardens themselves.

,RGYAL BYED KYIS KYANG SGO KHANG PHYOGS NAS SA DUM BU ZHIG
BCOM LDAN 'DAS LA PHUL TE, TSAL DER MGON MED ZAS SBYIN GYIS
SH'A RI'I BU LA BR TEN NAS LHA MI'I BZO BOS KUN DGA' RA BA KHYAD
PAR DU 'PHAGS PA ZHIG BZHENGTS TE ZIN PA NA BCOM LDAN 'DAS
KYIS RGYAL BYED KYI BSAM PA MKHYEN NAS, GTZUG LAG KHANG GI
MING YANG DE BSTUN GYIS

BTAGS SO, , MGON MED ZAS SBYIN 'DIS CHU NANG DANG SA 'OG NA
YOD PA'I RIN PO CHE'I GTER RNAMS MTHONG ZHING RANG DGAR
BLANGS NAS LONGS SPYOD NUS PA STON PA'I SBYIN BDAG GI CHED DU
BSAM BZHIN DU SKYE BA BZUNG BA'I SKYES CHEN DAM PA ZHIG GO,

Jetavan as well offered to the Conqueror a parcel of land that had been part of the quarters for the caretakers of the property. In these gardens Anata-pindada, availing himself of the abilities of Shariputra, directed artisans from the lands of both gods and men to construct an extraordinary park.

When the park was completed, the Conqueror, perceiving that Jetavan wished it, named the main temple after him. Anata-pindada, by the way, was a great being who had purposely taken a birth as someone who could act as the Teacher's sponsor. He had the power to see deposits of precious gems and metals deep under water or below the earth itself, and could utilize these riches whenever he wished.

,DE NAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS SNGA DRO'I DUS KYI TSE SHAM THABS DANG
CHOS GOS SKU LA GSOL TE LHUNG BZED BSNAMS NAS MNYAN YOD
KYI GRONG KHYER CHEN POR BSOD SNYOMS KYI PHYIR ZHUGS SO, , DE
NAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS MNYAN YOD KYI GRONG KHYER CHEN POR
BSOD SNYOMS KYI PHYIR GSHEGS NAS BSOD SNYOMS KYI ZHAL ZAS
MJUG TU GSOL TE ZAS KYI BYA BA MDZAD NAS ZAS PHYI MA'I BSOD
SNYOMS SPANGS PAS, LHUNG BZED DANG CHOS GOS BZHAG NAS
ZHABS BSIL TE GDAN BSHAMS PA LA SKYIL MO KRUNG BCAS NAS SKU
DRANG POR BSRANG STE DRAN PA MNGON DU BZHAG NAS BZHUGS
SO,

In the morning then the Conqueror donned his monk's robes and outer shawl, took up his sage's bowl, and entered the great city of Shravasti for requesting his meal. When he had collected the food, he returned from the city and then partook of it. When he had finished eating he put away his bowl and shawl, for he was a person who had given up the later meal. He washed his feet and then seated himself on a cushion that had been set forth for him. He crossed his legs in the full lotus position, straightened his back, and placed his thoughts into a state of contemplation.

DE NAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS GDUL BYA'I DON DU SNGA DRO'I DUS SU
CHOS GOS RNAM GSUM SKU LA GSOL ZHING LHUNG BZED BSNAMS
NAS MNYAN YOD KYI GRONG KHYER CHEN POR BSOD SNYOMS KYI

PHYIR TE CHED DU GSHEGS SO, , BSOD SNYOMS BLANGS TE MJUG TU
SLAR BYON NAS ZHAL ZAS GSOL BA'I BYA BA MDZAD DO,

In the morning then the Conqueror—all for the sake of his disciples—**donned** the three parts of a monk's attire, **took up his sage's bowl, and** went to **the great city of Shravasti for requesting**, in order to request, **his meal**. He accepted **his food** and **then, after** coming back, **partook of it**.

,ZAS PHYI MA PHYI DRO'I BSOD SNYOMS ZA BA SPANGS NAS, LHUNG
BZED SOGS BZHAG NAS ZHABS BKRUS SHING BSIL TE, GDAN BSHAMS
PA NYID LA DKYIL MO KRUNG BCAS NAS SKU DRANG POR SRANG STE,
GZHUNG 'DI STON PAR 'GYUR BA MKHYEN PA'I DRAN PA MNGON DU
BZHAG NAS BZHUGS SO,

When he had finished eating he put away his bowl and so on, **for he was a person who had given up the later meal**; that is, who would never go to request a meal in the latter part of the day. **He washed his feet**, bathed them, **and then seated himself on a cushion that had been set forth for him**. **He crossed his legs in the full lotus position**, and **straightened his back**. Then **he placed his thoughts into a state of contemplation**, knowing that he was about to deliver this teaching.

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS BSOD SNYOMS LA 'BYON PA NI, RANG NYID BSOD
SNYOMS KYI ZAS ZA DGOS PA'I CHED MIN GYI, GDUL BYA LA TSOGS
GSOG PA DANG CHOS STON PA SOGS KYI CHED DU'O, , SANGS RGYAS
LA NI BKRES SKOM 'BYUNG MI SRID PAR GSER 'OD LAS BSHAD CING ,
GSOL DGOS NA'ANG RANG NYID NAM MKHA' MDZOD KYI YE SHES LA
DBANG BSGYUR BAS YO BYAD KYIS PHONGS PA MI SRID LA, SA RDO
SOGS GSER DNGUL RIN PO CHER BSGYUR NUS SHING , DE DAG DANG
ZAS DMAN PA DAG KYANG RO BRGYA LDAN PA'I ZAS SU BSGYUR BA
DANG , ZAS NGAN PA CI 'DRA BA ZHIG YIN KYANG SANGS RGYAS KYI
ZHAL DU BZHES PA NA RO PHUN SUM TSOGS PA GZHAN GYIS MYONG
BAR MI 'GYUR BA LTA BU'I ZAS SU 'GYUR TE, MNGON RTOGS RGYAN
LAS, 'DI LA RO MI ZHIM PA RO MCHOOG SNANG , , ZHES GSUNGS PA'I
DON YANG DE'O,

We should speak a bit here about the fact that the Conqueror went to request food. As far as the Buddha is concerned, there is no need at all to go and ask for his meal. Rather, he does so only so that his disciples will have an opportunity to

collect masses of good karma, or else in order to give instruction in the Dharma, or for some similar reason.

The *Sutra of Golden Light* explains how it is completely impossible for a Buddha to suffer hunger or thirst. And even if they did need to eat or drink something, it is a complete impossibility that the Buddhas would ever find themselves without sufficient supplies; they could take care of themselves perfectly well, for they have gained total mastery over what we call the "knowledge of the store of space." They have as well the ability, should they so desire, to turn dirt or stones or other things of the like into gold, or silver, or precious jewels.

Furthermore they have the power to transform such objects, and also inferior kinds of food, into feasts of a thousand delectable tastes. No matter how poor some meal might be, it turns to a matchless, savory banquet as soon as a Buddha touches it to his lips—delicious in a way that no other kind of being could ever in his life experience. The *Ornament of Realizations* is making this same point when it says "To him, even a terrible taste turns delicious to the supreme."

,SNGON STON PAS ZLA BA GSUM DU RTA CHAS KYI NAS GSOL DGOS
PA'I TSUL BSTAN PA'I TSE, KUN DGA' BO'I BSAM PA LA STON PA RGYAL
PO'I RIGS SU SKYES KYANG , DA LTA RTA CHAS GSOL BA'I DUS BYUNG
NGO SNYAM DU YID SKYO BA'I TSE, STON PAS ZHAL NAS NAS KYI 'BRU
GCIG PHYUNG STE 'DI ZO ZHIG CES GSUNGS NAS BYIN PAS KUN DGA'
BOS ZOS PA NA TSIM STE, DE NAS NYIN ZHAG BDUN DU ZAS ZA DGOS
PA'I 'DU SHES MA SKYES PAS NGO MTSAR DU GYUR PA BZHIN NO,

There was a time before when, for three months, the Teacher pretended to be so destitute that he was forced to eat the barley that we usually use for horse fodder. His disciple Ananda was depressed by the sight, thinking to himself, "Now the day has come that the Teacher, who was born into royalty, is reduced to eating horse fodder." The Teacher then took a single piece of the grain from his mouth, handed it to Ananda, and instructed him to eat it. The disciple complied, and was filled; in fact, for an entire week thereafter he felt no urge to eat anything at all, and was overcome with amazement. This incident applies here too.

,GSER 'OD LAS STON PAS BSOD SNYOMS LEN PAR MDZAD CING GSOL BA
LTAR SNANG YANG DON LA GSOL BA MED CING , BSHANG GCI YANG
MED PAR BSHAD LA, GSANG BA BSAM GYIS MI KHYAB PA'I MDO LAS, DE
BZHIN GSHEGS PA'I SKU NI GSER GYI GAR BU LTA BU STE, SKU LA

KHONG STONG DANG PHO BA LONG KA RGYU MA SOGS KYANG MED
PAR BSHAD DE DON LA GNAS SO,

The *Golden Light* relates how—despite the fact that the Teacher appeared to have to go for requesting his meal—and seemed as well to eat it, in truth he did not eat, and had no feces or urine either. The *Sutra of the Inconceivable* explains as well that the holy body of the Ones Thus Gone are like a lump of solid gold: there is no cavity inside, and no organs like the stomach, nor large or small intestines. This is actually the way it is.

,DE NAS DGE SLONG MANG PO BCOM LDAN 'DAS GA LA BA DER DONG
STE LHAGS NAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYI ZHABS LA MGO BOS PHYAG
'TSAL TE BCOM LDAN 'DAS LA LAN GSUM BSKOR BA BYAS NAS PHYOGS
GCIG TU 'KHOD DO, , YANG DE'I TSE TSE DANG LDAN PA RAB 'BYOR
'KHOR DE NYID DU 'DUS PAR GYUR TE 'DUG GO ,

And then a great number of monks advanced towards the Conqueror and, when they had reached his side, bowed and touched their heads to his feet. They circled him in respect three times, and then seated themselves to one way. At this point the junior monk Subhuti was with the same group of disciples, and took his seat with them.

,DE NAS DGE SLONG MANG PO YANG BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYI DRUNG DU
LHAGS PA STE PHYIN NAS LAN GSUM BSKOR BA BYAS NAS PHYOGS
GCIG STE LHAN CIG TU 'KHOD DO, , DER MA ZAD, DE'I TSE GNAS BRTAN
RAB 'BYOR YANG 'KHOR DE NYID DU 'DUS NAS 'DUG GO,

The root text is saying that, **then, a great number of monks too advanced to the side of (which is to say approached) the Conqueror. Then they circled him in respect three times, and seated themselves to "one way";** that is, they sat down all together. Not only that, but **at this point the** respected elder named **Subhuti was with this same group of disciples, and took his seat with them.**

, GNYIS PA DNGOS GZHI GZHUNG DON BSHAD PA LA GNYIS, THOG
MAR ZHUS TSUL DANG , DE'I LAN RNAMS RIM PAR BSHAD PA'O, , DANG
PO NI,

We now begin the second step in our commentary to the sutra, which is an explanation of the actual body of the text. This itself comes in two parts: a description of how the teaching was initially requested, and then an explanation

of the series of answers that followed. Here is the first of these.

,DE NAS TSE DANG LDAN PA RAB 'BYOR STAN LAS LANGS TE BLA GOS
PHRAG PA GCIG TU GZAR NAS PUS MO G-YAS PA'I LHA NGA SA LA
BTZUGS TE BCOM LDAN 'DAS GA LA BA DE LOGS SU THAL MO SBYAR BA
BTUD DE BCOM LDAN 'DAS LA 'DI SKAD CES GSOL TO,

And then the junior monk Subhuti rose from his cushion, and dropped the corner of his higher robe from one shoulder in a gesture of respect, and knelt with his right knee to the ground. He faced the Conqueror, joined his palms at his heart, and bowed. Then he beseeched the Conqueror in the following words:

DE NAS TSE DANG LDAN PA RAB 'BYOR RANG GI 'DUG PA'I STAN LAS
LANGS TE, BLA GOS TE STOD GOS PHRAG PA G-YON PA'I PHYOGS GCIG
TU GZAR NAS, RKANG PA G-YON PA'I MTHIL DANG , G-YAS PA'I PUS
MO'I LHA NGA SA LA BTZUGS TE BCOM LDAN 'DAS PHYOGS GA LA BA
DER THAL MO SBYAR BA BTUD NAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS LA 'DI SKAD CES
GSOL TO,

The root text next describes how **the junior monk Subhuti then rose from the cushion** where he had been seated, **and dropped the corner of his "higher" robe**—meaning his upper robe—**from his left shoulder in a gesture of respect.** He placed the sole of his left foot **on the ground**, and then **knelt with his right knee** as well. **He faced** in the direction of **the Conqueror, joined his palms at his heart, and bowed. Then he beseeched the Conqueror in the following words.**

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA DGRA BCOM PA YANG DAG
PAR RDZOGS PA'I SANGS RGYAS KYIS BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS
DPA' CHEN PO RNAMS LA PHAN GDAGS PA'I DAM PA JI SNYED PAS
PHAN BTAGS PA DANG , DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA DGRA BCOM PA YANG
DAG PAR RDZOGS PA'I SANGS RGYAS KYIS BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'
SEMS DPA' CHEN PO RNAMS YONGS SU GTAD PA'I DAM PA JI SNYED PAS
YONGS SU GTAD PA NI, BCOM LDAN 'DAS, NGO MTSAR LAGS SO, , BDE
BAR GSHEGS PA, NGO MTSAR LAGS SO,

Oh Conqueror, the Buddha—the One Gone Thus, the Destroyer of the Enemy, the Totally Enlightened One—has given much beneficial

instruction to the bodhisattvas who are great beings. Whatever instruction he has ever given has been of benefit.

And the One Gone Thus, the Destroyer of the Enemy, the Totally Enlightened One, has as well instructed these bodhisattvas who are great beings by granting them clear direction. Whatever clear direction he has granted, oh Conqueror, has been a wondrous thing. Oh Conqueror, it is a wondrous thing.

,DE NAS TSIG SNA BSDUS TE BRJOD NA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KHYOD KYIS BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' CHEN PO RNAMS LA CHOS KYI SGO NAS 'DI PHYI RNAMS LA PHAN GDAGS PA'I DAM PA MCHOG JI SNYED PA CIG MDZAD NAS PHAN GDAGS PA DANG , YANG BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' RNAMS LA GNAS DANG CHOS DANG BKAR GDAGS PA'I YONGS SU GTAD PA RNAM PA GSUM GYI DAM PA JI SNYED PAS YONGS SU GTAD PAR MDZAD NA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS NGO MTSAR CHE SOGS ZHES GSOL TO,

To put it simply, Subhuti beseeches the Buddha by saying:

Oh Conqueror, you have given much instruction to the bodhisattvas who are great beings; and in a spiritual sense it has been of the highest benefit, the ultimate help, for both their present and future lives. Whatever instruction you have ever given, all of it has been of this same benefit.

You have as well **instructed these bodhisattvas by granting them** three kinds of **clear direction**. You have directed them towards the source, and towards the dharma, and towards the commands.

Subhuti then tells the Conqueror how **wondrous** this is, and so on.

,DE LA GNAS NI DGE BA'I BSHES GNYEN LA GTAD PA DANG , CHOS NI DES PHAN 'DOGS BYED DU BCUG PA DANG , BKAR BTAGS PA NI BYANG SEMS KHYED RNAMS KYIS SEMS CAN LA PHAN GDAGS PAR BYA'O ZHES GTAD PA STE SLOB DPON K'A MA SH'AI'I DGONGS PA'O,

In Master Kamalashila's thinking here the word "source" would refer to directing a disciple to a spiritual guide. The word "dharma" would signify how this guide leads his disciple to engage in what is beneficial. And the "commands" would

describe the Buddha's directions: "You, my bodhisattva, must act to help all living beings."

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'I THEG PA LA YANG DAG
PAR ZHUGS PAS JI LTAR GNAS PAR BGYI, JI LTAR BSGRUB PAR BGYI, JI
LTAR SEMS RAB TU GZUNG BAR BGYI, DE SKAD CES GSOL PA DANG ,

**Oh Conqueror, what of those who have entered well into the way of the
bodhisattva? How shall they live? How shall they practice? How
should they keep their thoughts?**

This did Subhuti ask, and then...

,ZHUS TSUL DNGOS NI BCOM LDAN 'DAS BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'I
THEG PA LA YANG DAG PAR ZHUGS PAS JI LTAR GNAS PAR BGYI, JI
LTAR BSGRUB PAR BGYI, JI LTAR SEMS RAB TU GZUNG BAR BGYI ZHES
DON TSAN GSUM ZHUS SO, , GNYIS PA LAN LA,

This brings us to the actual way in which the sutra was requested. Subhuti asks the **Conqueror**, "**What of those who have entered well into the way of the bodhisattva?**" He phrases his question in three different sections: "**How shall they live? How shall they practice? How should they keep their thoughts?**"

Here secondly we explain the Buddha's reply.

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS TSE DANG LDAN PA RAB 'BYOR LA 'DI SKAD CES
BKA' STZAL TO, , RAB 'BYOR, LEGS SO, , LEGS SO, , RAB 'BYOR, DE DE
BZHIN NO, , DE DE BZHIN TE, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS BYANG CHUB SEMS
DPA' SEMS DPA' CHEN PO RNAMS LA PHAN GDAGS PA'I DAM PAS PHAN
BTAGS SO, , DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS DPA'
CHEN PO RNAMS LA YONGS SU GTAD PA'I DAM PAS YONGS SU GTAD
DO,

...the Conqueror bespoke the following words, in reply to Subhuti's question:

**Oh Subhuti, it is good, it is good. Oh Subhuti, thus it is, and thus is it:
the One Thus Gone has indeed done benefit to the bodhisattvas who
are great beings, by granting them beneficial instruction. The One Thus
Gone has indeed given clear direction to the bodhisattvas who are great
beings, by granting them the clearest of instruction.**

BCOM LDAN 'DAS RAB 'BYOR GYIS DE LTAR ZHUS PA LA THUGS DGYES
NAS LEGS SO DANG DE YIN PA'I BDEN KHA GNANG STE, DE BZHIN
GSHEGS PAS BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' RNAMS LA PHAN GDAGS PA
DANG , YONGS SU GTAD PAR ZHAL GYIS BZHES SO, ,

The Conqueror is greatly pleased by the request that Subhuti submits to him, and so he says **"It is good."** Then he provides his affirmation of the truth of what Subhuti has spoken, by assenting that **the One Thus Gone has indeed done benefit to the bodhisattvas who are great beings, and has indeed given them clear direction.**

,RAB 'BYOR, DE'I PHYIR NYON LA LEGS PAR RAB TU YID LA ZUNGS SHIG
DANG , BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'I THEG PA LA YANG DAG PAR ZHUGS
PAS JI LTAR GNAS PAR BYA BA DANG , JI LTAR BSGRUB PAR BYA BA
DANG , JI LTAR SEMS RAB DU GZUNG BAR BYA BA NGAS KHYOD LA
BSHAD DO,

And since it is so, oh Subhuti, listen now to what I speak, and be sure that it stays firmly in your heart, for I shall reveal to you how it is that those who have entered well into the way of the bodhisattva should live, and how they should practice, and how they should keep their thoughts.

RGYU MTSAN DE'I PHYIR NA, LEGS PAR NYON LA LEGS PAR YID LA MI
BRJED PAR ZUNGS SHIG CES DANG , GONG DU ZHUS PA'I JI LTAR GNAS
PAR BYA BA SOGS GSUM KHYOD LA BSHAD PAR BYA'O ZHES GSUNGS,

"And since this reason is so," continues the Buddha, **"listen well now to what I speak, and be sure that it stays firmly,** without ever being forgotten. **For I shall reveal to you** the answer to those three questions about **how** these beings **should live,** and so on."

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS, DE BZHIN NO, , ZHES GSOL NAS TSE DANG LDAN PA
RAB 'BYOR BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYI LTAR NYAN PA DANG , BCOM LDAN
'DAS KYIS 'DI SKAD CES BKA' STZAL TO,

"Thus shall it be," replied the junior monk Subhuti, and he sat to listen as instructed by the Conqueror. The Conqueror too then began, with the following words:

LAN LA RAB 'BYOR GYIS BCOM LDAN 'DAS DE DE BZHIN NO ZHES GSOL
NAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYI GSUNGS PA LTAR MNYAN PA DANG , BCOM
LDAN 'DAS KYIS RAB 'BYOR LA 'CHAD PAR 'GYUR BA 'DI SKAD CES BKA'
STZAL TO, , RAB 'BYOR 'DI NYAN THOS KYI TSUL BZUNG BA TZAM MA
GTOGS, DON LA 'JAM DPAL GYI SPRUL PAR SNANG LA, STON PAS YUM
GSUNGS PA'I TSE RAB 'BYOR NYID YUM GYI MDO THOG MAR 'CHAD PA
POR BSGOS TE DGONGS GZHI CHE'O,

In reply then **Subhuti** proffers to the Conqueror, "**Thus shall it be.**" **He sits to listen as instructed by the Conqueror, and the Conqueror too begins his explanation with the words that follow.**

This Subhuti, by the way, is only posing as a disciple: in reality he would appear to be an emanation of Manjushri himself. When the Teacher spoke the sutras on the Mother of the Buddhas, it was none other than Subhuti that he would appoint to give the opening presentations—and there is a special significance to why he did so.

,GZHUNG GI BSDUS DON LA SLOB DPON K'A MA SH'AI LAS, SEMS
BSKYED PA DANG , PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA LA SBYOR BA DANG , GZUGS
SKU THOB PAR 'DUN PA NAS, SANGS RGYAS KYIS YONGS SU BTZAL BA'I
BAR BCVO BRGYAD BSHAD CING , DE'I DANG PO BCU DRUG NI MOS
SPYOD KYI SA DANG , DE NAS GCIG NI LHAG BSAM DAG PA'I SA DANG ,
BCVO BRGYAD PA NI SANGS RGYAS KYI SA DANG SBYAR NAS 'CHAD
DO, , 'DIR CUNG ZAD BSDUS NAS 'CHAD PAR 'DOD PAS DANG PO BYANG
CHUB TU SEMS BSKYED PA NI,

As for the general structure of the text, Master Kamalashila makes his presentation in a total of eighteen different points. These begin with relating the text to the Wish for enlightenment, and then to the perfections, and then discussing the aspiration for the Buddha's physical body. After covering all the others, he reaches finally the part where the Buddha has completed his pronouncement.

Master Kamalashila provides his commentary by relating the first sixteen of these points to the levels of those who act in belief. The one point that follows then he relates to the levels of those who act out of total personal responsibility. Point number eighteen refers, lastly, to the level of a Buddha.

My intention here is to offer a somewhat more concise explanation, and I begin with the part that concerns the Wish for enlightenment.

[The Diamond-Cutter Sutra, f. 216b; Sunlight for the Path, ff. 4b-7a]

,RAB 'BYOR, 'DI LA BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'I THEG PA LA YANG DAG
PAR ZHUGS PAS 'DI SNYAM DU, BDAG GIS JI TZAM SEMS CAN DU BSDU
BAS BSDUS PA SGO NGA LAS SKYES PA'AM, MNGAL NAS SKYES PA'AM,
DROD GSHER LAS SKYES PA'AM, BRDZUS TE SKYES PA'AM, GZUGS CAN
NAM, GZUGS MED PA'AM, 'DU SHES CAN NAM, 'DU SHES MED PA'AM,
'DU SHES MED 'DU SHES MED MIN NAM, SEMS CAN GYI KHAMS JI TZAM
SEMS CAN DU GDAGS PAS BTAGS PA DE DAG THAMS CAD PHUNG PO
LHAG MA MED PA'I MYA NGAN LAS 'DAS PA'I DBYINGS SU YONGS SU
MYA NGAN LAS BZLA'O, , DE LTAR SEMS CAN TSAD MED PA YONGS SU
MYA NGAN LAS BZLAS KYANG SEMS CAN GANG YANG YONGS SU MYA
NGAN LAS BZLAS PAR GYUR PA MED DO, , SNYAM DU SEMS BSKYED
PAR BYA'O,

Subhuti, this is how those who have entered well into the way of the bodhisattva must think to themselves as they feel the Wish to achieve enlightenment:

I will bring to nirvana the total amount of living beings, every single one numbered among the ranks of living kind: those who were born from eggs, those who were born from a womb, those who were born through warmth and moisture, those who were born miraculously, those who have a physical form, those with none, those with conceptions, those with none, and those with neither conceptions nor no conceptions. However many living beings there are, in whatever realms there may be—anyone at all labelled with the name of "living being"—all these will I bring to total nirvana, to the sphere beyond all grief, where none of the parts of the person are left at all. Yet even if I do manage to bring this limitless number of living beings to total nirvana, there will be no living being at all who was brought to total nirvana.

RAB 'BYOR 'DI LA BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'I THEG PA LA ZHUGS PAS
THOG MAR SEMS BSKYED PA'I TSE 'DI SNYAM DU SEMS PAR BYA STE,
BDAG GIS NI SEMS CAN GYI KHAMS DPAG TU MED CING GRANGS MED
PA ZHIG YOD PA JI TZAM PA DE RNAMS SKYE GNAS KYI SGO NAS SEMS

CAN GYI RIGS SU BSDU BAS BSDUS PA NA, SGO NGA LAS SKYES PA'AM,
DE BZHIN DU MNGAL DANG , DROD GSHER DANG , RDZUS TE SKYES PA
BZHI DANG , 'DOD KHAMS DANG GZUGS KHAMS NA YOD PA'I SEMS
CAN GZUGS CAN DANG , GZUGS MED NA YOD PA'I GZUGS CAN MA YIN
PA DANG , 'BRAS BU CHE BA DANG SRID RTZE'I SEMS CAN LAS GZHAN
PA'I 'DU SHES CAN GYI SEMS CAN DANG , 'BRAS BU CHE BA'I PHYOGS
GCIG GI SEMS CAN RNAMS 'DU SHES MED PA DANG , SRID RTZER SKYES
PA'I SEMS CAN RNAMS 'DU SHES RAGS PA MED CING PHRA BA MED
PA'ANG MA YIN PA STE, MDOR NA SEMS CAN GYI KHAMS CI TZAM DU
SEMS CAN ZHES MING GIS GDAGS PAS BTAGS PA DE DAG THAMS CAD
SGRIB GNYIS DANG SDUG BSNGAL GYI PHUNG PO LHAG MA MED PA'I
MI GNAS PA'I MYA NGAN LAS 'DAS PA'I DBYINGS SU YONGS SU MYA
NGAN LAS BZLA'O SNYAM DU SEMS BSKYED PAR BYA'O , ,

What the root text is saying is: "**Subhuti, this is how those who have entered the way of the bodhisattva must think to themselves first as they feel the Wish to achieve enlightenment:**

Whatever realms there may be, and however many living beings there are, they reach to infinity, they are countless. If one were to classify those numbered among the ranks of living kind by type of birth, there would be four: those who were born from eggs, and then those who were born from a womb, those who were born through warmth and moisture, and those who were born miraculously.

Then again there are the sentient beings living in the desire realm and the form realm: **those who have a physical form.** There are also the beings in the formless realm: **those with no physical form.**

There are "**those with conceptions,**" meaning the beings who live in all the levels except the ones known as the "great result" and the "peak of existence." There are "**those with no conceptions,**" which refers to a portion of the beings who reside at the level of the great result. In addition are the beings who have been born at the level of the peak of existence: **those with no coarse kinds of conceptions** but who on the other hand are **not** such that they have **no subtle conceptions.**

The point, in short, is that I speak of **all living beings: of anyone at all labelled with the name of "living being."** **All these will I bring to total nirvana, to the sphere beyond all grief, where one no longer remains in**

either of the extremes—and **where none of the two kinds of obstacles, and none of the suffering heaps of parts to the person, are left at all.**

DON BSDU NA SEMS CAN DE THAMS CAD MI GNAS PA'I MYANG 'DAS SANGS RGYAS KYI CHOS KYI SKU NGO BO NYID SKU THOB PA'I CHED DU SEMS BSKYED PA'O, , SEMS CAN KUN SDUG BSNGAL GSUM PO CI RIGS LAS SKYOB 'DOD KYI SNYING RJE CHEN PO SNGON DU BTANG NAS MYANG 'DAS MTHAR THUG LA 'GOD 'DOD KYI SEMS GSAR DU BSKYED PA DANG , SNGAR BSKYED ZIN PA ZHIG YIN NA NI BSKYED PA DE GSAL BTAB STE GONG 'PHEL DU BYED PA'O,

To summarize, these bodhisattvas develop the Wish for the sake of bringing all these different living beings to the state of that nirvana where one no longer remains in either of the extremes; to bring them to the dharma body, the essence body, of the Buddha. The reference here is either to someone who is feeling the Wish for the first time, or to someone who has already been able to develop it. The first of these two has been practicing the emotion of great compassion, where one wishes to protect all living beings from any of the three different kinds of suffering they may be experiencing. This has made him ready for his first experience of the state of mind where he intends to lead all sentient kind to the ultimate nirvana. The latter of the two, the one who has already developed the Wish, is re-focussing his mind on his mission, and thus increasing the intensity of his Wish.

,SKYE GNAS BZHI LAS SGONG SKYES NI, MI DANG KLU DANG BYA SOGS LA YOD CING , MNGAL SKYES NI MI DANG DUD 'GRO DANG YI DVAGS LA'ANG YOD DO, , DROD SKYES LA PHYI'I DNGOS PO LO TOG SOGS MANG YANG MI LA RGYAL PO SPYI BO SKYES LTA BU DANG DBYAR DUS SU SKYES PA'I 'BU SRIN PHAL CHER RO, , BRDZUS SKYES NI BSKAL PA DANG PO'I MI RNAMS DANG LHA DANG DMYAL BA PA RNAMS DANG BAR DO BA DANG LHA MIN DUD 'GRO LA'ANG YOD DO, , MI LA SGONG SKYES NI STON PA'I DUS SU DGE BSNYEN MA SA GA LAS SGO NGA MANG PO DANG DE LAS BU MANG PO ZHIG BYUNG BAR BSHAD PA LTAR RO,

Here is a little on the four types of birth. Birth from an egg exists among humans, serpentes, birds, and other creatures. Birth from the womb is found with humans and animals, and is also one of the ways in which craving spirits take birth. There are many examples of inanimate objects which grow from warmth and moisture--crops and so on. Among humans though there was the case of the

king called "Headborn." The majority of the insects which appear in the summer are also born this way. Miraculous birth occurs with the humans who appear at the beginning of the world, and with pleasure beings, hell beings, inbetween beings, and near pleasure-beings. It is also one of the ways in which animals take birth. An example of birth from an egg among humans would be the story that we see of Saga, who possessed the lifetime vows of a laywoman. She gave a great number of eggs, and from these eggs grew boys.

,GONG GI DE NI KUN RDZOB PA'I SEMS BSKYED TSUL YIN LA, DE LA SMON SEMS DANG 'JUG SEMS GNYIS TE, GTZO BOR TSOGS SBYOR GYI GNAS SKABS LA DGONGS PAR SEMS SO,

The above description applies to the way in which a person thinks as he or she feels what we call the "deceptive" Wish for enlightenment. It refers both to the Wish in the form of a prayer and to the Wish in the form of actual activities. I would say as well that Lord Buddha's intention at this point is to refer primarily to the Wish as it occurs at the paths of accumulation and of preparation.

,SEMS BSKYED KYI MTSAN NYID YONGS SU RDZOGS PA LA GZHAN SANGS RGYAS LA 'GOD 'DOD TZAM GYIS MI CHOG GI, RANG YANG SANGS RGYAS THOB 'DOD ZHIG NGES PAR DGOS SO, , DE'I PHYIR BYAMS PAS, SEMS BSKYED PA NI GZHAN DON PHYIR, , YANG DAG RDZOGS PA'I BYANG CHUB 'DOD, , CES GSUNGS TE, GZHAN DON PHYIR ZHES PAS GZHAN MYANG 'DAS LA 'GOD 'DOD DANG , RDZOGS PA'I BYANG CHUB 'DOD CES RANG RDZOGS BYANG THOB 'DOD ZHIG DGOS ZHES BSHAD DO,

For a person to feel a Wish for enlightenment which is complete in every necessary characteristic, it is not sufficient simply to intend to lead all other sentient beings to the state of Buddhahood. Rather, you must have the desire that you yourself reach this state as well. This is exactly why Maitreya stated that "The Wish for enlightenment consists of the intention to reach total enlightenment for the sake of others." The part about "the sake of others" is meant to indicate that you must intend to lead other beings to nirvana, whereas the part about the "intention to reach total enlightenment" means that you must intend to reach perfect Buddhahood yourself.

,SEMS BSKYED DE BDAG MED RTOGS PA'I LTA BAS ZIN DGOS PAR BSTAN PA'I PHYIR DE LTAR SEMS CAN TSAD MED PA ZHIG MI GNAS PA'I MYANG 'DAS LA YONGS SU 'GOD PAR

'DOD CING , BKOD DU ZIN KYANG DON DAM PAR SEMS CAN GANG
YANG YONGS SU MYA NGAN LAS 'DAS PA THOB PAR 'GYUR BA MED DO
SNYAM DU SEMS BSKYED PAR BYA'O,

Lord Buddha wants us to understand that this Wish for enlightenment must be imbued with that correct view wherein you perceive that nothing has a self-nature. This is why He states that we must develop a Wish for enlightenment where we intend to lead **this limitless number** of living beings to the nirvana beyond both extremes, but where at the same time we realize that, **even if we do manage to bring them to this total nirvana, there will be no living being at all** who achieved it, and who also existed ultimately.

, 'DIR MYA NGAN ZHES 'BYUNG BA NI MYA NGAN NI LAS NYON GNYIS
DANG SDUG BSNAL TE DE LAS BZLAS PA NI LAS NYON DANG SDUG
BSNAL LAS THAR PA 'AM 'DAS PA'I MYANG 'DAS SO, , DES NA BZLAS
ZHES PA NI MYANG 'DAS DANG DE LA 'GOD PA'I DON DU YANG 'GYUR
RO, , GZHUNG 'DIS SO SKYE LA DON DAM SEMS BSKYED RJES MTHUN PA
ZHIG BSTAN CING , DON DAM SEMS BSKYED DNGOS KYANG BSTAN TE
'PHAGS PA KHO NA YOD DO,

The Tibetan term for "nirvana" means "passing beyond sorrow." The "sorrow" mentioned here refers to the pair of karma and mental afflictions, as well as to suffering. The nirvana to which you wish to bring beings then refers to a state of escaping from the combination of karma and bad thoughts, along with suffering: it means to go beyond them. This is why the unusual Tibetan verb here refers not only to nirvana, but to the act of *bringing* someone to nirvana as well. The root text at this point is meant to indicate that ordinary beings can possess something that approximates the ultimate Wish for enlightenment. It is also indicating the existence of the actual ultimate Wish for enlightenment, which only realized beings possess.

,SLOB DPON K'A MA LA SH'AI LAS, SKABS 'DIR LTA BA'I SKOR MANG PO
ZHIG BSHAD CING , DE YANG 'DI'I GZHUNG 'OG MA RNAMS NI STONG
NYID KYI LTA BA DANG SBYAR NAS GSUNGS PA'I DON SHES PA LA
DGOS PA'I DBANG DU MDZAD PA YIN PAS GAL CHE YANG , 'DIR MANG
DU 'GYUR DOGS NAS BSDUS TE MTSON TZAM MDZAD NA,

At this juncture in his commentary, Master Kamalashila presents a great deal of explanation concerning the correct view of reality. He does so because he realizes

that this background is very important for a proper understanding of the remainder of the root text, which is all spoken relative to the correct view of emptiness. If I did the same here in my own commentary I fear it would become too long for the reader, and so I will cover some of these points now, but only in the very briefest way, just to give you a taste.

KUN BYANG GI CHOS THAMS CAD KYANG THA SNYAD TZAM DU YOD
PAR 'JOG GI, DON DAM DPYOD BYED KYI RIGS PAS DPYAD NAS DPYAD
MI BZOD CING BTAGS DON MI RNYED DE, DE LA DGAG BYA NGOS ZIN
NA 'GOG SLA BAS THOG MAR DGAG BYA JI LTA BU YIN BRJOD NA,

Now each and every existing object, be it part of the afflicted part of existence or part of the pure side, is established as existing only by virtue of terms. If one performs an analysis with reasoning which examines an object in an ultimate sense, no object can bear such examination, and we fail to locate what we gave our label. Here the thing we deny is easier to deny if we can identify it clearly. As such I will speak a bit about what this thing we deny is like.

DGAG BYA LA SPYIR 'DOD TSUL MANG YANG 'DIR DBU MA THAL 'GYUR
BA'I LUGS LTAR BSHAD PAR BYA'O, , DE YANG MDO LAS, DE DAG RTOG
PA'I DBANG GIS BZHAG PA YIN, , ZHES DANG , BZHI BRGYA PA'I 'GREL
PA LAS, RTOG PA YOD PA KHO NAS YOD PA NYID DANG ZHES SOGS
DANG , RJES DGONGS PA RAB GSAL LAS, CHOS RNAMS RTOG PA'I
DBANG GIS BZHAG PAR GSUNGS TE, CHOS THAMS CAD RTOG PAS
BTAGS PA TZAM DANG RTOG PA'I DBANG GIS BZHAG PAR GSUNGS PA
MANG NGO ZHES GSUNGS PA LTAR,

Generally speaking there are a great number of different positions that exist about what the object we deny exactly is. Here though I will give my explanation according to the position of the Consequence section of the Middle Way school. A certain sutra says that "They are all established through concepts." The *Commentary to the Four Hundred* too contains lines such as the one which says, "It is only due to the existence of concepts that existence itself can exist, and..." The Lord, in his *Illumination of the True Thought*, says as well that "These lines [from sutra] are describing how all existing things are established by force of concepts; and we see many other such statements, that all existing objects are simply labeled with our concepts, and are established only by force of concepts."

CHOS THAMS CAD RTOG PAS BTAGS PA'I DPE NI, THAG PA KHRA BO

YUL MI GSAL BA NA GNAS PA'I TSE KHA CIG LA 'DI SBRUL LO SNYAM
PA'I BLO 'BYUNG NGO , , DE'I TSE THAG PA DE'I TSOGS PA DANG CHA
SHAS GANG YANG SBRUL DU MED KYANG , DE LA SBRUL LO SNYAM
PA'I SBRUL NI RTOG PAS BTAGS PA TZAM DU 'CHAR RO,

There is a metaphor used to describe how all existing things are labeled with our concepts. When you put a rope with a checkered pattern on it in a dark corner, some people might get the impression that it's a snake. The truth at this point though is that nothing about the rope is a snake: neither the rope as a whole, nor the parts of the rope. Nonetheless the person thinks of the rope as a snake, and this snake is an example of something which only makes its appearance as something labeled with a concept.

,DE BZHIN DU PHUNG PO 'DI LA BR TEN NAS NGA'O SNYAM DU 'BYUNG
YANG , PHUNG PO'I TSOGS PA DANG RGYUN DANG CHA SHAS GANG
YANG NGA'I MTSAN GZHIR 'JOG RGYU MED CING , PHUNG PO LAS NGO
BO THA DAD PA GZHAN ZHIG KYANG NGA'I MTSAN GZHIR BZUNG
MED PAS, NGA DE NI PHUNG PO LA BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA TZAM YIN
GYI, RANG GI NGO BO NYID KYIS GRUB PA MED DO,

In the same way, the heaps of parts that make us up serve as a basis for us to get the impression "This is me." There is nothing at all about these heaps as a whole, nor their continuation over time, nor their separate components, that we could establish as being an actual representation of "me." At the same time though there is nothing else, nothing essentially separate from these heaps of parts to ourselves, that we could consider an actual representation of "me" either. As such, this "me" is merely something labeled upon the heaps of parts that make us up; there is nothing which exists by its own essence.

,DE LTAR YANG 'PHAGS PA'I RIN CHEN 'PHRENG BA LAS, ,SKYES BU SA
MIN CHU MA YIN, ,ME MIN RLUNG MIN NAM MKHA' MIN, ,RNAM SHES
MA YIN KUN MIN NA, ,DE LAS GZHAN PA'I SKYES BU GANG , ,ZHES
GSUNGS TE, SA MIN NAS RNAM SHES MIN ZHES PAS SKYES BU'I KHAMS
DRUG GI CHA SHAS RE RE BA DANG , KUN MIN ZHES PAS KHAMS DRUG
GI TSOGS PA SKYES BU'I BDAG TU 'JOG PA BKAG CING , RKANG PA PHYI
MAS KHAMS RNAMS LAS NGO BO THA DAD PA'I BDAG BKAG GO,

This too is the point being made in the *String of Precious Jewels*, by the realized being Nagarjuna:

If it's true that the persona is not the element
Of earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind,
Not space, or consciousness, not all of them,
Then how could he ever be anything else?

The part of the verse that goes from "not earth" up to "not consciousness" is meant to deny that you could ever establish a self-nature of the person in any of the six elements that make up a persona, considered separately. The words "not all of them" are meant to deny that you could establish such a self-nature in the collection of the six elements, considered as a whole. The final line of the verse denies that there could be any self-nature which was essentially separate from these same elements.

'O NA SKYES BU STE GANG ZAG JI LTAR 'JOG PA YANG DE NYID LAS,
,SKYES BU KHAMS DRUG 'DUS PA'I PHYIR, ,YANG DAG MA YIN JI LTA
BAR, ,DE BZHIN KHAMS NI RE RE YANG , , 'DUS PHYIR YANG DAG NYID
DU MIN, ,ZHES GSUNGS TE, RGYU MTSAN DES NA SKYES BU NI RANG GI
KHAMS DRUG 'DUS PA'I STENG

DU BTAGS PA TZAM MA GTOGS, YANG DAG PAR MA GRUB BO,

How then do we establish the existence of the persona (which in this case simply means "person")? The same work says:

Because the persona includes all six
Elements, he's nothing that purely exists;
Just so, because they include their parts,
None of these elements purely exist.

Given the reason stated above, the persona is nothing more than something labelled upon the six elements that make him up—he does not though purely exist.

,DE JI LTA BA BZHIN DU KHAMS RNAMS KYANG RANG RANG GI CHA
SHAS 'DUS PA LA BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA YIN PA'I PHYIR YANG DAG PAR
MA GRUB ZHES BSTAN TO, , DE BZHIN DU PHUNG SOGS KYI CHOS
THAMS CAD KYANG RANG RANG GI CHA SHAS DANG TSOGS PA LA
BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA YIN PA'I PHYIR RANG DBANG DU GRUB PA MED
CES SBYOR RO, , RANG GI GZUGS PHUNG NI YAN LAG LNGA SOGS LA
BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA DANG , YAN LAG RNAMS KYANG CHA CAN

PHUNG PO DANG RANG GI PHYOGS KYI CHA LA BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA DANG , NYING LAG SOR MO LTA BU YANG RANG GI CHA CAN DANG CHA SHAS LA BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA DANG ,

Just so none of these elements themselves exist purely, for they too are simply labeled upon the parts that they include. This same reasoning can be applied to the heaps of parts that make up a person, and all other objects as well: you can say about all of them that, because they are labeled on their parts and their whole, they do not exist independently. The physical heap of parts that I myself possess is something labeled upon my five appendages and so on; these appendages themselves are something labeled upon the body as a whole and the parts that go off to each side of it; and the smaller appendages like fingers and toes too are labeled upon their whole and their parts.

BUM PA NI RANG GI MCHU ZHABS LTO BA SOGS LA BTAGS PA DANG , MCHU ZHABS SOGS KYANG RANG GI CHA SHAS DANG CHA CAN BUM PA LA BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA SOGS GZUGS CAN

RNAMS LA 'GRE ZHING , SHES PA RNAMS KYANG SKAD CIG SNGA PHYI DANG DMIGS PA SOGS LA BR TEN NAS DANG , 'DUS MA BYAS RNAMS KYANG RANG GI GDAGS GZHI SO SO LA BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA STE, RGYAS PAR GZHAN DU BSHAD ZIN TO,

A water pitcher is something labeled on its spout and base and other parts; the spout and base and such in turn are labeled on their parts and whole; and so on--the same pattern applies to all physical objects. Mental things too are labeled on mental events of successive moments, and through the objects towards which they function, and so on. Even uncaused phenomena are labeled upon the respective bases that take their labels. All this I have covered before, in other writings.

,DES NA BR TEN NAS BYUNG BA DANG BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA MA YIN PA'I CHOS MED PAS, BR TEN NAS BTAGS PA MA YIN PAR YOD PA DE BRTAG PA MTHA' GZUNG GI DGAG BYA'I TSAD DO, , DE LTAR YANG , RTZA SHE LAS, ,GANG PHYIR BR TEN 'BYUNG MA YIN PA'I, ,CHOS 'GA' YOD PA MA YIN PAS, ,DE PHYIR STONG PA MA YIN PA'I, ,CHOS 'GA' YOD PA MA YIN NO, ,ZHES GSUNGS SO,

Given the above, there does not exist anything which does not occur in dependence, or which is not labelled through a dependent relationship.

Therefore the point at which we can say something is the object denied by our search for a hypothetical self-existent thing would be any time that thing existed without having been labelled through a dependent relationship. This too is why the *Root Text on Wisdom* states:

No object which does not occur
Through dependence even exists at all;
As such no object could exist
At all if it weren't empty.

,MDOR NA BDAG GAM GANG ZAG BTAGS DON BTZAL BA'I TSE MI
RNYED KYANG THA SNYAD DU SGYU MA DANG SPRUL PA LTAR BYA
BYED 'THAD PA DE BZHIN DU CHOS THAMS CAD LA'ANG 'DRA STE,
SDUD PA LAS, , BDAG CI 'DRA BAR DE 'DRAR SEMS CAN THAMS CAD
SHES, ,SEMS CAN THAMS CAD CI 'DRA DE 'DRAR CHOS KUN SHES, ,ZHES
DANG ,

In short, when you search for the thing given the name of "self" or "me" you will never find anything; despite this, the fact that things can do something is completely right and proper, in the sense of an illusion, or magic. And this fact applies to each and every existing thing there is. As the *Shorter [Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom]* states,

You should understand that the nature of every single living is the same
as that of the "self."
You should understand that the nature of all existing objects is the same as
that of every living being.

TING NGE 'DZIN RGYAL PO LAS KYANG , ,JI LTAR KHYOD KYIS BDAG GI
'DU SHES NI, ,SHES PA DE BZHIN KUN LA BLOS SBYAR BYA, ,ZHES
GSUNGS SO, , DE BZHIN DU SBYIN SOGS KYI CHOS RNAMS KYANG THA
SNYAD BTAGS PA TZAM DU YOD PA MA GTOGS, RANG BZHIN GYIS
STONG PAR SHES DGOS PA LA DGONGS NAS DNGOS PO CI LA YANG MI
GNAS PAR SBYIN PA SBYIN PAR BYA'O ZHES SOGS GSUNGS SO,

The *King of Concentration* says as well,

You should apply what you understand about how
You think of your "self" to every thing there is.

All this is true as well for objects like the perfection of giving and so on: they exist only through being labelled with a term, and are empty of any natural existence. Seeking to make us realize how necessary it is to understand this fact, Lord Buddha makes statements like "Perform the act of giving without believing in any object at all."

,GNAD CHE BA 'DI SHES DGOS TE, JI SRID BDEN 'DZIN GYIS BCINGS PA
LAS MA GROL CING STONG NYID KYI DON MA RTOGS PA DE SRID DU
SANGS RGYAS KYIS DNGOS SU RJES SU BZUNG YANG THAR PA THOB MI
NUS PA'I PHYIR TE, MGON PO KLU SGRUB KYIS, ,GANG DAG STONG
NYID MI SHES PA, ,DE DAG THAR PA BSTEN MA YIN, ,GRO DRUG SRID
PA'I BTZON RAR NI, ,RMONGS PA DE DAG 'KHOR BAR 'GYUR, ,ZHES
GSUNGS SHING , 'PHAGS PA LHAS KYANG , DNGOS PO'I 'DU SHES CAN
LA THAR PA MED CES BSHAD PA'I PHYIR DANG , GZHAN YANG MANG
NGO ,

This is the most important thing for us to learn: so long as we are still not free of the chains of grasping to things as truly existing, and so long as we have yet to grasp the meaning of emptiness, then we will never be able to achieve freedom, even if the Buddha should appear himself and try to lead us there. This is supported by the words of the savior Nagarjuna:

Freedom is a complete impossibility
For anyone who does not understand emptiness.
Those who are blind will continue to circle
Here in the prison of six different births.

Master Aryadeva as well has spoken that "For those who conceive of things, freedom does not exist." And there are many other such quotations.

,DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, GAL TE BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'
SEMS CAN DU 'DU SHES 'JUG NA, DE BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' ZHES MI
BYA BA'I PHYIR RO,

Why is it so? Because, Subhuti, if a bodhisattva were to conceive of someone as a living being, then we could never call him a "bodhisattva."

,GONG GI PHRO NI, BDEN PAR GRUB PA'I SEMS CAN GANG YANG
MYANG 'DAS THOB PA MED PAR SEMS BSKYED DGOS PA'I RGYU MTSAN
LA DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR ZHES BOS NAS GAL TE BYANG

CHUB SEMS DPA' GANG SEMS CAN LA SEMS CAN DU BDEN PAR GRUB
PA'I 'DU SHES 'JUG NA, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' DE BDAG MED RTOGS
PA'I BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' ZHES MI BYA'O,

Here we return to where we left off in the root text. One may ask, "**Why is it so?** What reason is there for saying that we should develop a Wish for enlightenment, while still understanding that there is no truly existing sentient being at all who ever achieves it?" Lord Buddha first calls **Subhuti** by name, and then explains that **we could never call** any particular bodhisattva a "**bodhisattva** who had realized the meaning of no-self-nature" **if this bodhisattva were to conceive of** any living being **as a living being** who existed truly.

,DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' GANG MI
GNAS PAR SBYIN PA SBYIN PA DE'I BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO NI, RAB
'BYOR, TSAD GZUNG BAR SLA BA MA YIN PA'I PHYIR RO,

Why is that? Think, oh Subhuti, of the mountains of merit collected by any bodhisattva who performs the act of giving without staying. This merit, oh Subhuti, is not something that you could easily ever measure.

,BDEN 'DZIN GYIS BCINGS PA'I SBYIN SOGS LAS BSOD NAMS CHEN PO
'BYUNG MOD, BDEN 'DZIN GYIS BCINGS PA DANG BRAL BA'I SGO NAS
SBYIN SOGS BSGRUB PA NA BSOD NAMS LHAG PAR CHE BAR NGES ZHES
STON PA NI, DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA'
GANG MI GNAS PAR SBYIN PA SBYIN PA DE'I BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO
CHE BA'I MTHA' TSAD NI GZHAN GYIS GZUNG BAR SLA BA MIN TE DKA'
BA'I PHYIR RO,

One would have to admit that a person locked in the chains of grasping to some true existence can collect a great amount of merit through acts of giving and the like. But suppose a person is able to practice giving and the rest after he has freed himself from these same chains. His merit then is certain to be ever much greater. And it is to emphasize this point that the Buddha says, **Why is that? Think, oh Subhuti, of the mountains of merit collected by any bodhisattva who performs the act of giving without staying. This merit is not something whose limit you could easily ever measure;** in fact, it would be quite difficult to measure.

,RAB 'BYOR, 'DI JI SNYAM DU SEMS, SHAR PHYOGS KYI NAM MKHA'I
TSAD GZUNG BAR SLA'AM, RAB 'BYOR GYIS GSOL PA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS,

DE NI, MA LAGS SO, , BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS BKA' STZAL PA, DE BZHIN DU LHO DANG , NUB DANG , BYANG DANG , STENG DANG , 'OG GI PHYOGS DANG , PHYOGS MTSAMS DANG , PHYOGS BCU'I NAM MKHA'I TSAD GZUNG BAR SLA'AM, RAB 'BYOR GYIS GSOL PA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS, DE NI, MA LAGS SO, , BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS BKA' STZAL PA, RAB 'BYOR, DE BZHIN DU BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' GANG MI GNAS PA'I SBYIN PA SBYIN PA DE'I BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO YANG TSAD GZUNG BAR SLA BA MA YIN NO,

Oh Subhuti, what do you think? Would it be easy to measure the space to the east of us?

And Subhuti replied,

Oh Conqueror, it would not.

The Conqueror bespoke:

And just so, would it be easy to measure the space to the south of us, or to the north of us, or above us, or below us, or in any of the ordinal directions from us? Would it be easy to measure the space to any of the ten directions from where we now stand?

And Subhuti replied,

Oh Conqueror, it would not.

The Conqueror bespoke:

And just so, oh Subhuti, it would be no easy thing to measure the mountains of merit collected by any bodhisattva who performs the act of giving without staying.

,DE'I DPE STON PA NI, SHAR LA SOGS PA PHYOGS BCU'I NAM MKHA'I TSAD GZUNG BA SLA BA MA YIN PA LTA BU STE, RAB 'BYOR DE BZHIN DU ZHES SOGS KYIS DPE BSTAN PA'I DON BSDUS SO,

The root text here is presenting an example. It would be no easy thing to measure the space to the east or any of the rest of the ten directions reaching out

from the particular point where we are now. Then the Buddha summarizes the point of the example with the words that start with "**Just so, Subhuti...**"

,RAB 'BYOR, 'DI JI SNYAM DU SEMS, MTSAN PHUN SUM TSOGS PAS DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAR BLTA'AM, RAB 'BYOR GYIS GSOL PA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS, DE NI, MA LAGS TE, MTSAN PHUN SUM TSOGS PAS DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAR MI BLTA'O, , DE CI'I SLAD DU ZHE NA, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS MTSAN PHUN SUM TSOGS PAR GANG GSUNGS PA DE NYID MTSAN PHUN SUM TSOGS PA MA MCHIS PA'I SLAD DU'O, , DE SKAD CES GSOL PA DANG , BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS TSE DANG LDAN PA RAB 'BYOR LA 'DI SKAD CES BKA' STZAL TO,

Oh Subhuti, what do you think? Should we consider someone to be the One Thus Gone because he possesses the totally exquisite marks on a Buddha's body?

And Subhuti replied,

Oh Conqueror, we should not. We should not consider someone the One Thus Gone because he possesses the totally exquisite marks on a Buddha's body. And why not? Because when the One Thus Gone himself described the totally exquisite marks on a Buddha's body, he stated at the same time that they were impossible.

And then the Conqueror spoke to the junior monk Subhuti again, as follows:

, SBYIN SOGS BSOD NAMS KYI TSOGS LAS SANGS RGYAS KYI GZUGS SKU 'GRUB PAR 'GYUR ZHING , GZUGS KYI SKU NI MTSAN DPES BRGYAN PA'O, , RAB 'BYOR 'DI JI SNYAM DU SEMS ZHES PA NI, RAB 'BYOR KHYOD KYIS DON 'DI LA JI LTAR YIN SNYAM DU SEMS PA STE BSAM, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA'I GZUGS KYI SKU RNAM PA GNYIS NI MTSAN DPE PHUN SUM TSOGS PA DANG LDAN PA YIN MOD, 'ON KYANG MTSAN DPE PHUN SUM TSOGS PA YOD PA DE TZAM GYIS DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAR LTA BA STE 'DOD PAR BYA BA YIN SNYAM MA'AM ZHES DRIS PA NA, RAB 'BYOR GYIS BCOM LDAN 'DAS DE NI DE LTAR BLTA BA MA LAGS SO ZHES GSOL TE, CUNG ZAD DBYE BA NI MTSAN DPE PHUN SUM TSOGS PA YOD PA DE TZAM GYIS DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAR BLTA BAR MI BGYID DE, DE CI'I SLAD DU ZHE NA, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GZUGS KYI SKU'I MTSAN DPE PHUN SUM TSOGS PA GANG GSUNGS PA DE NYID KUN RDZOB TU SGYU MA LTAR YOD PAR GSUNGS KYI, DON DAM PAR

MTSAN DPE PHUN SUM TSOGS PA MA MCHIS PA'I SLAD DU'O ZHES
GSOL TO,

The merit of acts such as giving and the rest bring us the physical body of a Buddha, and this physical body is adorned with various marks and signs. The words "**Subhuti, what do you think?**" mean "Subhuti, turn your mind to this subject, and think about how it could be—contemplate upon it."

The Buddha then asks Subhuti, "Assume for a minute that **someone possessed the totally exquisite marks** and signs, or the two physical bodies, of the One Thus Gone. Would that in itself **require us to consider him**—that is, assert that he is—**the One Thus Gone?** What do you think?"

Subhuti replies to the Buddha with the words starting off from, "**We should not** consider him so." At this point we have to draw a slight distinction. One should not necessarily consider someone the One Thus Gone simply **because he possesses the totally exquisite marks** and signs. "**And why not?**" says Subhuti. He answers himself by saying, "**Because when the One Thus Gone himself described the totally exquisite marks and signs on a Buddha's body, he stated at the same time that they** existed deceptively, in the way of an illusion. Signs and marks of this kind that existed ultimately, however, would be a complete **impossibility.**"

,RAB 'BYOR, 'DI JI SNYAM DU SEMS, MTSAN PHUN SUM TSOGS PA DE
TZAM DU RDZUN NO, , JI TZAM DU MTSAN PHUN SUM TSOGS PA MED
PA DE TZAM DU MI RDZUN TE, DE LTAR DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA LA
MTSAN DANG MTSAN MED PAR BLTA'O, , DE SKAD CES BKA' STZAL PA
DANG , BCOM LDAN 'DAS LA TSE DANG LDAN PA RAB 'BYOR GYIS 'DI
SKAD CES GSOL TO,

Oh Subhuti, what do you think? The totally exquisite marks on a Buddha's body, as such, are deceptive. The totally exquisite marks on a Buddha's body are also not deceptive, but only insofar as they do not exist. Thus you should see the One Thus Gone as having no marks, no marks at all.

Thus did the Conqueror speak. And then the junior monk Subhuti replied to the Conqueror, as follows:

,GZUGS SKU'I MTSAN DPE RNAMS NI RI MOS BRIS PA'I GZUGS BRNYAN
LTAR RKYEN TSOGS PA LAS BYUNG BA'I KUN RDZOB BRDZUN PA'I

GNAS TSUL YIN GYI, BDEN PA'I RANG BZHIN MIN NO ZHES STON PA NI, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS RAB 'BYOR LA CI TZAM DU MTSAN PHUN SUM TSOGS PA DE TZAM DU BRDZUN NO ZHES GSUNGS, 'O NA MI BRDZUN PA GANG ZHE NA, JI TZAM DU MTSAN DPE PHUN SUM TSOGS PA RNAMS BDEN PAR MED PA DE TZAM NI MI BRDZUN ZHING BDEN TE, DE LTAR DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA LA BDEN PAR GRUB PA'I MTSAN DANG MTSAN MA MED PAR BLTA BAR BYA'O, , 'DIS GZUGS SKU LA MTHA' GNYIS SEL TE, GZUGS SKU DANG DE'I MTSAN DPE RNAMS KUN RDZOB BRDZUN PA'I STONG TSUL DU YOD PAS SKUR 'DEBS SEL ZHING , BDEN GRUB KYI MTSAN DANG MTSAN MA MED PAR BSTAN PAS SGRO 'DOGS KYI MTHA' SEL BA'I PHYIR RO, , DE'I SNGA MAS GZUGS SKU DANG PHYI MAS CHOS KYI SKU BSTAN TE NGO BO NYID SKU GTZO CHE'O,

The marks and signs on the physical body of the Buddha are like an image drawn on a piece of paper: they are not the real thing—they exist in a deceptive manner, as things that occur when all of their causes have gathered together. They do not exist as something with a true nature. To indicate this fact, Lord Buddha says to Subhuti, "Insofar as **the totally exquisite marks on a Buddha's body** exist, **as such they are deceptive**.

"Just what," you may ask, "is meant by the word **deceptive**?" **The totally exquisite marks and signs on a Buddha's body are also not deceptive**, and true, **but only insofar as they do not exist truly. Thus you should see the One Thus Gone as having no marks, no marks** to indicate his nature, **at all**.

The section here helps to prevent us from falling into either one of the two extremes. The physical body of the Buddha and its various marks and signs do exist—albeit in a deceptive way, in a false or empty way—and this fact keeps us from the extreme of denying the existence of something which actually does exist.

The text though also states that there exist no marks, and no marks that would indicate any nature, which also exist truly. This fact keeps us from the extreme of asserting the existence of something which actually does not exist. The former of these two [marks] is referring to the physical body of a Buddha. The latter is referring to the dharma body, and chiefly to the essence body.

[*The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, f. 217b-218b; *Sunlight for the Path*, ff. 9b-10b]

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS, MA 'ONGS PA'I DUS LNGA BRGYA THA MA LA DAM PA'I CHOS RAB TU RNAM PAR 'JIG PAR 'GYUR BA NA SEMS CAN GANG LA LA DAG 'DI LTA BU'I MDO SDE'I TSIG BSHAD PA 'DI LA YANG DAG PAR 'DU SHES BSKYED PAR 'GYUR BA LTA MCHIS SAM, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS BKA' STZAL PA, RAB 'BYOR, KHYOD 'DI SKAD DU, MA 'ONGS PA'I DUS LNGA BRGYA THA MA LA DAM PA'I CHOS RAB TU RNAM PAR 'JIG PAR 'GYUR BA NA SEMS CAN GANG LA LA DAG 'DI LTA BU'I MDO SDE'I TSIG BSHAD PA 'DI LA YANG DAG PAR 'DU SHES BSKYED PAR 'GYUR BA LTA MCHIS SAM ZHES MA ZER CIG,

Oh Conqueror, what will happen in the future, in the days of the last five hundred, when the holy Dharma is approaching its final destruction? How could anyone of those times ever see accurately the meaning of the explanations given in sutras such as this one?

And the Conqueror bespoke,

Oh Subhuti, you should never ask the question you have just asked: "What will happen in the future, in the days of the last five hundred, when the Dharma is approaching its final destruction? How could anyone of those times ever see accurately the meaning of the explanations given in sutras such as this one?"

,DE LTA BU'I CHOS GZUGS KYI SKU BSHAD PA'I MDO 'DI LA YID CHES SHING MOS PA'I SEMS CAN MA 'ONGS PA 'BYUNG NGAM ZHES PA NI, RAB 'BYOR GYIS BCOM LDAN 'DAS MA 'ONGS PA'I DUS LNGA BRGYA'I THA MA LA DAM PA'I CHOS RAB TU RNAM PAR 'JIG PAR 'GYUR BA NA SOGS TE, LAN DU BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS RAB 'BYOR KHYOD DE SKAD MA ZER CIG CES PA NI KHYOD MA 'ONGS PA NA DE LTA BU'I GANG ZAG 'BYUNG MI 'BYUNG LA DOGS PA MA ZA NAS MA 'DRI SHIG CES PA'I DON NO,

The issue is whether or not there will be **anyone** at all **in the future** who believes in, or has any great interest in, **sutras such as this one**—sutras which **explain** the nature of the dharma body, and the physical body, of a Buddha. In order to raise this issue, Subhuti asks the question that begins with "**Oh Conqueror, what will happen in the future, in the days of the last five hundred, when the holy Dharma is approaching its final destruction?**"

In reply, **the Conqueror speaks: "Oh Subhuti, you should never ask the question you have just asked."** What he means here is that Subhuti should never entertain the uncertainty of wondering whether or not there will be anyone of this type in the future; and if he never had this doubt, Subhuti would never ask the question.

YANG RAB 'BYOR, MA 'ONGS PA'I DUS LNGA BRGYA THA MA LA DAM PA'I CHOS RAB TU RNAM PAR 'JIG PAR 'GYUR BA NA BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS DPA' CHEN PO TSUL KHRIMS DANG LDAN PA, YON TAN DANG LDAN PA, SHES RAB DANG LDAN PA DAG 'BYUNG STE, RAB 'BYOR, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS DPA' CHEN PO DE DAG KYANG SANGS RGYAS GCIG LA BSNYEN BKUR BYAS PA MA YIN, SANGS RGYAS GCIG LA DGE BA'I RTZA BA BSKYED PA MA YIN GYI, RAB 'BYOR, SANGS RGYAS BRGYA STONG MANG PO LA BSNYEN BKUR BYAS SHING , SANGS RGYAS BRGYA STONG DU MA LA DGE BA'I RTZA BA DAG BSKYED PA'I BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS DPA' CHEN PO DAG 'BYUNG NGO ,

And again the Buddha bespoke,

Oh Subhuti, in the future, in the days of the last five hundred, when the holy Dharma is approaching its final destruction, there will come bodhisattvas who are great beings, who possess morality, who possess the fine quality, and who possess wisdom.

And these bodhisattvas who are great beings, oh Subhuti, will not be ones who have rendered honor to a single Buddha, or who have collected stores of virtue with a single Buddha. Instead, oh Subhuti, they will be ones who have rendered honor to many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, and who have collected stores of virtue with many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas. Such are the bodhisattvas, the great beings, who then will come.

,RAB 'BYOR MA 'ONGS PA'I DUS SU DAM PA'I CHOS 'JIG PAR 'GYUR BA'I TSE NA YANG , BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' CHEN PO LHAG PA TSUL KHRIMS KYI BSLAB PA DANG LDAN PA DANG , LHAG PA TING NGE 'DZIN GYI BSLAB PA'I YON TAN DANG LDAN PA DANG , LHAG PA SHES RAB KYI BSLAB PA STE BSLAB PA GSUM DANG LDAN PA DAG NGES PAR 'BYUNG STE, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' CHEN PO DE DAG KYANG SNGON SANGS RGYAS GCIG TZAM LA BSNYEN BKUR ZHING DGE BA'I RTZA BA

BSKYED PA MA YIN GYI, SANGS RGYAS 'BUM PHRAG DU MA LA BSNYEN
BKUR ZHING DGE RTZA BSKYED PA YIN PAR NGAS MKHYEN TO ZHES
PA'O,

Oh Subhuti, says the text, **in the future**, even when the holy Dharma is approaching its final destruction, there will come bodhisattvas who are great beings. They will possess the extraordinary form of the training of morality; they will possess that fine quality which consists of the extraordinary form of the training of concentration, and they will possess the extraordinary form of the training of wisdom.

And these bodhisattvas who are great beings will not be ones who have rendered honor to or collected stores of virtue with only a single Buddha, but instead they will be ones who have rendered honor to and collected stores of virtue with many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas. This fact, says the Conqueror, is something I can perceive right now.

,K'A SH'AI S L NGA BRGYA THA MA ZHES BYA BA LA BRGYA PHRAG
LNGA'I TSOGS NI L NGA BRGYA STE, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYI BSTAN PA
LNGA BRGYA PHRAG LNGA'I BAR DU GNAS ZHES GRAGS PAS ZHES
BSHAD PA'I L NGA BRGYA PHRAG LNGA NI LO NYIS STONG LNGA
BRGYA'I BAR DU BSTAN PA GNAS ZHES PA'O, , BSTAN PA'I GNAS TSAD
LA MDO DANG DGONGS 'GREL DAG LAS BSHAD TSUL MI 'DRA BA
MANG STE, THUB PA'I BSTAN PA LO STONG DANG NYIS STONG DANG
NYIS STONG LNGA BRGYA DANG LNGA STONG DU GNAS PAR BSHAD
PA'ANG YOD DE DGONGS PA NI MI 'GAL LO, , MI 'GAL BA'I TSUL NI 'GA'
ZHIG 'BRAS BU DANG SGRUB PA'I DUS DANG 'GA' ZHIG NI LUNG GI DUS
LA DGONGS SHING , LA LA NI 'PHAGS YUL GYI DBANG DU MDZAD PAR
MNGON NO, , DE LTA BU'I BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' NI 'PHAGS YUL GYI
'DZAM GLING RGYAN DRUG LTA BU SOGS DANG , BOD DU NI SA PAn
DANG BU STON DANG RJE YAB SRAS LTA BU'O,

Master Kamalashila explains the expression "**days of the last five hundred**" as follows:

"Five hundred" here refers to a group of five hundreds; it refers to the well-known saying that "The teachings of the Conqueror will remain for five times five hundred."

As such, the "five times five hundred" refers to the length of time that the teachings will remain in the world: 2,500 years.

On the question of just how long the teachings will survive in this world, we see a number of different explanations in the various sutras and commentaries upon them. These state that the teachings of the Able One will last for a thousand years, or two thousand, or two and a half thousand, or five thousand years. When we consider their intent though these various statements are not in contradiction with each other.

The reason for their lack of contradiction is that some of these works are meant to refer to the length of time that people will still be achieving goals, or still be practicing. Still others refer to the length of time that the physical records of these teachings remain in our world. Some, finally, appear to be referring to the Land of the Realized [India].

There are many examples of the kinds of bodhisattvas mentioned in the text. In the Land of the Realized, there have been the "Six Jewels of the World of Dzambu," and others like them. In Tibet there have been high beings like the Sakya Pandita, or Buton Rinpoche, or the Three Lords—the father and his spiritual sons.

,RAB 'BYOR, GANG DAG 'DI LTA BU'I MDO SDE'I TSIG BSHAD PA 'DI LA SEMS DAD PA GCIG TZAM RNYED PAR 'GYUR BA DE DAG NI, RAB 'BYOR, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS MKHYEN TO, , RAB 'BYOR, DE DAG NI, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GZIGS TE, RAB 'BYOR, SEMS CAN DE DAG THAMS CAD NI, BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO DPAG TU MED PA BSKYED CING RAB TU SDUD PAR 'GYUR RO,

Oh Subhuti, suppose a person reaches even just a single feeling of faith for the words of a sutra such as this one. The One Thus Gone, oh Subhuti, knows any such person. The One Thus Gone, oh Subhuti, sees any such person. Such a person, oh Subhuti, has produced, and gathered safely into himself, a mountain of merit beyond any estimation.

,DE'I TSE SEMS CAN GANG DAG 'DI LTA BU'I MDO SDE SHER PHYIN STON PA'I GZHUNG RNAMS LA THOS BSAM GYIS DAD PA MANG PO LTA CI SEMS DANG BA GCIG TZAM ZHIG RNYED CING BSKYED PAR 'GYUR BA'I SEMS CAN DE RNAMS NI, DA LTA NAS DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS MKHYEN

CING GZIGS TE SEMS CAN DE DAG GIS BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO
DPAG TU MED PA BSKYED CING SDUD PAR 'GYUR RO, , MKHYEN PA NI
BSAM PA DANG GZIGS PA NI GZUGS LA SOGS PA'O,

Suppose, says the text, **that a person** of those future days learns, and then contemplates, **a sutra such as his one**; that is, a scripture which teaches the perfection of wisdom. And say further that this brings him to **reach**, or develop, **even just a single feeling** of admiration for this teaching—much less any frequent emotion of **faith** for it. From this moment on the **One Thus Gone knows and sees that any such person has produced, and gathered safely into himself, a mountain of merit beyond any estimation**. He "knows" the person's thoughts, and "sees" his visual form and such.

,DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS DPA'
CHEN PO DE DAG NI, BDAG TU 'DU SHES 'JUG PAR MI 'GYUR ZHING ,
SEMS CAN DU 'DU SHES PA MA YIN, SROG TU 'DU SHES PA MA YIN TE,
GANG ZAG TU'ANG 'DU SHES 'JUG PAR MI 'GYUR BA'I PHYIR RO,

Why is it so? Because, Subhuti, these bodhisattvas who are great beings entertain no conception of something as a self, nor do they entertain any conception of something as a living being, nor any conception of something as being alive, nor any conception of something as a person.

,RGYU MTSAN DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' DE DAG
NI BDAG DANG SEMS CAN DANG SROG DANG GANG ZAG TU BDEN PAR
'DZIN PA'I 'DUS SHES MNGON 'GYUR BA 'JUG PAR MI 'GYUR BA'I PHYIR
RO, , BDAG DANG GANG ZAG SOGS KYI SGRA DON NI GONG DU BSHAD
PA LTAR TE, K'A SH'AI NI NGA'O SNYAM DU BDAG YOD PAR 'DZIN PA
NI BDAG TU 'DUS SHES PA'O, , BDAG GIR YOD PAR 'DZIN PA NI SEMS
CAN DU 'DU SHES PA'O, , BDAG DE NYID KYI TSE JI SRID GNAS KYI BAR
YONGS SU 'DZIN PA NI SROG TU 'DU SHES PA'O, , YANG DANG YANG DU
'GRO BA DAG TU 'GRO BAR 'DZIN PA NI GANG ZAG TU 'DZIN PA'O ZHES
BSHAD DE, BDAG GIR 'DZIN PA'I DON SNGA MA DANG CUNG MI 'DRA'O,
, DE LTA BU'I 'DU SHES RAGS PA

MI 'JUG PA NI BDAG MED RTOGS PA'I SKABS LA DGONGS SO,

One may ask the reason **why** the above **is so**. It's because **these** particular **bodhisattvas** will **entertain no manifest conception of something as a self, or as a living being, or as being alive, or as a person**. The denotation of the words

"self" and "person" and so on here are the same as I have mentioned earlier. Master Kamalashila at this point says:

The expression "conceive of something as a self" means thinking "me," or grasping that the self exists. "Conceiving of something as a living being" means grasping that something belonging to the self exists. "Conceiving of something as being alive" means continuing to grasp to the same "self" as above, but for the entire length of its life. "Conceiving of something as a person" means grasping that those who are born again and again are born.

Thus the meaning of grasping to something as belonging to the self is a bit different than before.

When the text says that these bodhisattvas **entertain no** such coarse **conceptions**, it is referring specifically to the occasions at which one realizes the lack of a self-nature.

,RAB 'BYOR, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS DPA' CHEN PO DE DAG CHOS SU 'DU SHES PA DANG , CHOS MED PAR YANG 'DU SHES MI 'JUG STE, DE DAG NI, 'DU SHES DANG , 'DU SHES MED PAR YANG 'DU SHES 'JUG PAR MI 'GYUR RO, , DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, GAL TE BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS DPA' CHEN PO DE DAG CHOS SU 'DU SHES 'JUG NA, DE NYID DE DAG GI BDAG TU 'DZIN PAR 'GYUR ZHING , SEMS CAN DU 'DZIN PA DANG , SROG TU 'DZIN PA DANG , GANG ZAG TU 'DZIN PAR 'GYUR BA'I PHYIR RO, , GAL TE CHOS MED PAR 'JUG NA'ANG DE NYID DE DAG GI BDAG TU 'DZIN PAR 'GYUR ZHING , SEMS CAN DU 'DZIN PA DANG , SROG TU 'DZIN PA DANG , GANG ZAG TU 'DZIN PAR 'GYUR BA'I PHYIR RO,

Oh Subhuti, these bodhisattvas who are great beings neither entertain any conception of things as things, nor do they entertain any conception of things as not being things. They neither entertain any conception of a thought as a conception, nor do they entertain any conception of a thought as not being conception.

Why is it so? Because if, oh Subhuti, these bodhisattvas who are great beings were to entertain any conception of things as things, then they would grasp these same things as being a "self"; they would grasp them as being a living

being; they would grasp them as being something that lives; they would grasp them as a person.

And even if they were to entertain them as not being things, that too they would grasp as being a "self"; they would grasp as being a living being; they would grasp as being something that lives; they would grasp as a person.

,DE RNAMS BDAG TU SOGS BDEN ZHEN GYIS MI 'JUG PAR MA ZAD,
GZUGS SOGS LA THA SNYAD DU CHOS SU BDEN PAR 'DU SHES PA DANG
, CHOS SU MED PAR YANG BDEN ZHEN GYIS 'DU SHES MI 'JUG STE, DE
DAG NI DE LTA BU'I 'DU SHES YOD PA DANG 'DU SHES MED PAR YANG
'JUG PAR MI 'GYUR RO, , RNAM PA GCIG TU NI GZUGS LA SOGS PA KUN
RDZOB PA'I CHOS DANG , KUN RDZOB PA'I CHOS RNAMS BDEN PAR
MED PA LA'ANG BDEN ZHEN GYI 'DU SHES MI 'JUG PA'I DON DU BSHAD
KYANG RUNG STE, 'DU SHES DE LTAR 'JUG NA SKYON DU 'GYUR BA NI,
CHOS SU 'DU SHES 'JUG NA YANG SOGS DANG , CHOS BDAG MED PAR
'DU SHES 'JUG NA YANG ZHES SOGS DANG 'BREL LO,

The text is saying: "Not only do these beings avoid entertaining a belief in things as being something true; **neither do they entertain any conception of** physical form and other **things as** being true **things** nominally. **Nor** as well **do they entertain any conception** where they believe that **these things are not things.**"

From another point of view, it is appropriate as well to gloss the passage as follows. Physical form and other such things are deceptive objects, and deceptive objects are not something which is true. These bodhisattvas avoid entertaining even the conception where one believes that this fact itself is something true. If one in fact did entertain such a conception, then certain problems would arise—and this explains the relevance of the two paragraphs that come next in the root text, the one that mentions "**If they were to entertain any conception of things as things**" and so on; and the other that starts with "**If they were to entertain them as not being things**" that had a self.

[*The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, ff. 219a-219b; *Sunlight for the Path*, ff. 12b-13a]

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS BKA' STZAL PA, RAB 'BYOR, 'DI JI SNYAM DU
SEMS, RIGS KYI BU'AM, RIGS KYI BU MO GANG LA LA ZHIG GIS STONG
GSUM GYI STONG CHEN PO'I 'JIG RTEN GYI KHAMS 'DI RIN PO CHE SNA

BDUN GYIS RAB TU GANG BAR BYAS TE SBYIN PA BYIN NA, RIGS KYI BU'AM, RIGS KYI BU MO DE GZHI DE LAS BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO MANG DU BSKYED DAM,

The Conqueror bespoke:

Oh Subhuti, what do you think? Suppose some son or daughter of noble family were to take all the planets of this great world system, a system with a thousand of a thousand of a thousand planets, and fill them all up with the seven kinds of precious substances, and offer them to someone. Would that son or daughter of noble family create many great mountains of merit from such a deed?

,DE LTAR SANGS RGYAS PA DANG CHOS BSTAN PA SOGS CHOS THAMS CAD DON DAM PAR MED KYANG THA SNYAD DU YOD PAS SBYIN PA BYIN PA LAS BSOD NAMS CHEN PO 'BYUNG MOD, DE LAS KYANG CHOS 'DI LA THOS BSAM SGOM PA'I NYAMS LEN BYAS PA'I BSOD NAMS LHAG PAR CHE'O ZHES STON PA NI, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS RAB 'BYOR LA KHYOD 'DI SNYAM DU SEMS, RIGS KYI BU DANG BU MO GANG LA LA ZHIG GIS, JI SKAD DU MDZOD LAS, GLING BZHI PA DANG NYI ZLA DANG , , RI RAB DANG NI 'DOD LHA DANG , , TSANGS PA'I 'JIG RTEN STONG LA NI, , STONG NI SPYI PHUD YIN PAR 'DOD, , DE STONG LA NI STONG GNYIS PA, , BAR MA'I 'JIG RTEN KHAMS YIN NO, , DE STONG LA NI STONG GSUM MO, , ZHES 'BYUNG BA LTAR, STONG GSUM GYI STONG CHEN PO'I 'JIG RTEN GYI KHAMS 'DI GSER DANG DNGUL DANG SHEL DANG BEE d'AURU DANG RDO'I SNYING PO DANG SPUG DANG MU TIG DMAR PO STE RIN PO CHE SNA BDUN GYIS GANG BAR BYAS TE, GZHAN LA SBYIN PA BYIN NA BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO MANG DU BSKYED DAM DRIS PAS,

With this next section of the sutra, Lord Buddha wishes to demonstrate a certain fact. In the sections above we have spoken about the act of becoming enlightened, and of teaching the dharma, and so on. Neither these, nor any other object in the universe, exists ultimately. Nonetheless, they do exist nominally. As such, one would have to admit that anyone who performs an act of giving does acquire great merit thereby. Yet anyone who carries out the process of learning, or contemplating, or meditating upon this teaching acquires infinitely greater merit.

To convey this point, **the Conqueror** asks **Subhuti** the question beginning with **"What do you think? Suppose some son or daughter of noble family were to take this great world system, as system with a thousand of a thousand of a thousand planets..."** The system mentioned here is described in the *Treasure House [of Higher Knowledge, the Abhidharmakosha,]* as follows:

A thousand sets of all four continents with
A sun and moon, Mount Supreme, pleasure
Beings of the desire, and world of the
Pure agreed as an elementary system.
A thousand of these is a second-order kind,
The intermediate type of world system.
A third-order system is a thousand of these.

"Suppose further," continues Lord Buddha, **"that they were to fill up this system of planets with the seven kinds of precious substances:** with gold, silver, crystal, lapis, the gem essence [emerald], *karketana* stone, and crimson pearl. And say then that **they offered them to someone. Would they create many great mountains of merit from such a deed,** from giving someone else such a gift?"

RAB 'BYOR GYIS GSOL PA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS, MANG LAGS SO, , BDE BAR
GSHEGS PA, MANG LAGS TE, RIGS KYI BU'AM, RIGS KYI BU MO DE GZHI
DE LAS BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO MANG DU BSKYED DO, , DE CI'I
SLAD DU ZHE NA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS, BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO DE
NYID PHUNG PO MA MCHIS PA'I SLAD DU STE, DES NA, DE BZHIN
GSHEGS PAS BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO, ,
ZHES GSUNGS SO,

And Subhuti replied,

Oh Conqueror, many would it be. Oh Conqueror, it would be many. This son or daughter of noble family would indeed create many great mountains of merit from such a deed. And why so? Because, oh Conqueror, these same great mountains of merit are great mountains of merit that could never exist. And for this very reason do the Ones Thus Gone speak of "great mountains of merit, great mountains of merit."

LAN DU RAB 'BYOR GYIS BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO MANG BAR ZHUS
SHING BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO DE YANG RMI LAM DANG SGYU MA

LTA BUR THA SNYAD TZAM DU YOD PAR 'JOG LAGS KYI, BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO DE NYID DON DAM PAR PHUNG POR GRUB PA MA MCHIS SHING , THA SNYAD DU DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS DE LA BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO, , BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO ZHES THA SNYAD MDZAD CING GSUNGS SO ZHES GSOL, 'DIS NI LAS DKAR NAG SNGAR BYAS PA DANG PHYIS BYED PAR 'GYUR BA'I 'DAS PA 'GAGS SHING MA 'ONGS PA DA LTA MA BYUNG BAS MED KYANG , SPYIR YOD PAR 'DOD DGOS SHING DE NYID BYED PA PO'I SEMS RGYUD DANG 'BREL BA LAS 'BRAS BU 'BYUNG BAR 'DOD DGOS TSUL LA SOGS BSTAN TE CUNG DKA' BA'I GNAS YIN NO,

In response, **Subhuti replies:**

It would be many great mountains of merit—and these great mountains of merit are mountains of merit that we could establish as existing only in name, only in the way that a dream or an illusion exists: **these same great mountains of merit though** could **never exist** as mountains that existed ultimately. **The Ones Thus Gone** as well **speak** in a nominal sense of **"great mountains of merit, great mountains of merit"**—applying the name to them.

This section is meant to demonstrate a number of different points. Black and white deeds that you have committed before now, and which you are going to commit later, are such that the ones in the past have stopped, and the ones in the future are yet to come. Therefore they are non-existent, but we have to agree that, generally speaking, they exist. We also have to agree that they are connected to the mind stream of the person who committed them, and that they produce their appropriate consequences for this person. These and other difficult issues are raised in the words above.

,BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS BKA' STZAL PA, RAB 'BYOR, RIGS KYI BU'AM, RIGS KYI BU MO GANG GIS STONG GSUM GYI STONG CHEN PO'I 'JIG RTEN GYI KHAMS 'DI RIN PO CHE SNA BDUN GYIS RAB TU GANG BAR BYAS TE SBYIN PA BYIN PA BAS, GANG GIS CHOS KYI RNAM GRANGS 'DI LAS THA NA TSIG BZHI PA'I TSIGS SU BCAD PA GCIG TZAM BZUNG NAS GZHAN DAG LA YANG 'CHAD CING YANG DAG PAR RAB TU STON NA, DE GZHI DE LAS BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO CHES MANG DU GRANGS MED DPAG TU MED PA BSKYED DO,

And the Conqueror bespoke:

Oh Subhuti, suppose some son or daughter of noble family were to take all the planets of this great world system, a system with a thousand of a thousand of a thousand planets, and fill them all up with the seven kinds of precious substances, and offer them to someone. Suppose on the other hand that one of them held but a single verse of four lines from this particular dharma, and explained it to others, and taught it correctly. By doing the latter, this person would create many more great mountains of merit than with the former: they would be countless, and beyond all estimation.

,TSIGS SU BCAD PA ZHES 'BYUNG BA NI 'DI BOD SKAD DU TSIGS BCAD MA YIN KYANG LEGS SBYAR GYI SKAD LA TSIGS BCAD DU BSGRIGS RGYU YOD PA LA DGONGS PA'O, , BZUNG BA NI TSIG BLO LA BZUNG BA DANG , GLEGS BAM LAG TU YOD PA LA'ANG BYAR RUNG ZHING KHA TON BYED PA DANG , YANG DAG PAR 'CHAD PA NI TSIG BRJOD CING LEGS PAR 'CHAD PA DANG , STON PA NI DON LEGS PAR STON PA LA BSHAD CING DE NI GTZO CHE BA'I DBANG DU MDZAD PA'O, , DE LTAR BZUNG BA SOGS BYAS NA DE LAS BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO CHES GRANGS MED CING DPAG TU MED PA ZHIG BSKYED DO,

We should first say something about the word "**verse**" here. Although the sutra in Tibetan is not written in verse, the idea is that one could put it into verse in Sanskrit. The word "**hold**" refers to "holding in the mind," or memorizing. It can also apply to holding a volume in one's hand and, in either case, reciting the text out loud.

The phrase "**explain it correctly**" is explained as stating the words of the sutra and explaining them well. The phrase "**teach it correctly**" is explained as teaching the meaning of the sutra well, and this is the most important part.

Suppose now that **one held** the sutra and did the other things mentioned with it, rather than the other good deed described. **This person would then create great mountains of merit that were ever more countless, and beyond all estimation.**

,DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA DGRA BCOM PA YANG DAG PAR RDZOGS PA'I SANGS RGYAS RNAMS KYI BLA NA MED PA YANG DAG PAR RDZOGS PA'I BYANG CHUB NI, 'DI LAS BYUNG STE, SANGS RGYAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS RNAMS KYANG 'DI LAS SKYES PA'I PHYIR RO,

Why is it so? Because, Subhuti, this is where the matchless and totally perfect enlightenment of the Ones Thus Gone, the Destroyers of the Foe, the Totally Enlightened Buddhas, comes from. It is from this as well that the Buddhas, the Conquerors, are born.

,RGYU MTSAN NI, ZANG ZING GI SBYIN PA BYIN PA LAS CHOS KYI SBYIN PA BYIN PA PHAN YON LHAG PAR CHE ZHING , DER MA ZAD, YANG DAG PAR RDZOGS PA'I SANGS RGYAS KYI BYANG CHUB NI GZHUNG 'DI'I BRJOD BYA'I DON STONG NYID RTOGS PA'I SHER PHYIN 'DI LAS THOB CING BYUNG STE, SANGS RGYAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS RNAMS KYANG 'DI NYAMS SU BLANGS PA LAS SKYES PA'I PHYIR RO,

The reason for this is as follows. The act of giving someone the dharma is of much more benefit than the act of giving material things. Not only that, but **the enlightenment of the totally enlightened Buddhas comes from**—is achieved through—the perfection of wisdom: the realization of emptiness which forms the subject matter of this text. **It is from** putting **this** into practice as well **that the Buddhas, the Conquerors, are born.**

[*The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, ff. 220b-221a, 224b; *Sunlight for the Path*, ff. 14b-16a, 22a]

*BCOM LDAN 'DAS, BDAG NI, , DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA DGRA BCOM PA YANG DAG PAR RDZOGS PA'I SANGS RGYAS KYIS NYON MONGS PA MED PAR GNAS PA RNAMS KYI MCHOG TU BSTAN TE, BCOM LDAN 'DAS BDAG 'DOD CHAGS DANG BRAL BA DGRA BCOM PA LAGS KYANG , BCOM LDAN 'DAS, BDAG 'DI SNYAM DU, BDAG NI, DGRA BCOM PA'O, , SNYAM DU MI SEMS LAGS SO, , BCOM LDAN 'DAS, GAL TE BDAG 'DI SNYAM DU, BDAG GIS DGRA BCOM PA NYID THOB BO, , SNYAM DU SEMS PAR GYUR NA, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS BDAG LA RIGS KYI BU RAB 'BYOR NI, NYON MONGS PA MED PAR GNAS PA RNAMS KYI MCHOG YIN TE, CI LA'ANG MI GNAS PAS NA, NYON MONGS PA MED PAR GNAS PA, NYON MONGS PA MED PAR GNAS PA ZHES LUNG MI STON LAGS SO,

Oh Conqueror, I declare that the Ones Thus Gone—those Destroyers of the Foe who are the Totally Enlightened Buddhas—reside in the highest of all those states that are free of the mental afflictions. I am, oh Conqueror, a person who is free of desire; I am a foe destroyer.

But I do not, oh Conqueror, think to myself, "I am a foe destroyer." For suppose, oh Conqueror, that I did think to myself, "I have attained this very state, the state of a foe destroyer." If I did think this way, then the One Thus Gone could never have given me the final prediction: he could never have said: "Oh son of noble family, oh Subhuti, you will reach the highest of all those states that are free of the mental afflictions. Because you stay in no state at all, you have reached the state free of mental afflictions; you have reached what we call the 'state free of mental afflictions.'

,DE NAS RAB 'BYOR GYIS BDAG THA SNYAD DU NYON MONGS SPANGS PA'I DGRA BCOM PA LAGS KYANG , BDAG GIS BDAG NI DGRA BCOM PA'O SNYAM DU BDEN PAR MI 'DZIN LAGS SO ZHES DANG , GAL TE DE LTAR 'DZIN NA NI BDAG KYANG NYON MONGS CAN DU 'GYUR BAS DGRA BCOM PA MA YIN PAR 'GYUR RO, , BDAG NI DGRA BCOM PA YIN TE, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS BDAG LA THA SNYAD DU RIGS KYI BU RAB 'BYOR NI NYON MONGS PA MED PA RNAMS KYI MCHOG TU LUNG BSTAN LA, DON DAM PAR CI LA YANG MI GNAS PAS NA NYON MONGS PA MED PAR GNAS PAR ZHES LUNG MI STON TE, DON DAM PAR GNAS BYA DANG GNAS BYED DANG GNAS PA PO GANG YANG MA GRUB PA'I PHYIR RO ZHES BSHAD DE, THAL 'GYUR BAS BDEN 'DZIN NYON MONGS SU BZHED PA DANG MTHUN NO,

Then Subhuti explains, **"I am, nominally speaking, a foe destroyer.** But it is also true that **I do not**, while grasping to some true existence, **think to myself, "I am a foe destroyer."** If I did grasp to it this way then I would start to have mental afflictions, and then I would stop being a foe destroyer. I am a foe destroyer, and the Conqueror **has given me the final prediction:** he has told me, "Nominally speaking **Subhuti, son of noble family, you will reach the highest of all those states that are free of the mental afflictions.**" In an ultimate sense though, **because I stay in no state at all, he could never have given me the final prediction, he could never have said, "Oh son of noble family, oh Subhuti, you will reach the state free of mental afflictions."** This is because, ultimately speaking, there does not even exist any place to stay, not thing to make one stay there, nor even anyone who stays there. All this is consistent with the position of the Consequence school, which says that grasping to some true existence is a mental affliction.

*, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS BKA' STZAL PA, RAB 'BYOR, 'DI JI SNYAM DU

SEMS, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA DGRA BCOM PA
YANG DAG PAR RDZOGS PA'I SANGS RGYAS MAR ME MDZAD LAS
GANG BLANGS PA'I CHOS DE GANG YANG YOD DAM, RAB 'BYOR GYIS
GSOL PA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS, DE NI, MA LAGS TE, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS
DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA DGRA BCOM PA YANG DAG PAR RDZOGS PA'I
SANGS RGYAS MAR ME MDZAD LAS GANG BLANGS PA'I CHOS DE GANG
YANG MA MCHIS SO,

The Conqueror bespoke:

Oh Subhuti, what do you think? Was there any dharma at all which the One Thus Gone took up from that One Thus Gone, the Destroyer of the Foe, the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha called "Maker of Light"?

And Subhuti respectfully replied,

Oh Conqueror, there was not. There exists no dharma at all which the One Thus Gone received the One Thus Gone took up from that One Thus Gone, the Destroyer of the Foe, the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha called "Maker of Light."

,DON DAM PAR THOB BYA DANG THOB BYED DANG THOB MKHAN
RNAMS MED PAR MA ZAD, DON DAM PAR BLANG BAR BYA BA'I CHOS
KYANG MED CES STON PA NI, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS RAB 'BYOR LA DE
BZHIN GSHEGS PA NGAS SNGON SANGS RGYAS MAR ME MDZAD LAS
DON DAM PAR GANG BLANGS PA'I CHOS DE GANG YANG YOD SNYAM
MAM ZHES DRIS PA NA, RAB 'BYOR GYIS DE MA MCHIS SO ZHES LAN
PHUL,

Ultimately speaking then there is nothing for one to achieve, and nothing that helps one achieve it, and no one even to do the achieving. But we can say even further that, again speaking ultimately, there is no dharma at all that one takes up, and practices. In order to demonstrate this point, Lord Buddha states the following.

The Conqueror asks, "Oh Subhuti, do you think that there was any dharma at all which I, the One Thus Gone, in those days long ago took up, ultimately speaking, from the Buddha called 'Maker of Light'?"

And Subhuti offers up the reply, "No, there was no such dharma."

'DIR SGOS SU SANGS RGYAS MAR ME MDZAD KYI MTSAN NAS SMOS PA NI, STON PAS SNGON GZHON NU CHOS KYI SPRIN DU GYUR PA'I TSE, SANGS RGYAS MAR ME MDZAD KYIS BYIN GYIS BRLABS PA LA BR TEN NAS MI SKYE BA'I CHOS LA BZOD PA CHEN PO THOB CING , SA BRGYAD PA MNGON DU MDZAD PA NA MAR ME MDZAD KYIS KHYOD LA MA 'ONGS PA'I DUS SU SANGS RGYAS SH'A KYA THUB PA ZHES BYA BAR 'GYUR RO ZHES LUNG BSTAN PA'I BKA' DRIN DRAN PA'I CHED DE 'OG TU BSHAD PAR BYA'O,

This specific reference, wherein Lord Buddha speaks of the Buddha "Maker of Light" by name, recalls an event which had taken place long before. In those times our Teacher was a youth known as "Cloud of Dharma." Due to the blessing of the Buddha "Maker of Light," he was able to achieve a stage known as the "great mastery of things that never grow," and to bring about the eighth bodhisattva level. When this had happened, Light Maker gave him the final prediction, saying "In the future, you will become the Buddha known as 'Shakyamuni'." In order to remember the kindness that Light Maker paid on this occasion, I will speak more of this later on.

We should say a little about this expression, the "great mastery of things that never grow." This refers to a point at which one has eliminated the mental afflictions, and achieved total mastery, fluency, in meditating upon non-conceptual wisdom, which perceives directly each and every instance of the very nature of all things, their emptiness of any natural existence. As such, all caused objects appear to this person exclusively in the nature of an illusion, as empty of any true existence, not only during periods of deep meditation but during the times between these meditations as well.

,MI SKYE BA'I CHOS LA BZOD PA CHEN PO THOB PA NI, NYON MONGS SPANGS SHING CHOS THAMS CAD RANG BZHIN GYIS STONG PA'I CHOS NYID MTHA' DAG MNGON SUM DU RTOGS PA'I MI RTOG YE SHES LA GOMS PA DBANG BSGYUR THOB PA'I PHYIR MNYAM GZHAG GI GNAS SKABS SU MA ZAD, RJES THOB KYI SKABS SU YANG 'DUS BYAS KYI CHOS THAMS CAD BDEN STONG SGYU MA LTA BU 'BA' ZHIG TU SNANG BAR 'GYUR RO,

When one reaches the stage of the great mastery of things that never grow, one directly perceives that no object at all has any true existence. One perceives that what was predicted to finally happen, and the thing one is to achieve, and

becoming enlightened--all of them--are empty of any natural existence. As such the Buddha had no belief that he was taking up any truly existing dharma at all from the Buddha Light Maker.

,MI SKYE BA'I CHOS LA BZOD PA THOB PAS CHOS THAMS CAD BDEN
MED DU MNGON DU GZIGS SHING GANG LUNG BSTAN PA DANG THOB
PAR BYA BA DANG 'TSANG RGYA BAR 'GYUR BA THAMS CAD KYANG
RANG BZHIN GYIS STONG PAR GZIGS PAS, MAR ME MDZAD LAS BDEN
GRUB KYI CHOS GANG YANG BLANGS SNYAM DU ZHEN PA MED DO, ,
DE YANG LUNG STON PA'I DUS SU GANG DU LUNG BSTAN PA'I SANGS
RGYAS DE MED CING , LUNG BSTAN PA'I DUS KYI GANG ZAG DE LUNG
BSTAN NAS SANGS RGYAS PA'I TSE NGA MED KYANG , THA SNYAD DU
'TSANG RGYA BAR LUNG BSTAN PA DANG SANGS RGYAS PA'I BAR GYI
GANG ZAG RNAMS RGYUD GCIG YIN ZHING , DUS SNGA PHYI'I NGA
RNAMS SO SOR MA PHYE BAR SNGA PHYI'I NGA KUN LA RJES SU 'GRO
BA'I NGA SPYI ZHIG YOD PAS DE LA DGONGS NAS KHYOD MA 'ONGS PA
NA SANGS RGYAS DER 'GYUR RO ZHES LUNG BSTAN PA'O,

It is true that, at the time that the final prediction is made, the Buddha who is predicted does not yet exist. And it is true that, by the time he becomes a Buddha, the person who received the prediction no longer exists. In a nominal sense though there is a single continuum, a single person, who exists from the point of the prediction up to the point of enlightenment. There does exist a general kind of "me," one which extends to the whole "me" of the past and the future, where we do not divide out the separate me's of some specific points in the past and future. It is with reference to this general "me" that the Buddha grants his final prediction, and says "You will become such and such a Buddha."

,DPER NA SKYE BA SNGA PHYI RNAMS DANG TSE STOD SMAD KYI NGA
RNAMS DA LTA'I DUS KYI NGA 'DI MIN YANG DE DAG GIS BYAS PA LA
NGAS BYAS SO ZHES DANG , DE DAG GIS BYED PA YANG NGAS BYED
PAR 'GYUR RO ZHES THA SNYAD 'DOGS NUS PA BZHIN NO, , DE BZHIN
DU NGAS KHANG PA DANG ZHVA GOS LHAVAM SOGS 'DI DANG 'DI
BYA'O ZHES BRJOD PA'I DUS SU KHANG PA SOGS MED KYANG MA
'ONGS PA NA 'BYUNG 'GYUR LA BSAMS TE BRJOD PA LTA BU STE, THA
SNYAD TZAM DU 'BYUNG YANG RANG BZHIN GYIS SKYE BA MED DO,

To give an example, it is true that the particular me's of specific past or future lives, or else the particular me's of some point early on in your life, or later on in your life, are not the "me" you are at this present moment in time. Nonetheless it

is allowable for us to say, of things that those me's have done or are going to do, "I did that," or "I am going to do that." It's just the same with the final prediction.

,RANG BZHIN GYIS SKYE NA NI KHANG PA SOGS BYA'O SNYAM PA'I DUS
NA'ANG KHANG PA SOGS YOD CES 'DOD DGOS KYANG DE MED DO, , DE
LTA BU LA DGONGS NAS, MA DROS PAS ZHUS PA'I MDO LAS, GANG
ZHIG RKYEN LAS SKYES PA DE MA SKYES, , DE LA SKYE BA'I RANG
BZHIN YOD MA YIN, , RKYEN LA RAG LAS GANG DE STONG PAR BSHAD,
, GANG ZHIG STONG NYID SHES DE BAG YOD YIN, , ZHES GSUNGS
SHING , SNGAR BSHAD PA'I BDEN MED SGRUB PA'I RIGS PA RNAMS
KYANG 'DIR YANG SBYAR RO,

We also say things like "I am going to build a house," or "I am going to make a hat, or some clothes, or a pair of shoes." Even though the house and the rest have no existence at the moment that we say these things, we can speak nonetheless of them, for we are thinking of them in the sense of something that will come about in the future. And they will occur, if only nominally; but they will not come forth through any nature of their own. If they could come about through some nature of their own, then the house and so forth that we must agree exist even as we speak of building or making them could never exist at all. This is exactly the idea expressed in the *Sutra Requested by Madrupa*, where it says:

Anything which arises from conditions does not arise;
There is no nature of arising in such a thing.
Anything dependent on conditions is explained as empty;
Anyone who understands emptiness is mindful.

You can also apply at this point all the reasonings presented earlier for demonstrating how things have no true existence.

,RGYU LAS 'BRAS BU RNAMS SKYE YANG RANG BZHIN GYIS MI SKYE BA'I
TSUL DE BZHIN LEGS PAR SHES NA DBU MA'I LUGS KYI RANG BZHIN
GYIS STONG PA LA BYA BYED 'THAD TSUL SHES SHING , SNANG STONG
ZUNG 'JUG GI DBU MA'I LAM YANG RNYED PAR 'GYUR RO,

At some point you will gain a really correct understanding of how, despite the fact that results do come from causes, they do not come from these causes through any nature of their own. At that moment you will finally grasp the way in which Middle Way philosophy describes how, despite the fact that things are empty of any natural existence, they can still quite properly work and function as

they do. At that point too you will have discovered the Middle Way itself, the path where the appearance of the normal world and emptiness itself are inseparably married together.

*, DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, GANG GI TSE KA LING KA'I RGYAL POS NGA'I YAN LAG DANG , NYING LAG RNAM PAR BCAD PAR GYUR PA DE'I TSE NGA LA BDAG TU 'DU SHES SAM, SEMS CAN DU 'DU SHES SAM, SROG TU 'DU SHES SAM, GANG ZAG TU 'DU SHES KYANG MA BYUNG ZHING , NGA LA 'DU SHES CI YANG MED LA, 'DU SHES MED PAR GYUR PA YANG MA YIN PA'I PHYIR RO,

Why is it so? Because, oh Subhuti, there was a time when the King of Kalingka was cutting off the larger limbs, and smaller appendages, of my body. At that moment there came into my mind no conception of a self, nor of a sentient being, nor of a living being, nor of a person—I had no conception at all. But neither did I not have any conception.

RGYU MTSAN NI RAB 'BYOR SNGON GYI DUS GANG GI TSE KA LING KA'I RGYAL POS NGA KHO RANG GI BUD MED DANG 'BREL LAM SNYAM PA'I DOGS NGAN BYUNG STE RAL GRIS NGA'I YAN LAG DANG NYING LAG SOR MO RNAMS BCAD PAR GYUR PA DE'I TSE, NGAS BZOD PA'I 'KHOR GSUM BDEN MED DU SHES NAS BZOD PA BSGOMS PAS, THA SNYAD PA'I NGA LA DMIGS NAS NGA'O SNYAM DU BDAG TU BDEN PAR ZHEN PA'I 'DU SHES NAS GANG ZAG TU BDEN PAR ZHEN PA'I 'DU SHES KYANG MA BYUNG ZHING , DE'I TSE NGA LA DE LTA BU'I BDEN ZHEN GYI 'DU SHES CI YANG MED LA, THA SNYAD DU 'DU SHES GZHAN MED PAR GYUR PA YANG MA YIN TE, BZODDO SNYAM PA'I SDUG BSNAL DANG LEN DANG GNOD PA LA JI MI SNYAM PA DANG , BDEN MED DU RTOGS PA'I CHOS LA NGES SEMS KYI 'DU SHES RNAMS YOD PA'I PHYIR RO SNYAM DU DGONGS SO,

For what reason **is it so? Because** long ago **there was a time, oh Subhuti, when the king of Kalingka** got the evil suspicion that I had engaged in relations with his woman. And so he **was cutting off the larger limbs, and smaller appendages of my body.** (The latter refers to the fingers and toes.)

At that moment I practiced patience, keeping my mind on an understanding of the lack of true existence to each of the three elements to the act of patience. As I

focussed on the "me" which exists nominally, **there came into my mind no conception** where I held any belief in some truly existing "me": and so I had no conception **of** anything from a truly existing "self" up to a truly existing "person."

At that moment **I had no conception at all** of any such conception that something was existing truly. At the same time though it was **neither** as if **I had no** other, nominal **conceptions** at all. What Subhuti is saying here is the following. I did have the thought that I would have to keep my patience: I did have the thought to take the pain on willingly, and not to be upset about the harm being done to me. And I did have the kind of conception where I reconfirmed my knowledge of how I had perceived that no existing object has any true existence.

*, DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, GAL TE DE'I TSE BDAG TU 'DU SHES BYUNG NA, DE'I TSE GNOD SEMS KYI 'DU SHES KYANG 'BYUNG LA, SEMS CAN DU 'DU SHES PA DANG , SROG TU 'DU SHES PA DANG , GANG ZAG TU 'DU SHES PA BYUNG NA, DE'I TSE GNOD SEMS KYI 'DU SHES KYANG 'BYUNG BA'I PHYIR RO,

Why is it so? Suppose, oh Subhuti, that at that moment any conception of a self had come into my mind. Then the thought to harm someone would have come into my mind as well.

The conception of some sentient being, and the conception of some living being, and the conception of person, would have come into my mind. And because of that, the thought to harm someone would have come into my mind as well.

,RGYU MTSAN NI GAL TE DUS DE'I TSE NGA LA NGA'O SNYAM DU DON DAM PAR BDAG TU 'DU SHES PA SOGS YOD NA NI DE'I TSE GZHAN LA GNOD SEMS KYI 'DU SHES KYANG 'BYUNG BAR 'GYUR NA DE MA BYUNG BA'I PHYIR RO ZHES SO,

Here is the reason **why it is so. Suppose that at that moment any conception of a self**, where I thought of "me" as existing in an ultimate way, **had come into my mind**. Or suppose any of the other conceptions mentioned had come into my mind. **Then the thought to harm someone would have come into my mind as well;** but the fact is that it did not.

[*The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, ff. 221a-221b, 226b-227a ; *Sunlight for the Path*, ff. 16a-17a, 25a-25b]

*, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS BKA' STZAL PA, RAB 'BYOR, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' GANG LA LA ZHIG 'DI SKAD DU, BDAG GIS ZHING BKOD PA RNAMS BSGRUB PAR BYA'O, , ZHES ZER NA, DE NI, MI BDEN PAR SMRA BA'O,

The Conqueror bespoke:

Suppose, oh Subhuti, that some bodhisattva were to say, "I am working to bring about paradises." This would not be spoken true.

,DE LTAR 'TSANG RGYA BA LA GANG DU 'TSANG RGYA BA'I ZHING DAG PA SGRUB DGOS PAR STON PA NI, BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS RAB 'BYOR LA BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' GANG LA LA ZHIG BDAG GIS ZHING BKOD PA RNAMS BDEN ZHEN GYIS DON DAM PAR BSGRUB PAR BYA'O SNYAM ZHING ZER NA, TSIG DE NI MI BDEN PAR SMRA BA'O,

Lord Buddha wishes to indicate that, in order for a person to reach the enlightenment described above, he or she must first bring about a paradise in which to achieve the enlightenment. Therefore **the Conqueror** says to **Subhuti**,

Suppose some bodhisattva were to say or think to himself—while holding a belief in true existence, and referring to ultimate existence—"I am working to bring about paradises." This statement would not be spoken true.

*, DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, ZHING BKOD PA RNAMS ZHING BKOD PA RNAMS ZHES BYA BA NI, BKOD PA DE DAG MED PAR DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GSUNGS PA'I PHYIR TE, DES NA, ZHING BKOD PA RNAMS ZHES BYA'O,

Why is it so? Because the Ones Thus Gone have stated that these paradises, these "paradises," these lands that are put there do not even exist. And this is why we call them "paradise."

,RGYU MTSAN NI, 'TSANG RGYA BA'I GNAS KYI ZHING GI BKOD PA PHUN SUM TSOGS PA RNAMS NI RGYU RKYEN DU MA TSOGS NAS

BYUNG BA SGYU MA LTA BU'I BKOD PA YIN GYI, DON DAM PAR BKOD
PA DE DAG MED PAR DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GSUNGS PA'I PHYIR TE, 'ON
KYANG MA BRTAG MA DPYAD PA'I BLO NGO NA YOD PAS THA SNYAD
DU ZHING GI BKOD PA RNAMS ZHES BYA'O, , SANGS RGYAS KYI ZHING
MA ZAD, SNOD BCUD KYI BKOD PA THAMS CAD KYANG CHA SHAS DU
MA TSOGS PA LA BTAGS PA STE, KHANG PA LA SOGS PA BZHIN NO, , DE
DAG THAMS CAD KYANG RIGS PAS RDUL PHRA RAB KYI BAR BSHIG NA
CI YANG MA YIN PA'I BAR 'GYUR TE MTSON TZAM MO,

Why is this the case? The reason is that **the Ones Thus Gone have stated that these perfect paradises**, these places where you achieve your enlightenment, are put there like an illusion; that is, they occur because a great many causes and conditions have come together. But **lands** which have been **put there** in an ultimate sense, say the Buddhas, **do not even exist**. Since though they do exist to that state of mind which performs no check or analysis, **we** can nominally **call them "paradise."**

This fact refers not only to the paradise of a Buddha, but also to each and every thing which has ever been put here: to both the world where beings live and the beings who live in the world. All of these are simply a label put on the collection of a number of parts: they are all the same as a house, for example. And all of these are such that, should you break them down mentally all the way to their tiniest atoms, you would reach the point where they are nothing at all. (This is the briefest sketch of the meaning for you.)

*, RAB 'BYOR, DE LTA BAS NA, BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' SEMS DPA' CHEN
POS 'DI LTAR MI GNAS PAR SEMS BSKYED PAR BYA'O, , CI LA'ANG MI
GNAS PAR SEMS BSKYED PAR BYA'O, , GZUGS LA'ANG MI GNAS PAR
SEMS BSKYED PAR BYA'O, , SGRA DANG , DRI DANG , RO DANG , REG
BYA DANG , CHOS LA'ANG MI GNAS PAR SEMS BSKYED PAR BYA'O,

Since this is so, oh Subhuti, those bodhisattvas who are great beings develop their wish without residing in these thoughts. They develop their wish without residing in anything at all. They develop their wish without residing even in visible form. They develop their wish without residing even in sounds, or in smells, or in tastes, or in things to touch, or in any object at all.

,DE LTA BAS NA BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' ZHING GI BKOD PA BSGRUB
PAR BYA BA NA 'DI LTAR BDEN ZHEN GYIS MI GNAS PAR SEMS BSKYED

PAR BYA'O, , DON DAM PAR CI LA YANG MI GNAS SHING GZUGS SGRA
SOGS KYI CHOS GANG LA BDEN ZHEN GYIS MI GNAS PAR SEMS BSKYED
PAR BYA'O,

Since this is so, says Lord Buddha, **bodhisattvas** who are working to bring about their paradise should **develop their wish** [for enlightenment] **without residing** in any such state where they hold a belief in some true existence. **They** should **develop their wish without residing in** any state where they believe in the ultimate existence of **anything at all**. **They** should **develop their wish without residing in** any state where they hold a belief in some true existence of **any object at all: visible form**, or any of the rest.

*, RAB 'BYOR, 'DI LTA STE, DPER NA, SKYES BU ZHIG LUS 'DI LTA BUR
GYUR TE, 'DI LTA STE, RI'I RGYAL PO RI RAB TZAM DU GYUR NA, RAB
'BYOR, 'DI JI SNYAM DU SEMS, LUS DE CHE BA YIN NAM, RAB 'BYOR GYIS
GSOL PA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS, LUS DE CHE BA LAGS SO, , BDE BAR GSHEGS
PA, LUS DE CHE LAGS SO, , DE CI'I SLAD DU ZHE NA, DE BZHIN GSHEGS
PAS DE DNGOS PO MA MCHIS PAR GSUNGS PA'I SLAD DU STE, DES NA,
LUS ZHES BGYI'O, , DE DNGOS PO MA MCHIS PAR DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS
GSUNGS TE, DES NA, LUS CHE ZHES BGYI'O,

Oh Subhuti, it is thus: Suppose, for example, that someone's body were to grow this large—suppose it were to grow as large as the king of all mountains, Mt. Sumeru. What do you think, oh Subhuti? Would that person's body be large?

And Subhuti replied,

Oh Conqueror, such a body would be large. Oh you who have Gone to Bliss, such a body would be large. And why so? Because Those Gone Thus have stated that it could never be a thing at all. And this is why we call it a "body." Because Those Gone Thus have stated that it could never be a thing at all, we call it a "large body."

,PHYI'I ZHING GI BKOD PA LTA BUR MA ZAD, BCUD KYI GANG ZAG GI
LUS KYI BKOD PA YANG RKYEN TSOGS PA TZAM LA DON DAM PAR
GRUB PA MED DO ZHES STON PA NI, , RAB 'BYOR DPER NA SKYES BU
ZHIG LUS RI'I RGYAL PO RI RAB TZAM DU GYUR NA LUS DE CHE BA YIN
SNYAM MAM ZHES DRIS PA NA, LAN DU LUS DE CHE BAR ZHUS SHING ,
LUS DE NYID CHA DU MA TSOGS PA'I PHUNG PO THA SNYAD TZAM DU

YOD KYI, CHA LA MA BLTOS PA'I DNGOS PO STE NGO BOR MED PAR DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GSUNGS TE, 'JIG RTEN GYI THA SNYAD DU LUS DE LA CHE'O ZHES BYA'O, , DES NA DON DAM PAR LUS SU GRUB PA MA MCHIS PA'I KUN RDZOB PA'I LUS DE LA LUS ZHES BYA'O, , LUS CHE BAS MTSON NAS GZUGS CHE CHUNG THAMS CAD KYANG DE DANG 'DRA BAR SBYAR RO, , DE LTAR GSUNGS PA NI SNOD BCUD THAMS CAD KYANG RANG BZHIN GYIS STONG PAR BSGOM PA'I TSUL BSHAD PA'O,

Lord Buddha wishes to show that the above applies not only to outer things such as paradises, but also to the beings who inhabit this world: to objects such as the body of a person. He wishes to show that they too exist only because conditions have come together, and not in an ultimate way. Therefore he asks **Subhuti**,

Suppose some person's body were to grow to the size of the king of mountains, Mt. Sumeru. What do you think? Would that body be something large?

And Subhuti respectfully replies,

Such a body would be large. Those who have Gone Thus though have stated that this same body exists only as a term applied to the heaps, to some collection of a great many parts. It could never be a thing at all which existed in essence; that is, it could never be something which did not depend on its parts, say they. And this is why we can call such a body "large," in the sense that words are used in the everyday world.

Here a large body is just a representative example; we are meant to apply this reasoning to all physical objects, large or small. The entire statement here in the sutra is aimed at showing us how to meditate upon the fact that each and every detail of the world and the beings who inhabit it are all empty of any natural existence.

*, YANG RAB 'BYOR, SA PHYOGS GANG NA MDO SDE 'DI STON PA'I SA PHYOGS DE, LHA DANG , MI DANG , LHA MA YIN DU BCAS PA'I 'JIG RTEN GYIS MCHOD PAR 'OS PAR 'GYUR RO, , SA PHYOGS DE PHYAG BYA BAR 'OS PA DANG , BSKOR BA BYA BAR 'OS PAR YANG 'GYUR RO, , SA PHYOGS DE NI, MCHOD RTEN LTA BUR 'GYUR RO,

And I tell you further, oh Subhuti: any place where this sutra is taught thereby becomes a place worthy of the offerings of the entire world, with its gods, and men, and demigods. It becomes a place which is worthy of their prostrations, and worthy of their circumambulations. That place becomes something like a stupa.

,YANG SA PHYOGS GANG NA MDO SDE 'DI STON PA'I SA PHYOGS DE LHA DANG MI DANG LHA MA YIN DANG BCAS PA'I 'JIG RTEN GYI SEMS CAN RNAMS KYIS MCHOD PA DANG PHYAG BYA BA DANG BSKOR BAR BYA BA'I 'OS SU 'GYUR TE, SA PHYOGS DE MCHOD RTEN LTA BUR 'GYUR RO, , 'DI NI MNGON RTOGS RGYAN LAS, BYANG CHUB DANG NI RTEN MCHOD NYID, , ZHES PA'I RTZA BA'I MDO YUM RGYAS 'BRING BSDUS GSUM DANG 'GREL PA RNAMS LAS NI BYANG SEMS SGOM LAM PA GANG DU BZHUGS PA'I GNAS DE GZHAN GYIS BKUR BA'I GNAS MCHOD RTEN LTA BUR GSUNGS PA DANG 'DRA LA, GTZO BO NI GZHUNG 'DI'I BRJOD BYA DON GYI SHER PHYIN KHYAD PAR CAN RGYUD LA SKYES PA'I GANG ZAG BZHUGS PA'I GNAS LA DGONGS SO, , GONG DU 'DI LTA BU ZHIG SONG YANG GZHI SO SO'I DBANG DU MDZAD PA'O,

Furthermore, any place where this sutra is taught thereby becomes a place worthy of the offerings, and the prostrations, and the circumambulations of all the living beings in the entire world, with its gods, and men, and demigods. This point recalls the line in the *Ornament of Realizations* where it talks about "enlightenment and none other than a stupa." This refers to a fact mentioned in the root sutra—in the Mother, in its more extensive, medium, and shorter versions, as well as in the commentaries. Here it says that any place where a bodhisattva on the path of habituation stays thereby becomes a place like a stupa, a place that should be revered by other people. The reference here in this case is mainly to any place where there resides a person who has managed to develop the whole point of this text—that is, an extraordinary form of actual perfection of wisdom—within the stream of his mind. Previously in the sutra a section similar to this one appears, but each instance applies to a different case.

*, RAB 'BYOR, RIGS KYI BU'AM RIGS KYI BU MO GANG DAG 'DI LTA BU'I MDO SDE'I TSIG 'DI DAG LEN PA DANG , 'DZIN PA DANG , KLOG PA DANG , KUN CHUB PAR BYED PA DE DAG NI, MNAR BAR 'GYUR, SHIN TU MNAR BAR 'GYUR RO,

Oh Subhuti, any son or daughter of noble family who takes up a sutra like this, or who holds it, or reads it, or comprehends it fully, will suffer. They will suffer intensely.

,SNGA MA LAS GZHAN YANG RAB 'BYOR RIGS KYI BU'AM BU MO GANG
MDO SDE 'DI 'DZIN 'CHANG SOGS BYED CING DON NYAMS SU LEN PA'I
SEMS CAN DE DAG NI NAD SNA TSOGS DANG 'THAB RTZOD 'TSANG
'DRU DANG BCING RDEG SOGS KYIS MNAR BA DANG SHIN TU MNAR
BA'I SDUG BSNAL MYONG BAR 'GYUR BA YOD SRID KYANG , SKYON
CHEN PO MA YIN TE,

Here in a statement over and above the one before, Lord Buddha says,

Oh Subhuti, consider any son or daughter of noble family who takes up this sutra, who holds it in their hands, and so on—any living being who does these things and then puts the meaning of the sutra into practice. It is entirely possible that such a person could experience some pain, that they could **suffer, and suffer intensely, through various kinds of illness, or conflict with others, or being criticized, or chained, or beaten, or anything of the like. It could happen, but it would be no great problem, because. . .**

*, DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, SEMS CAN DE DAG GIS TSE RABS
SNGA MA'I MI DGE BA'I LAS NGAN SONG DU SKYE BAR 'GYUR BA GANG
DAG BYAS PA DAG TSE 'DI NYID LA MNAR BAS, TSE RABS SNGA MA'I MI
DGE BA'I LAS DE DAG 'BYANG BAR 'GYUR TE, SANGS RGYAS KYI BYANG
CHUB KYANG 'THOB PAR 'GYUR BA'I PHYIR RO,

Why is it so? Because, oh Subhuti, such beings are purifying non-virtuous karma from the entire string of their previous lives, karma that would have taken them to the three lower realms. As they purify this karma, it causes them to suffer here in this life. As such they will succeed in cleaning away the karma of these non-virtuous deeds of their previous lifetimes, and they will as well achieve the enlightenment of a Buddha.

RGYU MTSAN DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, SEMS CAN DE DAG GIS NI TSE RABS
'DI DANG SNGA MA'I DUS SU MI DGE BA'I LAS CHEN PO NGAN SONG
GSUM DU SKYE BAR 'GYUR BA'I LAS GANG DAG BYAS PA DE DAG
THAMS CAD KYI 'BRAS BU NI TSE 'DI NYID KYI THOG LA SMIN TE SDUG

BSNGAL GYIS MNAR BA DE'I STOBS KYIS TSE RABS SNGA MA'I MI DGE
 BA'I LAS DE DAG THAMS CAD 'BYANG BA STE DAG PAR 'GYUR TE,
 SANGS RGYAS KYI BYANG CHUB KYANG MYUR DU THOB PAR 'GYUR RO,
 , SHER PHYIN LA BRTZON PA'I GNYEN PO KUN TU SPYOD PA'I STOBS
 KYIS NI SDIG LAS RNAMS KYI RTZA BA BDAG 'DZIN BCOM STE THAR PA
 DANG THAMS CAD MKHYEN PA YANG THOB PAR 'GYUR ZHES BSHAD
 NA, NGAN 'GROR SKYE BA'I LAS RNAMS 'JOMS PA LTA CI SMOS SO, ,
 TSUL DE LTAR RTOG GE 'BAR BA SOGS NAS BSHAD CING , THAR PA
 CHEN PO LAS KYANG , NGAN 'GROR SKYE BA'I SDIG YOD KYANG , , MGO
 BO NA BA TZAM GYIS 'BYANG , , ZHES GSUNGS SO, , DPER NA SA BON
 BTAB KYANG CHU LUD DROD GSHER SOGS GTAN MED NA MYU GU MI
 SKYE BA LTAR BDAG 'DZIN SPONG NUS NA NI, BSAGS PA'I LAS CI YOD
 KYANG GROGS NYON MONGS MED PAS RNAM SMIN 'BYIN MI NUS TE,
 RNAM 'GREL LAS, SRID PA'I SRED LAS RNAM BRGAL BA'I, , LAS GZHAN
 'PHEN NUS MA YIN TE, , LHAN CIG BYED PA ZAD PHYIR RO, , ZHES
 GSUNGS PA LTAR RO,

For what reason **is it so? Because such beings are purifying** great **non-virtuous karma** that they have committed both in this life and in their lifetimes past—karma so serious that **it would normally have taken them to the three lower realms**. As such, the results of all these deeds are ripening here **in this very life**. Thus one is **suffering** pain, and by force of this suffering he or she is "**cleaning away**"—that is, purifying—all of this non-virtuous **karma**. As such, one will quickly **achieve the enlightenment of a Buddha**.

The force of an antidote action consisting of making great efforts in the perfection of wisdom is destroying the grasping to some self-existence, the very root of all non-virtuous deeds. This is why the text goes on to say that one will achieve freedom and the state of omniscience. And since the text does say this, then needless to say one could destroy the karma that is leading you to a birth in the lower realms. The way in which this works is explained in texts such as the *Blaze of Reasoning* and others. As the *Sutra of the Great Liberation* says as well,

Even though one may have the bad karma
 To take his birth in the three lower realms,
 A simple headache will clean it away.

Suppose for example that a seed is planted, but is then deprived completely of water, or fertilizer, or warmth, or the rest. Then it would never sprout.

Here the case is the same. If you are able to eliminate grasping to some self-nature, then none of the karmas you have collected, regardless of how many there are, can ever ripen forth. This is because their companion, the mental afflictions, are absent. As the *Commentary on Valid Perception* states,

No further karmas can ever project their results
In one who has gone beyond the desire for existence;
This is because the conditions have all been finished.

[*The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, ff. 222b-223a; *Sunlight for the Path*, ff. 17b-18a]

*, BCOM LDAN 'DAS LA TSE DANG LDAN PA RAB 'BYOR GYIS 'DI SKAD CES GSOL TO, , BCOM LDAN 'DAS, CHOS KYI RNAM GRANGS 'DI'I MING CI LAGS, JI LTAR GZUNG BAR BGYI, DE SKAD CES GSOL PA DANG , BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS TSE DANG LDAN PA RAB 'BYOR LA 'DI SKAD CES BKA' STZAL TO, , RAB 'BYOR, CHOS KYI RNAM GRANGS 'DI SHES RAB KYI PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA ZHES BYA STE, 'DI DE LTAR ZUNGS SHIG ,

The junior monk Subhuti spoke the following words, with great respect, to the Conqueror:

**Oh Conqueror, what is the name of this particular kind of Dharma?
How are we to consider it?**

And the Conqueror bespoke the following to the junior monk Subhuti:

Oh Subhuti, this particular kind of Dharma is known as the "perfection of wisdom," and that is how you should consider it.

,DE NAS RAB 'BYOR GYIS GZHUNG 'DI'I MING CI LTAR LAGS ZHES ZHUS PA NA, LAN DU BCOM LDAN 'DAS KYIS 'DI'I MING LA GZHUNG SHES RAB KYI PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA ZHES BYA STE 'DI'I MING DE LTAR ZUNGS SHIG CES PA NI, BRJOD BYA DON GYI SHER PHYIN BRJOD BYAR BYAS NAS STON PAS RJOD BYED GZHUNG LA BRJOD BYA'I MING GIS BTAGS PA'O, , 'DIS SHES RAB KYI PHAR PHYIN GYI MING GIS MTSON TE PHAR PHYIN GZHAN YANG BSTAN TO, ,

Then **Subhuti** asks, "**What is the name of this text?**" In reply the **Conqueror** states, "Its name is **the 'perfection of wisdom,'**" and "**that is how you should consider it** to be named." The subject matter selected by the Teacher, the subject expressed by the text, is the perfection of wisdom in its actual form. The point here then is that the Teacher has named the text that expresses this subject by using the name of the subject it expresses. Here the name of the perfection of wisdom is meant to represent all the other perfections as well.

*, DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS SHES RAB KYI PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA GANG GSUNGS PA DE NYID PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA MED PA'I PHYIR TE, DES NA, SHES RAB KYI PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA ZHES BYA'O,

Why is it so? Because, oh Subhuti, that same perfection of wisdom spoken by the Ones Thus Gone is a perfection of wisdom that doesn't even exist. And this is why we call it the "perfection of wisdom."

DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS SHES RAB KYI PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA ZHES GANG GSUNGS PA DE NYID DON DAM PAR PHA ROL TU PHYIN PAR GRUB PA MED CING , DES NA THA SNYAD DU SHES RAB KYI PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA ZHES 'DOGS SO, , DON DAM PAR MED CING THA SNYAD DU YOD PAR BSHAD PA 'DI 'DRA THAMS CAD KYIS KYANG MTHA' GNYIS SPANGS PA'I BDEN GNYIS ZUNG DU 'JUG PA'I DBU MA'I LAM STON TE, DE YANG RANG BZHIN GYIS STONG PA DANG THA SNYAD DU YOD PA GNYIS DUS GCIG TU GZHI GCIG GI STENG DU 'DU BAR STON PA'O, , PHAR PHYIN ZHES PA'I SGRA DON NI, 'KHOR BA'I RGYA MTSO'I PHA ROL TU PHYIN PAR BYED PA DANG PHYIN ZIN PA'I DON TE, SNGA MA LTAR NA SLOB LAM NA YOD CING , PHYI MA NI SANGS RGYAS KYI SA NA YOD DE RNAM MKHYEN DANG DON GCIG GO, SHER PHYIN GYI SGRAS BRJOD PA TZAM LA NI, RANG BZHIN DANG GZHUNG DANG LAM DANG 'BRAS BU'I SHER PHYIN LTA BU MANG STE KHYAD PAR SHES DGOS KYANG MA BRJOD DO, , MDOR NA BYANG CHUB KYI SEMS KYIS ZIN PA'I STONG NYID RTOGS PA'I YE SHES LA SHER PHYIN DU GSUNGS PA'I SHER PHYIN 'DI NI SBYIN PA'I PHAR PHYIN SOGS PHAR PHYIN DANG PO LNGA SANGS RGYAS KYI SAR 'KHRID PAR BYED PA'I THABS KHYAD PAR CAN YIN TE 'CHAD PAR 'GYUR RO,

That same perfection of wisdom spoken by the Ones Thus Gone to be the "perfection of wisdom" is a perfection of wisdom that doesn't even exist as a perfection of wisdom in an ultimate sense. **And this is why we can,** in a nominal

sense, label **it the "perfection of wisdom."** All these kinds of explanations, where they state that things do not exist ultimately but do exist nominally, illustrate the path of the middle way, wherein the two truths are accepted as an inseparable unity, which functions to prevent completely the two extremes. They illustrate, in short, how the quality of being empty of any natural existence, and the quality of existing nominally, coexist with each other as simultaneous attributes of any single object.

Here is a bit on the literal meaning of the expression "perfection," or "gone to the other side." This term connotes either that thing which takes you to the other side of the ocean of cyclic life, or else the state of having already reached that other side. Taken the former way, the expression refers the perfection of wisdom as it exists on the paths of those who are still learning [that is, non-Buddhas]. Taken the latter way, it refers to the perfection of wisdom which exists at the level of a Buddha, and is equivalent to the knowledge of all objects.

If we go beyond its strictest sense, there are many different usages of the term "perfection of wisdom": it can refer to the "natural," or the "textual," or the "path," or the "resulting" perfection of wisdom. It's important to be able to distinguish between all these, but it would be beyond the scope of this commentary for me to discuss them here. To put it briefly, what was **spoken** of as the "**perfection of wisdom**" refers to that knowledge which is imbued with the wish to attain enlightenment, and which perceives emptiness. **It is this same perfection of wisdom** which acts as an extraordinary kind of method for taking the first five perfections—those of giving and the rest—and leading them up to the point of enlightenment. I will speak further of this later.

*, RAB 'BYOR, 'DI JI SNYAM DU SEMS, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GANG GSUNGS PA'I CHOS DE GANG YANG YOD DAM, RAB 'BYOR GYIS GSOL PA, BCOM LDAN 'DAS, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GANG GSUNGS PA'I CHOS DE DAG GANG YANG MA MCHIS SO,

Oh Subhuti, what do you think? Is there any dharma at all which the Ones Thus Gone ever speak?

And Subhuti respectfully replied,

Oh Conqueror, none of the dharmas ever spoken by the Ones Thus Gone even exist.

, 'DIR SHES RAB KYI PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA GANG GSUNGS PA DE ZHES
SHER PHYIN GSUNGS PAR BSHAD PA NI, 'O NA DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS
DON DAM PAR GSUNGS PA'I CHOS GZHAN YOD DAM SNYAM PA NA, DE
MED CES STON PA NI CHOS DE GANG YANG YOD SNYAM MAM ZHES
DRIS PA'I TSE, LAN DU RAB 'BYOR GYIS DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GANG
GSUNGS PA'I CHOS DE GANG YANG DON DAM PAR MA MCHIS SO ZHES
LAN PHUL TE, SNGAR DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS CHOS BSTAN PA MA
MCHIS PAR GSUNGS PA'I DON BSHAD PA DANG 'DRA'O,

In the part before this one, Lord Buddha mentioned "the perfection of wisdom spoken by the Ones Thus Gone," and explained how it could be the perfection of wisdom. Someone might think to themselves, "Are there though any other dharmas which were spoken by the Ones Thus Gone, and which *do* exist in an ultimate sense?"

In order to answer this question with an emphatic "No!" the Buddha poses a question to **Subhuti**: "**Is there any such dharma at all?**"

In reply, Subhuti offers up the following answer: "**None of the dharmas ever spoken by the Ones Thus Gone even exist**, at least in an ultimate sense." The point here is very similar to the one before, where it said that the teaching of the dharma by the Ones Thus Gone did not even exist.

[*The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, ff. 224a-224b; *Sunlight for the Path*, ff. 21a-21b]

*, DE DE BZHIN TE, MDO 'DI BSHAD PA 'DI LA GANG DAG MI SKRAG MI
DNGANG ZHING DNGANG BAR MI 'GYUR BA'I SEMS CAN DE DAG NI,
NGO MTSAR RAB DANG LDAN PAR 'GYUR RO,

It is thus. Any living beings who receive an explanation of this sutra and who are not made afraid, and are not frightened, and who do not become frightened, are truly wondrous.

RGYU MTSAN NI, MA 'ONGS PA NA SEMS CAN GANG DAG MDO SDE 'DI
BSHAD PA'I TSIG DON THOS PA NA, DE LTAR THAMS CAD BDEN PAR
MED NA LAS 'BRAS SOGS BYA BYED MI 'THAD CING MED PAR 'GYUR RO
SNYAM DU YID MI SKRAG CING MI DNGANG LA, SHIN TU DNGANG BAR
MI 'GYUR ZHING YID CHES TE MOS PA DE DAG NI NGO MTSAR RAB

DANG LDAN PAR 'GYUR RO, , BDEN PAR GRUB NA BSGYUR DU MI RUNG
BAS LAS 'BRAS LA SOGS PA'I BYA BYED THAMS CAD BZHAG TU MI RUNG
ZHING MI 'THAD LA, BDEN PAR MED PA'AM RANG BZHIN GYIS MA
GRUB PA LA BYA BYED THAMS CAD DANG MYANG 'DAS SOGS 'THAD
PA'I TSUL NI, RJES RTEN 'BREL BSTOD PA LAS, RANG BZHIN LDOG PA
MED PA'I PHYIR, , CHOS RNAMS RANG BZHIN 'GA' YOD NA, , MYA NGAN
'DAS PA MI RUNG ZHING , , SPROS KUN LDOG PA MED PAR GSUNGS, ,
ZHES DANG , RANG BZHIN GYIS NI STONG PA DANG , , BYA BYED 'THAD
PAS MI 'GAL ZHING , , DE LAS LDOG PAR MTHONG BA NA, , STONG LA
BYA BA MI RUNG ZHING , , ZHES GSUNGS PA LTAR RO,

Here is the reason. In future days, **certain living beings will receive**, they will listen to, **an explanation of** the meaning of the words of **this sutra**. And yet **they will not be made afraid, and they will not be frightened, and they will not become** extremely **frightened**, by any such thought as: "If this is so, and if nothing at all exists in a true way, then all the ways in which things like karma and its consequences work cannot be right, and so really nothing at all can work."

Rather they will find a greater belief, an even greater faith, in all these objects. And beings like this will be **truly wondrous**.

If things did exist in a true way, then it would be improper to say that they ever changed. And then it would be improper, it would never be right, to describe all the workings of things like karma and its consequences.

The way in which all things work, and nirvana itself, and everything else are all quite proper. And none of these objects has any true existence, none of them has any nature of their own. How all this can be is described by Lord Tsongkapa in his *Praise from Interdependence*:

Reaching the state of nirvana could never occur,
And elaborations too could never be stopped,
If objects had any nature of their own, because
A nature could not be stopped, You stated.

He also says,

Since things are empty of any nature
And the way things work is right,

There is no contradiction between them.

Those who see things the opposite
Think nothing can work with emptiness...

*, DE CI'I PHYIR ZHE NA, RAB 'BYOR, PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA DAM PA 'DI NI, DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GSUNGS TE, PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA DAM PA GANG DAG DE BZHIN GSHEGS PAS GSUNGS PA DE, SANGS RGYAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS DPAG TU MED PA RNAMS KYIS KYANG GSUNGS PA'I PHYIR TE, DES NA, PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA DAM PA ZHES BYA'O,

Why is it so? Because, oh Subhuti, the One Thus Gone now speaks to you the holy perfection of wisdom; and the holy perfection which the One Thus Gone now speaks to you is the same perfection of wisdom which Conquering Buddhas beyond any number to count have spoken as well. And this is why we can call it the "holy perfection of wisdom."

,NGO MTSAR CHE BA'I RGYU MTSAN NI, CHOS KUN RANG BZHIN GYIS MA GRUB PAR STON PA'I GZHUNG PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA DAM PA MCHOG 'DI NI DA LTA DE BZHIN GSHEGS PA NGAS GSUNGS TE, SNGON SANGS RGYAS BCOM LDAN 'DAS DPAG TU MED PA RNAMS KYIS GSUNGS PA'I PHYIR RO, , DE NI GONG DU RGYU 'BRAS KYI CHOS RNAMS RANG BZHIN GYIS MED PAR BSHAD PA LA YID CHES PA'I GNAS SU 'DZIN PA'I CHED DU GSUNGS PA'O, , RGYU MTSAN DES NA PHA ROL TU PHYIN PA DAM PA ZHES BYA'O,

Here is the reason **why** it will be so wondrous. **The holy, or highest, perfection of wisdom**—a work which teaches how no object exists through any nature of its own—is **now being spoken to you** by myself, **by the One Thus Gone**. And **this is the same perfection of wisdom which has been spoken** in the past by **Conquering Buddhas** who are **beyond any number to count**.

Lord Buddha makes this statement because he wants his listeners to consider what he has just said above as something authoritative. What he has just said, remember, is that nothing involved with cause and effect has any nature of its own. **And this reason is why we can call it the "holy perfection of wisdom."**

*, SKAR MA RAB RIB MAR ME DANG , ,SGYU MA ZIL BA CHU BUR DANG , ,RMI LAM GLOG DANG SPRIN LTA BU, ,DUS BYAS DE LTAR BLTA BAR BYA,

See anything
Brought about by causes
As like a star,
An obstruction of the eye,
A lamp, an illusion,
The dew, or a bubble;
A dream, or lightning,
Or else a cloud.

,DE NAS 'DUS BYAS KYI CHOS RNAMS RANG BZHIN MED CING MI RTAG
PAR BSTAN NAS MJUG BSDU BA NI, SKAR MA RAB RIB MAR ME DANG , ,
ZHES GSUNGS TE, GZUGS LA SOGS PA'I PHUNG PO LNGA SOGS LA
MTSON NA, DPE JI LTAR NA,

Next comes a concluding summary, which shows how all **things brought about by causes** are empty of any nature of their own, and are also impermanent. All this is contained in the verse about the "star, an obstruction of the eye, a lamp," and the rest.

We could take for example the five heaps—physical form and the rest—or any such objects. All these can be described in the following metaphors.

SKAR MA RNAMS NI MTSAN MOR SNANG ZHING , NYIN MOR MI SNANG
BA DE BZHIN DU PHUNG SOGS KYI 'DUS BYAS RNAMS NI MA RIG PA'I
MUN PA YOD NA DON DAM PAR STONG GI, BDEN MED RTOGS PA'I YE
SHES KYI NYI MA SHAR BA NA DON DAM PAR MI SNANG BAS SKAR MA
BZHIN DU BLTA'O,

Stars appear at night, and then by day they no longer appear. The parts to a person and other things brought about by causes are just the same. If a person's mind is full of the darkness of ignorance, then they appear to exist in an ultimate sense. [Correcting an error in Tibetan text, *stong* for *snang*.] Suppose though that the sun rises—the sun of the wisdom which perceives that nothing exists truly. Then these objects no longer appear in an ultimate sense. As such we should see these things **as being like a star**.

,RDUL SOGS RAB RIB KYIS MIG BSGRIBS PA'I TSE DON JI LTA BA BZHIN
DU MI SNANG BAR GZHAN DU MTHONG BA LTAR MA RIG PA'I RAB RIB
KYIS BLO MIG BSGRIBS PA'I NGOR 'DUS BYAS RNAMS KYANG DON

GZHAN DU SNANG NGO ,

Suppose your **eyes** are blocked by some **obstruction** in them—by particles of dust or something of the like. The thing that you're trying to look at then doesn't look the way it really is; rather, you see it some other way. It's just the same with the eye of the mind when it's blocked by the obstruction of ignorance. Things brought about by causes then appear to this mind as something other than what they are.

,MAR ME NI SNGO 'BU LA BR TEN NAS MYUR DU SKYE ZHING 'JIG PA DE
'BZHIN DU 'DUS BYAS RNAMS NI RANG RANG GI RGYU RKYEN LA BR TEN
NAS MYUR DU SKYE 'JIG BYED DO,

The flame of a butter **lamp**, supported by a thin plant wick, flares and then quickly dies out. Caused things, each supported their various causes and conditions, also go through a continuous process of rising and quickly dying out.

,SGYU MA NI DON GZHAN DU SNANG BA LTAR 'DUS BYAS RNAMS NI
BLO 'KHRUL BA'I NGOR BDEN PAR SNANG NGO ,

An illusion is something that looks different than what is actually there. Things brought about by causes also appear to exist truly, to a mistaken state of mind.

,ZIL MA NI MYUR DU 'JIG PA LTAR 'DUS BYAS RNAMS NI RANG GI DUS
GNYIS PAR MI SDOD PAR MYUR DU 'JIG GO,

Dew vanishes quickly; things with causes are the same--they die away speedily, without lasting even into the second instant of their existence.

,CHU BUR NI CHU 'KHRUGS PA SOGS LAS GLO BUR DU 'BYUNG ZHING
'JIG PA LTAR 'DUS BYAS RNAMS NI RKYEN TSOGS NA GLO BUR DU
'BYUNG ZHING 'JIG GO,

Bubbles pop up at random, because some water is stirred up or something of the like, and then they burst and disappear just as suddenly. Caused things work the same way: when the various conditions all come together, they pop up suddenly, and then they die out just as suddenly.

,RMI LAM NI GNYID KYIS BSLAD PA'I TSE 'KHRUL SNANG YIN PA LTAR
'DUS BYAS RNAMS NI MA RIG PAS BSLAD PA'I NGOR BDEN SNANG DU

'CHAR RO,

Dreams are an example of a misperception, which is due to the affects of sleep on the mind. Things brought about by causes as well are misapprehended, they seem to exist truly, to the mind which is affected by ignorance.

,GLOG NI MYUR DU 'BYUNG ZHING 'JIG PA LTAR 'DUS BYAS RNAMS NI RKYEN TSOGS NA MYUR DU 'BYUNG ZHING 'JIG GO,

Lightning flashes and dies out quickly. Caused things too rise and die out quickly, depending on the conditions that assemble to bring them about.

,SPRIN NI KLU SOGS KYI BSAM PA'I DBANG GIS MKHA' LA SKYE ZHING 'JIG PA LTAR 'DUS BYAS RNAMS NI, THUN MONG DANG THUN MONG MA YIN PA'I LAS DBANG GIS SKYE 'JIG BYED BAR 'GYUR ZHES PA'I DPE RNAMS KYIS KYANG 'DUS BYAS THAMS CAD BDEN MED DU BSHAD DO,

Clouds are something that gather and fade in the sky, depending on the wishes of the serpent-beings and such. Things brought about by causes are the same; depending on the influence of karma which is either communal or not, they rise or die out.

Each of the metaphors above is also meant to represent how no object brought about by causes has any true existence.

,DE DAG NI 'DUS BYAS RNAMS LA THUN MONG DU SBYAR NAS BSHAD PA STE, MDO LAS NI, GZUGS NI DBU BA BRDOS PA 'DRA, , TSOR BA CHU YI CHU BUR BZHIN, , 'DU SHES SMIG RGYU LTA BU STE, , 'DU BYED RNAMS NI CHU SHING BZHIN, , RNAM PAR SHES PA SGYU MA LTAR, , NYI MA'I GNYEN GYIS BKA' STZAL TO, , ZHES BSHAD TZAM MGON PO KLU SGRUB GSUNG NGO , , SLOB DPON K'A MA LA SH'AI LAS NI PHYI MA GSUM DUS GSUM DANG SBYAR NAS SNGA MA LAS MI 'DRA BAR BSHAD KYANG MI 'GAL LO,

The explanation given here applies to things brought about by causes as an entire group. A more restricted application is quoted from sutra by Master Nagarjuna:

The physical form is like a bubble that forms,
And the feelings resemble the froth of a wave;
Discrimination is just a mirage,

And the other factors like empty cane;
Awareness is similar to an illusion—
Thus did the Cousin of the Sun speak.

Master Kamalashila relates the final three metaphors to the three times; this is a little different from the explanation here, but the two are in no way contradictory.

,MDOR NA 'DUS BYAS THAMS CAD KYANG GONG DU BSHAD PA'I DPE
DGU PO DE LTAR MI RTAG PA DANG RANG BZHIN MED PAR BLTA'O
ZHES SO, 'DIS KYANG GANG ZAG DANG CHOS KYI BDAG MED PA GNYIS
KA BSTAN PAR GZUNG NGO ,

To put it briefly, Lord Buddha is telling us that we should "See that each and every thing brought about by causes is impermanent, and is empty of any nature of its own, all just like the nine examples given above." We should also consider these lines as indicating both the lack of self to the person, and the lack of self to phenomena.