

The Middling Stages of the Path

An explanation of the manner of training in calm abiding, which is of the nature of a dhyāna¹.

by the Noble Tsongkapa (1357-1419)

translated by Ilia Durovic

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The first topic has three subdivisions:

1. Indicating the collection [of preconditions] for calm abiding²
2. How to meditate on calm abiding in dependence on that,
3. The criterion of attaining calm abiding through having meditated.

The first topic has six subdivisions:

1.1 Dwelling in a harmonious place , i.e. a place which has the 5 qualities:

- 1.1.1 Easily obtained food and clothing, obtainable without difficulty.
- 1.1.2 A good place which is free of malevolent, carnivorous animal as well as on in which foes do not dwell.
- 1.1.3 A sound area, through being free of diseases.
- 1.1.4 Worthy friends: having friends who are of compatible view and ethics.
- 1.1.5 Having the excellence of lacking many people by day and little noise by night.

As is said in Maitreya³'s "Ornament of the Mahāyāna-Sūtras⁴":

The place in which those with a mind practice has:
Easily obtained, a sound area,
A worthy area and worthy friends,
And has the requisites to make a yogi happy !

1.2 Having few desires, i.e. having no special desire for fine or numerous monastic robes

1.3 Contentment, i.e. to always be content through getting only the worst of robes.

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1. We have relied for this translation on the Sera Je edition of the "Middling Lam Rim" published in 1999 used on the occasion of HH. the Dalai Lama's bestowal of the transmission of the "Middling Lam Rim" at Sera Je monastery in 2001. All the passages and terms in brackets are additions of the translator to clarify the meaning.

2. This is perhaps the best English translation of the Sanskrit term calm abiding. "Serenity" which has been adopted by the Lam Rim Chen Mo translation committee is potentially misleading. A good translation would be the literal "State of peace" which unfortunately conveys very little to the English reader.

3. While Western Buddhist scholarship remains profoundly divided regarding the actual identity of Maitreya, who was Asanga's teacher, the Asian Mahāyāna traditions are unanimous in considering him as the future Buddha Maitreya, residing in the Pure Land Tuṣita in whose presence Asanga received the famous 5 Treatises of Maitreya which had a seminal influence on the whole of Mahayana Buddhism.

4. Mahāyāna-Sūtrālamkāra

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1.4 Giving up being busy, i.e. totally abandoning the bad activities of business, as well as intensively befriending householders and monastics, debasing, astrology and so forth.

1.5 Pure ethics, i.e. [preserving] the various foundations of the trainings regarding natural and artificial faults concerning the Vows of Individual Liberation and Bodhisattva vows and, should nonetheless they be torn through heedlessness⁵ to renew them with swift remorse.

1.6 Totally abandoning fancies⁶ such as desire and so forth, i.e. one must abandon all fancies of desire and so forth through either:

i. meditating on the defects of desires such as being slain or imprisoned in this life and going to the lower realms and so forth in future lives or,

ii. alternatively, [reflecting that] all pleasant and unpleasant things of cyclic existence are disintegrating subjects which are impermanent. Most definitely, if I am to become greatly separated from all of them and unable to carry them [with me], why be greatly attached to them.

Since is said in Atiśa's⁷ "Lamp for the Path"⁸:

Even should one have meditated with intense effort
For thousands of years,
When the branches of calm abiding have decayed
There will be no attainment of Samādhi !

it is important for those with a heartfelt wish to attain the Samādhi of [the union of] calm abiding and special insight to put effort in the thirteen⁹ explained in Asanga's "Grounds of Hearers"¹⁰.

5. བག་ལེ

6. རྣམ་རྟོག་

7. The great Indian master, Dīpamkaraśrijñāna (982-1054) also known as Atiśa who reformed the practice of Buddhism in Tibet and was a powerful influence on the so-called New Schools of Translation as well as being the creator of the Kadampa tradition.

8. Bodhipathapradīpa

9. The 13 are :

1. The main prerequisites, i.e. familiarity with the teaching and inner discipline
2. Excellence of one's own aim
3. Excellence of other's aim
4. Desire for the teaching
5. Renunciation
6. Vows of ethical discipline
7. Restraint of the senses
8. Moderation in eating
9. Wakefulness
10. Dwelling vigilantly
11. Solitude
12. Cleansing obscurations
13. Proper basis of concentration

cf. LRCM, III, pp. 396, note 51.

10. Śrāvaka bhūmi

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2. [How to meditate on calm abiding in dependence on that] has two subdivisions:

- 2.1 Preparation
- 2.2 Actual practice.

2.1 Preparation:

Having meditated long on the previously explained six preliminary practices as well as Bodhicitta, one will train as well in the natures of the objects of meditation shared with the beings of the small and middling scope as their branches.

2.2 Actual practice.

- 2.2.1 The physical postures by means of which one meditates
- 2.2.2 Explaining the actual stages of meditation.

2.2.1 The physical postures by means of which one meditates

In keeping with the explanation in Kamalaśīla's "Stages of Meditation", adopt the physical posture which has the eight features¹¹ on an extremely soft and comfortable cushion.

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Regarding that, place the legs either in complete vajrāsana, alternatively, half-vajrāsana is also suitable. The eyes should neither be fully open nor should they be closed and should be focused on the tip of the nose. The body should neither be extremely erect nor bowed, but should be kept straight with the attention placed inwards. The shoulders should be aligned. The head should be neither high nor low and should not be bent in one direction, instead [the body from the nose to the navel should be set straight. Teeth and lips should be left in the usual state for oneself. The tongue should be placed in front of the upper teeth. The breath should not be noisy in its outward and inward movement, not should it be forceful¹² or agitated¹³, but instead must definitely flow effortlessly and softly in and out, without sensation. In this way, practice at first as explained the 8 features of physical posture and specifically controlling¹⁴ the breath.

2.2.2 Explaining the actual stages of meditation.

[2.2.2.1 Introduction]

Although most "Stages of the Path" explain the practice of calm abiding by means of the eight applications¹⁵ which abandon the five faults as explained in Maitreya's "Separation of the Middle from the Extremes"¹⁶, the instructions from the lineages of Geshe Losarwa explain

11. ཚེས

12. རྩམས་པ

13. རྟོག་པར་ཅན

14. ལྷུང་ཚམས་ལད་པའ་པ

15. འདུལ་ལྡོག་

16. Madhyānta-vibhāga

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that one must practice in addition to these the six forces¹⁷, the four attentions¹⁸ and the nine [means of abiding of the] mind explained in Asanga's "Grounds of Hearers". The Noble Maitreya explained also in the "Ornament of the Mahāyāna-Sūtras" as well as in "Separation of the Middle from the Extremes" the nine means of abiding of the mind¹⁹ and the eight abandoning applications and Indian scholars following him, such as the Masters Haribhadra²⁰, Kamalaśīla²¹, Śāntipa²² and so forth wrote extensively on the stages of concentration²³. Although these must also be understood from the standpoint of the Mantra Vehicle, it would seem that, specifically, the defects of the five faults of concentration and the manner of dispelling them were explained more elaborately from the standpoint of Sutra.

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[2.2.2.2 The actual topic]

2.2.2.2.1 The criteria for having generated concentration faultlessly

2.2.2.2.2 In dependence on that, the stages of generation of mental states²⁴.

2.2.2.2.1 The criteria for having generated concentration faultlessly

2.2.2.2.1.1 How to proceed before focusing the mind on the object of observation²⁵.

2.2.2.2.1.2 How to proceed while focusing the mind on the object of observation.

2.2.2.2.1.3 How to proceed after focusing the mind on the object of observation.

2.2.2.2.1.1 How to proceed before focusing the mind on the object of observation

If one does not enjoy meditating on concentration and is unable to put an end to the laziness which delights in what is at odds with it, one will not be granted entry, from the very inception, into concentration and even should one obtain it once, it will swiftly decay through being unable to maintain the continuum. Hence, putting an end to laziness at the beginning is critical.

Regarding that, if one obtains the pliancy which enhances physical and mental happiness and bliss, this will oppose laziness since disheartedness²⁶ will not arise when one applies oneself to virtue day and night. To give rise to that, one must be able to begin to strive continually at concentration, the cause for the generation of pliancy. Since its cause is seeing the qualities of

17. རྟོགས་རྒྱུ

18. ཡིད་བྱེད་བཞི

19. སེམས་གནས་པའི་ཐབས་དུལ

20. The great Yogācāra-Svatantrika master of the Perfection of Wisdom Literature (ca. 8th cent. AD)

21. Kamalaśīla (740-795) the famous Indian scholar and Bodhisattva who travelled to Tibet to debate the Chinese Chan monk Hwa Shang Mohoyen at the council of Samye (ca. 790)

22. Ratnākaraśānti the great master of the Perfection of Wisdom literature.

23. རྟོང་དེ་འཛིན་, Sk. Samādhi

24. སེམས་གནས

25. དམིགས་པ

26. རྟོད་ལྡོག

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concentration and since one needs a firm faith which delights [therein], one must meditate again and again on the faith which thinks of the qualities of concentration.

It is said in Maitreya's "Separation of the Middle from the Extremes":

The state and that which dwells,
Are actually cause and effect !

There, "the state" is striving, i.e. dwelling in seeking. "That which dwells" is seeking or effort. The cause of seeking is faith which is convinced of the qualities. The result of seeking is pliancy.

Here, the qualities of of the concentration which has been meditated upon are as follows:

i. if **calm abiding** is attained, it is evident that one will dwell in bliss through the increase of mental happiness and physical bliss,

ii. through finding physical and mental pliancy, it is possible to set the mind on whichever virtuous object of observation one wishes,

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iii. through involuntarily pacifying distraction²⁷ towards wrong objects²⁸, numerous wrong behaviours will not arise and whatever virtue one engages in will be stronger.

iv. in dependence on **calm abiding**, it is possible to actualize the qualities of direct perception and magical emanation

v. and, if one thinks specifically of being able to sever swiftly the root of cyclic existence through the realisation of special insight into emptiness in dependence upon that

one will have meditated on an understanding of the increases in the powerful delights of concentration meditation. From within the generation thereof, it is easy to attain concentration through a continuous application at concentration. Upon attaining that, through repeated engagement in meditation, decay will be difficult.

2.2.2.2.1.2 How to proceed while focusing the mind on the object of observation.

2.2.2.2.1.2.1 Identifying the object of observation which is the basis upon which the mind is set.

2.2.2.2.1.2.1.1 A general presentation of objects of observation

2.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.1 Teaching the actual object of observation

2.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.1 [Identifying the divisions of the objects of observation]

27 གཡེད་བ

28. རྟོགས་རྟོད

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The Bhagavan taught four objects of meditation for yogis:

i. the four pervading objects of observation which must be realised:

- a. non-analytical placement
- b. analytical objects of observation
- c. the boundaries of conventional and ultimate things
- d. the attainment of transformation through meditation by observing the conventional and ultimate objects of the aforementioned two methods of meditation.

ii. the objects of observation which thoroughly purify behaviour, which are the five objects of meditation:

- a. ugliness
- b. love
- c. dependent origination
- d. the divisions of the constituents²⁹
- e. the inhalation and exhalation of breath

acting respectively as antidotes to :

- a. desire
- b. hatred
- c. benightedness
- d. pride
- e. discursiveness³⁰

in former lives.

iii. The five objects of observation of scholars:

- a. the aggregates
- b. the constituents
- c. the sense-spheres³¹
- d. the twelve links of interdependence.
- e. occurrence and non-occurrence³²

iv. objects of observation which purify the delusions:

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29. ཁྲམས

30. རྣམ་རྟོག་། We have also translated the term at times as “fancies” as it is polysemic.

31. རྩེ་མཚེད

32. གནས་དང་གནས་མ་ཡིན་པ།

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- a. the coarseness and [comparative] pacification of higher and lower grounds.
- b. the sixteen [aspects of] the Four noble Truths, [such as] impermanence and so forth.

Regarding those, the objects of observation for the thorough purification of behaviour are specific objects of observation since they easily oppose desire and so forth, specifically desirous behaviour and so on, and since, in dependence on that, the attainment of concentration is easier. Objects of observation for scholars are good objects of observation for **calm abiding** since they are similar³³ to the generation of a special insight which realises selflessness through refuting a self separate from those phenomena. Moreover, inasmuch as objects of observation for the purification of delusions act as antidotes to the general delusions, they are very meaningful. There are no pervading objects of observation apart from the former objects of observation. Hence, since it is necessary to attain concentration through depending on a object of **calm abiding** with a specific purpose, it is clear that those who attain concentration having taken as a base of observation a pebble or a twig are ignorant of the presentation of the objects of concentration.

Persons ranging from those having mainly desire to those having mainly discursiveness should, in keeping with the “Teachings requested by Revatī³⁴”, apply the respective object of observation which has been individually ascertained, ranging from ugliness to the inhalation and exhalation of breath. Since those persons with an equal temperament³⁵ or weak delusions can apprehend mentally whichever of the previously explained objects of observation they like, it is not necessary to be definite regarding what is allowed.

Those who have a preponderance of desire or any of the five afflictions generate enduring desire or any of the five afflictions even towards a small object of desire or any of the five afflictions because of having become familiar with desire or any of the five afflictions in former lives.

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Those who have an equal temperament, even though they did not become habituated to desire and so forth in former lives, through not having seen them as faults are not bereft of them even though great desire and so forth does not arise continually and for long with respect to their object. Those with weak delusions, through not having become habituated to desire and so forth in other lives and having seen them as faults, etc will give rise only slowly to desire, etc with respect to a great object of desire and so forth and will not give rise to any with respect to middling and small objects [of desire etc]. In addition, those with a preponderance of the five [delusions] , desire and so forth, will attain the mental states over a long period of time and those with an equal temperament will not attain them over an extremely long period of time, while those with weak delusions will attain them swiftly.

2.2.2.1.2.1.2 Identifying occasional objects of observation

33. རྣམ་ལྡན་མཐུན་པ།

34. Unidentified Sūtra quoted by Asanga in his Śrāvaka bhūmi.

35. ཚམས་མཐུན་པ།

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Should one think : “Now, on what object of observation should I attain calm abiding ?” While, generally, persons should have as their object of observation the formerly explained ones, it is important for those with a predominance of discursiveness to meditate on the breath. Moreover, the “Sūtra on the Concentration which dwells on the Direct Realisation of the Present Buddha³⁶” as well as Kamalaśīla’s middling and latter “Stages of Meditation³⁷” quoting from the the “King of Concentration Sūtra³⁸” teach that concentration is realised through observing the Body of the One Gone Thus, and in addition the Master Bodhibhadra is quoted by Atiśa’s “Commentary on the Lamp for the Path³⁹” as saying that concentration is realised through observing the body [of the Buddha]. Regarding that, apprehending the Buddha’s Body with [one’s] mind seems to have multiple purposes such as :

- i. generating immeasurable merit through recollecting the Buddha
- ii. a greater difference through observing upon relying on a clearly visualised field in the aspect of that Body as a field for the accumulation of merit such as prostrations, offerings, prayers and so forth as well as a field for the purification of obscurations through confession and restraint.
- iii. the quality of the recollection of the Buddha not degenerating at the time of death
- iv. a greater difference regarding deity yoga, should one meditate on the Mantra Path.

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In keeping with the passage from “King of Concentration Sūtra”:

Ravishing Lord of the world
With a Body the color of gold,
A Bodhisattva whose mind engages that object,
Is said to be in meditative equipoise.

take a basis of observation. Moreover, from within the two: visualising [a Buddha’s Body] through generating it newly mentally and visualising [a Buddha’s Body as if] it were naturally present, the latter has great advantages in giving rise to faith and since it is compatible with [practice] on the occasion of the shared vehicle⁴⁰, practice the latter.

Initially, when seeking for a basis of observation, a base which will be apprehended by the mind, having searched out an excellent Body of the Teacher, a painted or a cast representation, etc, having repeatedly stared at it, memorize its features until entry into meditation when the object appears to the mind. Alternatively, reflecting upon the object heard described by the Guru, seek for a object of observation⁴¹ which will begin to dawn to the mind. One is advised moreover not to have the object of observation appear as a painting or a

36. Pratyutpanna buddha sammukhāvasthita samādhi sūtra

37. Bhāvanā krama

38. Samādhirāja sūtra

39. Bodhi mārga pradīpa pañjikā nāma

40. i.e. the Pāramitāyāna

41. དམིགས་རྟེན

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cast statue, but instead for it to dawn as the actual Buddha.

Some, after having stared with their eyes at a representation set out in front of of themselves, immediately engage in meditation. Master Yeshe De⁴²’s refutation is most appropriate: inasmuch as concentration is not established within sense consciousnesses, but within the mental consciousness, the actual object of observation of concentration is an actual object of the mental consciousness, therefore, it must be apprehended by the mind. Although bodies [of the Buddha] have both coarse and subtle features, it is asserted in other sources that, at first, after relying on observing the coarse ones, in dependence on that, later one must observe the subtle ones.

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Also, since, in keeping with experience, it is easy for the coarse [features] to appear, one must incrementally take the coarse features of the body as objects of observation. Specifically, for as long as one has not realised a fully characterized calm abiding it is unsuitable to change to numerous objects of observation of discordant types, since if one is meditating on concentration, changing to numerous different objects will become a great obstacle. Āryaśura⁴³ states:

Relying upon one object,
Give rise to a stable thought !
Through flowing with many objects,
The mind will be troubled by afflictions.

and “The Lamp for the Path⁴⁴” [in the verses] :

Place a virtuous mind
On any one object !

states [this] by means of the definite term “one”. In this way, initially, the criterion of having found whatever object of observation is apprehended by the mind is if, upon visualising several times incrementally the head, the two arms, the remainder of the body’s chest and two legs, when at the end of that upon engaging in attention on the general body, just half of the coarse limbs can appear from the mind’s side, even though they are not of a luminous clarity. Being satisfied with merely that, grasp it with the mind. Otherwise, if one is not satisfied with merely that and does not grasp it with the mind and wishing for even greater clarity than that visualizes again and again, even though the object of observation will become clearer, not only will one not attain a stable concentration but it will act as a hindrance to finding [the object of observation]. If the mind has apprehended one half of the parts [of the body which is visualised] even though the object of observation is not very clear, concentration will be found very swiftly and thereby as clarity will be enhanced⁴⁵, the factor of clarity⁴⁶ will be swiftly attained. This is an important point from the instructions of the Master Yeshe De.

42. Ye she sde (ca. 9th cent.) was the author of the first treatise on Buddhist philosophical tenets in the history of Tibet, recently rediscovered.

43. Generally identified with Aśvaghōṣa.

44. Atiśa’s Bodhi-patha-pradīpa

45. བོགས་འདོན་པ

46. གསལ་ཚ

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Moreover, skillfully, when the general body as well as some of the bodily parts appear clearly grasp them. If they have become unclear, grasp again the general [body]. At that time if uncertainty regarding :

- i. color, while wishing to meditate on yellow [body] a red one appears
- ii. form, while wishing to meditate on a [body which is] seated, a standing one appears
- iii. number, while wishing to meditate on a single [body], two appear
- iv. size, when wishing to meditate on a large [body] a small one appears

it is unsuitable to go along with this, therefore take as object of observation only whatever fundamental object of observation [you have initially chosen]. Although, in the context of the practice of Deity Yoga in Secret Mantra, the aspect of the deity must appear clearly and until it does so appear one must apply numerous means for it to occur, here⁴⁷, if the aspect of the deity appears with difficulty, upon placing [the mind] upon any of the formerly explained bases of observation or having prepared for the ascertainment of suchness, it is allowable to actualize concentration by having apprehended [them with the] mind, since the actualisation of **calm abiding** is the main purpose.

[2.2.2.2.1.2.2 The manner of focusing the mind thereon.]

2.2.2.2.1.2.2.1 Positing the faultless manner of setting [the mind]

2.2.2.2.1.2.2.2 Dispelling faulty manners of setting [the mind]

2.2.2.2.1.2.2.3 Teaching the duration of sessions.

2.2.2.2.1.2.2.1 Positing the faultless manner of setting [the mind]

The concentration which is to be attained here has two features:

- i. it has an intensity⁴⁸ which is the factor of clarity of an extremely clear mind
- ii. it has a factor of abiding which dwells non-conceptually and single-pointedly on the object of observation.

Although some having added to that bliss get three [features] and others having added limpidity⁴⁹ get four [features], limpidity is twofold:

- i. subjective limpidity, which is the limpidity thought of when a recipient of faultless crystal is filled with pure water and is struck by sunlight from a cloudless [sky] and

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47. i.e. in the Pāramitāyāna

48. རྩ

49. དྲུག་པ་

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- ii. the limpidity which thinks that it can count to the point of touching them the coarse and subtle atoms of those [objects such as pillars, etc] when the aspect of an object such as a pillar and so forth appears.

However, since these two arise upon generating the factor of clarity which has severed subtle sinking⁵⁰, it seems unnecessary to set them aside from the beginning, also, although the happiness which has the aspect of a feeling of ease⁵¹ will arise as the result of the concentration established in this context, it is not counted here inasmuch as it is not associated with the concentration which is included within the preparations⁵² of the first dhyāna. The reason for which sinking and agitation become the foremost hindrances to the attainment of pure concentration is that the manifestation of such an intense factor of clarity is interrupted by sinking while non-conceptual single-pointedness is interrupted by agitation⁵³.

Therefore, since, if one does not know how to identify well both coarse and subtle agitation and sinking as well as the authentic methods of protecting⁵⁴ concentration by blocking⁵⁵ those two, let alone special insight, it will be impossible to generate **calm abiding** as well, the intelligent striving for concentration should be skilled in those methods. Regarding that, inasmuch as I will explain later that sinking and agitation are obstructing conditions to the attainment of **calm abiding**, the mode of identification of the obstructing conditions as well as the actual means for blocking them, I will explain here the harmonious conditions for attaining **calm abiding**, the mode of generating concentration. Now, although concentration is the factor of abiding single-pointedly on the mental object of observation, in addition, it must dwell continually on the object of observation. For that, a means for the mind not waver from its fundamental object of observation as well as an awareness of whether or not distraction is occurring are necessary. The first is recollection⁵⁶ and the second vigilance⁵⁷.

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As is said in the [Vasubandhu⁵⁸] “Commentary on the Ornament of the Mahāyāna-Sūtras⁵⁹”:

As to the close focus of recollection and vigilance,

50. བྱིང་བ་ལྡོམ་མོ་

51. སྲིམ་པ་

52. རྟེན་བརྗེས་གསལ་

53. རྗོད་པ་ which actually has the meaning of “wild”, “untamed” and is much more powerful and concrete than the somewhat emasculated translation “agitation” which is commonly used. The term “wildness” presents also the advantage of suggesting the notion of taming. We have nonetheless retained the commonly-used “agitation” so as not to foster confusion.

54. རྒྱུ་རྩལ་ The choice of the LRCM committee to translate རྒྱུ་རྩལ་ as “to sustain” is debatable. “To protect” and “to sustain” have somewhat different connotations in English. While རྒྱུ་རྩལ་ refers to “mere protection”, “sustaining” also implies an element of enhancement which is totally absent in the meaning of the Tibetan verb.

55. འགོག་པ་

56. དྲན་པ་, Sk. smṛti

57. འཇམ་མཐོག་ལྷོད་པ་, Sk. samprajanya

58. Asanga’s half-brother, who was the foremost Vaibhāṣika scholar of his age before converting to the Mahāyāna under the aegis of Asanga.

59. Mahāyāna-Sūtralāmkāra-bhāṣya

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The first does not [allow] the mind to scatter⁶⁰ from the object of observation, while the second fully understands the mind's scattering

Since, if one forgets the object of observation after recollection has declined, the object of observation will be dispersed, the recollection which does not forget the object of observation is fundamental. The manner of closely focusing that recollection on the object of observation is, as explained previously, after at least visualising the object of observation, while generating a powerful factor of apprehension which apprehends [that] having understood it, having set the mind at a high level, set it without any new analysis.

It is said in [Asanga's] "Compendium of Knowledge"⁶¹ that recollection has three features:

If one enquires about recollection,
It is the mind's non-forgetfulness of a familiar thing,
[And] has the function of thorough non-distraction.

Here, the feature of the object is that "of a familiar thing" since it does not arise with respect to a previously unfamiliar object and, in this context, the appearance of the aspect of a basis of observation which was previously ascertained.

As to the feature of the mode of apprehension⁶², "the mind's non-forgetfulness" is the factor of non-forgetfulness of the mind regarding that object and in this context is not forgetting the basis of observation.

The mode of non-forgetfulness is not said to be the mere capacity to recollect the teachings of the Guru stating: "This object of observation is like this" when either engaging oneself or when another engages it conceptually, but instead not being distracted in the slightest upon remembering at once the object of observation to which the mind is affixed. Through the mere occurrence of distraction recollection is dispersed. Therefore, having placed the mind on the object of observation and thinking: "Thus have I set [my mind] on the object of observation",

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protecting the uninterrupted continuum of the force of that very mind, without thinking anew, is the holy pith of the mode of instruction on recollection. The mind is made not to waver to another object of observation.

Affixing the mind in this way to the object of observation, i.e. taming, is illustrated with the example of the taming of an elephant. For instance, upon tying a wild elephant with numerous stout ropes to an extremely stable pillar or tree-trunk, if it does as the Mahout says, excellent! If it doesn't it is subdued and tamed after being struck over and over again with a sharp hook. The mind is akin to this untamed elephant which has been bound by the rope of recollection to the stable pillar of the formerly explained object of observation. If it cannot stay

60. འཕྲོབ་

61. Abhidharma-samuccaya, translated in French by Walpola Rahula, "Le Compendium de la Super-Doctrine (Abhidharma-samuccaya) d' Asanga", Ecole Française d' Extrême Orient, Paris 1980. An English translation of the French version was published by Sara-Boin Webb: "Abhidharmasamuccaya: The Compendium of the Higher Teaching (Philosophy)", Asian Humanities Press, 2001

62. འཛིན་སྣངས་

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there, subdue it gradually⁶³, drawing blood with the hook of vigilance,. As is said in [Bhāvaviveka's] "Heart of the Madhyamika":

Having bound steadfastly the wrongful elephant of the mind,
To the stable pillar of the object,
With the rope of recollection,
Subdue it gradually with the hook of vigilance.

and in Kamalaśīla's middling "Stage of Meditation":

Bind the elephant of the mind to the trunk of the object of observation
with the ropes of recollection and vigilance.

As it is said that it is in dependence on recollection that concentration is attained and it is said as well that recollection binds the mind to the object of observation continuously, just as a rope, the mode of protection which is foremost in the attainment of concentration is the mode of protection of recollection. Moreover, since recollection has a mode of apprehension endowed with the aspect of certainty⁶⁴, when one protects concentration, while placing the [mind] without a tight mode of apprehension of certainty, even though one may:

i. obtain the factor of clarity of a limpid mind, since

ii. the factor of clarity which arises from the intensity of certainty does not arise,

a forceful recollection will not be generated and since, in addition, subtle sinking will not have been blocked, it will turn into a faulty concentration.

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Since, without placing the mind on another object of observation such as a deity's body and so forth while merely protecting the mind's non-conceptuality and after thinking:

"I will not place non-conceptually the mind on any object!"

making the mind non-distracted and without dispersion is synonymous with a recollection which does not forget an object and is not distracted as well, it does not pass beyond a method of protecting recollection. Hence, such a meditation relies on a recollection which elicits⁶⁵ the force of certainty.

2.2.2.1.2.2.2 Dispelling faulty manners of setting [the mind]

63. ལུང་ལྱིས་ལུང་ལྱིས་

64. དམ་འཛིན་

65. ཐོབ་པ་

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There are wrong conceptions concerning what is to be clarified⁶⁶. If having set non-conceptually, as formerly explained, consciousness at a high level⁶⁷ one concentrates, one will see that although there is no sinking, through great agitation, it will not be possible for the continuous flow of the factor of abiding to occur and in addition, the elevation⁶⁸ of the mind will decrease, while one sees that if the concentration⁶⁹ is greatly loosened, the factor of abiding will swiftly arise. This is a good technique. Thinking in this way, although many say :

“ To great looseness⁷⁰, great meditation !”

This entails not distinguishing between the arising of sinking and the arising of meditation. Therefore, as was explained previously, faultless concentration must have two features and the single factor of non-conceptual mental states is insufficient.

Should one think :

“ Regarding that, if the mind is overcast with dullness⁷¹, that is sinking, otherwise when that is absent, since the mind has the factor of limpid clarity⁷², this is a faultless concentration. ”

This seems to be a case of not differentiating lethargy⁷³ and sinking. These will be explained later. Therefore, if a fiercely concentrated awareness has been made intense, even though the factor of clarity may be present, because of great agitation, the factor of abiding will be hard to generate. On the other hand, when one protects the mind after having greatly loosened it, even though the factor of abiding may be present, through great sinking, the clarity is elicited from intensity will not be present.

Since it is difficult to ascertain the moment to loosen concentration, Candragomin was

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thinking of the difficulty of giving rise to concentration when he wrote⁷⁴ [in the “Praise of Confession”]:

If I rely on exertion, agitation will arise,
If I abandon that, disheartedness⁷⁵ arises
If it is hard to find a balanced engagement which is suitable
for this,
What shall my troubled mind do ?

66. བསམ་པ་བྱུ་

67. འཕང་བརྗོད་ probably mistaken for འཕང་མཐོ་

68. གཞུང་པ་

69. བརྗོད་པ་

70. མྱོད་

71. རྒྱུ་ལྡན་པའི་མཐོང་བའི་འཕྲིབ་པ་ལོ་

72. དྲུང་པའི་གསལ་མཆོ་

73. ལྷུག་པ་

74. Deśanā-stava

75. ལྷུག་པ་

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and :

If I start with exertion, agitation will arise,
Whereas if I loosen that, disheartedness will arise,
If it is hard to practice the mind between these,
What shall my troubled mind do ?

Seeing this, if one abandons exertion and loosens the mind which has started to exert, the sinking which is an inward disheartedness of the mind arises. Therefore, that middle between the two extremes of sinking and agitation, i.e. a mind which dwells equally, is an equal engagement which is “hard to find”. If loosening sharply presented no difficulties in the slightest, since it is said that sinking arises from that, that is not appropriate as a method for practicing concentration. The time for loosening concentration is, when inspecting :

- i. the criterion of thinking : “Were I to heighten the awareness’ level just one iota, agitation would definitely arise.” then, loosen [the mind],
- ii. the criterion of thinking : “Were I just to set it down one iota, sinking would easily arise”, [then tighten the mind]

These are the manners of setting the level [of the mind]. Moreover, Ārya Asanga says in the context of the two first minds⁷⁶:

Setting on that and thoroughly setting on that is to concentrate, i.e. to have attention which engages.

and it is explained as well in the first “Stages of Meditation” that:

To eliminate sinking, you will hold that very object of observation tightly.

If one protects [the mind] without knowing the previously explained manner of relying on recollection, numerous faults such as :

- i. the more meditation one does, the more the factor of forgetfulness increases and
- ii. the wisdom which discriminates sharply the dharma, will dull greatly.

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Now, should one think, when attaching the mind to the object of observation :

76. i.e. the first two of the nine mental states.

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Is it suitable or not for the conception which acts as a sentinel⁷⁷ over whether the object of observation is well apprehended or not to arise?

The necessity thereof is explained in the middle “Stages of Meditation”. In addition, having concentrated, you do not stop observing in that way, but while staying within concentration one just observes whether one is dwelling or not on the root object of observation on which [the mind] was previously placed and if one is not dwelling on it, which of agitation or sinking has occurred. The sentinel should check, after setting oneself in concentration, neither too frequently nor too seldom, but at times. When one does this, while the force of the previous mind has not quite ceased, since it arises within the intensity of that mind, it has the purpose of dwelling longer within that intensity and of recognising swiftly sinking or agitation. Moreover, inasmuch as protecting [the mind] by checking occasionally whether the object of observation is just the one recollected must lead to more powerful recollection as well as must be the cause for the continuous engagement [of the object of observation], this is why the manner of protecting recollection is explained Asanga’s “Grounds of Hearers” and it is said in Sthiramati’s “Commentary on the Separation of the Middle from the Extremes⁷⁸”:

The instruction on setting the mind, “Recollection is not forgetting the object of observation”, is to utter mentally.

Since, relying on recollection is for the sake of blocking forgetting the object of observation after having wavered from the object of observation, not forgetting the object of observation is a mental utterance of the object of observation, i.e. a repeated bringing to mind of the object of observation. For instance, it is similar to someone suspecting that he will forget something he must know, recollecting it again and again making forgetting more difficult.

2.2.2.2.1.2.3 Teaching the duration of sessions.

Now, should one enquire whether or not there is a definite criterion for the duration of the session until which the mind will be affixed to the object of observation by recollection?

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Even though there does not seem to be a clear presentation of the duration of the session in great treatises such as Asanga’s “Grounds of Hearers” and so forth, nonetheless, Kamalaśīla’s final “Stage of Meditation” says:

One should stay in these stages for one hour, one half of a night’s watch, one [meditative] session or as long as one can.”

Although it would seem that this was said in the context of the duration of a session while meditation on special insight after having accomplished **calm abiding**, it is evident that at first, in the context of accomplishing **calm abiding**, the situation is similar.

77. བྱ་རྩེད་པའི་རྩོམ་པ་

78. Madhyānta-vibhāga-tīkā

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Moreover, even though as was explained previously regarding the manner of protecting the recollection and vigilance⁷⁹, there is no fault in either short or long sessions during which one occasionally recollects the object of observation and occasionally checks as a sentinel, nonetheless, should the majority of beginners engage in long sessions, either :

- i. distraction arises after forgetfulness⁸⁰, and at that point, whether it is sinking or agitation which arise, not only will one not know⁸¹ them for a long time, but they will not be identified⁸² swiftly
- ii. although recollection is not forgotten, it is easy to succumb to sinking and agitation and the arising of sinking and agitation is not swiftly recognised.

Since the former two interfere with the generation of a powerful recollection, while the latter two interfere with the generation of powerful vigilance, it is difficult to sever sinking and agitation. In particular, the distraction after having forgotten the object of observation, which is a non-recognition of sinking and agitation having arisen, is far worse than not having recognised swiftly that sinking and agitation have arisen within non-forgetfulness of the object of observation. Therefore, the methods for protecting recollection, the antidotes which block the decay of recollection after distraction, such as those which were explained previously are very important.

If forgetfulness which ensues after distraction is stronger and the vigilance which recognises swiftly sinking and agitation is weak, the sessions must be short. On the other hand, if forgetfulness arises difficultly, and it seems that one is able to recognise sinking and agitation swiftly, there is no fault in the session being slightly longer. It is because of thinking of this lack of fault, that it is said that durations of one hour and so forth are not definite. In brief, because of the necessity of acting in harmony with one’s mental capacity, Kamalaśīla says “ as long as one can⁸³”.

Moreover, stay in meditative equipoise as long as sudden mental or physical harm does not arise,

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should it arise, do not meditate on forcefully, but instead dispel the interference to the constituents. Since this is the intent of scholars regarding meditation, act in this way. This is to be known as a subdivision of the duration of the session.

2.2.2.2.1.3 How to proceed after focusing the mind on the object of observation.

2.2.2.2.1.3.1 What to do when sinking and agitation arise

2.2.2.2.1.3.1.1 Teaching the antidotes for not recognising sinking and agitation

2.2.2.2.1.3.1.1.1 Ascertaining the definitions of sinking and agitation

2.2.2.2.1.3.1.1.2 The means for generating a vigilance which knows them while meditating

79. དཔྱད་ལེས

80. བརྩེས་ངས

81. དོས་ལེས་པ

82. དོས་འཛིན་པ

83. In the quote at the top of the page.

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2.2.2.2.1.3.1.2 Teaching the antidotes for not trying to abandon them although one has recognised them

2.2.2.2.1.3.2 What to do when free of sinking and agitation

2.2.2.2.1.3.1.1.1 Ascertaining the definitions of sinking and agitation

Regarding agitation, Asanga's "Compendium of Ascertainments" says:

Should one enquire what agitation is:
it is a thoroughly non-pacified mind which belongs to the factor of desire and which follows the marks of the beautiful. Its function is to interfere with **calm abiding**.

This has three [features]:

- i. the object is pleasing and beautiful
- ii. the aspect is a mind in a non-pacified aspect and dispersed outwards, i.e. since it is a part of desire, it engages with the aspect of craving for the object.
- iii. the function is to interfere with the mind dwelling on the object of observation.

When the mind is affixed internally to an object of observation, agitation which desires forms, sounds and so on leads the mind powerlessly to those objects and [induces] distraction. As is said in [Candragomin's] "Praise of Confession":

However much one observes **calm abiding**
Focusing the mind over and again on that,
The noose of the afflictions,
Powerlessly draws one away with the rope of desire for objects.

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"Sinking" has been translated as "disheartedness" by many translators⁸⁴. Regarding this, it is insuitable as some assert to say that a lethargic mind which lacks limpid clarity while not dispersing to other objects to be sinking. It is stated in the Kamalaśīla's middle "Stages of

84. There is a very clear distinction between the Sanskrit terms which are translated as ཕྱིད་པ་, "sinking" and ལྷུམ་པ་, "disheartedness". ཕྱིད་པ་ translates the Sanskrit term *magan* which has almost always the sense of physically or metaphorically sinking into an unfortunate state of affairs:

Protect me, I who am protector-less and *sinking* into the mire of cyclic existence. (*from the "Hevajra Tantra"*)

while ལྷུམ་པ་ which frequently translates the Sanskrit term *layah* has the very clear connotation of cowardice and disheartedness in both Sanskrit and Tibetan. The problem arises from the fact that ཕྱིད་པ་ (Sk. *magan*) is actually seldom used in texts dealing with the development of calm abiding, as Je Tsong kha pa points out a bit later.

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Meditation" as well as the "Sutra Commenting on the Intent"⁸⁵ that sinking arise from lethargy⁸⁶, in addition, even though Asanga's "Compendium of Ascertainments" explains sinking in the context of the secondary affliction of distraction, since the distraction explained there also arises as virtue, it is not definitely non-virtuous.

Therefore, lethargy is explained both by Asanga's "Compendium of Ascertainments" and Vasubandhu's "Commentary on the Abhidharmakośa"⁸⁷ as a component of ignorance which renders body and mind heavy and unserviceable⁸⁸. As to sinking, even though the object of observation appears clearly upon loosening the mode of apprehension grasping the mental object of observation, since it is not apprehended tightly, even though the factor of limpidity is present, if the mode of apprehension of the object of observation is unclear, sinking will follow. As is said in Kamalaśīla's middle "Stages of Meditation":

Whenever one is like a blind person, a man sitting in the gloom⁸⁹ or one whose eyes are shut without seeing clearly the mental object of observation, at that time it is correct to say that sinking as arisen.

one does not read in other major treatises clear definitions of sinking.

While sinking has both virtuous and neutral [aspects], lethargy is non-virtuous and obscured and is either neutral [or non-virtuous] and is only a component of benightedness⁹⁰. Since the great treatises assert that one must inspire⁹¹ the mind through meditating on bodies [of the Buddhas] and joyous objects to dispel sinking, after blocking unclear objects which cause the mind to sink in gloom as well as lower mental modes of apprehension, one must have both the clarity of the object of observation and the factor of concentration⁹² on the mode of apprehension.

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While agitation is easy to understand, since sinking is not clearly identified in the great treatises of the Muni which are the sources, it is both difficult to understand and, in addition, important since it is the main issue of contention regarding faultless concentration. Hence, identify it through careful examination in keeping with the explanation in Kamalaśīla's "Stages of Meditation" added to experience accrued with a careful mind.

2.2.2.2.1.3.1.1.2 The means for generating a vigilance which knows them while meditating

It is not sufficient to merely have an understanding of sinking and agitation, one must generate as much as one can a vigilance which knows whether sinking and agitation are present or not during meditation. Moreover, since powerful vigilance is generated gradually, one must definitely

85. Saṃdhanirmocana sūtra

86. ལྷུག་པ་

87. Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya

88. ལམ་ལྷུ་མི་རུང་བ་

89. ལྷུག་པ་

90. བཞི་ལྷུག་

91. བཞེད་ལ་བཞེད་

92. ལྷུག་པ་

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generate a vigilance which identifies the arising of sinking and agitation at once : one must give rise to a vigilance which is aware [of them] just before they arise, when they have not actually arisen, since it is said in Kamalaśīla's latter "Stages of Meditation":

When seeing that the mind is sinking or suspecting sinking . . .

and

Seeing mental agitation or suspecting agitation . . .

Until such a vigilance is not generated, there is no basis for deciding that: "a faultless meditation with neither sinking nor agitation occurred during a given period", since one could not have been certain whether sinking or agitation had occurred. In addition, the quote in Maitreya's "Separation of the Middle from the Extremes":

Realising sinking and agitation . . .

refers to the necessity of a vigilance which realizes sinking and agitation. In that way, if when sinking and agitation arise, a vigilance which does not exclude the ignorance of sinking and agitation is not generated, even should one have meditated for long years, insensitive to sinking and agitation, one will have spent time [affected] by subtle sinking and agitation.

Then, should one think : "How should that vigilance be generated ?"

Regarding that, that method of protecting recollection previously taught, is one of the causes of the greatest importance.

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Since, if one is able to generate such a continuous recollection, it can oppose the occurrence of distraction after forgetting the object of observation, through counteracting long-term insensitivity to the arising of sinking and agitation, making the understanding of sinking and agitation easier. This is very clear if one examines, in terms of experience, the longer or shorter periods of time for:

- i. the awareness of sinking and agitation to occur when recollection has decayed, and
- ii. the awareness of sinking and agitation to occur when recollection has not decayed.

It is thinking about this that Śāntideva says in his "Entry into the Conduct of a Bodhisattva"⁹³:

When through recollection at the mind's door,
One dwells on the object to be protected.

and that Sthiramati's "Commentary on Separation of the Middle from the Extremes" adds:

Recollection is the cause of vigilance.

93. Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra

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After observing the aspect which is apprehended of one cause, either the observation of the aspect of a deity's body which is held or the mere clarity and cognitivity of an experience, from within the recollection which was taught, as previously explained, the mental apprehension standing guard to check whether the mind has dispersed from that object to another or not is to be understood as the crux of the protection of [the mind] by vigilance. In this vein, Śāntideva says in his "Entry into the Conduct of a Bodhisattva":

In brief, only repeatedly examining
The condition of both body and mind,
Is the definition of protecting with vigilance.

Therefore, through this the generation of the vigilance which is aware just before sinking and agitation arises occurs, while through the methods teaching recollection, by preventing the forgetfulness which ensues after distraction, one must differentiate objects well. Having well trained in the previously explained methods of protecting recollection and vigilance, a powerful recollection arises and since vigilance is able to be aware of even subtle sinking and agitation, there is no fault of not identifying the arising of sinking and agitation. However, since:

- i. not relying on trying to oppose these two as soon as they have arisen or
- ii. trying not to accept or
- iii. not applying [the remedies]

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is a great fault of concentration one must meditate on their antidotes, the intention which is called "application or exertion".

2.2.2.1.3.1.2 Teaching the antidotes for not trying to abandon them although one has recognised them

2.2.2.1.3.1.2.1 Upon identifying the intention, the method of countering sinking and agitation.

2.2.2.1.3.1.2.2 In dependence on what one identifies the cause for the arising of sinking and agitation.

2.2.2.1.3.1.2.1 Upon identifying the intention, the method of countering sinking and agitation.

The meaning of the statement in Asanga's "Compendium of Ascertainments":

Should one enquire what intention is: the activity of the mind actualising the mind which has the function of engaging mentally the virtuous, the non-virtuous and the neutral.

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in the self-same way a iron is set involuntarily in motion under the influence of a magnet, since intention is the mental factor of motivation⁹⁴ which is moved by virtuous, non-virtuous and neutral minds, here it is to be understood as the mind which mentally establishes the abandonment of sinking and agitation, should they arise.

Now, should one enquire what sorts of methods of obstructing sinking and agitation there might be? Since a sinking mind is one which has lost the mode of apprehension of the object of observation through excessively withdrawing inwards, to [obviate] that one takes to mind⁹⁵ to objects one enjoyment as a cause of outwards dispersion. Moreover, this should be something like a body of the Buddha, not something which gives rise to afflictions. Alternatively, taking to mind instances of clarity, appearances such as the light of the sun and so forth, and when sinking is dispelled, at once, as is said in Kamalaśīla's first "Stages of Meditation" protect by tightening the mode of apprehension of the object of observation. Here, one should not meditate on saddening objects of observation since sadness is a cause of inner withdrawal of the mind. Delighting upon having examined using the wisdom of analytical meditation whichever object of investigation one wishes is also a counterforce to sinking. As is said in Āryaśūta's "Summary of Perfections"⁹⁶:

By the power of the force of striving for special insight,
Should one become faint-hearted, inspire [the mind].

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Regarding such sinking and faintheartedness, since a drop in the level⁹⁷ of the mode of apprehension of the object of observation is sinking while extreme inner withdrawal is disheartedness, elevating the mode of apprehension and rejoicing upon generating a larger object of observation [both] counter it. As is said in Bhāvaviveka's "Heart of the Madhyamaka":

The faint-hearted through meditating on a vast object,
Become expansive.

and

The faint-hearted also, through seeing the benefits of enthusiasm,
Are inspired.

The most important antidote obstructing sinking is, upon reflecting on the qualities of the Triple Gem, the benefits of Bodhicitta, and the meaningfulness of obtaining the leisure [of a precious human rebirth], in the self-same way as when cold water is thrown on a sleeper's face, his mind becomes vividly clear, it must [generate] fortitude⁹⁸. This depends on the arising of experience through specific analytical meditation of the beneficial aspects.

If one relies upon meditated antidote to the appearances of the underlying causes which give rise to sinking which are in the aspect of gloominess, sleepiness as well as gloomy minds inducing those two, in addition, the sinking depending on those will not arise and its arising will

94. བསྐྱམ་བཤ

95. ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ

96. Pāramitā samāsa nāma

97. འཕམ

98. འགྲོ་ལྷན་པ

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be counteracted. Regarding this, Asanga's "Grounds of Hearers" explains activities such as, going for walks, repeatedly familiarising oneself with the characteristics of bright objects after bringing them to mind, as well as inspiring the mind through any of the six recollections: the Triple Gem, ethics, giving, a deity⁹⁹ or other pure objects of observation as well as reciting Dharmas teaching the faults of lethargy and sleepiness, staring in the four directions and at the moon and stars, washing one's face with water and so forth.

In addition, if sinking is very superficial and infrequent, meditate having concentrated the mode of mental apprehension, however, if sinking is profound and occurs over and again, cease meditating, dispel the sinking with whichever antidote it is suitable to rely upon and meditate.

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If either a superficial or a profound aspect of mental gloominess which lacks clarity regarding whichever object of observation has been apprehended by the mind arises, generate great mental clarity and limpidity by becoming accustomed over and again to apprehending the characteristics of luminosity such as butter-lamps or the sunlight.

Since agitation is the minds running after objects such as forms or sounds under the sway of desire, bring to mind things which [foster] renunciation¹⁰⁰ and are causes for drawing the mind inwards. As soon as agitation has been pacified, settle in meditative equipoise. As is said in Bhāvaviveka's "Heart of the Madhyamaka":

Pacify agitation through applying the mind
To impermanence and so forth.

and:

Withdraw from distraction
Through seeing the faults of the characteristics of distraction.

If powerful or long-lasting agitation arises, loosen for a while the meditation and engage in the key-practice of meditating on despondency¹⁰¹ and do not hook the scattered mind and place it [on the object of observation]. When agitation is less substantial, after hooking the scattered [mind] attach it to the object of observation, since it is said in Āryaśūta's "Summary of the Perfections":

When the mind which has become wild,
Revert [this] through calm abiding.

inasmuch as a wild mind must not be applied to a a delightful object, since this is a cause for outward distraction.

2.2.2.2.1.3.1.2.2 In dependence on what one identifies the cause for the arising of sinking and agitation.

99. Which add up to six, if one counts each of the Triple Gems individually.

100. ཡིད་བྱུང

101. རྫོག་པ

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The shared cause of sinking and agitation is not protecting the doors of the senses, not eating with measure, not striving at not sleeping during the earlier and later watches of the night, as well as dwelling without vigilance. In addition, the causes of sinking are : sleeping greatly, relaxing excessively the apprehension of the mental object of observation,

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relying excessively on calm abiding and not relying equally on calm abiding and special insight., keeping the mind in gloominess and not delighting in focusing on the object of observation.

The causes of agitation are explained to be little despondency, excessively tightening the mind on the object of observation, not having become accustomed to exertion, great mental distraction through involvement with relatives.

Therefore, even though the subtlest factors of sinking and agitation are known by vigilance, because of having to obstruct them all, [some] may give up thinking:

“Even though I have severed agitation and distraction from the very beginning, since they do not remain severed, I will not longer sever them !”

and those who think :

“I do not need to sever them since they are not strung¹⁰² together in a powerful and durable continuum, and since they are weak and short in duration, I will not accumulate karma.”

do not understand how to establish pure concentration.

Therefore, when the mind is patchy from sinking and agitation, having attached [the mind] to the interior object of observation, seek the factor of stability; upon the arising of the factor of stability, be wary of sinking and issue forth an intense clarity. Having made these two harmonious, a faultless concentration will have been accomplished, however, do not settle the mind on a mere limpidity which lacks the intense factor of clarity of the mode of apprehension.

2.2.2.2.1.3.2 What to do when free of sinking and agitation

As formerly explained, upon severing subtle sinking and agitation, when, through meditation, the mind has entered a state of equanimity bereft of the imbalance which occurs when either sinking or agitation arise, applying [the antidotes] or exertion are faults of concentration. Therefore, meditate on their antidote, equanimity.

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The manner in which application or exertion become faults is when, upon having gained confidence that sinking and agitation will not occur during a given session through meditation on turning the mind inwards [if agitation occurs] and inspiring [the mind] if sinking occurs, at the very beginning having great wariness of sinking and wariness, one protects [the mind]. Since distraction will occur if one acts in this way, one must know how to loosen the mind at that point. Nonetheless, even though one loosens exertion, one does not give up the intensity of the mode of apprehension. Hence, meditation on equanimity is not applied on all occasions when

102. Literally : “do not follow each other as lambs [to the slaughter]”

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sinking and agitation have not arisen, but only after the climax¹⁰³, since when the climax of sinking and agitation is not past, there is no equanimity.

What then is that equanimity ? It is the last from within the feeling of equanimity, immeasurable equanimity and the equanimity of application¹⁰⁴. Its nature is stated in Asanga’s “Grounds of Hearers” to be :

It is explained to be the attainment of a mental evenness¹⁰⁵, of calmness¹⁰⁶, of entry inside oneself¹⁰⁷, of functionality¹⁰⁸ and upon attaining such an equanimity, when one meditates on concentration, at a time when neither sinking nor agitation arise, having made that equanimity manifest, one sets [the mind] without fierce exertion.

These are explained in Maitreya’s “Separation of the Middle from the Extremes”:

Functionality in that state,
Leads to all goals
Abandoning the five faults [with] the eight applications,
It arises from the causes taught.

I assert laziness and forgetting the instruction,
Sinking and agitation
Non-application and [intemperate] application,
As the five faults.

Dwelling and what dwells,
Cause and effect,
Not having forgotten the object,
Recognising sinking and agitation,
The actual application to abandon those.
When [they are] pacified, entering into calmness.

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In that quote, **that state**¹⁰⁹ is **that state** of the beginning of an enthusiasm striving to dispel discordant situations from which the concentration of a functional mind arises. Moreover since it is the **the state** of the limbs of miraculous emanation which fulfil all **goals** such as the attaining the clairvoyances and so forth, it **leads to all goals**. Such a concentration **arises from the causes taught abandoning the five faults [with] the eight applications**. The five faults are:

- i. while practicing, the fault of **laziness**, since it does not connect to concentration,

103. དཔལ་ཚོགས་པ

104. Elegantly translated by J. Hopkins as “desisting from application”.

105. སེམས་མཉམ་པ་ཉིད

106. རྣམ་དུ་འབབ་པ

107. རང་གི་ངང་གིས་འཇུག་པ

108. ལས་སྤྱ་རླུང་བ

109. Here as usual, terms in bold characters are individual terms from a previous quote which are being explained.

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ii. while striving at concentration, the fault of **forgetting the instruction**, since there is no meditative equipoise of the mind on the object once the object has been forgotten.

iii. while in meditative equipoise, the faults of **sinking and agitation**, since those two make the mind non-functional,

iv. when sinking and agitation have arisen, the fault of non-exertion¹¹⁰, since there will be no pacification of those two¹¹¹,

v. when free of sinking and agitation, the fault of attention.

If sinking and agitation are counted as one, this makes five, however, it is also said that there are six, differentiating them in keeping with Kamalaśīla's "Stages of Meditation". The eight applications which are the antidotes abandoning those are :

the four antidotes to laziness : trust¹¹², aspiration, seeking and pliancy,

followed by the antidotes to:

- i. forgetfulness,
- ii. sinking and agitation,
- iii. non-application and
- iv. [intemperate] application

which are respectively:

- i. recollection
- ii. vigilance
- iii. mental-application
- iv. an equanimity set on calmness

which were previously explained. Since this is shared by all instructions on protecting single-pointed concentration by freeing it from sinking and agitation, through recollection and vigilance, one should not think: "Although these are teachings which act as the door to the Vehicle of Definitions¹¹³, they are unnecessary for Mantra", since they are explained in numerous sets of Highest Yoga Tantras.

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2.2.2.2.2 In dependence on that, the stages of generation of mental abiding

2.2.2.2.2.1 The actual levels of generation of mental abiding.

2.2.2.2.2.1.1 Mental placement

2.2.2.2.2.1.2 Continuous placement

2.2.2.2.2.1.3 Repeated placement

110. Synonymous with non-application.

111. i.e. sinking and agitation.

112. ५५५

113. i.e. the Pāramitāyāna

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2.2.2.2.2.1.4 Close placement

2.2.2.2.2.1.5 Subduing

2.2.2.2.2.1.6 Pacification

2.2.2.2.2.1.7 Thorough pacification

2.2.2.2.2.1.8 Single-pointed concentration

2.2.2.2.2.1.9 Meditative equipoise

2.2.2.2.2.2 The method of actualising those by the 6 forces

2.2.2.2.2.3 The manner in which they have the 4 attentions.

2.2.2.2.2.1 The actual levels of generation of mental abiding.

2.2.2.2.2.1.1 Mental placement

Mental placement is to gather in the mind from all external objects of observation and to focus it on an interior objects of observation. As is said in Maitreya's "Ornament of the Mahāyāna-Sūtras":

After focusing the mind on the object . . .

2.2.2.2.2.1.2 Continuous placement

Continuous placement is a continuous placement on that object of observation in which that initially focused mind is not distracted towards other [objects]¹¹⁴:

Continually do not be distracted.

2.2.2.2.2.1.3 repeated placement

Upon knowing that distraction to the exterior has occurred through forgetfulness affix the mind again on the object of observation:

Having quickly understood distraction,
Patch it again on that.

2.2.2.2.2.1.4 Close placement

As is explained in Ratnākaraśānti "Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom": withdrawing the mind over and again from its natural expansiveness, after having made it subtle, again and again place it. This is in keeping with the statement:

The intelligent over and again,
Withdraw the mind inwards.

2.2.2.2.2.1.5 Subduing

Upon having thought of the qualities of concentration, [give rise] to delight in concentration:

Then, by seeing the qualities,
The mind is subdued in concentration.

114. Unless otherwise mentioned, all these quotes are from Maitreya's "Ornament of the Mahāyāna-Sūtras"

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2.2.2.2.1.6 Pacification

Having seen the defects of distraction, pacify dislike for concentration:

Through seeing the faults of distraction,
I will pacify dislike for that.

2.2.2.2.1.7 Thorough pacification

The through pacification of the occurrence of desirous minds, unhappiness¹¹⁵, lethargy, sleepiness and so forth:

The arising of desirous minds, unhappiness and so forth
I will pacify thus.

2.2.2.2.1.8 Single-pointed concentration

Striving for effortless striving:

Then, those who are tamed and enthusiastic,
Actually apply to the mind,
And attain dwelling within.

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2.2.2.2.1.9 Meditative equipoise

While Kamalaśīla's "Stages of Meditation" says that when the mind is in meditative equipoise it is engaged in equanimity, Ratnākaraśānti "Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom" teaches that through becoming meditating continually it enters spontaneously within itself and gains its own power. Likewise:

"Through familiarity, there is no application".

The names of the nine mental levels I have quoted in keeping with Kamalaśīla's first "Stages of Meditation":

This path of calm abiding will be explained relying upon the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and so forth.

2.2.2.2.2 The method of actualising those by the 6 forces

The six forces are : the forces of hearing, thinking, recollecting, vigilance, enthusiasm and thorough familiarity¹¹⁶. The manner in which they establish a given mind :

115. ཡིད་མི་བདེ

116. ཡོངས་སུ་འདྲིས་པ

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i. The force of hearing will establish mental placement, since it is through merely following the instructions heard from another that, initially, [the mind] is affixed to the object and not through one's own self becoming accustomed [to it] through repeated reflection.

ii. The force of thinking will establish continuous mental placement, since the initial attainment of the capacity to extend the continuum [of concentration] a little bit arises through initially having protected [the mind] by having repeatedly reflected on the continual affixing [of the mind] to the object of observation.

iii. The force of recollection will establish both patchy mental placement and close mental placement, since:

- when distraction through moving away from the object of observation occurs, by recollecting the former object of observation, the mind is withdrawn within and
- the generation of the force of recollection from the very beginning will not allow the mind to be distracted from the object of observation.

iv. The force of vigilance will establish both the subduing mind and the pacifying mind, since vigilance, upon knowing the faults of mental scattering to the fancies and the characteristics of the secondary afflictions as faults, will not allow scattering to those two.

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v. The force of enthusiasm will establish the minds of through pacification and single-pointedness, since should even the slightest fancy or secondary affliction arise, through abandoning it with exertion, it will not be accepted and, having acted in this manner, a continuous concentration which cannot be interrupted by sinking and agitation will be established.

vi. The force of familiarity will establish the mind of meditative equipoise, since it gives rise to a concentration which enters effortlessly within by the power of great familiarity with the former ones.

Since these are in keeping with the import of Asanga's "Grounds of Hearers", do not rely on other ones.

Regarding this, the attainment of the 9th mental level is similar to, for instance, when one is highly familiar with the recitation of treatises and so forth: after the initial motivation to recite has been generated, when one recites, even if at times the mind is distracted elsewhere, this does not interrupt the recitation which continues effortlessly. Likewise, upon placing the mind in meditative equipoise initially, once, with a recollection focused on the object of observation, after that, even if one doesn't rely continually on recollection and vigilance, that concentration, without being scattered, will be able to engage for long and continually [its object of observation]. If recollection and vigilance are continuous, since effort in relying on them is unnecessary, it is said to be without actual application¹¹⁷ or effortless.

To give rise to this, upon relying previously on exertion in recollection and vigilance, one must generate a concentration which is able to last for a long session without being interrupted

117. མངོན་པར་འདྲེན་པ

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by discordant factors¹¹⁸ such as sinking and agitation, which is none other than the 8th level of mind. This 8th level and the 9th are similar in that they cannot be interrupted by discordant factors to concentration such as sinking , agitation and so forth.

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Since here one must rely on uninterrupted recollection and vigilance, it is said to be accompanied with actual application or exertion. Since, to generate this it is necessary to prevent the acceptance of even the slightest arising of sinking and agitation, the 7th level is necessary. Since to generate that, upon understanding distraction by fancies and secondary delusions to be a fault, a forceful vigilance which stands guard against scattering towards those is necessary, both the 5th and the 6th level of mind are needed, since those two levels of mind will have established the the strength of vigilance. Moreover, to give rise to those, since both:

- a. the recollection which swiftly remembers the object of observation should one be distracted from the object of observation and
- b. the recollection which, from the very inception, is not distracted from the object of observation are necessary,

the 3rd and 4th level of mind are needed, inasmuch as these two establish recollection.

To give rise to that, since initially the mind must be tied to the object of observation and must not be distracted from that continuum of having been tied, the first two levels of mind must be previously generated.

In brief, in keeping with the instructions which have been heard, practice well the mode of setting the mind in equipoise, then having reflected over and again on that [setting in meditative equipoise], protect continuity through connecting as much as one can the continuum [of concentration], then if distraction occurs through the decline in recollection, gather the mind inwards quickly and recollect swiftly the forgotten object of observation and in addition, after that, generate a forceful recollection. Then, generate a forceful recollection which is not distracted from the object of observation from the very beginning. Having established strong recollection, give rise to a fierce vigilance which stands guard through seeing the defects of sinking and agitation which distract away from the object of observation. Then, should one be distracted by subtle forgetfulness, again, after becoming instantaneously aware of this, sever its continuum and, after severing it, give rise to the force of exertion which extends the continuum [of concentration] uninterrupted by the discordant factors as far as possible.

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When generating that, one will establish an effortlessly the 9th level of mind which becomes a concentration after having come into the habit of meditating with effort. Therefore, although before attaining the 9th level of mind, yogis must exert effort towards setting the mind in concentration and after attaining the 9th level, there is no exertion to set the mind in equipoise, instead the mind enters into complete concentration. Nonetheless, even though one has obtained this 9th level of mind, should one have not obtained pliancy, as explained further on, if one has at present not obtained calm abiding, how much less can one have obtained special insight ?

118. རི་མཐུན་ཕྱོགས

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2.2.2.2.3 The manner in which they have the 4 attentions.

As is said in Asanga's "Grounds of Hearers":

Should one set out the explanation of the existence of the 4 attentions¹¹⁹ within the 9 mental levels: at the time of the first two levels of mind, since one must concentrate¹²⁰ with effort, one designates [this as] the attention which engages through having concentrated¹²¹. Then, at the time of the 5th mental level, since one is unable to protect [the mind] during a long session¹²² because of interruptions from sinking and agitation, one designates [this as] the attention of occasionally interrupted engagement¹²³. Then on the 8th level, since one is able to protect [the mind] for a long session without being interrupted by sinking or agitation, one designates [this as] non-occasionally interrupted engagement¹²⁴. On the 9th level, since not only not only is [the flow of concentration] uninterrupted, but in addition one does not need to rely on exertion, one designates [this as] the attention which enters without exertion¹²⁵.

Then, should someone enquire why:

- i. while during the first two levels of mind, there is interrupted engagement and
- ii. during the 5 intermediate levels of mind, concentration is also necessary,

and yet:

- i. during the first two levels of mind the existence of an attention which engages interruptedly is not taught and
- ii. during the middling 5 levels the existence of an attention engaging through having concentrated is also not taught.

[Answer:]

During the first two levels of mind, from within the two minds entering concentration and not entering concentration, the latter is longer while, since during the 5 intermediate levels dwelling in concentration is much longer, the latter is given the designation of interrupted concentration and the former not.

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119. ཡིད་བྱེད

120. ལྷོམ

121. བསྐྱེལ་ཏེ་འཇུག་པའི་ཡིད་བྱེད།

122. Or "period of time".

123. སྐབས་སུ་ཆད་ཅིང་འཇུག་པའི་ཡིད་བྱེད།

124. སྐབས་སུ་ཆད་པ་མེད་པར་འཇུག་པའི་ཡིད་བྱེད།

125. ཚོལ་བ་མེད་པར་འཇུག་པའི་ཡིད་བྱེད།

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Hence, even though these two are similar in having engagement through having concentrated, since they are not dissimilar regarding having engagement with occasional interruption or not, those 5 [intermediate] levels of mind have not been designated as “attentions having engagement through having concentrated”.

One must have practiced in keeping with the quote from Āryaśura’s “Summary of the Perfections”:

Put effort in attaining dhyāna
By means of uninterrupted yoga.
If one rests from rubbing over and again,
There will be no fire¹²⁶;
It is similar for the manner of [practicing] yoga !

3. The criterion of attaining calm abiding through having meditated.

3.1 Teaching the limit between not having attained calm abiding and having attained calm abiding.

3.1.1 Teaching the actual topic

3.1.1.1 Teaching the obtention or non-obtention of calm abiding in dependence on whether the completion of pliancy has been obtained or not.

3.1.1.2 Teaching the manner of realising calm abiding after having obtained the completion of pliancy.

3.1.2 Eliminating doubts regarding the signs of having the attentions, etc.

3.2 Teaching generally the manner of progressing on the path after having attained calm abiding.

3.3 Specifically teaching the manner of progressing on the mundane path.

3.1.1.1 Teaching the obtention or non-obtention of calm abiding in dependence on whether the completion of pliancy has been obtained or not.

Should one wonder whether having obtained a concentration which:

- i. can protect [the mind] for long without the subtle sinking and agitation of the 9th level of mind, as explained previously, and
- ii. which, in addition, without depending on the effort which relies continually on recollection and vigilance, enters spontaneously [into its object of observation]

is the attainment of calm abiding or not.

[Answer:]

126. i.e. one must rub the fire sticks uninterruptedly until the small spark which will set fire to the kindling is generated.

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Since the existence or not of the attainment of this¹²⁷ concentration hinges on whether pliancy has been obtained or not, if one has not obtained pliancy, although [the concentration] is concordant with calm abiding, it is not actual calm abiding. As is said in the “Sutra Commenting on the Intent”:

Bhagavan, for so long as that Bodhisattva places his mind in the mind which is observing , without having obtained physical¹²⁸ and mental pliancy, for so long what is that called ?

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Maitreya ! That is not calm abiding. It is to be called a wish¹²⁹ which is concordant¹³⁰ with calm abiding and similar¹³¹ to it.

and in Maitreya’s “Ornament of the Mahāyāna-Sūtras”:

Non-application after habituation to that,
Then, after that, upon obtaining in that body and mind
Great pliancy, one is said to be “one with attention”.

here “attention” is calm abiding. Also in Kamalaśīla’s middling “Stages of Meditation” puts this clearly:

In that way, having trained in calm abiding, when one’s body and mind have become pliant at whichever period and the mind has become powerful regarding whichever object of observation it wishes, at that point one is to be known as having attained calm abiding.

Also Ratnākaraśānti’s “Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom” states as well:

Here, a Bodhisattva alone, dwelling in solitude and so forth, should set attention on the object thought about. After abandoning mental discursiveness¹³², place attention many times on the appearance of that very mind in that way. For as long as physical and mental pliancy have not arisen, it is an attention which is concordant with calm abiding.

Should one enquire : “Now then, which ground is that concentration prior to the generation of pliancy included within ?” It is included within the ground of desire. Although it has that sort of mental single-pointedness, it is a ground of non-meditative equipoise and is not designated as a ground of meditative equipoise: it is explained as the actual ground because not having been established by remorselessness, delight, supreme bliss and pliancy.

127. i.e. calm abiding. The demonstrative article འདི is critical here.

128. Emending ལྷགས to ལྷས

129. མོས་པ

130. རྗེས་མཐུན

131. མཚུངས་པར་ལྡན་པ

132. ཡིད་ཀྱི་བརྗོད་པ

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Likewise, if one has not obtained pliancy, although one doesn't rely one continuous recollection the mind becomes non-conceptual by its own force and, in addition, it can be blended with all the activities of going, walking, sleeping and staying put.

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Although this semblance of concentration¹³³ is called a “single-pointed mind”, it is not an actual calm abiding.

3.1.1.2 Teaching the manner of realising calm abiding after having obtained the completion of pliancy.

Should one enquire : “Now then, what are the methods to obtain pliancy and, after obtaining it, how does one proceed to calm abiding ?”

Here, pliancy, in keeping with Asanga's “Compendium of Knowledge” is said:

Should one ask what pliancy is, it is that very serviceability of body and mind for the sake of severing the continuum of the assumption of bad physical and mental states¹³⁴ which has the activity of dispelling all the obscurations.

The assumption of bad physical and mental states is the body and the mind's unsuitability to be put to work to whatever virtuous deeds one wishes. Their antidotes, physical and mental pliancy, since they are bereft of **the assumption of bad physical and mental states** are highly suitable to the body and mind being put to work to virtuous deeds. In addition, when one abandons the afflictions, it interferes with delight and when one exerts oneself towards the abandonment of the afflictions and the assumption of bad physical and mental states which are in the category of the afflictions, after being freed of physical unserviceability, such as physical heaviness and so forth, the occurrence of lightness is physical serviceability. Likewise, the assumption of bad physical and mental states which are in the category of afflictions destroy joy in the abandonment of afflictions, and when one exerts oneself in abandoning the afflictions, since one is free from not serviceably engaging into the nine joys which are focused on the virtuous objects mental observation, that unobstructed engagement into mental objects of observation is mental serviceability.

In this vein, in addition, Master Sthiramati states in his “Commentary on [Vasubandhu's] “Thirty”“:

As to that, physical serviceability will arise from a buoyant lightness regarding the actions of one's own body,

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While mental serviceability is the cause which gives rises to mental lightness and happiness which engages attention perfectly. Since one can engage without obstruction the object of observation when one has that other phenomenon¹³⁵ which has arisen from the mind, it is called “mental serviceability”.

133. ལྷན་སྤྱོད་བཞི་ཉིད་དེ་འཛོམས་

134. ལུས་དང་སེམས་ཀྱི་ལས་དན་ལེན་

135. i.e. mental serviceability

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In brief, when one obtains pliancy, even if one strives to abandon the afflictions, upon having reverted the physical and mental unserviceability, which is loathe to start and similar to starting work with ill will, the mind becomes extremely workable and blissful. Since this thorough and complete serviceability of body and mind arises from the attainment of the beginning of concentration as a subtle factor, upon increasing ever more, it will become the calm abiding which is single-pointed and pliant. In addition, it is said in Asanga's “Grounds of Hearers” that at first, because of its subtlety, it is difficult to know, but later it becomes easier to know. The portent¹³⁶ of the arising of that pliancy which is both fully-characterised and easy to discern is the appearance of the thought that the brain of the person who is exerting himself ar meditating on concentration feels heavy and inanimate¹³⁷. This is not an unpleasant heaviness. As soon as this arises, one is freed from the assumption of the bad mental states which interfere with delight in abandoning the afflictions and the former mental pliancy which is their antidote arises. As is said in Asanga's “Grounds of Hearers”:

As a portent of the generation of a durable, unobstructed mental and physical pliancy, of an easily discerned single-pointed mind and of the degree of that attainment, his brain will appear to be heavy. This is not a harmful characteristic. As soon as this occurs, whatsoever assumption of bad mental states in the category of the afflictions¹³⁸ which interferes with delight in the abandonment [of the afflictions], will be abandoned. It's antidote, mental serviceability and mental pliancy will also be generated.

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Then, in dependence on the power of the arising of that pliancy of mental serviceability, an energy¹³⁹ which is the cause of the arising of physical pliancy will course through the body. When that energy has coursed through the parts of the body, one becomes free of the assumption of bad physical states and the antidote to the assumption of bad physical states, physical pliancy, arises. Moreover, after spreading through the whole body, it seems as if it is filled with the power of the energy of serviceability. As is said in Asanga's “Grounds of Hearers”:

Through the generation of that [mental pliancy], energies of the great elements which are compatible with the arising of physical pliancy will course through the body. During those coursings, one is freed from whatever assumption of bad physical states in the category of the afflictions which interferes with delighting in abandonments¹⁴⁰ and it will seem that it's antidote, physical pliancy, spreads through all the body and fills it.

Regarding that, although physical pliancy is a strong pleasant sensation within the body, it is not a mental factor. Master Sthiramati states in his “Commentary on [Vasubandhu's] “Thirty”“:

136. ལྷ་ལྷས་

137. ལྷི་ལེམ་པ་

138. ཉེན་མོངས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་འགྱུར་པ།

139. ལྷུང་ actually means “wind”.

140. of the afflictions.

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If one has apprehended a physical sensation which has the feature of delight, that is to be known as physical pliancy. Since it is said in a Sūtra : “If the mind is delighted, the body will become pliant.”¹⁴¹

Moreover, the first time physical pliancy is generated, a great experience of physical bliss arises in dependence on the power of the energies, the mind depending on that will also undergo a great experience of bliss and delight.

After this, the initial force with which pliancy arose will progressively decrease. This is not an occurrence of a dearth of pliancy, but more after that coarse [pliancy] which greatly moved the mind has ceased, a pliancy which is as subtle as a shadow¹⁴¹ and is concordant with concentration will arise. The mental delight also fades progressively, and after that has ceased, the mind will dwell stably on its object of observation and a calm abiding which is free from disruption by the turbulence of great delight is obtained.

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As is said in Asanga’s “Grounds of Hearers”:

At first, when that is generated, there will appear a mental delight, a mind experiencing extreme bliss, a supreme mental delight which actually delights in the object of observation. That initial force of pliancy, will later incrementally become very subtle¹⁴² and the body will acquire an shadow-like pliancy. Whatever is that mental delight will be abandoned as well and the mind will engage the object of observation by calm abiding, with both the aspects of thorough reliance and extreme pacification.

3.1.2 Eliminating doubts regarding the signs of having the attentions, etc.

3.1.2.1 The actual signs of having the attentions

3.1.2.2 Explaining the elimination of doubts.

3.1.2.1 The actual signs of having the attentions

It is said in Asanga’s “Grounds of Hearers” that the signs which are to be known [as indicating] own and other’s having attained the attentions are that :

- i. such an attainment is a mind included within the ground of form, endowed with physical and mental pliancy and is a mind which has attained the lesser of the four single-pointednesses
- ii. it has the capacity to purify the afflictions by a path which has the aspect of a truth or the aspect of pacification and coarseness

141. སྒྲིབ་མ་ལྟར་སྤང་བའི་འོད་སྤོང་།

142. Unfortunately, the translation of “The Great Stages of the Path”, vol. 3, pp.84 misreads badly this passage translating “the force of pliancy that first arose slowly becomes very refined” not appreciating that the verb in this sentence, འབྱུང་བ་ “to arise”, is in the future and not the past tense. A natural reading of ལྷན་ལྷན་ཀྱིས་འོད་སྤོང་ལྟར་འབྱུང་། is quite simply: “[the force force of pliancy] . . .will become incrementally very subtle”.

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iii. upon placing in interior meditative equipoise, both boily and mental pliancy arise very swiftly

iv. a majority of the the five obscurations such as sleep and desirous aspirations will not occur¹⁴³.

v. upon rising from meditative equipoise, one is still endowed with the joy of physical and mental pliancy.

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Upon obtaining an attention which has those signs, it will be easy for it to become a pure path of calm abiding. Since both physical and mental pliancy can be swiftly induced at the end of a meditative equipoise which is the calm abiding of a single-pointed mind, calm abiding will increase and it is explained in Asanga’s “Grounds of the Hearers” that, inasmuch as by however much pliancy increases, by just so much will calm abiding increase, they are mutually enhancing. In brief, when the mind is serviceable, the energies will become serviceable and, then, a specific physical pliancy will arise. If that arises, a specific concentration will have been generated and since that, in turn, establishes specific serviceable energies, it will induce physical and mental pliancy.

In addition, it is said in Asanga’s “Grounds of the Hearers” :

Not turning towards all the characteristics, for the sake of not being totally distracted, and focusing closely from the very inception will create neither recollection nor attention.

and it is explained that should one have become accustomed when setting the mind single-pointedly at the very beginning to not setting recollection and attention on anything else, as is said in Asanga’s “Grounds of the Hearers” regarding the method of giving rise to concentration:

You must definitely closely focus single-pointedly and through incrementally focusing closer on the calm abiding inside the mind turn all the mental continua¹⁴⁴ and flow¹⁴⁵ into characterless-ness¹⁴⁶, non-discursiveness, a close pacification. You will focus the mind in this way. When obtaining the mind of calm abiding in this way, if because of the faults of forgetfulness and non-habituation¹⁴⁷, characteristics, fancies, and secondary afflictions appear, shut the door. If you turn [them] into the object of observation, the observation of their arising, will have set one under the sway of seeing the previous afflictions. Extinguish recollection and attention towards them. By such non-recollection and non-attention, the aspects of that object of observation disintegrate and, when they are

143. This passage has been interpreted in the light of the edition of *Lam rim chen mo* in ལམ་རིམ་ཆེན་མོ་མཚན་པའི་སྒྲུབ་པ་ “The four-fold interwoven commentary on the Great Stages of the Path”, vol. 2, pp. 96 ss., Tehor Tenzhug Committee, Dharamsala, 2005

144. ལྷན་ལྷན་

145. ལྷན་ལྷན་ synonymous with ལྷན་ལྷན་ but with the additional sense of the “running flow”.

146. མཚན་མ་མེད་པ་

147. མ་གོ་མས་པ་

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dispelled, you will engage in close placement on that very lack of appearance. Such is worthy.

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Since this object of observation is both subtle and hard to realise, one should give rise to fierce effort and aspirations to realise it.

Here, by stating **you will** the method of generating incrementally the three, characterless-ness and so forth¹⁴⁸ is taught through having protected as formerly. Then by stating **extinguish** one explains that, even though one calm abiding has been attained, through not having great habituation to that, should characteristics and so forth have appeared to the mind and should the mind have recollected the faults it fell under the sway of, without thinking at all about following those, one should set [the mind]. Then by stating **one should give rise** one explains that through having become habituated in that way, whatever of the three characteristics and so forth may have arisen, without relying on the intended focus by the force of a habituation which does not think about that at all, having pacified oneself, dwelling in the non-appearance of those three, one should not be entranced¹⁴⁹ by them. The remainder is both subtle, in the context of calm abiding, and difficult to explain.

Here characteristics are explained as the characteristics of the five objects [of the senses], the three poisons¹⁵⁰ and the ten characteristics of women. The mode of extinguishing them is, initially as far as the appearance of various characteristics of the objects such as form and so forth, as soon as they have appeared to lead them to their own peace and purity¹⁵¹, and finally, when dwelling in meditative equipoise, without the characteristics of form, sound and so forth appearing, for the aspect of awareness, clarity and ease¹⁵² of the mind to appear exclusively.

Then, regarding the method of by which conceptuality will be extinguished, as formerly, having placed oneself in a state free of recollection and attention, whatever discursiveness arises is led to its own pacification without being able to link to greater elaboration, in the self same way as a bubble of water has arisen from water.

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Then having protected as previously, that appearance of experience as awareness and bliss as bliss is not specifically blocked, but as soon as it has arisen, it is led to its own peace and purity without tolerating a focus in the self same way as bark is incinerated.

At that time, when in meditative equipoise, no appearance of one's body, etc appears at all and the mind appears¹⁵³ as if it were inseparable from space. When one arise from that, the body appears suddenly. Even though during the subsequent period¹⁵⁴, the fancies of the afflictions such as hatred and so on do arise, their force is incomparably weaker than previously and they cannot link into a great flow.

In these contexts, one refers to “close pacification” since:

148. i.e. characterless-ness, non-discursiveness and close pacification

149. ལྲོག་པ་ literally “plundered”. Tibetan, as a language, is fond of brutal military metaphors.

150. Desire, anger and ignorance.

151. རང་གི་རང་དག་ཏུ་འགོ་

152. བདེ་མེད་དེ་བ

153. ཉམས་འཚར་

154. རྗེས་ཚེ་

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i. the experience of greater clarity leads one to think that one could count the subtle-most atoms of the wall and pillars of the house and

ii. through the deepening of the factor of stability, means that even when sleeping, one does not sleep as before that attainment of concentration, but instead will think that it is blended with concentration and many pure appearances will occur in the dream state.

3.1.2.2 Explaining the elimination of doubts.

One might wonder on what path one is if one obtains a concentration similar to that explained previously? Although having ascertained the view of selflessness with the previously explained [concentration], a concentration which has meditated on the view, is able to place one onto the path of liberation of an ordinary being¹⁵⁵, a meditation which is not of that sort is said to be in Asanga's “Grounds of the Hearers”:

Since it is said that the mundane paths which have the aspect of a coarse pacification¹⁵⁶ establishing the actual basis¹⁵⁷ of the first dhyāna are established in dependence on this concentration, even though the Non-Buddhist Sages realise

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the grounds beneath [the God Realm of] “Nothingness” which are bereft of desire through mundane paths, however since, depending on these, one must travel to higher paths, it is a concentration which is common to both Buddhist and Non-Buddhists.”

In addition, through realising well the view which realises un-mistakenly selflessness as well as the faults of all of existence, renunciation to cyclic existence arises and, if it has been apprehended by the thought of definite emergence which strives for liberation, it will become a path of liberation while if it has been apprehended by Bodhicitta, it will also become a path of the Greater Vehicle. For instance, it is similar to the generosity of giving a bit of beered-tampa¹⁵⁸ to an animal and to protecting a given category of ethics becoming, respectively, the collections of merit for the path of liberation or omniscience in function of the thought. However, here this is not an investigation into whether having been apprehended by another path will lead into a path of liberation or omniscience, but an investigation into what path concentration leads into in function of its nature.

Therefore, it is extremely important to analyse well whether or not the bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality by which a natural¹⁵⁹ and apprehension-less mind, which meditates without recollection and without attention, is designated is indeed a meditation on emptiness which is a meditative equipoise on the meaning of suchness or not, since even if one does not

155. i.e. the Path of preparation of a Hearer, Solitary Realiser or Bodhisattva.

156. རྒྱུ་ལྡན་པ་ Grammatical context alone does not let one decide between two possible translations:

- “coarse and peaceful” which is adopted by the LRCM committee and
- “coarse pacification” which we have adopted, as it seems to make far greater sense in the context.

157. དངོས་གཞི

158. A traditional Tibetan snack made of barley flour infused in beer and dried.

159. མ་བཅོས་པ་

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realise the meaning of suchness, in addition, the grounds for being mistaken in realisation are very great. If one doesn't analyse as was previously explained, inasmuch as the concentrations which are common to both our own Dharma practitioners and others occur as the principal ones in the completion stage of Highest Yoga Tantra, one must investigate carefully.

3.2 Teaching generally the manner of progressing on the path after having attained calm abiding.

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Should one say that the attainment of attention on the previously explained non-conceptual concentration protects just that non-conceptuality which has the features of clarity, non-conceptuality and so forth, the generation of such a concentration in the mental continuum is for the sake of generating a special insight which overcomes afflictions. If, in dependence on that, special insight is not generated, irrespective of how much one becomes habituated to that concentration, then let alone being unable to abandon the afflictions of the desire realm, how could one abandon all afflictions. Hence, special insight must have been meditated upon. In addition there are two special insights:

- i. the special insight leading to a mundane path abandoning the manifestation of the afflictions
- ii. the special insight leading to a supra-mundane path abandoning afflictions from their the very root, from their very seed.

The former, is attained on the lower grounds and on the higher grounds [which have] the aspect of a coarse pacification of the peaceful view, while the latter, are the two meditations which have the sixteen aspects of the Four Noble Truths, such as impermanence and so forth as well the principal one explained in Asanga's "Ground of Hearers", the view which realises the selflessness of persons.

In that way, whether one is a:

- i. Non-Buddhist who, through having meditated on paths which have the aspect of coarse pacification, has abandoned the manifestation of the afflictions or
- ii. a Buddhist, who having meditated on the meaning of selflessness, has abandoned the afflictions from the root

initially, the previously explained calm abiding is needed as the foundation for the abandonment of the afflictions of both Buddhist and Non-Buddhist yogis. Let alone that, both the yogis of the Lesser and the Greater Vehicle must establish that concentration and since, in the Great Vehicle, in addition, all the yogis of the Perfection Vehicle and the Mantra Vehicle need to establish that calm abiding, this calm abiding, which is the foundation for progress on the paths of all yogis, is very important.

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While to attain Buddhahood¹⁶⁰, it is not unsuitable not to have the former two special insights, the special insight which realises selflessness is a branch which it is unsuitable not to have. Moreover, if one attains previously explained calm abiding which is subsumed by the grounds of nearness¹⁶¹ to the first dhyāna, even though one does not attain a calm abiding of formlessness or one of the higher dhyānas, one can attain a liberation which will be freed from all of the fetters of cyclic existence by having meditated on special insight in dependence on that. However, if one has not meditated upon and realised the suchness which is selflessness, even though one were to attain the mind of the peak of cyclic existence through abandoning all of the manifestations of the afflictions beneath the [God realm of] "Nothingness" by the previously explained calm abiding and mundane special insight, one will not be liberated from cyclic existence.

As is said in "A Paean to the Praiseworthy one":

Those beings at odds with thy Dharma
Are blinded by benightedness,
Although having meandered 'till the peak of existence
Suffering again will arise and existence be established.
The followers of thy teachings,
May not attain an actual dhyāna,
Yet while under the baneful gaze of the Demon,
They have countered existence.

Hence, although yogis of Highest Yoga Tantra do not have to generate a special insight observing conventionalities having the aspect of coarse pacification as well as the calm abiding which has established that, they will have had to generate a calm abiding. In addition, the period of generation¹⁶² is on the occasion of the Generation Stage.

3.3 Specifically teaching the manner of progressing on the mundane path.

Here, Asanga's "Grounds of Hearers" explains that from the 9th mental abiding until attention has been attained, one is a neophyte in attention and from the attainment of attention onwards, a meditator on attention who knows individual characteristics out of a wish to purify the afflictions is a neophyte in the thorough purification of the afflictions.

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If one has not well ascertained this explanation in Asanga's "Grounds of Hearers", one might mistakenly think :

The lowest of the paths of dhyāna and formlessness is a nearness to the first dhyāna, however since there is a cognition of the individual characteristics, the initial explanation

160. སངས་རྒྱལ་པ་

161. ཉེ་བ་ཕྱོགས་, Sk. sāmāntaka is often translated as "access" (LRCM), or "preparation (J. Hopkins et al.). This technical term has etymologically the meaning of "coming close to".

162. རྒྱུ་མཚན་པ་

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of the six attentions regarding that, the initial arising of the mind which is subsumed by the nearness [to the first dhyāna] is aware of individual characteristics.

It is unacceptable to think in that way, since in that way:

- i. there would be no locus of generation of a nearness to the first dhyāna for one who has not obtained calm abiding
- ii. if a nearness to the first dhyāna is not obtained, there is no calm abiding and
- iii. since it would be an analytical meditation cognising individual characteristics, through having meditated on that, it would not be possible for someone who has not previously obtained calm abiding to obtain it newly.

Therefore, the beginning of the six attentions of the first nearness are the beginning of meditation on special insight which is subsumed within nearness, but is not the mere beginning of the first nearness, since it is necessary, before that, for a calm abiding which is subsumed by nearness to occur. Since all concentrations prior to obtaining a concentration subsumed by the first nearness are single-pointed minds of desire, it would seem that very few indeed are those who have obtained calm abiding in keeping with the greater treatises. Since I fear excessive verbosity were I to explain the mode of elimination of desire for desirous beings¹⁶³ by means of the six attentions of the first nearness, I will write no more.

163. i.e. beings of the Desire Realm

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English-Tibetan terminological glossary

actual application	མངོན་པར་འདུ་བྱེད་པ
actual basis	དངོས་གཞི
agitated	ཚོད་བག་ཅན
agitation	ཚོད་པ
appear (to)	ཉམས་འཆར
applications	འདུ་བྱེད
attention of non-occasionally interrupted engagement	སྐབས་སུ་ཚད་པ་མེད་པར་འཇུག་པའི་ཡིད་བྱེད།
attention of occasionally interrupted engagement	སྐབས་སུ་ཚད་ཅིང་འཇུག་པའི་ཡིད་བྱེད།
attention which engages through having concentrated	བསྐྱིམ་ཏེ་འཇུག་པའི་ཡིད་བྱེད།
attention which enters without exertion	ཚོལ་བ་མེད་པར་འཇུག་པའི་ཡིད་བྱེད།
attention	ཡིད་བྱེད
bad physical and mental states	ལུས་དང་སེམས་ཀྱི་ལས་ངན་ལེན
benightedness	གཉི་སྤྲུག
block (to)	འགོག་པ
Buddhahood	སངས་རྒྱས་པ
calmness	རྣལ་དུ་འབབ་པ
certainty	དེས་ཤེས
characterless-ness	མཚན་མ་མེད་པ
climax	དཔལ་ཚོགས་པ
coarse pacification	ཞི་རག་ལ།
concentrate (to)	སྐྱིམ
concentration	ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན
concentration	བསྐྱིམས
conception which acts as a sentinel	བྱ་ར་བྱེད་པའི་རྩོག་པ
concordant	རྩེས་མཐུན
constituents	ཁྲམས
continuum	རྒྱུད
controlling the breath	རླུང་ཚམ་ལ་དབབ་པ
despondency	སློབ་ལས
discordant factors	མི་མཐུན་ཕྱོགས
distraction	གཡེད་བ
dullness	ཉེག་ཉེག
ease	བདེ་སེང་དེ་བ
ease	སེམ་པ
elevation	གཞེངས
elicit (to)	ཐོན་པ
energy	རླུང
enhance (to)	བོགས་འདོན་པ

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entry inside oneself རང་གི་ངང་གིས་འཇུག་པ།
 equal temperament ཚུལ་མཉམ་པར་སྤྱད་པ།
 factor of clarity གསལ་ལ་ཚུལ།
 factor of concentration སྤྲོལ་ལ་ཚུལ།
 factor of limpidity རྒྱུ་ལ་ཚུལ།
 disheartedness རྨོད་ལྡན།
 disheartedness ལྲུམ་པ།
 fancies, discursiveness རྣམ་རྟོག་པ།
 flow རྒྱུ་ལ། synonymous with རྒྱུ་ལ། but with the additional sense of the “running flow”.
 force རྒྱུ་ལ།
 forceful རྒྱུ་ལ་པ།
 forgetfulness བརྗེས་པ།
 fortitude འགོ་ཐུབ་པ།
 gloom ལྷན་པ།
 gradually རྒྱུ་ལ་ལྷོད་ལྷོད་ལྷོད།
 heavy and inanimate ལྷི་ལེམ་པ།
 heedlessness བག་མེ།
 high level འཕང་བརྗོད་ (probably mistaken for འཕང་མཐོ།)
 identify (to) རོལ་འཛིན་པ།
 in the category of the afflictions རོལ་མོངས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཕྱོད་གསལ་སུ།
 inspire (to) གཤེད་པར་བརྗོད་པ།
 intensity རྒྱུ་ལ།
 know (to) རོལ་འཛིན་པ།
 lead to one's own peace and purity རང་གི་རང་དག་ཏུ་འགོ།
 lethargy ལྷན་པ།
 limpidity རྒྱུ་ལ་པ།
 looseness རྨོད་པ།
 means of abiding of the mind སེམས་གནས་པའི་ཐབས།
 mental discursiveness ཡིད་ཀྱི་བརྗོད་པ།
 mental evenness སེམས་མཉམ་པ་ཉིད།
 mental states སེམས་གནས།
 mode of apprehension འཛིན་སྣངས།
 motivation བསྐྱེད་པ།
 natural མ་བཅོས་པ།
 nearness རྒྱུ་ལ་ལྷོད་པ།
 non-habituation མ་གོམས་པ།
 object of observation རྟོག་གི་འགྲུབ།
 occurrence and non-occurrence གནས་དང་གནས་མ་ཡིན་པ།
 period of generation རྒྱུ་ལ་ཚུལ།
 pliancy which is subtle as a shadow སྤོང་མ་ལྷོད་པའི་ལྷོད་ལྷོད།
 portent ལྷན་པ།

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preparation རྒྱུ་ལ་ལྷོད་པ།
 recollection རྒྱུ་ལ།
 renunciation ཡིད་ལྷོད།
 scatter (to), scattering འགོ་བ།
 semblance of concentration ལྷན་པ་ལྷོད་པའི་ཉིད་ལྷོད།
 sense-spheres རྒྱུ་ལ་ཚུལ།
 serviceability ལས་སུ་རུང་བ།
 similar རྒྱུ་ལ་ལྷོད་པ།
 similar ལྷོད་པ་ལྷོད་པ།
 subsequent period རྒྱུ་ལ་ཚུལ།
 subtle sinking རྒྱུ་ལ་ལྷོད་པ།
 take to mind (to) ཡིད་ལྷོད་པ།
 thorough familiarity ཡིད་སུ་འདྲིས་པ།
 trust རྒྱུ་ལ།
 unhappiness ཡིད་མི་བདེ།
 unserviceable ལས་སུ་མི་རུང་བ།
 vigilance འཇགས་པ།
 wish རོལ་པ།
 wrong objects རྒྱུ་ལ་ལྷོད་པ།
