

*"When we search to find a flower existing in accordance with our ideas about it,
that is not at all findable." — His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama*

All the Flowers I Normally See

*Validating Kadampa Buddhist Teachings
on Faith, Love & Wisdom, by Comparison
with Other Buddhist Traditions*

*A Collection of Essays
composed by Kelsang Tsondru*

(Revised March 12th, 2024)

Offering the Mandala

*The ground sprinkled with perfume and spread with flowers,
The Great Mountain, four lands, sun and moon,
Seen as a Buddha Land and offered thus,
May all beings enjoy such Pure Lands.*

*I offer without any sense of loss
The objects that give rise to my attachment, hatred, and confusion,
My friends, enemies, and strangers, our bodies and enjoyments;
Please accept these and bless me to be released directly from the three poisons.*

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI



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The Virtuous Friend: You Will Know Them by Their Root

“I prostrate to Manjushri,
Through whose kindness my virtuous intentions arise;
And I prostrate to my Spiritual Guide,
Through whose kindness my virtuous qualities increase.”

— Shantideva, *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (10:58)

Tenzin Peljor has long been [circulating a document](#) with quotes from Buddhist scriptures and commentaries concerning unqualified Spiritual Guides, which he hopes will encourage people to abandon Geshe Kelsang Gyatso as their root Guru. He references a number of books written by Tibetan Masters:

- *Ornament of Stainless Light* by Khedrup Norsang Gyatso
- *Buddhist Ethics* by Jamgon Kongtrul
- *Tantric Ethics* by Je Tsongkhapa
- *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* by Je Tsongkhapa
- *Words of My Perfect Teacher* by Patrul Rinpoche

As a Consequentialist, I am only too happy to cite the very sources that Tenzin Peljor recommends. (A Prasangika uses the opponent's own source materials because these are already acceptable to him.) Most prominent is an extensive excerpt from the book *Ornament of Stainless Light*, from which the section “Characteristics of those unsuitable to be gurus” is quoted in full. Well, almost... As always, it is interesting to observe what is omitted by Tenzin Peljor. (Cherry picking quotes has been his modus operandi since his first edits on Wikipedia, so I fact-check all his references, just to see what he has conveniently ignored.)

For example, the ending quote from the *Paramarthaseva* (pp. 216-217) has been mysteriously left out, even though it also appears in *Buddhist Ethics*; I will provide the missing quote below. As another example, Tenzin Peljor cites Je Tsongkhapa's reference to *Ornament of the Essence*, which says...

Distance yourself from Vajra Masters who are not keeping the three vows, who keep on with a root downfall, who are miserly with the Dharma, and who engage in actions that should be forsaken. Those who worship them go to hell and so on as a result.

...but Tenzin Peljor fails to give his audience the surrounding context, namely Je Tsongkhapa's *commentary* which explains how, even if the above accurately describes our own Spiritual Guide, "This is not a problem" and we can still receive the empowerment (*Tantric Ethics*, p. 46).

To continue, both *Ornament of Stainless Light* (p. 214) and *Buddhist Ethics* (p. 52) give the same list of unsuitable characteristics for a Spiritual Guide:

Proud, subject to uncontrollable anger, defiant of pledges, guilty of misappropriation, ignorant [of the doctrine], willfully deceptive of students, having failed to enter the state of supreme bliss, uninitiated, a slave to wealth and enjoyments, careless, rude in speech, and obsessed with sexual desire: wise students who wish full awakening should shun such a teacher as they would hell.

Apparently, in Tenzin Peljor's mind, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso is such a Teacher. However, both commentaries also state that no Teacher nowadays will be free from *all* of these faults. Instead, we should rely on a Teacher whose good qualities predominate, as explained in the *Paramarthaseva*, this being the quote which Tenzin Peljor left out:

*In these troubled times
faults and good qualities in gurus are mixed.
None are completely without fault.
The disciples will come to rely upon
those discovered, after careful examination,
to have a predominance of good qualities.*

Along these lines, Je Tsongkhapa gives a second list of good qualities, saying that one may accept a Teacher who has only an eighth (1/8) of them (*The Great Treatise*, p. 75). He later explains how to train in faith in such a Teacher (p. 81):

Your guru might have good qualities for the most part, and have only slight faults. If you examine your guru for those faults, this will block your own attainments. Whereas, even in the case of a guru who mostly has faults, you will give rise to your own attainments if you train in faith by focusing on the good qualities while not looking for the faults. Therefore, once someone is your guru,* whether he or she has small or great faults, contemplate the disadvantages of examining for his or her faults. Repeatedly think about eliminating that tendency, and then stop it.

Elsewhere—in his commentary on the first root downfall of the Tantric vows (*Tantric Ethics*, p. 85)—Je Tsongkhapa says that “at issue is not the amount of qualities possessed by masters who have been kind enough to teach us the Vajrayana, but their connection with tantric doctrine”! (Everything that follows below is founded on this main point.) In his *Teaching Notes on Tregchod*, His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche echoes this sentiment: “Even if the Guru is not a totally authentic master, if the disciple is a true disciple, on the basis of that disciple’s devotion and pure view, a state of Buddhahood can be obtained. The blessings of the Buddha will be received by that disciple with the pure mind. There are many such stories, and so of principle importance is one’s own devotion and pure view.”

It can be difficult, then, to harmonize one commentary with another. Patrul Rinpoche (pp. 151-152) attempts to simplify things for us, such that “examining a teacher could be condensed into just one question: does he or does he not have bodhichitta?” (See also *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* by Gampopa, p. 73.) A very fine question, indeed! But, even Patrul Rinpoche admits that such an extraordinary inner quality is difficult to discern; sometimes Teachers “hide their true nature,” while charlatans abound, making a display of good qualities that they do not really have. Instead, he considers us extremely lucky to have met a Spiritual Guide with whom we have a positive karmic connection from a previous life; our faith *quicken*s and our heart *sing*!

The greatest of all teachers is the one with whom we are linked from former lives. With him, examination is superfluous. Simply to meet him, simply to hear his

voice—or even just his name—can transform everything in an instant and stir such faith that every hair on our bodies stands on end.

When such a one is found, you are indeed Home, and who could ever question it? For those not so fortunate, is there no consistent, objective standard as to whether a Guru is authentic? In *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* (pp. 238, 250-251), after first asking us to “thoroughly investigate the guru, and rely on him only if you see he is worthy of it,” Je Phabongkhapa then says that, in terms of someone’s inner qualities, we cannot assess anyone, much less a Guru: “You can only assess yourself,” adding that the stories of how people first perceived Milarepa, Shantideva, and others “make a mockery of everything we see”! How paradoxical!

Once again, the commentaries previously mentioned instruct us variously: either to rely only on a Teacher with all the good qualities listed (*Words of My Perfect Teacher*, p. 151), or those with mostly good qualities (*Ornament of Stainless Light, Buddhist Ethics*; see also *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, p. 238). Yet, with faith, we could still rely on a Teacher with mostly bad qualities (*The Great Treatise*); in his *Tantric Ethics* Je Tsongkhapa quotes the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* (p. 84):

Even if a guru who teaches you the mandala behaves badly, physically or mentally, understanding [the consequences], never disparage.

Additionally, as a means to test our ability to make our own determinations and not just follow the Guru blindly (*The Great Treatise*, pp. 86; 385-386, n. 132), our Teacher might instruct us to

act nonvirtuously (e.g., to steal), in which case we may—with *soothing* words—politely excuse ourself from following this particular instruction. Je Tsongkhapa adds that “it is improper to take the gurus’ wrong actions as a reason for subsequent misbehavior such as disrespecting, reproaching, or despising the gurus” (*The Great Treatise*, p. 86). According to Je Tsongkhapa, this is no occasion to abandon a Guru, but rather we should remain with him and “acquire a portion of their teachings.”

Patrul Rinpoche sums up the conundrum (*Words of My Perfect Teacher*, p. 146):

It is therefore important not to take any of your teacher’s actions in the wrong way; train yourself to have only pure perception.

*Do not misinterpret how he acts.
Most of India’s siddhas lived
As common evil-doers, base outcastes,
More degenerate than the lowest of the low.*

People who ignore this point, continually misinterpreting and criticising what their teacher does, would, so it is said, find fault even in the Buddha if they were to live with him long enough.

For this reason—that it is so easy for us to see faults in our Teachers and lose faith—Je Tsongkhapa says it is better that “you should have few teachers” (*The Great Treatise*, p. 77). “Some listen to the teachings given by many teachers. They do not know how to rely on the guru, and, even if they know how, they do not do it.

Therefore, they will incur immeasurable misdeeds that are related to their improper reliance on the guru” (*ibid.*, p. 92).

In looking to reconcile the different commentaries into something more straightforward, I came across the following in *The Great Treatise’s* chapter on “Relying on the Teacher,” in a section labeled “The faults of not relying on the teacher” (p. 90):

Moreover, if you rely on nonvirtuous teachers and bad friends, your good qualities will slowly diminish and all of your faults will increase. Then everything that is unwanted will develop. Therefore, always avoid them.

A Kadampa practitioner pointed out to me how much it must have pained Je Tsongkhapa to put the two words *nonvirtuous* and *teacher* together, and indeed the phrase appears nowhere else in *The Great Treatise*. One is left wondering, then, what makes for a nonvirtuous teacher, if not—for example—a Guru who asks us to steal for him, or a Guru who is mentally and physically abusive?

I believe that Je Tsongkhapa could not bring himself to state the matter explicitly, for it is just like the question Vajrapani asks the Buddha in the *Tantra Bestowing the Initiation of Vajrapani*, quoted by Je Tsongkhapa at the beginning of this section:

“Bhagavan, what sort of fruition is there for those who reproach their masters?” The Bhagavan answered, “Vajrapani, do not ask this question, for the answer will frighten the world and the deities...”

Basically, in all of the laundry lists of characteristics of those suitable to be Gurus, why is their own reliance upon a Spiritual Guide not listed among them? After all, a Teacher's virtues and good qualities—including bodhichitta—come solely from his or her devotion to a Spiritual Guide. (Shantideva ends his *Guide* making this very point.) For this reason, I believe that the question of a Teacher's authenticity could be *further* condensed into “Does he himself rely upon his own root Guru?”

For example, we could check: In the past 12 years—the amount of time recommended to examine a Teacher before accepting him or her as one’s own—has this Teacher ever disrespected, reproached, or despised his Spiritual Guide, disparaging him and his Dharma? This is the one fault that could never be excused or explained away as a virtue or skillful means, for surely this would be the greatest deception.

Therefore, in this context, a “nonvirtuous teacher” may simply mean a “faithless teacher,” a teacher who has lost faith in his own Spiritual Guide, the root of all virtues. (Hence why Je Tsongkhapa included this term *only* in the section “The faults of not relying on the teacher,” since it can be only a *virtuous* friend who maintains an unbroken lineage!) Conversely, a “virtuous Teacher” would be a “faithful Teacher,” one who continually relies upon his own Spiritual Guide.

Going back and re-reading the sections of Je Tsongkhapa’s commentary in regards to how to interpret a virtuous Teacher’s apparent faults and wrong actions, these are all revealed as “blessings in disguise,” for how could non-virtue ever arise in the

mind of a Guru who fully relies upon his very own Spiritual Guide, if the results of actions are definite?!

To “disparage the master from the heart” is to disparage those from whom you have received advice on the precepts and so forth [thinking] “Now what use is there in listening to their advice, and so on?” (Je Tsongkhapa, *Tantric Ethics*, p. 84)

I also wish to take issue with Tenzin Peljor’s interpolation of the advice given in these sources with regard to what should be one’s attitude and conduct towards a former Spiritual Guide. Tenzin Peljor says that leaving Geshe Kelsang Gyatso and the NKT is no big deal:

There is no real problem. It is advised in the Kalachakra Tantra, that one can leave a teacher - one goes to a neutral distance - if one sees to [sic] many obvious faults.

According to him, the details are to be found in the section “Characteristics of those unsuitable to be gurus” mentioned at the beginning of this essay. I have paraphrased one part in particular:

If you have taken someone as your Guru when they have many faults—such as being without compassion, angry and malicious, arrogant, grasping, uncontrolled, and boastful—then you should part company with him and no longer associate with him in person. Go this far, but please no further! If you also lose faith in him, or

forsake him as a *Guru*, or cast him out of the Field of Merit, then you open yourself up to a root downfall.

Indeed, if you check the quotes cited therein, “They do not teach that one should lose one’s faith due to seeing faults” (*Ornament of Stainless Light*, p. 216). One never casts the Guru out of the Field for Accumulating Merit, but continues to visualize him or her as an object of refuge, making offerings of one’s daily practice to him as the highest field of worship. If we are able to keep the Guru in our heart in this way, it could never be claimed that we have abandoned or forsaken him, even if we are no longer in contact. So, obviously, “going to a neutral distance” is not what is being recommended; as a continuing spiritual practice, going merely to a neutral place in regards to one’s Spiritual Guide is actually a step backwards. Tenzin Peljor probably adopted this wording from Dr. Alexander Berzin, but put his own personal ‘spin’ on it, changing it slightly from “deciding to keep a *respectful* distance.” This was also Ron Garry’s take in the introduction to *The Teacher-Student Relationship* (p. 53) by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodu Thaye, yet another book suggested by Tenzin Peljor:

Sometimes a student examines the characteristics of the lama after taking him as a teacher. Kongtrul suggests that in the case of subsequently discovering that the lama is not qualified, the student should quietly distance himself from that lama. This should be done without criticism or generating negativity in any way.

Of course, I will give Tenzin Peljor the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps he was inspired by this quote from the Dalai Lama, which he also recommends:

If you have not yet taken someone as your guru and you find out about their misconduct, then you can stop the relationship. If you have already taken tantric initiations from them, avoid developing disrespect or antipathy. In such cases, the Kalachakra Tantra advises us to maintain a neutral attitude and not pursue the relationship any further. You can keep your distance, while still considering that person as your guru because they have benefited you Dharmically in the past. If someone is a student of an abusive teacher and you see that their relationship with that teacher is harmful, you should warn that student. But if that relationship is not harmful, you should leave it alone. The key to whether you create the negative karma of separating a disciple and teacher is your motivation. Actions motivated by an angry, judgmental attitude are to be avoided, while those based on compassion and tolerance are fine.

In discussing the last of the 10 nonvirtuous actions, Je Tsongkhapa said:

Although it is certainly the case that there are other wrong views, only this is called “wrong view,” for it is the greatest of all wrong views in that it is through this wrong view that you sever all your roots of virtue. (*The Great Treatise*, p. 227)

“Forsaking the holy Dharma” is wrong view [in the sense of] removing the importance Dharma has in your life, denigrating it and those who explain it, and desisting, each day, from listening to, thinking about,

meditating on, asking about, reading, or worshipping the Dharma. (*Tantric Ethics*, p. 76)

The Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive's glossary of terms defines *wrong view* or *heresy* (Tib. *lta ba log pa*) as "A general term in Tibetan Buddhism for the wrong view of negating karma and so forth; the negative thoughts toward the guru, the opposite of devotion." More commonly translated as "wrong view," Dr. Alexander Berzin renders it as "distorted antagonistic thinking" (Tib. *log-lta*), which he defines as "The action of thinking with a distorted outlook and, in addition, wishing to repudiate, with hostility, anyone that disagrees with one's view." He then references this when discussing having "a breach of guru-devotion":

Moreover, according to Tsongkhapa's *Grand Exposition of the Graded Stages of the Path* [Vol. 1, pp. 226-227], the motivation behind thinking with a distorted, antagonistic attitude needs to include five further disturbing emotions and attitudes: (1) One needs to be stubbornly blind to the actual qualities of someone. (2) One needs to be contentious, from having a perverse sense of enjoying being negative. (3) One needs to be convinced of the distortion, based on incorrect consideration and analysis. (4) One needs to be mean, unwilling to accept that others have good qualities. (5) One needs to be headstrong in wishing to bring down the person, without the least bit of shame about it and without thinking it improper.

Sound like anybody you know, Tenzin Peljor?

Third and Foremost: The “Third Buddha” Claim

Geshe Kelsang Gyatso is the “third Buddha”?! Where did this phrase come from? All it takes is a Google Books search...

Buddha Shakyamuni is called the “first Buddha” because he is the Founder of the Buddhist religion. Nagarjuna is called the “second Buddha” because he founded the Mahayana school. Atisha is also called a “second Buddha” because he founded the Kadampa tradition. Similarly, Je Tsongkhapa is called a “second Buddha” because he founded the New Kadampa / Gelug tradition. Even Padmasambhava is called the “second Buddha.” For founding the NKT, Geshe Kelsang’s followers likened him to a “third Buddha”! In 1994, Gen-la Thubten explained:

People call Je Tsongkhapa the Second Buddha, not because he replaced Buddha Shakyamuni but because he restored the essential doctrine of Buddha and showed how it could be practised in impure times. From this viewpoint, we have to say that Geshe Kelsang Gyatso is the Third Buddha, because he has once again restored the essential purity of Buddha’s doctrine and shown how to practise it in extremely impure times.

Although there was a lot of fuss in the British press during the mid-90s about the NKT’s seemingly cultish devotion towards Geshe Kelsang, such Guru devotion is not at all unusual in the realm of Vajrayana Buddhism. It was the same in the three Vajrayana traditions I practiced in.

Helen Waterhouse put the whole matter into perspective:

The *Guardian* article claimed that members pray to and worship Geshe Kelsang, which, it argued, represents a misunderstanding of the fundamentals of Buddhism. Such accusations are entirely to be expected given, first, the diversity of Buddhism in the UK and, second, the diversity of Buddhism in Asia as a whole and in Tibet. They stem in part from popular misunderstandings about the role of the Dalai Lama in Tibet, and of the centrality of the role of the *lama* (teacher) in Tibetan Buddhism. For Tibetans, the *lama* is a focus for going for refuge. Indeed, it is common within Tibetan Buddhism for practitioners to go for refuge to the *lama*, Buddha, *Dharma* and *Sangha*, in that order. In the individualistic West, people are suspicious of systems that promote another person, which, for religious reasons, much of Tibetan Buddhism does. In retaining this element of traditional Tibetan practice, therefore, the NKT has attracted criticism from Buddhists who operate without devotion to a teacher and from Buddhists who are devoted to another teacher. (*Representing Western Buddhism: A United Kingdom Focus*; quoted in *From Sacred Text to Internet*, p. 151)

Even the Dalai Lama's disciples believe that he is the incarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion. (The 5th Dalai Lama proclaimed himself to be an avatar of Avalokiteshvara, even naming his palace—the Potala—after that Buddha's Pure Land.) All of the following quotes about Guru devotion are from

the 14th Dalai Lama. They are taken from his book *Union of Bliss and Emptiness: A Commentary on Guru Yoga Practice*. Although Tenzin Peljor will surely minimize and downplay these instructions as teachings that are not to be taken *literally* (ha!), NKT students will recognize that these same teachings are what Geshe Kelsang teaches, consistent with the instructions of his spiritual forefathers. (*Union of Bliss* cannot compare to Geshe-la's *Great Treasury of Merit*, both of which are commentaries to the Guru yoga of Je Tsongkhapa).

Here is the Dalai Lama's teaching on Guru devotion, seeing one's Teacher as a real Buddha, after Shakyamuni and Nagarjuna, of course—*one, two, three!*

To develop a correct practice one has to rely upon a qualified master and follow his instructions to the word. (p. 18)

Such a person has to be viewed as a buddha... One has to view the guru as the actual embodiment of all the buddhas. (p. 18)

Lama Tsongkhapa says that proper reliance on the guru is "the root of all the paths." (p. 19)

If you are able to develop a heartfelt faith and conviction in your guru by reflecting upon his great qualifications and viewing him as a true buddha, this will be of great advantage for cultivating a very receptive mind, fertile for spiritual progress on the path. The stronger your faith, the more progress you will make in your practice. (p. 19)

If the buddhas are engaged in helping all sentient beings, including oneself, it is definitely only through the guru that they perform these activities. Therefore, the guru is the only door through which we benefit from the activities of the buddhas. (p. 20)

You should view the guru as the embodiment of the buddha, irrespective of whether he is a buddha in reality or not. As far as oneself is concerned, one's root guru is the most kind and most valuable. Although Lord Buddha is sacred and a very high being, as far as we are concerned we did not have the fortune to see him in person; the same with Nagarjuna: although he had tremendous wisdom, we did not see him. (p. 20)

If, for example, one were to speak of the faults of the guru or insult the guru, because he is the source through which all the activities of the buddhas reach us, indirectly one would be insulting all the buddhas. So, if one were to have a breach in one's guru devotion it would hinder one's practices even in this lifetime, not to mention one's future fate. (p. 118)

We can see practitioners who, at the mention of their root guru's name, actually have tears come into their eyes—these should be taken as the model. (p. 119)

All temporary and ultimate goodness is the consequence of relying on the guru, and all suffering and unsatisfactoriness is the consequence of not meeting a guru or not properly relying on him. (p. 119)

So, it is questionable whether the faults and defects actually exist within the guru or whether they are merely projections of your deluded mind. You can conclude that the faults you see in your Spiritual Guide are your projection. (p. 120)

What is meant by [a buddha] assuming an ordinary form is: having all the normal human faults, like emotional afflictions and so on. A person appearing to be free of these faults is generally regarded as uncommon, even in conventional terms. So, all the activities which show that the guru possesses negative states of mind are actually skillful means. It is because of these means that we can see him and have access to his wisdom. If he had not assumed this form there is no way he could tame us. (p. 121)

Therefore, thinking along such lines, and seeing superficial faults in gurus as an expression of skillful means should help your faith increase. Through such techniques you can actually cause the perception of faults in the guru to assist the increase of faith in him. (p. 121)

Your guru is kinder than all the buddhas and even kinder than Buddha Shakyamuni. You should reflect: "I, who have been left behind by all the buddhas who appeared in the past, have this opportunity to practice through your kindness alone." Contemplate what your fate would be if you were not under the care of this guru. Thinking along such lines will enable you to realize his great kindness. (p. 125)

So, when you do this practice, from the point of view of qualifications there is no difference between Buddha Shakyamuni and your own root guru, but there is a great difference in terms of their kindness; thinking along these lines, you will be able to convince yourself of the value of your guru. (p. 127)

When one has faith and devotion to the root guru from the bottom of one's heart, that itself is awareness. (His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche, quoting Jigme Lingpa, *Teaching Notes on Tregchod*)

Tibetans who know the essence of lam-rim practice don't decide on their gurus by checking how famous or learned they are because they know that successful practice has to do with samaya. Those who know how to correctly devote themselves to the virtuous friend, as Lama Atisha did with Lama Suvarnadvipi, check the lifestyle of the person and his practice, including how he devotes to his virtuous friends. On that basis, they then decide. A person could be famous and very learned but have some corruption in the samaya with his gurus. Even though one could learn intellectually from such a person, it would be difficult to complete the practice and gain real benefit. Real benefit doesn't come from just learning the words, like in school or university, but from subduing the mind. (Lama Zopa Rinpoche, *The Heart of the Path: Seeing the Guru as Buddha*, pp. 38-39)

Failing to Enter into the Spirit of the Letter

In December 2010, Tenzin Peljor (whose lay name is Michael Jäckel) made the following comment on his blog:

I think you have fallen prey to the myths/propaganda of NKT, just check the case of the 34th secondary Bodhisattva vow, which I have pointed out here:

M. Jaeckel review of The Bodhisattva Vow

Is this vow newly created or not? It is not so explained by Je Tsongkhapa or Asanga, so who made it up?

Je Tsongkhapa's *The Basic Path to Awakening* (Tib. *byang chub gzhung lam*) is a commentary to the ethics chapter of *Grounds of a Bodhisattva* (Skt. *Bodhisattva-bhumi*) by Asanga (c. 300-370 CE). Asanga's work systemized Buddha's teachings on the Bodhisattva path, with the chapter on ethics being later summarized in mnemonic verse by the seventh-century monk Chandragomin in a work called *Twenty Verses on the Bodhisattva Vow*. Of the forty-six secondary downfalls of the Bodhisattva vows, verse 17 of the *Twenty Verses* lists vows 33, 34, 35, and 36:

၁၇ အနောက်နှုန်းရွှေမီဒ္ဓန
တေသနနိုင်တိုင်ပို့ဆောင်ရေး
နှုန်းပရီးရွှေရာရံနှုန်းရွှေမီဒ္ဓန
ကုန်ပရီးရီးရွှေရွှေရာရံနှုန်း

The second line—“Deprecating him and referring to the letter” (Tib. *de la smod cing yi ge brten*)—has been translated a number of ways by contemporary Lamas. (See below for a few examples.) The following is Asanga’s explanation of this vow (*Grounds of a Bodhisattva*, 80b.6; trans. Tatz, p. 78):

If the bodhisattva deliberately discounts the person speaking doctrine and pays no respect to him, ridiculing him, making sarcastic remarks, and making his reference the letter rather than the meaning, then he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault.

Je Tsongkhapa then paraphrases Asanga’s words (*The Basic Path to Awakening*, 23.1 (17b); trans. Tatz, p. 232):

To deliberately discount the person speaking doctrine—not sincerely conceiving of him as a spiritual adviser and a teacher—and to fail to pay respect to him with one’s body, while ridiculing him with humiliating [questions] and making sarcastic remarks with harsh words, and referring to the literary expression in the sense of making much of it, is a defiled fault.

Je Tsongkhapa then proceeds to give his own commentary (to which I have added remarks in brackets to help clarify details that are brought out in Tatz’s annotations):

Briefly, if the words are not good but the meaning is good he fails to rely upon the meaning, whereas if the words are good but the meaning is not he does rely

upon it [the meaning]. Some would have it that the depreciation amounts to saying to the preacher that his teaching is only literary expression, without meaning, or that the meaning is incomprehensible—in other words, failing to enter into the spirit of the letter. This should be taken as explained earlier in the *Bbh* [in a previous chapter of the *Bodhisattva-bhumi*] in context of the four points of reference [i.e., the four reliances]. Jinaputra and Samudra further gloss [or explain] this as a misdeed of “disrespect for the doctrine.”

These three misdeeds [namely, the downfalls described in vows 32, 33, and 34] are explained by the new commentary [to *Twenty Verses* written by Bodhibhadra, a teacher of Atisha] as failing, respectively, in eliminating bad view, in application to study, and in service to the lama, [all] as part of collecting wholesomeness. “Makes his reference the letter” is explained as relying upon the literary expression in the sense of discounting the person who is speaking doctrine.

In brief, we can understand that Je Tsongkhapa’s main point concerning this vow is reliance upon—and service to—one’s Spiritual Guide, even in one’s questioning. Alternatively, one might “make his reliance the *letter*,” such that reliance upon the Spiritual Guide takes second place to a text. The word *letter* (Tib. *yi-ge*) lies at the heart of Tenzin Peljor’s objection to Geshe Kelsang Gyatso’s wording in *The Bodhisattva Vow*: “Preferring to rely upon *books* rather than upon our Spiritual Guide.”

Before considering whether or not this rendition is as nefarious and self-serving as Tenzin Peljor would have us to believe, let us see whether or not *books* is even a possible rendering of the Tibetan word *yi-ge*, for which the [Ranjung Yeshe wiki](#) provides the following translations:

Richard Barron: *letter; syllable*

Jim Valby: *letter, written language, character, word, deed, books, mail, any letter of the alphabet, written letter or note, any written document*

Rangjung Yeshe: 1) *written language, character, words, letter, books, document, syllable.* 2) *deed.* 3) *lexical; writing; letter; syllable; lexical. written language, character, words, letter, syllable, deed*

Ives Waldo: 1) *letter;* 2) *syllable, word;* 3) *writing;* 4) *yig cha'am, yig rigs;* 5) *letter [to someone];* 6) *books, document, anything written;* 7) *deed;* 8) *the lexical GD*

Even in English, there is a common connection between, say, “*a letter of the alphabet*” and “*a letter to a friend*.” (In both cases, the Tibetan word is again *yi-ge*.) This can also be contrasted as “*the spoken word*” versus “*the written word*.” I can’t help but think of the *spirit* of the law versus the *letter* of the law, when it comes to this topic.

Given the high illiteracy rates in India and Tibet—memorizing scriptures does not amount to actually being able to read them—it is no wonder that Asanga’s and Je Tsongkhapa’s commentaries relate this downfall in terms of oral discourse (in this case, the

emphasis of style over substance). In the literate West, with both our skepticism *and* our anti-literalism, this downfall manifests differently: “I don’t need a Teacher—I can just read the book by myself and figure everything out on my own!” Or, the student bombards the Teacher with endless, probing questions about the seeming numerous discrepancies between one presentation (i.e., tradition) or another. “But, Geshe-la, Zen teaches...”

Possibly, the student will become fixated and prefer to rely on an author with whom he has no connection, and begin to develop doubts around his own, personal Teacher. With either interpretation, the kindness of the Teacher is forgotten in deference to the *letter* (*text, book*), and thus the oral transmission of Buddha’s wisdom falls upon deaf ears.

Tenzin Peljor says in his Amazon review of *The Bodhisattva Vow*:

Kelsang Gyatso, the author of this text, made a remarkable mistake, I wish to point out in this review, because it has to be seen in the context of the author’s organisation, the New Kadampa Tradition - IKBU (aka as “Kadampa Buddhism”), in which he encourages and emphasizes the totally reliance on himself as the sole authentic (contemporary) Buddhist authority and actively discourages his followers to read other books, because this would ‘confuse’ them.

The problem with Tenzin Peljor’s theory here is that the reasoning he gives is not pervasive (in other words, it does not explain all cases). For example, Tenzin Peljor fails to account for Geshe Kelsang’s commentary to the immediately preceding vow

(#33): “Listening to Dharma teachings and reading Dharma books are the lamps that dispel the darkness of ignorance. If, without a good reason, we make no effort to do either, we incur a secondary downfall.” And, wouldn’t “Preferring to rely upon books...” also apply to Geshe Kelsang’s own books? In a blog post, Tenzin Peljor even quotes a 1996 teaching by Geshe-la in which he says, “You can read other [authors’] books and check,” to compare their *practicality*, and not just appreciate a text because it is *scholastic* or highly *technical*. I find Geshe-la’s texts not just practical, but encyclopedic.

Moreover, in *Transform Your Life* (p. 83), Geshe Kelsang unequivocally states: “It does not matter whether the author is famous or not—if a book contains pure spiritual teachings it is like a mirror, like medicine, like light, and like eyes; and it is a supreme Spiritual Guide.” Additionally, Tenzin Peljor fails to explain why Geshe Kelsang did not re-write the four reliances (referred to by Je Tsongkhapa above) to say something other than “Do not rely upon the person, but upon the Dharma. Do not rely upon the words, but upon the meaning,” etc.

Tenzin Peljor concludes with:

It was Je Tsongkhapa himself who distrusted Tibetan authors much and was very keen to check if what had been said about Buddha’s teachings is in accordance with Indian (Sanskrit) scriptures. Je Tsongkhapa remarked if something is in contraction to the origin [sic] Indian sources it should not be accepted.

The spin of this vow it would be a secondary downfall to ‘Prefer to rely upon books rather than our Spiritual Guide’ is the complete opposite of Je Tsongkhapa’s own approach and invites to follow blind devotion.

In that case, should we not hold the following Lamas up to the same standard? Do not some of these translations no longer accord with Je Tsongkhapa’s own, inviting blind devotion in one’s Guru? According to Tenzin Peljor’s logic, the following newly created vows are in contradiction to the original Indian sources and so should *not* be accepted, right?

- “Disparaging one’s guru and not relying on his words” — The 14th Dalai Lama
- “Disparaging the spiritual master” — FPMT’s Geshe Tashi, Jamyang Buddhist Centre, London
- “Despising your Guru and not relying on his words” — Tsem Tulku Rinpoche of Gaden Shartse monastery

Speaking of the Bodhisattva’s Pratimoksha vow, I have also written a 37-page essay that attempts to research various objections raised by Tenzin Peljor concerning ordination vows in the New Kadampa Tradition. Tenzin Peljor would have you to believe that Geshe Kelsang Gyatso is the lone dissenter against all of Tibetan Buddhism when it comes to what is called “three-vow theories” (i.e., Tibetan theories for harmonizing the Pratimoksha, Bodhisattva, and Tantric vows), as if Geshe Kelsang was the only one to teach that ordination vows can continue after death or that Pratimoksha vows can transform into Bodhisattva vows, etc. You can read [A Festival of Attainments](#) to learn more!

Context Changes Everything

Considering the NKT's position regarding the Tibetan traditions in general, Geshe Kelsang has stated on innumerable occasions that he deeply appreciates all four Tibetan Buddhist traditions, praises Buddhist masters from all four schools in his books, and teaches that all four schools provide a complete and valid path to enlightenment. The nearly 4,000 pages of his collected writings contain not a single criticism of any other spiritual tradition, Buddhist or non-Buddhist. (James Belither, former Secretary of the New Kadampa Tradition, talk.religion.buddhism, 22 February 1998)

I invite you to double check the following analysis by David N. Kay from his book *Tibetan and Zen Buddhism in Britain: Transplantation, Development, and Adaptation* (p. 92). Context changes everything, so I have included Google Books links so that you can see the relevant surrounding text. See for yourself whether Kay's isolated quotes are in keeping with the spirit of Geshe-la's writings, or whether we are given the wrong impression when they are taken out of context. You can view the quotations below in full and in their original setting.

If we want to know the *real* intended meaning of Geshe-la's words, it's best to go directly to the primary source material. Otherwise, you get what Tenzin Peljor calls 'spin', which I bet he learned by reading David Kay's book, this being Tenzin Peljor's favorite reference material on Wikipedia. This essay examines just two paragraphs out of David Kay's thesis, ridden with errors.

Geshe Kelsang's texts list the traditional qualities that should be possessed by the ideal spiritual teacher, and he encourages students to check these qualifications thoroughly before relying upon someone as a spiritual guide. This attitude of critical inquiry should be retained throughout a person's spiritual career (Kelsang Gyatso 1982: 144). Since the creation of the NKT in 1991, this teaching on the importance of personal authority in negotiating the Buddhist path has been overshadowed by an emphasis upon developing 'unwavering faith and confidence' in the guru and upon having faith in the teachings 'even if we do not fully understand them' (Kelsang Gyatso 1993a: 78). The exclusive emphasis on the authority of Geshe Kelsang is also reflected in the texts. The earlier view that practitioners 'must depend upon the advice of spiritual guides—fully qualified spiritual masters—and meditate according to their instructions' (Kelsang Gyatso 1982: 180) was replaced following the NKT's creation with the narrower claim that they must 'rely upon a qualified Spiritual Guide and practice precisely according to his or her instructions' (2nd edn: 190). According to Geshe Kelsang, the student must now 'be like a wise blind person who relies totally upon one trusted guide instead of attempting to follow a number of people at once' (Kelsang Gyatso 1991b: 17).

Taken at face value, Kay's report may indeed cause alarm for the reader, but there are some serious problems with his interpretations, which are full of undue weight (another problem

on Wikipedia). For example, it is unclear why Kay singled out the *one* instance in the revised edition of *Clear Light of Bliss* where the wording was changed from ‘spiritual guides’ to ‘Spiritual Guide,’ when there are other passages throughout the book which retain this plurality. (This is also true for the *third* edition published in 2014!) The next page allows for a side-by-side comparison.

Additionally, two of the four quotes cited by Kay are just based on figurative language coming from traditional Tibetan analogies. When this is taken into account, Geshe-la’s instructions appear far less extremist than Kay would have us to believe. Always presented out of context by critics, the wording of the last quote was derived from a story about the differences between a wise blind person and a foolish blind person. This particular analogy was clearly never meant as an imperative to take anything on blind faith, as that quote has nothing to do with how many Spiritual Guides someone has but how many Tantric Deities one practices, the ‘one trusted guide’ here being Buddha Vajrayogini for *she* is the “Guide to Dakini Land”!

If we continually recite Vajrayogini’s mantra we shall remember the mantra when we are dying, and then, as if in a dream, we shall hear Vajrayogini and her retinue of Dakinis calling us and inviting us to her Pure Land. In this way Vajrayogini will guide us through death and the intermediate state and lead us to the Pure Land of the Dakinis. (pp. 6-7)

These are not the only instances of ‘quote mining’. Elsewhere (p. 60), Kay again neglects the surrounding context that would have shed light on Geshe-la’s intended meaning:

ALL THE FLOWERS I NORMALLY SEE

From the 1st Edition	From the 2nd Edition
<p>It is at this point that the accomplished meditator chooses his or her rebirth, which can be in a human realm or in one of the pure lands. For example, if you wish to be born as a human in conditions conducive to the continuing practice of secret mantra, you would think, 'As I shall have not completed my practice of secret mantra, I should take rebirth in the human realm. Which country, therefore, would be most conducive to such practice?' Then, if you are an accomplished meditator, you will take rebirth in a country where secret mantra is taught by fully <u>qualified masters</u>. Unlike ordinary beings who from the intermediate state take rebirth in their mother's womb without conscious control or choice, the fully accomplished meditator can determine where and when he or she will be reborn.</p>	<p>It is at this point that we choose our next rebirth, which can be in a human realm or in one of the Pure Lands. For example, if we wished to be born as a human in conditions conducive to continuing our practice of Secret Mantra, we would think:</p> <p>As I still have not completed my practice of Secret Mantra, I must take rebirth in the human realm. Which country, therefore, would be most conducive to my practice?</p> <p>Then, if we are an accomplished meditator, we will take rebirth in a country where Secret Mantra is taught by fully qualified <u>Spiritual Guides</u>. Unlike ordinary beings, who from the intermediate state take rebirth in their mother's womb without conscious control or choice, fully accomplished meditators can determine where and when they will be reborn.</p>
<p>In [the First Panchen Lama's] commentary on mahamudra practice he wrote:</p> <p><i>The mind that is free from conceptualization / Is merely a level of deceptive mind; / It is not the mind's ultimate nature. / Therefore seek instruction from <u>qualified masters</u>.</i></p>	<p>In [the first Panchen Lama's] root text on the Mahamudra he wrote:</p> <p><i>The mind that is free from conceptualization / Is merely a level of conventional mind; / It is not the mind's ultimate nature. / Therefore, seek instruction from <u>qualified Masters</u>.</i></p>
<p>All of these mistakes come from misunderstanding the ultimate nature of the mind because you did not follow the instructions of <u>qualified teachers</u> or did not study such instructions completely.</p>	<p>All these mistakes come from misunderstanding the ultimate nature of the mind as a result of not following the instructions of <u>qualified Teachers</u>, or not studying such instructions well.</p>
<p>This has been merely a brief discussion of emptiness meditation. For more detailed explanations you should consult those texts—such as the sixth chapter of Chandrakirti's <i>Guide to the Middle Way</i> and the ninth chapter of Shantideva's <i>Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i>—where the correct view of emptiness is elucidated. However, it is not enough merely to study such texts. You must depend upon the advice of experienced <u>guides</u>—fully qualified <u>spiritual masters</u>—and meditate according to their instructions. Only in this way will your doubts be removed and will it be possible to gain a deep insight into the ultimate nature of reality. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, <i>Clear Light of Bliss: The Practice of Mahamudra in Vajrayana Buddhism</i> [2nd ed.], pp. 122, 142, 143, & 180, © 1982)</p>	<p>This has been only a brief discussion of emptiness. For more detailed explanations, we should consult <i>Ocean of Nectar</i>, which is a commentary to Chandrakirti's <i>Guide to the Middle Way</i>, and <i>Meaningful to Behold</i>, which is a commentary to Shantideva's <i>Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i>. It is not enough merely to study such texts; we must also rely upon a qualified <u>Spiritual Guide</u> and practise precisely according to his or her instructions. Only in this way will we be able to overcome our doubts and gain a deep insight into emptiness, the ultimate nature of all phenomena. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, <i>Clear Light of Bliss: The Practice of Mahamudra in Vajrayana Buddhism</i> [2nd ed.], pp. 132, 152, 153, & 190, © 2002)</p>

[T]he early texts indicate that Geshe Kelsang's primary orientation was exclusive. For example, he encourages students to commit themselves to their chosen practice and to follow it exclusively. His critique of students who 'jump from one meditation to another' (Kelsang Gyatso 1980: 197) may be an allusion both to the Tibetan practitioners within the Rimed movement who follow multiple lineages of practice, and to the Western trainees encountered at Manjushri Institute who adopted a similar approach to their Buddhist training.... In [*Clear Light of Bliss*] he maintains that 'pure' practitioners within all the Tibetan Buddhist traditions uphold the Prasanghika Madhyamaka view of emptiness, and that without this view, 'there is no chance of their attaining liberation or enlightenment, no matter how much they meditate' (Kelsang Gyatso 1982: 192). There is no explicit mention here of Nyingma Buddhism, but the hardline approach taken towards the Prasanghika Madhyamaka school clearly rules Dzogchen out as a valid or legitimate path to enlightenment. Coupled with this is his emphasis upon the importance of refuting 'mistaken or misleading teachings' (Kelsang Gyatso 1982: 153).

Emphasis on 'chosen path' since it is a commitment, like a faithful marriage. And, of course, Geshe-la cautions students against being fickle practitioners who do not stay with any one practice long enough to experience its transformative effects; merely dabbling in anything rarely brings lasting benefits. Next, by looking at the preceding paragraphs leading up to talk of refuting

mistaken teachings, it is obvious that Geshe-la was referring to an erroneous Mahamudra teaching, not to any Dzogchen teaching at all! His primary concern in writing a book on Mahamudra is for Mahamudra practitioners to get these particular Mahamudra teachings right. Although Kay claims that “There is no explicit mention here of *Nyingma* Buddhism,” in fact Geshe-la praises this tradition of Buddhism *by name* just three paragraphs before, citing the examples of “the great Nyingma Lama, Longchen Rabjampa ... and indeed the great Padmasambhava” as followers of Nagarjuna’s Madhyamika-Prasangika view of emptiness. Plus, in *Joyful Path of Good Fortune* (p. 10), Geshe-la clearly says that Padmasambhava had spread “pure Dharma” in Tibet:

Personally, I have never said that Dzogchen or Nyingma are not Buddhadharma because I respect these traditions. In ‘Joyful Path of Good Fortune’, I said that the teachings of Padmasambhava are pure Buddhadharma. Before Lama Tsongkhapa, Lamas such as Buton Rinpoche, Sakya Pandita, Lotsawa Rinchen Sangpo, debated whether Dzogchen was Buddhadharma or not, but I have never been interested in this debate. If you wish to have a full explanation of what these Lamas said and what other Lamas said to prove the contrary, please ask other Tibetan scholars. I do not wish to become involved in this debate. I respect and appreciate very much the Dzogchen and Nyingma traditions. I rejoice in their practice, and I think that it is very important to respect each other and to keep harmony between traditions. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, alt.religion.buddhism.nkt, 25 November 1997)

Dharma Protection for Everyone

David Kay believes that reliance upon the Dharma Protector Dorje Shugden as a “defining feature” of the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT) can be discerned from one of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso’s earliest publications, *Universal Compassion*. This book is a commentary to the short poem *Training the Mind in Seven Points* by Geshe Chekhawa (1102-1176). One of the lines in this poem makes reference to transforming adverse conditions into the path through the practice of the four preparations, the fourth preparation being “making offerings to Dharma Protectors.” Kay decides to compare Geshe Kelsang Gyatso’s commentary on this part of the root text to Geshe Rabten’s *Advice from a Spiritual Friend*, saying:

Since Geshe Chekhawa’s root text on mind training encourages Mahayana trainees to make offerings to protective deities in order to be free from any interference when practising, it is of no surprise to find comment upon such practices in both *Advice from a Spiritual Friend* and *Universal Compassion*. There is a noticeable difference, however, in the emphasis placed upon protector-deity practice in the two commentaries, with Geshe Kelsang going into more detail about its function and importance. (*Tibetan and Zen Buddhism in Britain*, p. 75)

Geshe Kelsang uses 322 words to explain making offerings to Dharma Protectors, while Geshe Rabten uses just 109 words. However, we have to interpret this difference in a larger context.

For example, to explain all *four* preparations, Geshe Kelsang gives us more than 9 pages of commentary, while Geshe Rabten offers his readers only 1-and-a-half pages total, a detail entirely missed by David Kay. From this, it is clear that Geshe Kelsang is not ‘obsessing’ over the issue of Dharma Protectors—it is just that his commentary *overall* is much more comprehensive than Geshe Rabten’s. Proportionately speaking, Geshe Kelsang focuses on Dharma Protectors *less* than Geshe Rabten does! It is also worth noting that Dorje Shugden is not mentioned anywhere in Geshe Kelsang’s commentary. The two examples of Dharma Protectors he does give are Mahakala and Kalarupa (p. 87).

Some claim that only Highest Yoga Tantra practitioners should be engaging in the *Heart Jewel* sadhana published by Tharpa, saying that reliance upon Dharma Protectors has no relevance outside of Highest Yoga Tantra. In the aforementioned commentary, Geshe Kelsang says that “Buddha Shakyamuni gave explanations in many Sutras and Tantras of the nature and function of different Dharma Protectors, and of the way to rely upon them,” showing that reliance upon Dharma Protectors is not limited only to Tantric practitioners. Remember, ‘training the mind’ (Tib. Lojong) is a part of Sutra practice, and the root text *Training the Mind in Seven Points* mentioned above advises us to rely upon Dharma Protectors in order to have success in this practice. Returning to the question of Highest Yoga Tantra, the *Heart Jewel* sadhana is comprised of two practices: (1) a Guru yoga of Je Tsongkhapa called *The Hundreds of Deities of the Joyful Land* (Tib. *Ganden Lhagyema*), followed by (2) a condensed sadhana of Dorje Shugden. Neither of these practices requires a Highest Yoga Tantra empowerment as a prerequisite:

(1) There are two main Guru yogas related to Je Tsongkhapa: *Offering to the Spiritual Guide*, or *Lama Chopa*, which is practised in conjunction with Highest Yoga Tantra, and *The Hundreds of Deities of the Joyful Land*, or *Ganden Lhagyema*, which is a more general yoga that can be practised in association with either Sutra or Tantra. This second practice is very famous and all followers of Je Tsongkhapa memorize it and practise it regularly. (*Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 25)

This is in perfect agreement with the Dalai Lama who says that the practices of *Gaden Lhagyema* and *Khedup Chikyue* "are very integrated guru yoga practices but do not require the receiving of initiation into highest yoga tantra" (*Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 16).

(2) There are common sadhanas and special sadhanas of Dorje Shugden. The common sadhanas, such as the *Heart Jewel* sadhana, can be practised by anyone who has faith, regardless of whether or not they have received a Highest Yoga Tantra empowerment or a blessing empowerment of Dorje Shugden... If we have received a Highest Yoga Tantra empowerment, we can practise uncommon sadhanas, such as the *Wishfulfilling Jewel* sadhana. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Heart Jewel*, pp. 122-123)

Anyone practicing Dharma—whether according to the initial scope, the intermediate scope, or the great scope—needs help eliminating obstacles to their practice and accumulating favorable conditions, which is the function of the Sangha Jewel. It is for this

reason that Je Tsongkhapa established Kalarupa, Mahakala, and Vaishravana as Dharma Protectors for practitioners of the Gelug tradition. Otherwise, we come to the absurd conclusion that only Highest Yoga Tantra practitioners need help protecting their Dharma realizations of the three scopes. (Dorje Shugden's special nature is that he is a Protector of Lamrim practitioners of all *three* scopes.) The Dalai Lama says, "Actually there is no need for any dharmapala besides these three. Sometimes I say that only when we hear that Kalarupa has passed away will we have to seek some other protection" (*Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 84). Yet, the Dalai Lama's own root Guru, Trijang Rinpoche, believed this had already happened, in accordance with his own Guru's Guru, as explained in his text *Music Delighting the Ocean of Protectors*. Geshe Kelsang used this work as the basis for his commentary to the practice of Dorje Shugden appearing in the book *Heart Jewel*. In it he says:

Among all the Dharma Protectors, four-faced Mahakala, Kalarupa, and Dorje Shugden in particular have the same nature because they are all emanations of Manjushri. However, the beings of this present time have a stronger karmic link with Dorje Shugden than with the other Dharma Protectors. It was for this reason that Morchen Dorjechang Kunga Lhundrup, a very highly realized Master of the Sakya tradition, told his disciples, 'Now is the time to rely upon Dorje Shugden.' (p. 91)

Some dispute the authenticity of the quote "Now is the time to rely upon Dorje Shugden," saying that no reference for it has ever

been given. However, Geshe Kelsang has already said it comes through Trijang Rinpoche. Now that *Music Delighting the Ocean of Protectors* has been translated into English, we can see that he took it from Losel Gyatso's *Dispelling the Darkness of Torment*, as quoted by Lelung Shepai Dorje:

Again, at a later time, Morchen Dorje Chang Kunga Lhundrub spread the practice [of Dorje Shugden] widely, saying that, since now is the time for all of his special pure visions to be fulfilled, one must rely upon this Great King, himself. (p. 110)

Of course, now people will be running around trying to track down *Dispelling the Darkness of Torment*, but for me the answer is quite simple. When controversy arose during the time of the 1st Dalai Lama over the authenticity of some particular Kadampa scriptures, he said, "I don't know whether they are authentic or not, but they actually are helpful for the mind." That is to say, it does not matter if something is 'true' or not; the real question is: *Does it benefit your mind?* The 14th Dalai Lama agrees in principle when he says, "if something is helpful for training the mind it proves it is an authentic dharma teaching; what further qualities are needed?" (*Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 81).

When you know for yourselves that, "These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to welfare and to happiness," then you should enter and remain in them. (Buddha Shakyamuni, *Kalama Sutta*)

Kagyus Lose Mahamudra Tradition?

The following quote from a teaching called *Introduction to Mahamudra* by Gen-la Thubten (aka Neil Elliott) back in 1994 has been unjustly cited time and again as evidence of sectarianism on the part of the New Kadampa Tradition:

So therefore, this I would like to say, when Geshe Kelsang says that he established the New Kadampa Tradition so as to preserve and protect the Dharma that was transmitted from the Wisdom Buddha Manjushri to Je Tsongkhapa, this is what he is talking about, the Mahamudra. This is the actual inner practice of the New Kadampa Tradition, the only practice of the New Kadampa Tradition. And we can say these days, previously you could find the practice of the Mahamudra outside this tradition; other traditions held this practice. But these days we can say definitely it doesn't exist outside of our tradition. Only this tradition holds the lineage, the pure lineage, of the Vajrayana Mahamudra. So this is what we need to preserve, this is what we need to protect. Geshe-la has carried this entire lineage.

This is clarified in *Mahamudra Tantra* (pp. 71-74). Geshe Kelsang Gyatso is referring to the lineage of practice that comes through the Ganden Oral Lineage given to Je Tsongkhapa by Manjushri: "Therefore, our uncommon Mahamudra Tantra practice begins with meditating on the central channel of the heart channel wheel. The transmission, teachings and lineage of this uncommon

instruction are not possessed by any other tradition.” The Kagyupas still have the lineage of Vajrayana Mahamudra wherein the practice begins at the navel chakra, which is also shared by the Gelugpas and taught by Geshe-la in *Clear Light of Bliss*.

However, since the time of Je Tsongkhapa, the New Kadampas have been the sole possessor of the uncommon Varjrayana Mahamudra practice wherein one begins to meditate on the central channel of the heart channel wheel (as contrasted with the navel channel wheel). Other traditions have their own lineages of Mahamudra, but they do not share this particular one. If that fact is a sectarian statement, then the Gelugpa tradition has been sectarian from the start!

Although originally taught by Buddha Vajradhara in the *Ambhidana Tantra*, the lineage of this instruction was eventually lost by all Tantric traditions, until it was passed down again to Je Tsongkhapa through Buddha Manjushri, who still held the lineage. So, in *Root Tantra of Manjushri*, when Buddha Shakyamuni predicts Manjushri’s emanation in Tibet as Je Tsongkhapa: “After I pass away *and my pure doctrine is absent*, you will appear as an ordinary being, performing the deeds of a Buddha and establishing the Joyful Land, the great Protector, in the Land of the Snows,” he is referring to this special Mahamudra. Buddha himself regarded this uncommon practice as superior to other forms of Mahamudra; the reasons are given in *Tantric Grounds and Paths* (pp. 121, 123).

All of the lineage Gurus of this uncommon Mahamudra practice have been Gelugpas—followers of Je Tsongkhapa—and for the past two centuries they have recognized and relied on Dorje Shugden as an enlightened being. (You can read about some of them on the [Dorje Shugden History](#) website.) If a number of Gelug Mahamudra lineage Gurus are now no longer regarded as authentic Buddhist Masters but mere “spirit worshippers,” then what happens to the blessings of that uncommon, unbroken practice lineage? What happens to Je Tsongkhapa’s tradition? “And my pure doctrine is absent” once again, no?!

The title of this essay, *Kagyus Lose Mahamudra Tradition?*, was taken from an old Google Groups discussion by the same name, initiated by Avyorth Rolinson. Avyorth’s interpretation was:

[N]obody even considered the possible implications of what Thubten was saying!! ... I guess all you Kagyu practitioners will be signing up with the NKT to receive the only pure lineage of the Mahamudra!!!

So, we have to decide how to interpret Gen-la’s teaching, either as (a) the Kagyu tradition has also lost its Mahamudra lineage, or (b) just the Gelug tradition has lost its Mahamudra lineage. Regarding these two possible interpretations—that Gen-la Thubten was referring to Mahamudra in general, or to the uncommon Gelug Mahamudra in particular—I have a few reasons for rejecting the former and supporting the latter, as outlined on the next two pages:

(a) Was Gen-la referring to Mahamudra within the Kagyu tradition?

- No. The first sentence that Avyorth gives us from the recording is “So therefore, this I would like to say, when Geshe Kelsang says that he established the New Kadampa Tradition so as to preserve and protect *the Dharma that was transmitted from the Wisdom Buddha Manjushri to Je Tsongkhapa*, this is what he is talking about, the Mahamudra.” Given this context, from this point on when Thubten speaks about “the practice of Mahamudra,” he is specifically referring to the uncommon Mahamudra lineage—the one transmitted by Manjushri to Je Tsongkhapa—not Mahamudra in general.
- No. Otherwise, this would contradict Geshe-la’s teachings in *Tantric Grounds and Paths* that the Kagyupas and Gelugpas do share a common Mahamudra practice: “In *Clear Light of Bliss*, I explain only the common tradition, not our uncommon tradition.” If the Kagyu tradition had lost its Mahamudra lineage, it wouldn’t be a “common tradition” anymore (perhaps a “*once-common tradition*”?). Besides, I cannot imagine why Geshe-la would ever say that the Kagyupas no longer have this lineage as well, or that he has anything ‘against’ the Kagyu tradition. Even David Kay (p. 88) agrees that, as a Gelugpa, Geshe-la has only ever been critical of fellow Gelugpas.

(b) Was Gen-la referring to Mahamudra within the NKT vs. Gelug traditions?

- Yes. In light of (a) above, when Gen-la says that “previously you could find the practice of the Mahamudra outside this tradition,” he must, therefore, be referring to the NKT versus other Gelugpa groups. This is because only the Gelugpas have held the uncommon Mahamudra practice, so how could Gen-la’s remarks refer to non-Gelug traditions if they never had it in the first place? A Tibetan saying goes, “Every Lama is his own tradition,” so by *tradition* Gen-la likely just means the NKT (“The New Kadampa Tradition is an entirely independent Buddhist tradition...”) as distinct from other Gelugpa groups.
- Concerning Gen-la’s words when he says, “previously you could find the practice of the Mahamudra outside [the NKT],” this must refer to a recent change, something that occurred within the past generation that we ourselves could have witnessed. Certainly, the Karmapa controversy has not caused the Kagyupas to lose their Mahamudra lineage. The only explanation that makes sense, then, is if we’re talking about the implications of the Dalai Lama’s views on Dorje Shugden. As Geshe-la said to *Newsweek*, “If these three are not pure Teachers [Je Phabongkhapa and Trijang Rinpoche being Mahamudra lineage Gurus] then there is no doubt that the entire practice of the Gelug Tradition is invalid. This is the main issue that needs clarification.”

Twenty-five years on, the Dalai Lama has never answered Geshe Kelsang’s open letter requesting a dialogue on this very question.

Just a Finger-snap of Bodhichitta-inspiring Love

Please take a moment to pick out the difference between the following two quotes, the first being taken directly from Nagarjuna's *Precious Garland of Advice for the King* (v. 283; trans. Jeffrey Hopkins), and the second being Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's commentary to it as found in *Joyful Path of Good Fortune* (p. 410):

*Even three times a day to offer
Three hundred cooking pots of food (to monastics)
Does not match a portion of the merit
In one instant of love.*

By meditating on love for just one moment we accumulate more merit than we do by offering food to all living beings three times every day.

Note that my amplification "to monastics" above is according to Jeffrey Hopkins' own commentary (*Nagarjuna's Precious Garland*, p. 26), with the above amplification found in his books *A Truthful Heart* (p. 177), and *Cultivating Compassion* (p. 151):

Love figures so prominently in the development of the eighty beauties^a of a Buddha that it is the only factor mentioned when he summarizes their causation (197). The meritorious power of love is such that an instant of it exceeds offering three hundred pots of food daily to monastics (283).

Though, unlike wisdom, love does not yield liberation, it is promoted as bringing many benefits to oneself—friendliness from gods and humans, protection by spirits, mental and physical pleasures, defense against weapons and poison, effortless achievement, and rebirth in comfort: (284-85)

The tabloid website NKT World warned its readers to "Be Careful with NKT's Quotes," in this case objecting to Geshe Kelsang's commentary above because of the change in *number*—from 300 beggars, to *all* living beings: "Surely, feeding trillions of living

beings three times a day offers greater benefit than meditating even on love for just one moment." That is to say, NKT world believes that while the merit accumulated by meditating on love for just one moment is greater than feeding 300 monastics thrice daily (as per Nagarjuna's original wording), certainly the same could not also be said when *every* living being is so benefitted. In the latter case, NKT World supposes, meditating on love would actually be *less* meritorious than, not *greater* than, feeding all living beings. Is Geshe Kelsang teaching what Nagarjuna taught?!

Is NKT accurate in its portrayal of Nagarjuna's advice? Or, is NKT paraphrasing Nagarjuna to rationalize why it rarely if ever offers sustenance to living beings (without a fee)? Various English translations are readily available, none of which supports NKT's version.

It is the aim of this essay to support Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's commentary simply by referencing other Tibetan Lamas' commentaries to the same verse, each Teacher giving the *meaning* and not just the *words* in his explanation. I have highlighted relevant portions of their teachings for ease of comparison. To begin, Sonam Rinchen explains the general meaning of Nagarjuna's verse, contradicting NKT World *right from the start!*

In the *Precious Garland* Nagarjuna praises the virtues of love by saying:

*Even if you donated three hundred pots
Of cooked food three times each day,
It could not compare to even a fraction
Of the merit from just a moment's love.*

On the fifteenth day of the fourth Tibetan month, on which the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing away are commemorated, many beggars come here to Dharamsala and line the road to the main temple. Giving one rupee to each beggar is considered a very good thing to do. Nagarjuna refers to a particularly delicious Indian rice dish cooked in a small clay pot. Imagine going to the trouble of preparing three hundred individual little pots of food, one for each beggar, not just once but daily. This would create much merit, yet he tells us that feeling true love and compassion for them and all living beings for even an instant is worth much more. (*Atisha's Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, p. 66)

Geshe Lhundop Sopa explains how the meditation on love, by definition, is not a "selfish exercise" as NKT World believes. Moreover, its nature is to offer others true happiness:

One creates far greater virtue if, in addition to not harming others, one provides them with excellent and blissful things. Instead of being concerned only with oneself, one is focused upon benefiting others. Thus love and compassion are the foundation of Mahayana practice. (*Steps on the Path to Enlightenment*, p. 87)

Je Tsongkhapa quotes from Nagarjuna's *Precious Garland* to elaborate on this point:

*There is no comparison between the merit
Created from one short moment of love*

*And that from offering three times everyday
Three hundred pots of the best food.*

Producing love for sentient beings even for a short time creates greater merit than making vast and extensive offerings. Nagarjuna explains this with an example that people of his day could easily understand. In ancient India the best foodstuffs were cooked in small clay pots. He says that the merit created by offering others three hundred pots of this food three times a day cannot compare to the merit created from an instant of love. (*Steps of the Path to Enlightenment*, vol. 3, p. 87)

Geshe Jampa Tegchok explains that these meditations far surpass other offerings because love and compassion are the substantial cause of bodhichitta. (The basis of the Mahayana, why would one think Nagarjuna had anything *less* than bodhichitta in mind?!)

In *The Land of Manjushri Sutra*, the Buddha said that to the northeast of our world, there is a world called “The World of the Great Sovereign,” which contains thousands of Buddha lands. When the monastics in that world enter the meditative absorption of cessation, they experience great pleasure and peace because the gross disturbing attitudes are prevented from manifesting. If we were able to make many sentient beings possess peace and pleasure like those monastics have for tens of millions of years, the positive potential would be very great. But the positive potential of meditating on love generated equally for all sentient beings even for the duration of a finger-snap would be far greater. If the

benefit of meditating on love for such a short time is so great, what need is there to mention the benefit of meditating on it for hours, days, months, or years? Why is there such benefit from meditating on love and compassion? When we reflect on them, we create the unique causes of bodhichitta, and bodhichitta is the basis of the Bodhisattva practices of the six far-reaching attitudes. *The Precious Garland of the Middle Way* says that if we were to give many types of delicious food to all the beggars three times each day, great positive potential would be created. Yet there would be even more positive potential in meditating on love and compassion because in the long term having these attitudes will enable us to benefit a far greater number of beings in more ways. In addition, we will naturally stop harming them and thus will be spared the negative experiences that result from our negative actions. (*Transforming Adversity into Joy and Courage*, pp. 185-186)

Je Phabongkhapa explains that affectionate love gives rise to the wish to liberate living beings from changing suffering:

[C]ontemplate as follows: “I can discount the uncontaminated happiness in the mindstreams of all sentient beings; they have only the contaminated sort. Even the thing they take to be happiness has not transcended the nature of suffering. How wonderful if all sentient beings had happiness! May they come to have it! I will procure for them such happiness!”

Nagarjuna's *Precious Garland* mentions the following benefits of meditation on this type of love:

*The merit of giving the three hundred types of food
Every day in the three times
Cannot compare with the merits gained
From meditating once for a short while on love.*

*Though such a person might not be liberated,
He will achieve love's eight cardinal virtues.
Gods and humans will come to love him
And will give him protection;*

*He will have mental ease and much happiness;
Poison and weapons will not harm him;
He will achieve his aims effortlessly
And be born in Brahma's world.*

The benefits are enormous, such as achieving these eight cardinal virtues of love. You will be reborn as a universal emperor or as Brahma the same number of times as the number of living beings you took as objects for your meditation on love. That is why the meditation is called the *brahmavihara* or "stages of Brahma." But if you take all sentient beings as your object, all beings who extend to the limits of space, you will achieve the nonabiding [or dynamic] form of nirvana—the mahabrahma state [that is, the Mahayana nirvana—buddhahood]. (*Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, pp. 529-530)

Like Geshe Jampa Tegchok's explanation above, Sonam Rinchen explains that Nagarjuna's advice about meditating on love would hold true even if we were able to feed *all* worlds:

...Here love consists not only of thinking, "If only all living beings could be happy. May they be happy!" but also of, "May I be the one who helps them find happiness."

It is said that such love creates more merit than filling all world systems in the universe with offerings. In his *Precious Garland* Nagarjuna mentions eight benefits that come from feeling strong love for even just a moment... (*The Bodhisattva Vow*, pp. 44-45)

Thus, whether it is "300 monastics" or "all living beings," what matters most is the *quality* of the happiness being offered, no? Are we removing just *one* form of manifest suffering (and giving only changing suffering in return), or *all* the sufferings pervading samsara? As the Dalai Lama explains:

If such great benefit arises from wishing that all beings be freed from a single type of suffering, think how amazingly beneficial it is to wish that all beings be freed from all suffering. As Nagarjuna says, there is merit in making donations to poor monastics, but love is even more powerful. (*How to Expand Love*, p. 84)

In comparing the power of these two virtuous actions, it is not the *number* of living beings involved which these Lamas are drawing our attention to, but the *nature* of the action itself (i.e., which

action will be most beneficial, long-term). Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's commentary clarifies this for us, showing that—with “all living beings” as the common denominator—the difference lies in what an enlightened being versus an unenlightened being is able to do for others, as Shantideva prays in *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (4:21b):

*May I become the basis from which everything arises
For sustaining the life of countless living beings;*

The same is Geshe Kelsang's wish in *Liberating Prayer*, which will be fulfilled once we attain enlightenment for the benefit of all:

*Please nourish me with your goodness,
That I in turn may nourish all beings
With an unceasing banquet of delight.*

As explained at the beginning of this short essay, NKT World's interpretation and Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's commentary are diametrically opposed. Yet, as seen above, no other Tibetan Lama supports NKT World's claim, but rather coincide with Geshe Kelsang's teaching, again and again! (How many Geshes does it take?!) In *To Dispel the Misery of the World: Whispered Teachings of the Bodhisattvas* (p. 106), Ga Rajampa (1397-1470) wrote:

“Concerning the benefits of meditating on love in this way, the King of Samadhi Sutra says:”

*Even an offering throughout billions of realms
consisting of gifts infinite in number and variety
presented to great beings every day for all eternity
could not match the wonder of a mind of love.*

Meaningful to Behold

In 2012, I came across a criticism against the New Kadampa Tradition and Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, posted by someone online with the username Rude Unawakening:

I was involved in NKT for a few months but have got out due to various gut feelings and things that weren't right, as well as noticing that something Kelsang Gyatso's was writing about in his book was total nonsense because he had misinterpreted [sic] the original text explaining the point (by Shantideva) and had apparently totally failed to get it. No point in studying one man's books when the book's been going round in circles saying the same thing for ages and is now giving wrong information as well!

...I'm looking forward to my new (second) Dalai Lama book *For the Benefit of all Beings - A Commentary on the Way of the Bodhisattva*. Now that's something worth reading.

I can't investigate gut feelings (which usually amount to petty fault-finding anyway), but I was intrigued by whatever doctrinal issue was at hand. Since no additional details were provided beyond the vague reference to Shantideva, I decided to contact the person to find out more so that I could then check things out myself. It has proven to be a worthwhile endeavor, and I would like to share the profound Dharma that I have since learned.

The doubter directed me to the book *Universal Compassion* by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, specifically the meditation on the emptiness of the body. Geshe-la bases his explanation strictly on Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* and yet when checked against that root text, Geshe-la's explanation appears to have added some things that Shantideva did not, in fact, say! According to Shantideva, the body is not any of its individual parts nor separate from them, but there is no explicit negation of the body being the *collection* of its parts. Shantideva's text (chapter 9, verses 78-80) reads:

*Neither the feet nor the calves are the body,
Nor are the thighs or the loins.*

*Neither the front nor the back of the abdomen is the body,
Nor are the chest or the shoulders.*

*Neither the sides nor the hands are the body, nor are the
arms or the armpits.*

*None of the inner organs is the body,
Nor is the head or the neck.
So where is the body to be found?*

*If you say that the body is distributed
Among all its different parts,
Although we can say that the parts exist in the parts,
Where does a separate possessor of these parts abide?*

There is no mention here of whether the body is the collection of its parts, so where did Geshe-la's claim that it's not come from? I asked the skeptic what alternative translation he or she was using, and I was told about Stephen Batchelor's translation. I

decided to get my hands on as many commentaries as possible, with which I made a comparison of each verse at issue. A table of parallel commentaries is included in the appendices (pp. 93-98).

Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's commentary *Meaningful to Behold* is the first complete explanation in English of Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. During the month of December 1978, Stephen Batchelor stayed at Manjushri Centre helping Geshe Kelsang prepare *Meaningful to Behold* for publication by translating the English transcripts of Geshe-la's teachings back into Tibetan for Geshe-la's review. This is how Stephen Batchelor described his experience:

I quickly settled into my cold, damp room and spent most of each day alone with Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, slowly going through the transcripts, correcting and revising them when necessary. It was painstaking but satisfying work. "Geshe Kelsang," I noted in my journal shortly after my arrival, "strikes me as a very fine and exceptional lama. He overflows with joy and optimism beneath his humble and mouselike demeanor." He was also a perceptive scholar, who interpreted Shantideva's text with insight and precision. At the end of the first week, I wrote: "I feel a strong relationship with him, he is very endearing."

One of the things that caught my eye when comparing translations was Tharpa Publications' rendering of verses 85 and 86, which has indeed *added* the words "merely imputed upon." These do *not* appear in any other translation, including Stephen Batchelor's. A table of parallel translations is included in the

appendices (pp. 91-92). Compare the huge difference this makes: “the body is *merely imputed upon* the collection of its parts” versus “the body *is* the collection of its parts.” Wow, did Geshe Kelsang get it wrong? Of course not. Sit down, people!

In *Mahamudra Tantra*, when translating portions of the *Condensed Heruka Root Tantra* from Tibetan into English, Geshe Kelsang said:

As Je Tsongkhapa said, each word of the root Tantra has many different meanings; I have translated the hidden meaning, not the words. My purpose in doing this is to benefit the people of this modern world.

Could this be the case with the NKT’s translation of *Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life* as well? Here’s a big clue that it is, from Kunzang Sonam’s *The Brilliant Torch*, a 19th-century commentary which was translated at the Dalai Lama’s request as the basis for his own teachings on Shantideva’s *Guide*. Following his commentary to verses 78-82, Kunzang Sonam (d. 1901) remarked:

Furthermore, one should not think that the combination of parts which is the basis of designation of the body is the body. It is not. It is just labelled as a body. If the combination of different parts which is the basis of designation of a body were the body, then it would follow that everything from the combination of fingers which is the basis of designation of a hand down to the aggregation of atoms would be the body. These remarks on how we impute the body do not appear in the root text—they are explained in a commentary.

That last line is Geshe Kelsang's vindication. The translators of Kunzang Sonam's commentary point out that "Numerous commentaries have been written by great Buddhist masters to explain Shantideva's somewhat cryptic poetry and subtle philosophical arguments... In *The Brilliant Torch*, Kunzang Sonam follows the traditional interpretations of the Gelugpa school as set forth by Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) and Gyaltsab Darma Rinchen (1362-1432)." So, Geshe-la is, once again, giving a traditional Gelug commentary.

The critic said to me that the following line from *Universal Compassion* was totally unconvincing: "The parts of the body are all non-bodies and so the collection of the parts must also be non-body." Geshe Kelsang Gyatso employs a similar line of reasoning in *The New Heart of Wisdom*, *Joyful Path of Good Fortune*, *Introduction to Buddhism*, and *The New Eight Steps to Happiness*, all of which follow the traditional presentation given by Shantideva, verse by verse. A table of parallel commentaries by Geshe Kelsang is provided in the appendices (pp. 99-107). Geshe-la also gave this example at the 2005 Fall Festival in Berlin:

The collection of the parts is not the body because it is a collection of things that are not the body. For example, a collection of cows cannot be a horse because it is a collection of things that are not a horse.

A collection of horse parts cannot be a horse because it is a collection of many things, none of which is a horse! The scoffer faults this reasoning and example on two fronts: it's just a bit of word calculation that doesn't actually work out, and it's obsessed with dissecting things rather than appreciating them holistically

as the collection of their parts. He or she contrasts this approach with the Buddha's *Flower Sermon*, using it as a supposed antithesis of the NKT's favorite demonstration of emptiness wherein a flower is destroyed piece-by-piece. However, it should be noted that, as a seminal scripture of the Zen tradition of Buddhism, the import of the *Flower Sermon* is to show Dharma being communicated at a level beyond words; indeed, for this very reason, people are still trying to guess what Buddha may have meant when he held up the flower!

Besides, the Dalai Lama himself is happy to mentally dissect a flower to prove its emptiness:

There is no question that persons and things exist; the question is how, or in what manner, they exist. When we consider a flower, for instance, and think, "This flower has a nice shape, nice color, and nice texture," it seems as if there is something concrete that possesses these qualities of shape, color, and texture. When we look into these qualities, as well as the parts of the flower, they seem to be qualities or parts of the flower, such as the color of the flower, the shape of the flower, the stem of the flower, and the petals of the flower—as if there is a flower that possesses these qualities or parts. However, if the flower really exists the way it appears, we should be able to come up with something separate from all of these qualities and parts that is the flower. But we cannot. Such a flower is not found upon analysis, or through other scientific tools, even though previously it seemed so substantial, so findable.

Because a flower has effects, it certainly exists, but when we search to find a flower existing in accordance with our ideas about it, that is not at all findable. (*How to See Yourself as You Really Are*, pp. 63-64)

In other words, all the things I normally see *do not exist at all!*

This clearly proves that our body that we normally see does not exist. It is almost as if our body does not exist at all. Indeed, the only sense in which we can say that our body does exist is if we are satisfied with the mere name 'body' and do not expect to find a real body behind the name. If we try to find, or point to, a real body to which the name 'body' refers, we shall not find anything at all. (*Modern Buddhism*, p. 109)

And, the apparent language game played by Geshe Kelsang is obviously not his own invention, as other Gelugpa Teachers have used similar examples. For example, Thubten Chodron's *Open Heart, Clear Mind* (pp. 161-162) sounds very familiar:

Nor is the cracker the collection of its parts, for a collection is just a group of parts. If none of the parts by itself is a cracker, how can many parts together be an independent cracker with some quality of cracker-ness? Just as a collection of non-butterflies, for example grasshoppers, doesn't make a butterfly, a group of non-crackers—that is, a group of crumbs—can't suddenly make a real cracker that exists as a cracker from its own side.

This is exactly like Geshe Kelsang's teaching that, from its own side, a collection of body parts cannot "magically transform" into the singular, partless whole that we normally see. When understood to be mere name, such a transformation is not truly magical at all—merely a function of our conceptual mind:

An absolutely objective physical world doesn't exist at all, and any statement about what occurs independent of appearances is fictitious. (B. Allan Wallace, *Meditations of a Buddhist Skeptic*, p. 138)

A table depends for its existence on its parts, so we call the collection of its parts the basis upon which it is set up. When we search analytically to try to find this table that appears to our minds as if it exists independently, we must look for it within this basis—the legs, the top, and so forth. But nothing from within the parts is such a table. Thus, these things that are not a table become a table in dependence upon thought; a table does not exist in its own right. (Dalai Lama, *How to See Yourself as You Really Are*, p. 62)

As mentioned above, Shantideva explains that the body is not any of its individual parts in verses 78-79. Interestingly, he uses the exact same words—which is why Shantideva need not repeat them—to prove that the body is not the collection of its parts. (Verse 80 then goes on to show that the body is not something separate from its parts.) That is to say, we can read Shantideva's words either way: demonstrating that the body is empty of being any of its individual parts, or demonstrating that the body is empty of

being the collection of its parts. We just assume it is only meant the first way, not having a qualified commentary.

In the first meditation, we consider each part of the body and ask ourselves, “Is this part, by itself, the whole body?” After checking each part, we see for ourselves that the body is not located anywhere within its individual parts. In the second meditation, we consider whether the collection of parts is anything more than just parts: Could the collection itself be the body? Rather than simply spotlighting the parts of the body one-by-one as in the first meditation, we follow verses 78-79 to mentally remove all the parts of the body to see if anything remains. Having removed each part one-by-one (at no point taking away the body itself, mind you), we find that no ‘body’ is leftover—there is an emptiness. As a result, we see for ourselves that the collection of parts is still *just parts* and never anything more than parts—merely named.

In other words, whenever we point to a part of the body (first meditation), we are pointing to something that is not the body; and whenever we remove a part of the body (second meditation), we are removing something that is not the body. We are only ever pointing to or removing one of its possessions, but never the part-possessor itself. Only by combining these two meditations together do we fully refute the possibility that the body can be located somewhere within its parts.

Then, when we also meditate on the absurdity of the body existing *somewhere without its parts*, we realize that ultimately the body also does not exist *independently of the mind*. After that, there’s nowhere else to look!

Merely Imputed upon a Collection of Collections

The person known online as Rude Awakening responded after I wrote the previous essay, *Meaningful to Behold*. Some of his comments appear below *in italics*, with some thoughts of my own interspersed. As you will see, the precision of Geshe Kelsang's careful wording merits much more appreciation...

I will have another go at explaining what is confusing me as wanted [sic] to quote another description of the emptiness of a flower which I've quoted at the end. But in answer to your question above, no, I meant it is imputed (by the mind) on top of/from what is there.

Thank you for clarifying. From what you say above and have said before, it sounds like what you are saying is that "the body is merely imputed by the mind on top of the collection of torso, arms, etc." Is this closer to your original intention?

I don't see what is meant by sides; when looking at it from a whole perspective there is what is and then there is mental delusion that sees what isn't there in place of what is. It is the mental delusion that is the cause of attachment and aversion.

Thus the question: Are we seeing what is really there (from the side of the object), or are we seeing what is appearing from the side of the mind?

I don't understand why something should need to be "collected," presumably by someone. This seems to assume the person as all important rather than realising the thing just is bound together.

It's a function of the mental factor discrimination to group and divide things into collections according to their uncommon signs. You sweep a bunch of dirt into a pile, and you see something very different from the floor. But I doubt that there is really a 'collection' of dirt there 'bound together' from its own side. Every 'thing' is a collection of aggregates of composite things, all the way down, and nothing but the conceptual mind says otherwise.

The essence between the difference in understanding seems to be whether one sees themselves as part of everything (with there being no centre) or as the centre of everything.

Or, if everything is mere name (including oneself), then one would experience the middle way between both those extremes: You could see everything as a part of yourself—you'd be centered into everything! This seems to be in-line with the quote from David Hawkins you shared: "To be at one with phenomena instead of separate from them results in experiencing the aliveness and allness of the presence expressed as all that exists."

In pages 62 and 63 of Universal Compassion (explanation of Shantideva's text about the body) the distinction between 1) the collection of parts which makes up what is imputed upon and 2) that which forms in the mind on top of this as the ""body", seems to go unmentioned,...

Umm, this is on page 63: "[The body] exists merely as a phenomenon imputed upon its parts."

...and it seems to be suggested that the parts actually do not exist rather than just that the body doesn't exist in the way we perceive it to.

This is the meditation on the emptiness of all phenomena, including the body and its parts. The meditation starts with discovering the emptiness of the body, but not even Shantideva ends there, does he?

It doesn't seem clear from the text that the concept of body imputed on the parts is seen as any different from the parts,

...

Umm, this is on page 62: "The collection of the parts of the body is the basis for imputing body; it cannot be the body itself."

...delusion doesn't mean they don't exist, it means they don't exist in THE WAY in which they are perceived, just as the flower exists but does not exist in the way in which it is perceived.

Umm, this is on page 61: "Thus, although all phenomena are mere appearances to mind, because of our ignorance we take them to be truly existent and develop deluded minds with regard to them."

How the flower actually exists:

as mere appearance to mind

My mind appears a flower through conceptual imputation.

"The flower does not exist on its own."

How the flower is normally perceived to exist:

not as mere appearance to mind

My mind does not appear the flower through conceptual imputation.

"The flower exists on its own."

The object of negation in emptiness meditation:

the flower's existing not as a mere appearance to mind

I will try to find a flower existing independently of my mind.

"Does the flower exist in the way that it appears?"

Result of that negation:

the real flower exists as mere appearance to mind

The flower that I normally see does not exist independently of my mind.

"The flower that I normally see does not exist at all."

Interestingly, the above negation is, of course, a non-affirming negative; and yet, for Je Tsongkhapa a negative times a negative (not independently) always equals a positive (existing dependently). And, so, as Geshe Kelsang says in *Joyful Path of Good Fortune* (p. 531), what remains after negating all that is to be negated is "mere name"! Sure enough, the emptiness of the body *is* the real body! In *The New Heart of Wisdom* (p. 59), Gehse Kelsang points out that "The correct view of emptiness avoids both extremes and therefore emptiness is called the 'middle way.'"

Universal Compassion then says: "Even though there is no truly existent body, nevertheless, because our mind is confused and apprehends the parts of the body as truly existent, we perceive a truly existent body." It suggests it is a mistake to apprehend the parts of the body as truly existent. However the parts themselves are not what is relevant to Shantideva's discussion as he is referring to the imputation by the mind on top of the parts.

This is fascinating! Geshe-la's commentary here is a combination of Shantideva's verses 83 and 84. Again, Tharpa's translation

seems to be the only one that translates the *meaning* and not just the *words*. Kunzang Sonam's commentary to verse 84 cites the scarecrow analogy and then—drawing from Shantideva's verse 85, which is not until the next section—says, "Similarly, as long as there are assembled the contributory causes of hands and so forth appearing to be truly existent, the combination of the limbs will be perceived as a body, and as it is perceived there will arises the belief that it is inherently existent." Think about it: if we had perceived the *parts* as mere appearance to mind—as mere name—then would we ever perceive the *whole* as inherently existent?

What we see is merely an appearance *to* our mind *from* our mind. Our mind *appears* all objects that we perceive, just as in a dream. Of course, right now we have no power over our mind, and so we have no corresponding control over our experiences. However, in *Ocean of Nectar* (p. 4), Geshe-la tells a fascinating story about how Chandrakirti was responsible for supplying all the monks of the monastery with milk and butter. Chandrakirti let the animals roam free and, with the power of his lucid mind, was able to obtain all the milk he needed from an image of a cow he had painted and hung up on a wall. The Abbot of the monastery exclaimed, "*Glorious Chandrakirti perfectly sustains and nourishes the monks by drawing milk from pictures of cows!*" More than a fanciful myth meant to inspire the faithful, its true import is stated in the colophon to *Guide to the Middle Way*, a great treatise on emptiness composed by Chandrakirti "who, by drawing milk from a picture of a cow, *destroyed the conception of true existence*" (emphasis added). Not even an object's *function* (one of its *parts*) exists from its own side! Bodhichitta destroys self-existence (Skt. *svabhava*)...

Mindfulness in Plain Emptiness

Responding to psychologist Dr. Michelle Haslam's request on Reddit in the Summer of 2019, NKT critic Linda Ciardiello commented, "*I do compare NKT's teachings with Buddhist teachings in general and find many many faults with NKT teachings.*" She then lists three major areas of concern: (1) Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's 'nihilistic' presentation of emptiness, (2) the lack of 'mindfulness' meditation in the NKT, and (3) the 'central' worship of Dorje Shugden which she regards as anti-Dharma. Let us see if Kadampa Buddhists are doctrinally at fault at all...

With regards to so-called *Kadampa nihilism*, when a Kadampa such as pop star [Deborah Blando](#) sings, "All the things I normally see do not exist at all," this raises all sorts of red flags. (No other Buddhist would ever say this, would they?!) During the 2013 Summer Festival, [Gen-la Dekyong](#) contrasted "The things I normally see do not exist" (which is synonymous with wisdom realizing emptiness), with the unrealistic mind of self-grasping:

So, self-grasping ignorance believes that the things we normally see *actually* exist. That everything exists as it appears. The things we normally see—*inherently existent* things. That things exist as they appear. Self-grasping believes that! That the things we normally see actually exist. Wisdom believes—correct view of emptiness—wisdom believes that the things we normally see do *not* exist! Things 'there'—truly existent things, things unrelated to the mind—they do *not* exist. Those two are completely opposite!

Nagarjuna's *Precious Garland of Advice* also says that, except for what is merely posited by the power of nominal designations, nothing at all exists. (Jeffrey Hopkins, *Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way*, p. 105)

When we start observing how the false self—the self we have habitually assumed to exist in persons and objects—manifests, we soon discover that it does not exist at all. Before we begin cultivating this awareness, our I seems to really be there, very solidly, but as soon as we start checking, we cannot find it. It disappears. If the I truly did exist, the more we searched for it the more concrete it should become...we should at least be able to find it. If it can't be found, how can it exist? ... If we meditate with the four keys to search for the self in our body, from the top of our head to the tips of our toes, and our aggregates of mind as well, we won't find anything. Thus, we will come to the realization that a fixed, unchanging self does not exist. It's like looking for a cow in a certain field. We walk all around: up the hills, down the valleys, through the trees, everywhere. Having searched the entire area and found nothing, we arrive at the certainty that the cow simply isn't there. Similarly, when we investigate the aggregates of body and mind and find nothing, we arrive at the certainty that the self-existent I simply isn't there either. This is the understanding of emptiness. (Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, "*In Search of the Self*," *Teachings from Tibet: Guidance from Great Lamas*, pp. 182, 185)

While both Geshe Kelsang Gyatso and the Dalai Lama have used the phrase “does not exist at all” for the conclusions of their emptiness meditations, both Teachers are a bit hesitant about it and qualify its use early on in their discussions on emptiness:

Because the “I” appears to our minds to be established in and of itself, when we use analysis to try to find it and it is not found, it seems that the “I” does not exist at all, whereas it is only the independent “I,” the inherently existent “I,” that does not exist. Because there is a danger here of stumbling into denial and nihilism, it is crucial as a first step to understand what is being negated in selflessness. (Dalai Lama, *How to See Yourself as You Really Are*, p. 129)

When it is said that the body that normally appears vividly to us does not exist, some people may misunderstand this and think that the existence of phenomena is being denied completely. It is therefore very important to think deeply and with sharp wisdom about this matter. We need to identify precisely the negated object of emptiness. If the object we negate is too extensive we will negate something that actually exists, and thereby fall into the extreme of non-existence. This would be the case if we were to deny that our body exists at all. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *The New Heart of Wisdom*, pp. 58-59)

Both authors can be rather inconsistent with this phrase, but this is understandable given the nature of dualistic language. Speaking of Non-duality, I know that Linda is not really a big fan

When you see something, look closely at the mind and at what you see in the mind. What is the difference between them? If you see a beautiful flower reflected in your mind, examine the image of the flower in your mind, and the mind itself. Appearances do not arise or abide outside the mind. (Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche, *A Complete Guide to the Buddhist Path*, p. 325)

Focus on the fact that there is nothing within mind and body that can be “I.” Mind and body are empty of a tangible “I.” Rather, just as a car is set up *in dependence upon* its parts and is not even the sum of its parts, so the “I” depends upon mind and body. An “I” without depending on mind and body does not exist, whereas an “I” that is understood to be dependent upon mind and body exists in accordance with the conventions of the world. Understanding this type of “I” that is not at all to be found within mind and body, and is not even the sum of mind and body but exists only through the power of its name and our thoughts, is helpful as we strive to see ourselves as we really are. (Dalai Lama, *(How to See Yourself as You Really Are*, pp. 128-129)

In other words, we must involve or engage our understanding of voidness with whatever appearances our mind normally produces of things in each moment, now, and try to dislodge them. We do this by seeing that the mode of existence mind makes appear and implies actually to exist does not exist at all. (Dalai Lama, *The Gelug/Kagyu Tradition of Mahamudra*, p. 343)

of the Dalai Lama, so perhaps this quote from Advaita Teacher Adyashanti would be more to her liking:

Now take this idea and apply it to everything and everyone in your life. Try it for a moment, or an hour, or a day. And if you do, you may begin to notice that the world you imagine to exist does not exist at all. This may cause you some fear, or possibly the thrill of discovery, but either way the important thing is to get some distance from the habitual way the mind contorts and creates perception. (Adyashanti, *Everything Under the Sun*)

You do not exist as your thoughts. If all the thoughts in your mind were to stop for five seconds, these would be five seconds when the egoic self did not exist, because the egoic self is the movement of thinking and the associated feelings and emotions your thinking produces. If you could *not* think about yourself, you would lose your entire sense of self. You *as you are* would not disappear, but you *as you imagine you are* would. (Adyashanti, *The Most Important Thing*, p. 103)

In contrast to what we normally see, Tony Parsons speaks of “the norm that is not usually perceived” (*As It Is*, p. 32). There are several additional “does not exist *at all*” quotes like this by Tibetan Lamas **highlighted** in the *Close Placement of Mindfulness of the Body* appendices of this PDF, including even more by the Dalai Lama! Ironically, the book by the Dalai Lama which I have quoted from above is the same one used by Tenzin Peljor in his 2015 “Name Only” critique! Lopon Tenzin Namdak adds:

What is the experience of feeling and knowing yourself as no image, no idea, no notion at all? At first, it might be disorienting or confusing. Your mind might think, “But there’s got to be an image! I have to have a mask to wear. I’ve got to present myself as somebody or something, or in some particular way.” But of course, that’s just the mind, that just conditioned thinking. It’s really just the incarnation of fear, because there is a fear of knowing what we really are. Because when we look into what we really are—underneath our ideas, underneath our images—there’s nothing. There’s no image at all. (Adyashanti, *Falling into Grace: Insights on the End of Suffering*, pp. 23-24)

I have described some aspects of the no-self experience as ‘having no center.’ I would also add no smallness or bigness, no contraction or expansion, no inside or outside, no form or formlessness, no being or not being, no I sense, me sense, or we sense. All of these are forms of self-consciousness. It is a non-relative state. I could go on but it would only be redundant. Although we can experience moments of no-self, rarely does the self fall away all at once. Generally one vacillates somewhat between moments of the no-self state, followed by self attempting to reconstruct itself to some extent. But with each taste of no-self, the self loses more and more of its ability to reconstruct itself, until it finally falls way altogether. (Adyashanti, *Experiencing No-Self*)

We have searched outside and inside exhaustively and what do we find? Where is this self of which we speak so freely? All the things we see and experience are not this so-called self. They are not us and yet we grasp at them as if they were ourselves. (*Four Essential Points*)

Linda is also concerned with the way **mindfulness** is taught by in the New Kadampa Tradition (citing only non-Mahayana comparisons, mind you). Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's first two published books were *Meaningful to Behold* in 1980, and *Clear Light of Bliss* in 1982, which together contain over 50 pages of commentary concerning mindfulness practices. *How to Understand the Mind*, which is the second book in Tharpa's suggested reading order has nearly 60 unique references to mindfulness throughout. Specifically, within the threefold Buddhist path, mindfulness associated with *moral discipline* is discussed in *Meaningful to Behold* (pp. 180-197); mindfulness supporting *tranquil abiding* is discussed in *Clear Light of Bliss* (pp. 163-186); and, mindfulness discerning wisdom is presented in *Meaningful to Behold* (pp. 417-431). I have provided relevant appendices for each of these three trainings.

It should be noted that the meditations covered in the previous two essays take place in the context of mindfulness, in particular the "close placement of mindfulness of the body." Apparently, Neil Elliott was teaching the 3rd *close placement of mindfulness of the body* meditation in the *Mindfulness Toolkit* talk that Linda attended, according to Shantideva's tradition (*Guide* 9:78-79). The other three mindfulness meditations that Shantideva presents are *of feelings, of the mind, and of phenomena*. Linda is referring to these four foundations of mindfulness when she wrongly claims:

When we are finished you may re-identify with the person and its world if you wish.... If you don't want them, you will find that they don't actually exist. (Mooji, *An Invitation to Freedom: Immediate Awakening for Everyone*, p. 8)

Determining that such an independent self cannot be found anywhere, we then conclude that it does not exist at all. That absence of an inherently existent self is the emptiness of the person. We then focus on that single-pointedly. In doing meditation on emptiness, we must be careful not to fall to the extreme of nihilism, thinking that no self at all exists. While an independent self does not exist, a conventional, dependent one does. (Thubten Chodron, *Buddhism for Beginners*, p.49)

One could say *samvrti* [conventional truth] is mere concealment (*samvrti*). In a certain sense it is not reality or truth at all, but merely a seeming reality. It is only relatively true in the sense that things seem to be that way to ordinary beings. Ultimately it is not true at all. (Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*, p. 77)

Just as it cannot be said of a son of a barren woman that he possesses a dark or fair complexion, since he does not exist at all, so it cannot be said of a Tathagata and these other things that exist independently, that they are or are not permanent, and so forth, since they do not exist at all. (James Duerlinger, *The Refutation of the Self in Indian Buddhism*, p. 170)

NKT almost completely ignores the Buddha's teachings on the Four Pillars of Mindfulness, particularly the importance and central significance of training in mindfulness of breath and mindfulness of sensation, as taught in the Vipassana meditation method and even in secular mindfulness practice.

Keep in mind that there are Theravadin and Mahayana versions of mindfulness practice, with Geshe Kelsang of course presenting the latter. (Many NKT critics seem to be *anti-Mahayana* at heart.) Ironically, Linda cites [an academic paper on mindfulness](#), which also describes the "change in perspective on the self" that comes as a result of mindfulness practice, quoting from the Dalai Lama's book *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight* (p. 84), also missed by Linda:

This seemingly solid, concrete, independent, self-instituting "I" under its own power that appears at such a time actually **does not exist at all**, and this specific non-existence is what is meant by the selflessness of the person.

Speaking of the threefold Buddhist path from a Dzogchen perspective, His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche sums up the ultimate Buddhist view, saying, "So in brief, what we are pointing to with this view is that there is no fixation on phenomena as being real at all" (*Teaching Notes on Tregchod*).

Buddhism 101 teaches us to always rely upon a happy mind alone, but Linda objects:

When the self completely collapses, there is this inexpressible, simple yet profound and ecstatic, compassionate awareness. Nobody is there. "I" is completely nonexistent in that place. (Anam Thubten, *No Self, No Problem: Awakening to Our True Nature*, p. 38)

If it doesn't exist when you are sitting in silence, then it doesn't actually exist. (Adyashanti)

I felt I had been suddenly overtaken and everything took on a new sense. I looked at grass, trees, dogs and people, moving as before, but now I not only recognised their essence but I was their essence, as they were mine. It was in another way as if everything, including me, was enveloped in a deep and all-encompassing love, and in a strange way it seemed that what I saw was also somehow nothing special...it is the norm that is not usually perceived. (Tony Parsons, *As It Is: The Open Secret of Spiritual Awakening*, p. 32)

The very first step of Dharma practice is to look at the mind. There are many different ways to do this. In the beginning, just witness what is present in the mind. So many thoughts arise, mostly anger, attachment, arrogance and jealousy. Uncover these defilements and purify them by applying their antidotes. Make them less and less powerful and then rest in the uncontrived state. (Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche, *Opening the Treasure of the Profound: Teachings on the Songs of Jigten Sumgon and Milarepa*, p. 53)

NKT claims that they teach mindfulness meditation but they do not. They teach a form of self-hypnosis which they call “meditation” which supposedly provides “antidotes” to “negative” thinking—claiming falsely that by repressing negative emotions with these “antidotes” it is possible to be “happy all the time”. Thus they basically teach methods of spiritual bypassing...

Yet, on the very *first* page of that same academic paper (*How Does Mindfulness Meditation Work?*) which she recommends, it says:

Historically, mindfulness is a concept stemming from ancient Buddhist philosophy (Bhikkhu, 2010), and is practiced to achieve enduring happiness (Ekman, Davidson, Ricard, & Wallace, 2005) and to gain insight into a view of the true nature of existence (Olendzki, 2010).

First, a quote from Dzogchen author Anam Thubten (*No Self, No Problem*, p. 3), backed up by Nagarjuna:

When that awakening happens, there is no longer any desire to become someone other than who we are. Every previous idea of who we are vanishes and along with it the pain, guilt, and pride associated with our body. In Buddhism this is called no self. This is the only true awakening. Everything else is a spiritual bypass. This awakening is what we should be aiming for from the very beginning of being on the path.

You want to cultivate mindfulness culminating in insight and wisdom to realize the truth as it is. You want to know the working of your body-mind complex exactly as it is. You want to get rid of all psychological annoyance to make your life really peaceful and happy. The mind cannot be purified without seeing things as they really are. (Bhante Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, p. 39)

Most people find it difficult to believe that a state of consciousness totally free of all negativity is possible. And yet this is the liberated state to which all spiritual teachings point. It is the promise of salvation, not in an illusory future but right here and now. (Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*, p. 61)

Take the bypass! You don’t have to work on yourself to be free! (Gangaji, [Taking the Spiritual Bypass](#))

Importantly, this fundamental nature—whether we call it *sugatagarbha*, emptiness, dependent origination, nature of mind, or *rikpa*—can best be understood in the way that virtue and nonvirtue lead to happiness and suffering, respectively and unmistakably, and ultimately to the resultant states of nirvana and samsara. With this understanding, the entire path taught by the Buddha is none other than the exhaustion of all nonvirtue and the perfection of all virtue. (Drikung Kyabgon Tinle Lhundup, *The Buddha’s Single Intention*, p. x)

The pacification of all objectification and the pacification of illusion: No Dharma was taught by the Buddha at any time, in any place, to any person. (Nagarjuna, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* 25:24; trans. Jay Garfield, p. 334)

This convergence of *mindfulness* with *selflessness* is fundamental to the Theravadin Buddhist tradition as well (Bhante Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, pp. 134, 138):

Mindfulness is non-egoistic alertness. It takes place without reference to self. With mindfulness one sees all phenomena without references to concepts like 'me', 'my' or 'mine'... Mindfulness sees the true nature of all phenomena. Mindfulness and only mindfulness can perceive the three prime characteristics that Buddhism teaches are the deepest truths of existence [*impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness*].

In the opening verses of the *Dhammapada* is Buddha's teaching that from virtue comes peace, from non-virtue comes suffering:

"He insulted me, he struck me, he cheated me, he robbed me": those caught in resentful thoughts never find peace.

"He insulted me, he struck me, he cheated me, he robbed me": those who give up resentful thoughts surely find peace.

For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love. This is an unalterable law.

To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. (Dogen, *Actualizing the Fundamental Point*)

When disturbing emotions are habituated, it is difficult to overcome them with antidotes. By arming oneself with the antidotal weapon of mindfulness, to destroy disturbing emotions such as desire the moment they first arise is the bodhisattvas' practice. (Thogme Zangpo, *The 37 Practices of the Conquerors' Sons*, v. 35)

Sandhinirmocanasutra [SNS VII.6] explains that emptiness of essence means that there is no self of the person in the skandhas because such a self does not exist at all in reality; it is imaginary (parikalpita). Emptiness of true existence means there is no arising of an independently existing essence (or self-nature) of phenomena (dharmas). (Susan K. Hookham, *The Buddha Within: Tathagatagarbha Doctrine According to the Shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhaga*, p. 303)

When the mind is like this, it does not become anything and nothing can shake it. Why? Because there is awareness. The mind knows itself as pure. It has reached its original state of independence. This has come about through the faculty of mindfulness together with wise reflection, seeing that all things are merely conditions arising out the confluence of the elements, without any individual controlling them. (Ajahn Chah, *Being Dharma: Essence of the Buddha's Teachings*, p. 69)

At least Linda is correct in pointing out that the word Dharma means “universal law,” to never rely upon an unhappy mind at all! The opening verses of the *Dhammapada* contrast the negative with the positive (trans. by Eknath Easwaran, p. 101), in which Buddha identifies the exact causes of *happiness* versus those of *suffering*, namely *virtues* as exact antidotes to *non-virtues*!

When we achieve meditative equipoise, a one-pointed mind focused on virtue, we can abide there in peace and joy. When our mind is tranquil and relaxed, that itself is joy. There is no need to search for joy elsewhere. This joy cannot be matched by any experience in samsara. This doesn’t mean that in such a “palace” we are entirely free from samsara, but we can rest there in stability and clarity. (Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche, *A Complete Guide to the Buddhist Path*, p. 250)

But if the elephant of our mind is bound tightly on all sides by the rope of mindfulness, all fears will cease to exist and all virtues will fall into our hands. (Shantideva, *Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life* 5:3)

I am really taken aback about what Linda says next:

The worship of deities is inherently sectarian because it is not universal and therefore it is anti-dharma. Buddha never taught that the worship of any deities has any place in the path to awakening, let alone the worship of some random obscure medieval Tibetan gargoyle, with three eyes, fangs and a big yellow hat. Ridiculous.

When you look at a flower, think, “This real flower appearing from its own side is a projection, a hallucination. In reality, there’s no such thing there.” If you practice mindfulness of how everything appears to exist from its own side is a hallucination, you’re always practicing awareness of emptiness. It naturally becomes awareness of emptiness. (Lama Zopa Rinpoche, *How Things Exist: Teachings on Emptiness*, p. 83)

The reason why body, feelings, mind, and phenomena are specifically chosen for deep contemplation is that they are the principal objects that form the basis for our grasping at “self” and the delusory states that arise from this ignorance. (Dalai Lama, *The World of Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 159, n. 11)

Mindfulness can’t be used in any selfish way, either. It is nonegoistic alertness. There is no ‘me’ in a state of pure mindfulness. So there is no self to be selfish. On the contrary, it is mindfulness which gives you the real perspective on yourself. It allows you to take that crucial mental step backward from your own desires and aversions so that you can then look and say, “Ah ha, so that’s how I really am.” In a state of mindfulness, you see yourself exactly as you are. You see your own selfish behavior. You see your own suffering. And you see how you create that suffering. You see how you hurt others. You pierce right through the layer of lies that you normally tell yourself and you see what is really there. Mindfulness leads to wisdom. (Bhante Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, p. 146)

And, yet, Buddhist Deities such as Avalokiteshvara and Manjushri are worshipped throughout Asia, not just Tibet! Whether it is a Bodhisattva boat captain preemptively killing a homicidal sea merchant, the self-immolation of Medicine Buddha as told in the *Lotus Sutra*, or wrathful Yamantaka adorning the head of a freshly decapitated bull, Dharma stories can sound quite gruesome at times—but all skillfully meant to tame our minds. Even Buddha Tara kicks deluded butt! Besides, the Dalai Lama also initiates his students into wrathful Deity practices like Mahakala and Vajrayogini—both of whom have ‘vampire’ fangs. Linda does not even offer that these may have artistic meanings—symbolizing *virtuous* qualities—just some medieval gargoyles! The cardiac muscle being ‘devoured’ by Dorje Shugden shows that his own heart is bejeweled with *universal compassion* for *all* living beings, not just Gelugpas. It is a matter of historical fact that before Je Phabongkhapa was even born (b. 1878), Dorje Shugden was long regarded as a manifestation Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani:

“Fast and powerful protector of the Buddhadharma...
both wrathful and virtuous.”

— Drubwang Dre'u Lhas

“Although having found the pure nature Dharmakaya,
by the power of compassion emanating a form, I entrust you...”

— Morchen Kunga Lhundrub

“He who is known as Dolgyal is not mistaken on the path to liberation,
and is in essence the Great Compassionate One.”

— Sakya Throne Holders Sonam Rinchen & Kunga Lodro

When the truth of your apparent existence is sought through the practice of Self-Enquiry (*Atma Vichara*), you can discover through your direct experience that your apparent “ego” (*ahamkara*) does not exist at all! It is as real as the wetness in a mirage lake, the pregnancy of a barren woman, or the horns on a hare. It just is not there! (A. Roy Horn, *Heroes, Sages & Madmen*, p. 207)

...[S]ee everything as empty forms without any substantiality, as in the eight similes of illusion: As in a dream, all the external objects perceived with the five senses are not there, but appear through delusion. As in a magic show, things are made to appear by a temporary conjunction of causes, circumstances and connections. As in a visual aberration, things appear to be there, yet there is nothing. As in a mirage, things appear but are not real. As in an echo, things can be perceived but there is nothing there, either outside or inside. As in a city of gandharvas, there is neither a dwelling nor anyone to dwell. As in a reflection, things appear but have no reality of their own. As in a city created by magic, there are all sorts of appearances but they are not really there. Seeing all the objects of your perception in this way, you come to understand that all these appearances are false by their very nature. (Patrul Rinpoche, *Words of My Perfect Teacher: A Complete Translation of a Classic Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 252)

"Protectors of Loseling's scholars, including Dorje Shugden, come here." – Fourth Jetsun Dampa

"Praise to the Lord of the Dharma King, protecting Lobsang's doctrine throughout space."

– Drepung Gomang's Fifth 'On Gyalse Rinpoche

"Dharma Protector that is the Lord of All Power and Capability [Vajrapani]..." – Sera Je Dragri Gyatso Thaye

"Great powerful protector of the Buddhadharma, Gyalchen Dorje Shugden and retinue come here!"

– Retreng Rinpoche Trichen Tenpa Rabgye

"Collection of Conquerors' power and capability, Lord of Secrets [Vajrapani], Gyalchen Dorje Shugden..."

– Sera Tantric College's Abbot Namkha Tenkyong

"Sole refuge Manjushrigarbha's Dharma protector, Wondrous Dorje Shugden Tsel..." – Trehor Khangsar Rinpoche

"Gyalchen Dorje Shugden, the special emanated Protector of the Doctrine of the Second Buddha Manjunatha [Je Tsongkhapa]..."

– Rongchen Kirti Lobsang Trinley

"The Chief Dharma Protector of Conqueror Manjunatha [Je Tsongkhapa], Dorje Shugden..." – Serkong Dorje Chang

"I enthrone you as the Great King of Dharma Protectors."

– Jigme Norbu, the Fourth Zhabdrung Mind Incarnation

"The Dharma Protector Dorje Shugden Tsel definitively is Avalokiteshvara." – Dragshul Trinley Rinchen

When you are completely attentive, the 'you' doesn't exist at all. The 'you' is the censor, which is the past. (Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Public Talk 5, 29 November 1970*)

And, spiritual awakening is seeing through the fiction of that, that actually there isn't actually a self in the center of one's consciousness. That's what this term that I use that a lot of people don't like. (It frightens them.) 'Emptiness' means: empty of *self*. Full of reality, absolutely full of the divine; but, empty of *self*. (Adyashanti, *The Experience of No Self*)

The problem is that the self that you became convinced was the real you is a phantom that exists only as an abstraction in your mind, animated by the conflicted emotional energy of separation. It's about as real as last night's dream. And when you stop thinking it into existence, it has no existence at all. That's why it is false, which begs the question, who or what is the real you? At the core of the false self is a void of deficiency derived from an essential turning away from one's own divinity, either out of natural development, despair, or simply by succumbing to the trance of the world with all its masks of deception and harsh obligation to conform to its insanity. The false self orbits around this vacuous abyss at its core, in silent terror of its nameless, faceless threat of oblivion. The false self is both an obstacle and a doorway through which you must pass on your way to awakening to the dimension of being. (Adyashanti, *The Way of Liberation: A Practical Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*, p. 13)

What's Your Best Argument for Reincarnation?

When the oil of an oil lamp is exhausted, the flame goes out because the flame is produced from the oil; but when our body dies, our consciousness is not extinguished, because consciousness is not produced from the body. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Modern Buddhism*, p. 37)

Looking in from the outside, it may seem like Buddhists are accepting reincarnation as a matter of faith, without any critical thought. My goal here is to explain what Geshe-la says is “the most important reason establishing the existence of reincarnation,” one that does not rely on new-agey notions of dream premonitions or past life recall, nor merely on anecdotal stories of ‘transference of consciousness’, and not even on the “scriptural authority” of Buddhist tradition, but simply on the logic of cause and effect.

If we turn to the book *Introduction to Buddhism*, before its discussion of past and future lives there is a section on understanding the mind. From the start, Geshe-la makes a hefty claim: *the mind is not the brain nor a function of it*. Instead, he says that “Knowing and perceiving objects is the uncommon function of the mind” (p. 14), which of course begs the question: What is the function of the brain? An uncommon function of the brain is that it regulates all our unconscious or involuntary bodily functions such as our heart beating, the digestion of food, and hormone regulation. The brain does not create karma because its actions are autonomic, not intentional—although sometimes we

can switch from one to the other, such as when controlling the breath. This is the converse of Geshe-la saying that “All *intentional* bodily, verbal, and mental actions are karma” (p. 25, emphasis added). Thus, it is the mind that instigates all our voluntary physical and verbal actions, which the brain then carries out, for example by communicating the intention to move our arm to the muscles in our arm.

Another uncommon function of the brain is to organize and store objects of knowledge, those appearing to the five senses as well as conceptual objects of mind. Thus, the brain is like the window through which the mind perceives the world. Geshe-la adds that “Our nervous system and the chemicals that make up our brain and body may be able to shape what kind of thoughts and feelings develop, but there is nothing within the brain or the body that can *transform* into mind” ([*About Reincarnation – Consciousness*](#); emphasis added). Here, he is referring to primary and secondary causes of mind, also rendered as “the main, or substantial, cause and various contributory conditions.” To explain the difference between these two, an analogy is in order: Where does an oak tree come from? An acorn! Yet this seed by itself cannot give rise to an oak tree. Without soil, air, sunlight, and water, the seed will not sprout. But amongst all these ingredients for an oak tree, how can we tell which one is the so-called *main* cause? All of them are necessary, for if any one of them was missing, the seed would remain dormant. So, necessity cannot be what distinguishes causes from conditions.

Geshe-la answers (*ibid.*), “The substantial cause transforms into the effect, whereas the contributory conditions enable this

transformation to occur.” We do not say that it is water or soil that turns into an oak tree; only the acorn carries this potential—in this case, oak tree DNA, which is activated by the presence of secondary causes. Therefore, it is the seed that sprouts and grows into an oak tree, while the contributory conditions serve to bring this transformation about. Another example is given (*ibid.*):

A clay pot is produced from its substantial cause—the clay it is made of—and a number of contributory conditions, such as the potter, his wheel, and the kiln, which serve to mould the clay into the particular form of the pot.

One can also consider the natural formation of a diamond: the substantial cause being carbon, and the necessary contributory conditions being extreme heat and pressure. In short, the substantial cause is that which is *transformed*, while the contributory conditions are the *transformers*.

Geshe-la goes on to say (*ibid.*) that “The substantial cause of a thing must be something of similar type or substance. Thus, the substantial cause of a clay pot must be clay and the substantial cause of a gold coin must be gold.” So, obviously, an apple seed cannot be the substantial cause of an oak tree, which is a basis for saying that they are not part of the same continuum of cause and effect. Likewise, since mind or “subjective experience” has a subjective nature, then its main cause must also have a subjective nature. This cannot be the brain, for neither matter nor unintentional actions have subjective properties that can transform into subjective experiences. Instead, nonvirtuous intentions transform into experiences of suffering, and virtuous

intentions transform into experiences of happiness—the main point being that virtue and non-virtue are both subjective in nature, just as the experiences to which they give rise. Again, none of the autonomic functions of the brain are subjective in this sense—we actually experience minds of anger and love, but our heartbeat and digestion usually go about unnoticed; there is meaning behind words of blame or praise, but hiccups and coughs* have no meaning at all (* unless done *intentionally!*). It is on this basis that Geshe-la concludes (*ibid.*):

The only thing that can transform into one moment of mind is a previous moment of mind. If this is the case, then where does the first moment of mind of this life come from? The only possible answer is from a previous moment of mind. This is the most important reason establishing the existence of reincarnation.

It is the foregoing inferential reasoning that, for Buddhists, establishes that body and mind arise from different continuums.



Becoming a Bodhisattva

"Through watering the ground of affectionate love with cherishing love,
And then sowing the seeds of wishing love and compassion,
The medicinal tree of bodhichitta will grow." — Je Tsongkhapa

Modern Buddhism eModernBuddhism.com	The Sevenfold Cause and Effect	Equalizing and Exchanging Self with Others (Lojong)
Affectionate Love	7. Developing equanimity 8. Recognizing that all living beings are other mothers 9. Remembering the kindness of all mother beings Developing the wish to repay the kindness of all mother beings Developing affectionate love	
Cherishing Love		10. Equalizing self and others 11. The disadvantages of self-cherishing 12. The advantages of cherishing others 13. Exchanging self with others
Wishing Love & Universal Compassion	14. Great compassion (16. Wishing Love)	
Actual Bodhichitta	Developing superior intention 18. Developing bodhichitta	15. Taking 17. Giving

(Numbers 7-18 refer to the 'great scope' meditations given in *The New Meditation Handbook*.)

The Bodhisattva Vow of Prince Siddhartha

<p>Contact</p> <p><i>OBSERVES IMMEASURABLE LIVING BEINGS</i></p> <p><i>"I am one single person but other living beings are countless."</i></p>	<p><i>Sometimes Prince Siddhartha would go into the capital city of his father's kingdom...</i></p>
<p>Feeling (Affectionate Love)</p> <p><i>EVERYONE IS PLEASANT, LIKEABLE, AND BEAUTIFUL</i></p> <p><i>"They are all my kind mothers."</i></p>	<p><i>...to see how the people lived.</i></p>
<p>Attention</p> <p><i>FOCUSSES ON THEIR SUFFERING AND LACK OF PURE HAPPINESS</i></p> <p><i>"These countless mother beings have to experience unbearable physical suffering and mental pain in this life and in their countless future lives."</i></p>	<p><i>During these visits, he came into contact with many old people and sick people, and on one occasion he saw a corpse. These encounters left a deep impression on his mind and led him to realize that all living beings without exception have to experience the sufferings of birth, sickness, aging, and death. Because he understood the laws of reincarnation, he also realized that living beings experience these sufferings not just once, but again and again, in life after life without cessation.</i></p>
<p>Discrimination (Cherishing Love)</p> <p><i>CONSIDERS OTHERS' SUFFERING AND HAPPINESS AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ONE'S OWN</i></p> <p><i>"Compared with the suffering of these countless living beings, my own suffering is insignificant."</i></p>	<p><i>Seeing how all living beings are trapped in this vicious circle of suffering...</i></p>
<p>Aspiration (Wishing Love & Compassion)</p> <p><i>WISHES TO PROTECT ALL LIVING BEINGS FROM SUFFERING AND GIVE THEM PURE HAPPINESS</i></p> <p><i>"I must liberate all living beings from suffering permanently."</i></p>	<p><i>...he felt deep compassion for them, and he developed a sincere wish to free all of them from their suffering.</i></p>
<p>Supreme Intention (The Bodhisattva's Vow)</p> <p><i>THE PROMISE TO BECOME A BUDDHA FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL</i></p> <p><i>"For this purpose I must attain a Buddha's enlightenment."</i></p>	<p><i>Realizing that only a fully enlightened Buddha has the wisdom and the power to help all living beings in this way, he resolved to leave the palace and retire to the solitude of the forest where he would engage in profound meditation until he attained enlightenment.</i></p>

The Emptiness of the Body

Normally when we think, “my body,” a body that exists from its own side, and is a single entity not depending upon its parts, appears to our mind. Such a body is the object of negation and is non-existent. “Truly existent body,” “inherently existent body,” and “body that exists from its own side” all have the same meaning, and all are objects of negation. If the body exists as it appears, it must exist in one of two ways: as its parts or separate from its parts; there is no third possibility.

9:78-79

*Neither the feet nor the calves are the body,
Nor are the thighs or the loins.
Neither the front nor the back of the abdomen is the body,
Nor are the chest or the shoulders.
Neither the sides nor the hands are the body, nor are the arms or the armpits.
None of the inner organs is the body,
Nor is the head or the neck.
So where is the body to be found?*

If the body is one with its parts, is it the individual parts or the collection of its parts? If it is the individual parts, then is it the hands, the face, the skin, the bones, the flesh, or the internal organs? By checking carefully, “Is the head the body? Is the flesh the body?” and so on, we will easily see that none of the individual parts of the body is the body.

If the body is not its individual parts, is it the collection of its parts? The collection of the parts of the body cannot be the body. Why? The parts of the body are all non-bodies, so how can a collection of non-bodies be a body? The hands, feet, and so forth are all parts of the body, but not the body itself. Even though all these parts are assembled together, this collection remains simply parts; it does not magically transform into the part-possessor, the body.

9:80

*If you say that the body is distributed
Among all its different parts,
Although we can say that the parts exist in the parts,
Where does a separate possessor of these parts abide?*

If the body is not its parts, the only other possibility is that it is separate from its parts; but if all the parts of the body were to disappear, there would be nothing left that could be called the body. We should imagine that all the parts of our body melt into light and disappear. First the skin dissolves, then the flesh, blood, and internal organs, and finally the skeleton melts and vanishes into light. Is there anything left that is our body? There is nothing. There is no body separate from its parts.

We have now exhausted all possibilities. The body is not its parts and it is not separate from its parts. Clearly, the body cannot be found. Where previously there appeared an inherently existent body, there now appears an absence of that body. This absence of an inherently existent body is the emptiness of the body.

(Excerpted from *Introduction to Buddhism* by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso)

THE COLLECTION OF PARTS
“*Basis of Imputation*”

vs.

THE PARTLESS WHOLE
“*Imputation*”

If the whole exists as it appears—*independent of the mind*—it must exist in one of two ways: as its parts or separate from its parts; there is no third possibility. If the whole is one with its parts, is it the individual parts or the collection of its parts? If it is the individual parts, then which part is it? By checking carefully, “Is this part the whole? Is that part the whole?” and so on, we will easily see that none of the individual parts of the whole is the whole.

If the whole is not its individual parts, is it the collection of its parts? The collection of the parts of the whole cannot be the whole. Why? The parts of the whole are all parts, so how can a collection of parts be a partless whole? These are all parts of the whole, but not the whole itself. Even though all these parts are assembled together, this collection remains simply parts; it does not magically transform into the part-possessor, the whole. (How can a collection of possessions be the possessor?)

If the whole is not its parts, the only other possibility is that it is separate from its parts; but if all the parts of the whole were to disappear, there would be nothing left that could be called the whole. We should imagine that all the parts of the whole melt into light and disappear. First one part dissolves, then a second part, a third, a fourth, and finally the last part melts and vanishes into light. Is there anything left that is the whole? There is nothing. There is no whole separate from its parts.

The fact that the whole cannot be found upon investigation does not imply that the whole does not exist at all. The whole does exist, but only as a conventional imputation. In accordance with accepted convention, we can impute the name “whole” to the assembly of various parts; but if we try to pinpoint the whole, hoping to find a substantially existent phenomenon to which the word “whole” refers, we find no whole. This unfindability of the whole is the emptiness of the whole, the ultimate nature of the whole. The whole that exists as mere imputation is the conventional nature of the whole.

Although it is incorrect to assert that the whole is identical with the collection of the parts, there is no fault in saying that the whole is imputed upon this collection. Even though the parts of the whole are plural, the whole is singular. The so-called “whole” is simply an imputation made by the mind that imputes it. It does not exist from the object’s side. There is no fault in imputing a singular phenomenon to a group of many things. For example, we can impute the singular “forest” to a group of many trees, or “herd” to a group of many cows.

(Adapted from *Introduction to Buddhism* by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso)

The Three Scopes & The Three Trainings

Stages of the Path (Lamrim)	Moral Discipline (<i>shila</i>) - <i>Vinaya</i> -	Concentration (<i>samadhi</i>) - <i>Sutra</i> -	Wisdom (<i>prajna</i>) - <i>Abhidharma</i> -
Initial Scope ↳ protection from lower rebirth	<u>Refuge Vows</u> Going for Refuge & Abandoning the 10 Non-Virtues	<u>Placement Meditation</u> Single-Pointed Focus on Virtue ("Meditation")	<u>Analytical Meditation</u> Bringing to Mind a Virtuous Object ("Contemplation")
Intermediate Scope (Hinayana) ↳ Liberation via Renunciation	<u>Pratimoksha Vows</u> Right Speech Right Action Right Livelihood	<u>Tranquil Abiding (<i>samatha</i>)</u> Right Effort Right Mindfulness Right Concentration	<u>Superior Seeing (<i>vipassana</i>)</u> Right View Right Intention
Great Scope (Mahayana) ↳ Enlightenment via Bodhichitta	<u>Bodhisattva/Tantric Vows</u> Perfection of Giving Perfection of Morality Perfection of Patience	<u>Tranquil Abiding (<i>shamatha</i>)</u> Perfection of Effort Perfection of Mental Stabilization (<i>dhyana/zen</i>)	<u>Superior Seeing (<i>vipashyana</i>)</u> Perfection of Wisdom (<i>prajnaparamita</i>)

Renunciation: [T]he actual paths to liberation from samsara are the three higher trainings: higher moral discipline, higher concentration, and higher wisdom. They are called "higher" trainings because they are practiced with the motivation of renunciation. To attain liberation, we need to abandon self-grasping, the root of samsara, by attaining a special wisdom directly realizing emptiness, or selflessness. This attainment depends upon a special type of concentration known as "tranquil abiding", which in turn depends upon pure moral discipline. Moral discipline helps to pacify our distractions, the main obstacle to attaining the concentration of tranquil abiding; tranquil abiding makes our mind stable, lucid, and powerful; and wisdom realizing emptiness directly opposes self-grasping ignorance. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Introduction to Buddhism: an Explanation of the Buddhist Way of Life*, p. 73)

Bodhichitta: Maintaining the Bodhisattva vows is the basis for training in a Bodhisattva's actions, which consist of the practice of the six perfections, the path to enlightenment... All the Mahayana practices of Sutra and Tantra are included within the six perfections. They are exclusively the practices of Bodhisattvas because they are all motivated by bodhichitta. Any action of giving that is not motivated by bodhichitta is not the perfection of giving. In the same way, any practice of moral discipline, patience, effort, mental stabilization, or wisdom is not the practice of a perfection unless it is motivated by bodhichitta. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Joyful Path of Good Fortune: the Complete Buddhist Path to Enlightenment*, p. 447)

Having gained some experience of bodhichitta, we should bring it to completion by practising the three higher trainings of the Mahayana: training in the perfection of moral discipline by keeping the Bodhisattva vows purely; training in the perfection of mental stabilization by striving to attain tranquil abiding; and training in the perfection of wisdom by developing superior seeing. (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *The New Meditation Handbook: Meditations to Make our Life Happy and Meaningful*, p. 101)

Practising the Moral Discipline of Restraint

“Conscientiousness should be practised in conjunction with mindfulness and alertness. With *mindfulness* we tie our mind to a virtuous object. A virtuous object is any object that has a positive effect on our mind, such as the twenty-one objects of meditation presented in *The New Meditation Handbook*. We should try to keep our mind on virtuous objects all the time. *Alertness* is a type of wisdom that understands the faults of delusions and keeps watch over our mind to check whether or not we are beginning to develop inappropriate attention. If through alertness we discover that a delusion is about to arise we should immediately prevent it by recalling the faults of delusions. This is the practice of *conscientiousness*.”

<i>Mindfulness</i>	<i>Examining my mental continuum throughout all my actions,</i>	At the very beginning of any action, whether it is thought, word or physical deed, we should examine our motivation to see whether it is virtuous or non-virtuous.
<i>Alertness</i>	<i>As soon as a delusion develops Whereby I or others would act inappropriately,</i>	If we discover that the motive behind the action we are contemplating is defiled by one of the delusions such as jealousy, greed or ill will...
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	<i>May I firmly face it and avert it.</i>	...we should bring to mind the faults of that delusion and immediately abandon it.

Sources: *How to Understand the Mind and Meaningful to Behold* by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso; *Eight Verses of Training the Mind* by Geshe Langri Tangpa.

The Perfection of Concentration: The Bodhisattva's Training in Tranquil Abiding

Mental Abidings	ANALYTICAL		PLACEMENT		
	Seeking	Finding	Holding	Remaining	
1. Placing the mind	✓	✓	1 minute		
2. Continual placement	✓	✓		5 minutes	
3. Replacement					1 hour
4. Close placement					Whole meditation session

MENTAL SINKING <i>Destroys the Clarity of Concentration</i>	CONCENTRATION <i>Single-pointedly Holding the Object Clearly</i>	MENTAL EXCITEMENT (DISTRACTION) <i>Destroys the Single-pointedness of Concentration</i>
GROSS MENTAL SINKING <i>Clarity and intensity diminish greatly</i>	← 1. Placing the mind (listening) ← 2. Continual placement (contemplating) 3. Replacement (mindfulness) → 4. Close placement (mindfulness) →	GROSS MENTAL EXCITEMENT <i>Object is completely lost (forgetfulness)</i>
SUBTLE MENTAL SINKING <i>Clarity remains, but grip loosens*</i>	← 5. Controlling (alertness) 6. Pacifying (alertness) →	SUBTLE MENTAL EXCITEMENT <i>Object is partly lost, but not completely</i>
VERY SUBTLE MENTAL SINKING	← 7. Completely pacifying (effort) → 8. Single-pointedness (effort)	VERY SUBTLE MENTAL EXCITEMENT
* the hold on the object, or the intensity of the concentration, decreases slightly	9. Placement in equipoise (complete familiarity)	

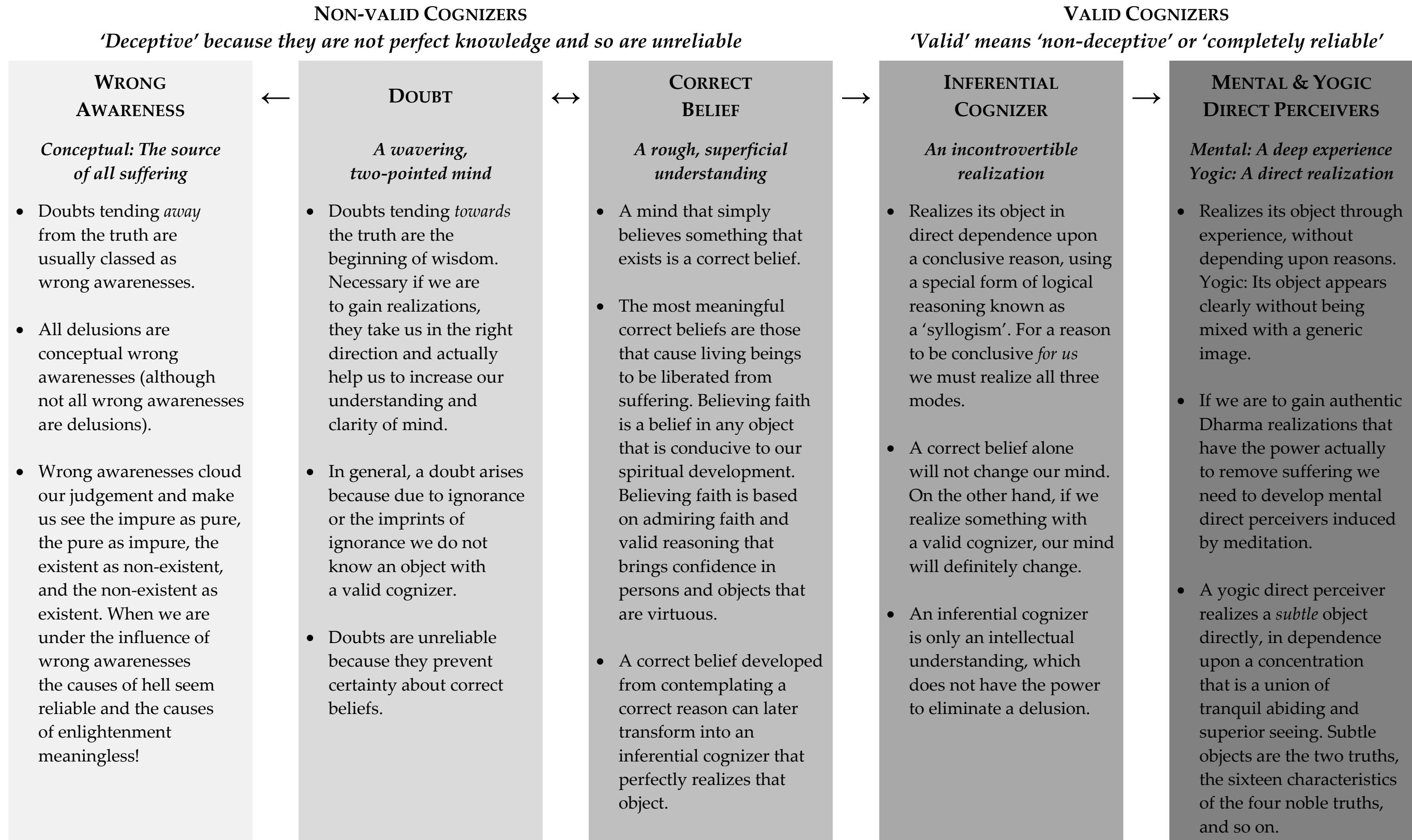
The Four Noble Truths: Apply Meditation to Whatever Circumstances You Meet

“The only way we can make ourself and others happy all the time is through practising Buddha’s teachings. This is because happiness depends on a peaceful mind. Through practicing Buddha’s teachings we can develop and maintain a peaceful mind all the time, so that we will be happy all the time; regardless of whether our external conditions are good or bad, if we maintain a peaceful mind all the time we will be happy all the time.” (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *The Mirror of Dharma*, p. 4)



“We should judge whether or not we believe that the main cause of suffering is our non-virtuous actions and the main cause of happiness is our virtuous actions. If we do not believe this we will never apply effort to accumulating virtuous actions, or merit, and we will never purify our non-virtuous actions, and because of this we will experience suffering and difficulties continually, in life after life without end.” (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Modern Buddhism*, p. 39)

Stepping Stones to Liberation: Transforming Doubts into Realizations



Overcoming Fear: Remain Natural While Changing Your Aspiration

We should know which type of being we are now—an ordinary or special small being, a middle being, or a great being. Through the practice of Lamrim instructions, we can progress from the level of an ordinary small being to that of a special small being, and then a middle being, a great being, and finally an enlightened being.

Initial Scope	Intermediate Scope	Great Scope	Enlightenment
An ordinary small being is someone whose aspiration does not extend beyond the limited goal of finding worldly happiness in this life alone.	A special small being is someone who has ceased to be interested in obtaining only the happiness of this life, and who aspires to the happiness of higher states of existence in future lives.	A middle being is someone who has ceased to be interested in obtaining changeable worldly happiness either in this present life or in any future life, and who seeks only the perfect happiness of freedom from all kinds of uncontrolled rebirth.	A great being is someone who has ceased to be interested in fulfilling only his or her own welfare, and who seeks to become fully enlightened so that he or she can help others find freedom from their suffering and experience the bliss of Buddhahood.
ATTACHMENT • This life	ATTACHMENT • <u>This life</u> • Samsara in general	ATTACHMENT • <u>This life</u> • <u>Samsara in general</u> • Solitary peace	ATTACHMENT • <u>This life</u> • <u>Samsara in general</u> • <u>Solitary peace</u>
FEAR • Ageing, sickness, and death	FEAR • <u>Ageing, sickness, and death</u> • Sufferings of the lower realms	FEAR • <u>Ageing, sickness, and death</u> • <u>Sufferings of the lower realms</u> • Any kind of uncontrolled rebirth	FEAR • <u>Ageing, sickness, and death</u> • <u>Sufferings of the lower realms</u> • <u>Any kind of uncontrolled rebirth</u> • The future suffering of all living beings

Close Placement of Mindfulness of the Body: Parallel Translations

	<i>GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE</i> (Neil Elliot, Kelsang Gyatso)	<i>A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE</i> (Stephen Batchelor)	<i>ENTERING THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT</i> (Marion Matics)	<i>THE WAY OF THE BODHISATTVA</i> (Padmakara Translation Group)	<i>ENGAGING IN BODHISATTVA BEHAVIOR</i> (Alexander Berzin)	<i>THE BODHISATTVACARYAVATARA</i> (Kate Crosby & Andrew Skilton)	<i>A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA WAY OF LIFE</i> (Vesna Wallace & B. Alan Wallace)
78	Neither the feet nor the calves are the body, Nor are the thighs or the loins. Neither the front nor the back of the abdomen is the body, Nor are the chest or the shoulders.	The body is neither feet nor calves; thighs and the waist are not the body; the abdomen and back are not the body; and neither are the chest and shoulders the body.	The body is not the feet or the legs or the breast. Neither is the body the hips, the belly, the back, nor the arms.	What we call the body is not feet or shins, The body, likewise, is not thighs or loins. It's not the belly nor indeed the back, And from the chest and arms the body is not formed.	A body is neither the feet nor the calves; Nor is a body the thighs or the hips. The belly or the back is not a body; Neither is a body the chest or the arms.	The body is not the feet, not the calves, not the thighs, and the body is not the buttocks. It is not the stomach nor the back either, nor is it the chest nor arms.	The body is not the feet, the calves, nor the thighs. Nor is the body the hips, the abdomen, the back, the chest, or the arms.
79	Neither the sides nor the hands are the body, nor are the arms or the armpits. None of the inner organs is the body, Nor is the head or the neck. So where is the body to be found?	The ribs and the hands are not the body; armpits and the nape of the neck are not the body; all inner organs are not the body; neither the head nor neck are the body. Therefore, what truly existent body is there among these parts?	It is likewise not the hands or the sides of the armpits or the shoulders or any external mark. The body is not the neck or the head. What then is the body?	The body is not ribs or hands, Armpits, shoulders, bowels, or entrails; It is not the head or throat: From none of these is "body" constituted.	The sides of the torso or the hands are not a body; Nor is a body the armpits or the shoulders. The inner organs as well are not it; And neither is a body the head or also the neck. So what (alternative) could a body be here?	It is not the hands nor the sides either, nor the armpits, nor is it the shoulder area. The body is not the neck nor the head. What among these, then, is the body?	It is not the hands, the sides of the torso, or the armpits, nor is it characterized by the shoulders. Nor is the body the neck or the head. Then what here is the body?
80	If you say that the body is distributed Among all its different parts, Although we can say that the parts exist in the parts, Where does a separate possessor of these parts abide?	If the body abided, in all its limbs equally in all directions, indeed I could say that all the parts of the body abide in the parts of its limbs, but where could the partless, truly existent body itself abide? (It would have to exist independent of its parts and unrelated to them).	If the body finds itself partially in all [parts], the parts find themselves in parts, and so where does the body itself abide?	If "body," step by step, Pervades and spreads itself throughout its members, Its parts indeed are present in the parts, But where does "body," in itself, abide?	If this body were located With a portion in all of these; Then, although the parts are located in the parts, Where is it itself located?	If you argue that the body is present in part in all of these, [our response is that] it is only the parts that are present in the parts, so where does it occur itself?	If this body partially exists in all these and its parts exist in their parts, where does it stand by itself?
81	And if you say that the entire body exists Within each part, such as the hand, It follows that there are as many bodies As there are different parts!	And if the entire, truly existent body abided separately in each of the individual parts such as the hands, then there would have to be as many bodies as there are parts.	If the body is everywhere completely in every part, then there must exist as many bodies as there are parts.	If "body," single and entire, Is present in the hand and other members, However many parts there are, the hand and all the rest, You'll find an equal quantity of "bodies."	And if a body itself, in its entirety, Were located (everywhere), in the hands and so forth, There would be as many bodies As there were hands and so on.	If the body did exist in its entirety in the hands and all these other parts, then there would be just as many bodies as there are hands and other parts.	If the body were located in its entirety in the hands and other limbs, there would be just as many bodies as there are hands and so forth.
82	If a truly existent body cannot be found either inside or outside the body, How can there be a truly existent body among the parts such as the hands? And since there is no body separate from its parts, How can there be a truly existent body at all?	If there is no truly existent body outside or within, how could the hands and so forth have such a body at all? And since it is not something different from the hands and other parts, how could a separate body, unrelated to its parts, exist?	The body is neither within nor without. How is the body in its parts? How is it outside its parts? How indeed does it exist?	If "body" is not outside or within its parts, How is it, then, residing in its members? And since it has no basis other than its parts, How can it be said to be at all?	As a body's not (located) outside or inside (the parts), How could a body exist in terms of the hands and so forth (as their possessor)? As it's also not (a possessor) separate from the hands and so on, How could it possibly be (truly) existent?	The body is not inside. It is not outside. How can the body be in the hands and other parts? It is not separate from the hands and other parts. How, then, is it to be found?	The body is neither inside nor outside. How can the body be in the hands and other limbs? It is not separate from the hands and the like. How, then, can it be found at all?
83	Therefore, there is no body. But, because of ignorance, we perceive a body within the hands and so forth, Just like a mind mistakenly apprehending a person When observing the shape of a pile of stones at dusk.	Therefore the body is not truly existent, but, through being confused about its hands and other parts, a mind that mistakes them for a (truly existent) body arises. But the body does not truly exist in the way it is apprehended by that mind. It is like the mind apprehending a pile of stones as a man because of their being set up in a form similar to a man's.	The body does not exist, but because of delusion (<i>moha</i>) there is a body-idea in its parts: because of a kind of fabrication, like imagining a man in a stump.	Thus there is no "body" in the limbs, But from illusion does the idea spring, To be affixed to a specific shape—Just as when a scarecrow is mistaken for a man.	Thus, a body's not (truly) existent; But, because of bewilderment in terms of the hands and so forth, A dualistic mind arises of a body. It's like the dualistic mind that arises of a man in terms of a scarecrow, By its feature of having been set up in its shape.	So there is no body. Yet, under the influence of delusion, there is the belief in a body regarding the hands and other parts, because of their particular configuration, just as one might believe there is a person when looking at a post.	Thus, the body does not exist. However, on account of delusion, there is the impression of the body with regard to the hands and the like, because of their specific configuration, just as there is the impression of a person with regard to a pillar. (Tibetan: "...like perceiving a scarecrow as a person, due to its specific configuration.")

	<i>GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE</i>	<i>A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE</i>	<i>ENTERING THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT</i>	<i>THE WAY OF THE BODHISATTVA</i>	<i>ENGAGING IN BODHISATTVA BEHAVIOR</i>	<i>THE BODHISATTVACARYAVATARA</i>	<i>A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA WAY OF LIFE</i>
84	For as long as the causes of mistaking the stones for a person are present, There will be a mistaken apprehension of the body of a person. Likewise, for along as the hands and so forth are grasped as truly existent, There will be an apprehension of a truly existent body.	In the same way that a pile of stones will appear to be a man for as long as the causal conditions to mistake them as a man are assembled, so will the hands and so forth appear as a (truly existent) body for as long as the causal conditions to mistake them for a body are present.	As long as there is a complete collection of causes, the body is taken to be a man. Likewise, as long as it is in its members, the body is seen there.	As long as the conditions are assembled, A body will appear and seem to be a man. As long as all the parts are likewise present, It's there that we will see a body.	For as long as the conditions are assembled, The body (of a scarecrow) is seen as a man; Likewise, for as long as there are hands and so on, A body is seen in terms of them.	As long as the combination of causes lasts, that post looks like a person. In the same way, as long as it lasts in respect of the hands and other parts, the body continues to be seen in them.	As long as the collection of conditions lasts, the body appears like a person. Likewise, as long as it lasts with regard to the hands and the like, the body continues to be seen in them.
85	Just as the body lacks true existence, so do its parts such as the hands; For they too are <u>merely imputed upon</u> the collection of their parts, the fingers and so forth. The fingers, in turn, are merely imputed upon the collection of their parts, such as the joints; And, when the joints are separated into their parts, they too are found to lack true existence.	Just as the body as a whole is not truly existent, how can the hands be truly existent? They are only a composite of fingers. The fingers too are not truly existent because they are a collection of joints, and the joints in turn, by being divided into their parts, are also found to be not truly existent.	In the same way there can be no foot, because that is a mass of toes. The limb is likewise a collection of limbs, separated according to their parts.	Likewise, since it is a group of fingers, The hand itself is not a single entity. And so it is with fingers, made of joints— And joints themselves consist of many parts.	Similarly, because of its being a composite of fingers, Which one could be a hand? (The same with) that (finger) as well, because of its being a composite of joints; And a joint as well, from the breakdown into its own parts;	In the same way, since it is an assemblage of toes, which one is the foot? The same goes for a toe, since it is an assemblage of joints. A joint can also be analysed into its own constituents.	In the same way, since it is an assemblage of toes, which one would be a foot? The same applies to a toe, since it is an assemblage of joints, and to a joint as well, because of its division into its own parts. (Tibetan: "fingers" and "hand" instead of "toes and "foot.")
86	The parts of the joints are <u>merely imputed upon</u> a collection of atoms, And they, in turn, are <u>merely imputed upon</u> their directional parts. Since the directional parts, too, can be further divided, Atoms lack true existence and are empty, like space.	Likewise when these parts are divided into atomic particles and the atomic particles into their directional parts, they are revealed as multiples and thus cannot be truly existent units. Even when the directional parts are divided up they are found to be devoid of truly existent parts. Hence they are found to be as empty as space, and so even atomic particles can have no true existence. Thus although the body appears to be truly existent, in fact it is not.	The parts also are split into atoms. The atom also is in six sections. The six sections are empty space without parts. Consequently there is no atom.	These parts themselves will break down into atoms, And atoms will divide according to direction. These fragments, too, will also fall to nothing. Thus atoms are like empty space—they have no real existence.	And a part as well, through a breakdown into particles; And that particle as well, because of directional divisions; And a directional division too, because of its being without (findable) parts, like space. Consequently, even particles don't (truly) exist.	Even the constituents can be analysed down to atoms. The atom too can be divided according to the directions. The division of a direction, since it is without parts, leaves space. Therefore the atom does not exist.	Even the parts can be divided into atoms, and an atom itself can be divided according to its cardinal directions. The section of a cardinal direction is space, because it is without parts. Therefore, an atom does not exist.
87	Therefore, what intelligent person Would develop attachment for this dream-like form? And since there is no truly existent body, Who is truly existent male and who is truly existent female?	Therefore who, having analyzed it, would be attached to this dream-like form? And when in this way the body is not truly existent, how can the distinction be made into (truly existent) male and female bodies?	When the form is like a dream, then who will deliberately fall in love with it? And since there is not body, then what is a woman. And what is a man?	All form, therefore, is like a dream, And who will be attached to it, who thus investigates? The body, in this way, has no existence; What is male, therefore, and what is female?	Therefore, what discerning (person) would be attached To a bodily form, which is like a dream? And when, like that, a body doesn't (truly) exist, Then what's a male and what's a female?	What person who analyses things thoroughly would take delight in a form which, as has been demonstrated, is like a dream? And since the body, as demonstrated, does not exist, then what woman or what man is there?	What discerning person would be attached to form, which is just like a dream? Since the body does not exist, then who is a woman and who is a man?

Close Placement of Mindfulness of the Body: Parallel Commentaries

<i>MEANINGFUL TO BEHOLD (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso) (pp. 417-420)</i>	<i>NECTAR OF MANJUSHRI'S SPEECH (Kunzang Pelden) (pp. 357-360)</i>	<i>THE BRILLIANT TORCH (Kunzang Sonam) (pp. 204-208)</i>	<i>TRANSCENDENT WISDOM (Dalai Lama) (pp. 67-71)</i>	<i>PRACTICING WISDOM (Dalai Lama) (pp. 110-113)</i>	<i>THE WAY OF AWAKENING (Geshe Yeshe Tobden) (pp. 316-320)</i>	<i>A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE (Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche) (pp. 145-147)</i>
<i>An Extensive Explanation of the Reasons that Establish Selflessness of Phenomena</i>	<i>Meditation on the Absence of Self in Phenomena</i>	<i>Detailed Explanation on the Logical Proofs of the Non-substantiality of Phenomena</i>	<i>Phenomenal Identitylessness</i>	<i>The Nature of Phenomena</i>	<i>The Lack of True Existence of the Self of Phenomena</i>	<i>The Egolessness of Phenomena</i>
<i>Explaining Selflessness of Phenomena by Means of the Four Close Placements of Mindfulness</i>		<i>Explanation of the Non-substantiality of Phenomena by Means of the Four Close Mindfulnesses</i>	<i>The Four Applications of Mindfulness</i>		<i>The Four Close Placements of Mindfulness</i>	
<i>Close Placement of Mindfulness of the Body</i>	<i>Close Mindfulness of the Body</i>	<i>How to Meditate on the Close Mindfulness of the Body</i>	<i>Mindfulness of the Body</i>		<i>Close Placement of Mindfulness on the Body</i>	
<i>Establishing the Non-true Existence of the Body as Possessor of its Parts</i>	<i>Examination of the Body in General</i>	<i>Establishing that the Body, Made up of Parts, Has No Inherent Being</i>				
Intro To ordinary people like us the body appears as truly existent and we grasp at, hold on to and assent to this true existence. In reality, the body has no true existence at all. In what way do we cling to it as truly existent? Instead of regarding it as a phenomenon merely imputed by conception we apprehend it as something existing by its own nature, from its own side. [...] Now we should try to examine clearly the way in which we grasp this body as being truly existent. At times when we think, 'My body is very attractive' and so forth, we are not thinking that our hand or our head is beautiful. We are instinctively apprehending and grasping at a vividly appearing body that is separate from and unrelated to its parts. In this way we apprehend a truly existent body. In fact the body does not exist in the way in which we apprehend it, and it lacks or is empty of this apparent true existence. If the body really were truly existent then it would have to be findable within one of its parts, as a collection of its parts or as something other than these two alternatives. Upon investigation a truly existent body is never to be found in any of these three possible places.			<i>The Way of the Bodhisattva</i> gives us a systematic practice for these four mindfulness meditations on emptiness. Let us take as our example the human body. It is composed of many different parts—head, arms, legs, and so on. There is also the whole—the body as a complete unit. Generally when we think of <i>body</i> , it appears to our mind, at least on the surface, as if there is a single entity that we can point to as a tangible, unitary reality. Based on this commonsense view, we can speak of various characteristics and parts of the body. In other words, we feel as if there is fundamentally a thing called <i>body</i> , and we can speak about its parts. Yet if we search for this "body" apart from its various parts, we come to realize that it is actually not to be found. This is what Shantideva means in the following verses.	Since the Madhyamika-Prasangikas maintain that no phenomenon is endowed with true existence—meaning that nothing exists by its own nature, intrinsically, independently of its own causes, its own parts, or of the labels applied to it—the Prasangikas' view opposes that of all other schools. The exegesis takes the form of a debate—show implicitly in the root text and explicitly in the various commentaries—between the exponents of the lesser Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophical schools on the one hand and the Prasangikas on the other. [...] <i>Some non-Buddhist schools state that there is a body separate from its parts, and that its nature is different from its parts; the same should then apply to the body and the self. These schools in fact consider the body to be impermanent, but the self to be permanent.</i>	In this chapter on perfection of wisdom of <i>A Guide to a Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i> it is taught that through meditation we can discover egolessness of the individual. Having discussed the egolessness of self, we are now going to discuss the egolessness of outer phenomena. The nonexistence of phenomena is explained here in four points: contemplation of the body, contemplation of the feelings, contemplation of the mind, and contemplation of phenomena. Nonexistence of the self is the lack of identity of that which we feel strongly as an "I." The nonexistence of phenomena means that nothing material has true substance as an independent identity. Whatever we form attachment to, that is regarded as clinging to the identity of outer phenomena. Clinging to our physical body is regarded as being attached to the existence of outer phenomena. Even if we believe that only parts of our body exist, this is also regarded as clinging to the existence of outer phenomena. So in general, whether we cling to the body or even just to parts of the body, there is no nature, no substantial entity in either body or limb. That is why we mindfully contemplate the body here with:	
None of the individual parts of the body is the body. The feet and legs are not the body, nor are the thighs and waist. The stomach and back are not the body, nor are the chest and shoulders.	What we call the "body" is mere imputation; it does not exist inherently. Our reason for saying this is that if a body, which is apprehended as a single (partless) whole complete with all its sense faculties, existed as such, it would have to be present in its members, for example the hand. But the various body parts, the foot, the shins and calves, are not the body. The thighs and hips, the waist and loins, the belly, back, chest and arms, and so on and so forth—none of these is the body.	What we call the body does not exist inherently. If it did, then if we looked to see how this thing designated 'body' is objectively, we would have to find the basis for imputation of a body either in individual parts like the feet or in the combination of the limbs or in something else different from them as being the illustrative basis of the body. But we do not find anything. The visible body of a human being does not exist in any of its parts: the feet and calves are not the human body; neither the thighs nor the hips are the body; nor are the belly or the back the body, for the body is merely imputed on the basis of these. The chest and arms are not the body...	If the self is imputed in dependence upon the body and mind, what then is the nature of the body? We say "my body" and "human body," and such designations are made upon the collection of the feet, head, hands, and so on. If one asks whether any individual component such as the head or a hand is the body, the answer must be "no." For if each part were the body, then a person would have many bodies. If quite a few of the parts are missing, it seems that there is not a body, but if only one is missing, the body still seems to be there. This is a matter of convention. If it seems inappropriate to make the designation of "body," it appears that there is no body; but if the designation is made, then there is a body. This is not determined by some presumably objective reality.	We have a concept of our body as a unitary entity, which we hold to be precious and dear. Yet if we look more carefully, we find that the body is not the feet, nor the calves, the thighs, the hips, the abdomen, the back, the chest, the arms, the hands...	The feet and the calves are not the body; the thighs and the waist are not the body; and neither are the chest or the shoulders.	<i>The body is not the feet or the legs or the breast. Neither is the body the hips, the belly, the back, nor the arms.</i>

	<i>MEANINGFUL TO BEHOLD</i>	<i>NECTAR OF MANJUSHRI'S SPEECH</i>	<i>THE BRILLIANT TORCH</i>	<i>TRANSCENDENT WISDOM</i>	<i>PRACTICING WISDOM</i>	<i>THE WAY OF AWAKENING</i>	<i>A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S</i>
79	The ribs and hands are not the body, nor are the armpits and back of the neck. They are all parts of the body, but none of them is the body itself. If the individual parts were the body, it would follow that one person would have many bodies. The collection of the parts is also not the body because the body is merely imputed in dependence upon this collection. The collection is the basis of imputation and the body is the imputed phenomenon; but the collection itself is not the body. The body cannot be found separate from the individual parts and their collection. In this way it is shown that the body is merely imputed by the conceptual mind and in no way exists inherently, from its own side.	As Shantideva says: The body is not ribs or hands, armpits, shoulders, bowels or entrails such as lungs and heart. It is not the head and it is not the throat. What is the "body," then, in all of this? None of these different elements in fact conforms to the actual definition of the whole body. Indeed, they appear to be related to each other, but like body parts scattered on a charnel ground, they do not make up a single whole. How could any member, left to itself, constitute the body? Moreover, a hand may be amputated, but the body is still considered to remain. What, therefore, is this so-called body, this aggregate of many parts? In itself, it is nothing.	...nor are the sides of the body or the hands the body. The armpits and shoulders are not the body, nor are the viscera. The head and throat are not the body. In none of these is there an objectively existing human body.	In terms of the author's analysis, the feet and so on are the parts, and a single human body is that which has those components. The "whole," the body, is imputed in dependence upon its parts. None of those parts can be identified as being the body.	...the side of the torso, the armpits, the shoulders, the neck, nor the head or any other parts. So where is "body" to be found? If, on the other hand, the body were identical to the individual parts of the body, then the very idea of the body as a unitary entity would be untenable.	The ribs and the hands are not the body; the armpits are not the body; all inner organs are not the body; neither the head nor the neck are the body. Therefore, what truly existent body is there among these parts?	<i>It is likewise not the hands or the sides or the armpits or the shoulders or any external mark. The body is not the neck or the head. What then is the body?</i>
	<i>Other schools:</i> We maintain that the body does exist as a phenomenon separate from its parts. <i>Prasangika:</i> Does the body exist partially amongst all its different parts or does the entire body exist in each part? In the former case there is nothing wrong in maintaining that the body's parts exist in the hands, legs, and so forth, but other than these parts where would a separate body as a possessor of these parts exist? It cannot be within its parts or separate from them. Therefore it is seen to be merely imputed in dependence upon them.	Here it will be objected that, granted that the individual parts are not the body, the body nevertheless is a reality and is present throughout its parts. It should be pointed out, however, that if this is so, it means either that one "body" with all its parts is present throughout our whole anatomy or that an entire body is present in each of our physical parts (thus implying a multiplicity of bodies). If it is meant that the parts of the "body" coincide with the physical parts, hands and so forth, this means that the body's parts correspond to the physical members in which it is present. But if we examine to see where this body, whole and entire, is actually located, checking off each part one by one, no single, pervasive body is found.	You might think then that the existence of the visible body made up of constituent parts is based on all its parts. In that case, does the visible partible body, whose existence is based on its parts, reside partially in all its parts, one part in the hands, another parts in the feet and so on? Or does the gross partible body reside entire in each single part like the hands? If it were the first case, then the parts of the gross partible body would indeed reside in the parts such as the hands, but where do the parts themselves—like the hands—reside? We could never find where they reside, because the parts like the hands, themselves made up of parts, would necessarily reside in their own fingers. We can continue with this sort of investigation down to the level of the tiniest particles. Put another way, the parts of the body would indeed reside in each of the individual parts, but where would the partible body itself reside? It is not possible to observe any other basis for its existence than its parts.	<i>Hypothesis:</i> The body, as the whole, is distinct from its individual parts, and it pervades all of them, part by part. <i>Response:</i> You may assert that the body as the whole exists in each of its components, but this suggests that the body itself is not composed of parts. Where then does it exist?		<i>The body is made of the head, the trunk, and four limbs, but if we look at it closely, none of these are the body itself, nor is it their assemblage. However, the body depends on these, and they share the same nature.</i>	<i>If the body finds itself partially in all [parts], the parts find themselves in parts, and so where does the body itself abide?</i>
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MEANINGFUL TO BEHOLD	NECTAR OF MANJUSHRI'S SPEECH	THE BRILLIANT TORCH	TRANSCENDENT WISDOM	PRACTICING WISDOM	THE WAY OF AWAKENING	A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA's
In the latter case, if the entire body existed in each part, the absurd consequence would follow that the hands and all other parts are individually bodies. Therefore, there would be as many bodies as there are parts.	If, on the other hand, an entire body, complete with all its parts, subsists in the hand and all the other members, this means that there are as many bodies as there are bodily parts. But this is impossible, since we cling to the body as a single whole.	The second case is not acceptable either, because if the entire body, complete with all its parts, resided in each of the individual parts such as the hands, there would be as many gross bodies as there are parts like the hands and so on. Again, one would have the problem of never reaching the end of one's investigation.	If the body were located in each of the parts, there would be as many whole bodies as there are parts of the body, including the hands and so forth.	If this unitary, single entity called <i>body</i> is identical to, or exists separately in, each individual part, then just as there are various parts of the body, the body too will become multiple.	<i>If the body truly existed, each individual part should be the body itself, but it is not possible for a part to be the whole.</i> <i>If the body truly existed, since it has many parts, each individual part would be the body, and yet it is not possible for a part to be the whole. The doubt may then arise that the assemblage of limbs might be the body, but this is also not the body. The body is made up of the head, the trunk, the four limbs, and so forth. But if we look closely, the leg is not the body because it is only a limb, and so on.</i> <i>When we speak of one year, we are referring to the period of twelve months; therefore the first, second, or third month cannot be the year, because they are only parts of it. The parts of the year are twelve—the twelve months—but a month does not have twelve months as its parts, and therefore a month of the year is not the year. Since a month does not contain twelve months, it is not a year. A year is designated by the duration of twelve months.</i> <i>As a part of the year cannot be the year itself, so a part of the body cannot be the body itself. When we look for the body among its various parts, we do not find it, and we also do not find a body separate from them. If we look for the body using analysis, not being satisfied with the fact that it exists conventionally as a mere designation of the mind, we will not find any body at all. This is why we say that the body does not exist truly or intrinsically, beyond a name given to its parts.</i>	<i>If the body is everywhere completely in every part, then there must exist as many bodies as there are parts.</i>
Upon such an investigation it will be seen that a truly existent body is not to be found either inside or outside the body. Therefore how can there be a truly existent body among the hands and the other parts, and how can there be a truly existent body separate from them? Thus, it is proved that there is no truly existent body at all.	Therefore, since there is no body, or rather since no body appears, when we search for it analytically within the outer and inner fields of the sense faculties, how can the body be said to exist in its parts? Obviously, it cannot. Finally, since there is no ground of imputation for the body, other than its parts, how can it be said to exist at all? It cannot. The root verse 78, beginning with the words "What we call the body..." shows that the body is not one with its parts. Root verse 80, which starts "If the 'body'..." indicates that the body is not something different from its interrelated parts.	If one investigates with this sort of reasoning, there is no inherently existent body anywhere, either for the individual which according to Buddhist theory is imputed extrinsically on the basis of the aggregates, or for the intrinsic individual of non-Buddhist theories which is permanent, single and independent, and not related to the aggregates. As this is the case, there is no inherently existent body in the hands or anywhere else. Furthermore, one should not think that the combination of parts which is the basis of designation of the body is the body. It is not. It is just labelled as a body. If the combination of different parts which is the basis of designation of a body were the body, then it would follow that everything from the combination of fingers which is the basis of designation of a hand down to the aggregation of atoms would be the body. These remarks on how we impute the body do not appear in the root text—they are explained in a commentary.	When one seeks the imputed object, the body itself is not found either inside or on the surface of the parts. Since no independent, truly existent body is found, how can it exist among those parts? As the body is not of a different nature from its parts, then that designated object is not to be found.	Therefore, continues Shantideva, the body does not exist as identical to the individual parts of the body, nor can it exist separately and independently of these parts.	<i>A truly existent body cannot be found among its parts or separate from them; the body exists as a mere attribution of a name to these parts, i.e., it is devoid of intrinsic existence.</i> <i>Some non-Buddhist schools say that there is a body beyond its parts, but the existence of this body is not possible, because if we take away its parts we do not find the body.</i> <i>According to our philosophical system, the parts and the whole have the same nature. Some non-Buddhist schools say instead that the parts and the whole are of a different nature, and that the same applies to the body and the self. They consider the body to be impermanent, but the self permanent.</i> <i>The Prasangikas ask the exponents of these schools, "Does the body exist as partially distributed among all of its parts, or is it entirely contained in each of its parts?" If their answer is that the body can be found equally distributed in each of its parts, then they are contradicting their own statement according to which the body is indivisible, without parts. If they say that a body can be found in each of its parts, then they will have to accept that there are as many bodies as there are parts.</i>	<i>The body is neither within nor without. How is the body in its parts? How is it outside its parts? How indeed does it exist?</i>

	MEANINGFUL TO BEHOLD	NECTAR OF MANJUSHRI'S SPEECH	THE BRILLIANT TORCH	TRANSCENDENT WISDOM	PRACTICING WISDOM	THE WAY OF AWAKENING	A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S
83	In reality there is no truly existent body, but because our confused mind apprehends the parts of the body as truly existent, we then apprehend a truly existent body. For example, at dusk we can easily mistake a pile of stones shaped like a man for a real man. Similarly, within the hands and other parts there is no truly existent body, but nevertheless we mistakenly apprehend them as being a truly existent body.	Consequently, although the body does not exist as such, it is through ignorance that the idea "body" occurs to the mind on the basis of the assemblage of physical parts. Aside from being a mere label, the "body" has in fact no existence. It is just as when a pile of stones is mistaken for a man, on account of the similarity of its appearance.	If there is no independent body different from the limbs and so on, how can it exist inherently? Even when we look for what is called a body from the point of view of its basis for designation, we do not find anything, and neither does it exist as something different from this basis for designation. So there is no inherently existent body.	Thus, although there is no intrinsically existent body, on the basis of the components, including the hands and so on, a self-defining body appears to the mind. This is like looking on a pillar in the shape of a human and mistaking it for a human.	So how can this body be autonomous, independent, and self-existent? If we carefully examine the nature of the body, we find that the body is nothing more than a mere designation that we assign on the basis of the aggregation of various parts. We might ask, "What then is the body?" Due to circumstantial conditions such as lighting, appearance of the object, and so on, we can sometimes mistake a certain shape as a human being.	<i>The concept of concrete, true, intrinsic existence arises from a confused mind that perceives hands and other parts of the body as a truly existent body. This erroneous mind is like the mind that mistakes a pile of stones from afar for a person, because it is assembled into a person's shape.</i>	<i>The body does not exist, but because of delusion there is a body-idea in its parts: because of a kind of fabrication, like imagining a man in a stump.</i>
84	For as long as the causes for mistaking a pile of stones for a man are present, we shall mistakenly apprehend a man. Likewise, for as long as we continue to grasp the hands and so forth as truly existent, we shall continue to grasp at a truly existent body.	As long as the conditions are fulfilled with regard to a specific shape, the body will continue to appear as a man or a woman. But when these conditions are not complete, it will not do so, as when a change of sex occurs or during the development of an unborn child or when the body is cremated and only ashes are left. In just the same way, as long as the circumstances for the imputation of the body are found (that is, the interconnected physical parts), a body will appear. But in themselves these parts are not the body; they are just pieces of flesh and bone.	However when people observe its basis for designation such as the hands, because of the ignorance which assumes true existence in things, they believe that the body exists truly. It is like thinking a man-shaped scarecrow is a man. As long as the circumstances—poor visibility at dusk, heaped up stones and so on—are brought together, a scarecrow will be perceived as a man. Similarly, as long as there are assembled the contributory causes of hands and so forth appearing to be truly existent, the combination of the limbs will be perceived as a body, and as it is perceived there will arise the belief that it is inherently existent.	On the basis of the assembly of the parts of the body one says "my body," "a good body" and "a poor body." In such cases the body seems clearly to exist from its own side. In fact the body is no more than a name which is designated on a certain basis, but it seems quite different from that.	Similarly, says Shantideva, as long as the appropriate conditions and factors are assembled that give rise to the sense of there being a person, then we can conventionally posit the concept of <i>body</i> on that basis. However, if we search for the true referent behind the term <i>body</i> , then we will find nothing. The upshot is that we arrive at the conclusion the "body" is, in the final analysis, a conventional construction—a relative truth—that comes into being only by depending on various causes and conditions.	In the same way that a pile of stones resembles a man for as long as the causal conditions to mistake them for a man are assembled, so the hands and so forth appear as a truly existent body for as long as the causal conditions to mistake them for a body are present.	<i>As long as there is a complete collection of causes, the body is taken to be a man. Likewise, as long as it is in its members, the body is seen there.</i> Being discussed [is] that what we think of a single body is, in fact, an accumulation of many small particles. There is no permanent, concrete entity that is a body. So the body is explained as the accumulation of many particles, just as at a distance a pile of many small stones can be mistaken for a large body or a single form. Similarly, the union of many organs and limbs cause us to think that we have a body.
85	Establishing the Non-true Existence of the Parts of the Body	Specific Examination of Physical Parts	Establishing that the Limbs, Made up of Parts, Lack Inherent Being				
	<i>Prasangika:</i> Just as the body is merely imputed upon the collection of its limbs and other parts, so is the hand, for example, merely imputed upon the collection of its parts: the fingers, nails, palm, joints, knuckles and so forth. In this way the hand also lacks true existence. Likewise a finger lacks true existence because it too is merely imputed upon its parts: the collection of joints, nails and so on. The joint too is only imputed upon the collection of its parts and hence also lacks true existence.	But even if the body does not exist, can we not still say that its limbs, the arms and so on, which we can see before our very eyes, really exist? No, just as the body itself does not truly exist, likewise the hand is simply a collection of fingers and so on, and is merely ascribed to the assembly of its parts. It does not exist as such. The fingers are also themselves assemblages of joints, and they too are therefore without true existence; and the joints in turn are divided into their separate sides and are therefore composite, not single units.	What we call the body, as explained above, is merely a label put on an aggregation of limbs, but it has no inherent existence. Similarly, when we consider the basis for designation which is the aggregation of the limbs and fingers, the latter are also merely labels, and therefore not only does the body not exist inherently, neither do the hands. The fingers too depend on their own basis for designation, the aggregation of phalanges. They are conceptual labels and have no inherent existence.	Previously there was an analysis of the body as a whole, and now the author discusses its components [e.g. the hands], the parts of those components [e.g. the fingers] and so on. "Hand" is imputed upon the configuration of the fingers, the palm and so on, but the hand does not exist among those individual parts. And there is no hand existing independently of those separate parts. Likewise, "finger" is designated upon a configuration of joints, and the joints, too, have their own separate parts.	This above analysis can also be extended to the individual parts of the body, as Shantideva does in the next verses. When we speak of a hand, we find that it is also a composite of various parts. If a hand existed intrinsically and independently this would contradict its having the nature of being dependent on other factors. If we search for a hand itself, we do not find a hand separate from the various parts that form it. Just as with a hand, a finger too is a composite that when dissected loses its existence. So with any part of the body, if we search for the true referent behind its name, nothing is to be found.	<i>Just like the entire body, each of its parts is in turn designated in dependence on its respective parts, and so on down to the smallest atomic particles, which are also devoid of intrinsic existence.</i> And the parts of the body also do not exist truly, or intrinsically. Any phenomenon has its parts but is neither one with nor separate from them. This is why we say that phenomena do not exist truly. For example, we cannot say that the month and the year are the same. If they were, then when the month is finished, we should say that the year is over too. Since we designate the year on the basis of the months, if we take out a month, we can no longer have a year. If it were possible to say that eleven months make a year, we could also say that ten months make a year, or eight, or seven, and so forth. The year cannot be separate from the months, nor the months from the year. We cannot find the truly existent year, because it is a mere designation based on the twelve months. Likewise, we call thirty days a month, and twenty-four hours a day—an hour is designated on the basis of sixty minutes, and a minute is designated on the basis of sixty seconds. In short, phenomena do not exist truly, precisely because they are mere nominal designations based on their parts.	Not only is the whole body nonexistent, but also the parts of the body are also nonexistent: <i>In the same way there can be no foot, because that is a mass of toes. The limb is likewise a collection of limbs, separated according to their parts.</i>

<i>MEANINGFUL TO BEHOLD</i>	<i>NECTAR OF MANJUSHRI'S SPEECH</i>	<i>THE BRILLIANT TORCH</i>	<i>TRANSCENDENT WISDOM</i>	<i>PRACTICING WISDOM</i>	<i>THE WAY OF AWAKENING</i>	<i>A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S</i>
85 <i>cont.</i>					<p>If phenomena do not exist by their own nature, or truly, then how is it that they appear to have intrinsic existence? This is so because we have a confused mind that grasps at the existence of phenomena as if they were true. Our grasping at the true existence of the body arises because we have not understood the way in which it came to exist, i.e. by the designation of a name to its parts. Without this mindfulness, we have the concept of a body existing intrinsically.</p> <p>For example, when we see a scarecrow from afar in the middle of a field, we think it is a man because it has a head, two arms, and is wearing a shirt. A body is also designated on the basis of its parts, but we believe that on that basis it exists truly. When we see a body, because of the imprints in our minds that cause us to grasp at true existence, we project onto its image a kind of concrete existence, and therefore think that it actually exists in this way.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>The body is designated as such in dependence on its parts; parts too are designated in dependence on their respective parts. The hand is a part of the body, and it exists in dependence on its own parts—fingers, joints, skin, and so forth. But if we are not satisfied with the fact that it exists as a designation and look more deeply, we will not find a hand.</p>	
86	<p>The individual parts of the joint are merely imputed upon the collection of particles that make them up and so they also lack true existence. The particles in turn are merely imputed upon their directional parts—north, east, south, and west—and are therefore not truly existent; likewise even the parts of the directions can be further divided. Thus a lack of truly existent parts is revealed, empty like space.</p>	<p>Again, these parts may be progressively subdivided, from the comparatively gross down to the most subtle particles, and even the tiniest particle may be split sixfold—above, below, and in the four directions. Ultimately, not one truly existent fragment can be found in any of these directional segments; even the fragments themselves disappear. Thus, if all apparent forms, for example the hand, are assessed by dissecting them in this way, going from comparatively gross to more subtle fragments, down to the directional segments of the infinitesimal particle, they are seen to be empty, like space; they have no existence as physical forms. Even the infinitesimal particle does not exist.</p>	<p>If again the phalanges are analysed by being split up into their individual parts, they are found to have no inherent existence. If the parts of the phalanges are split up into minute particles and analysed, they too are seen to lack inherent existence. And if the particles are analysed by being split up into their different directional facets, they too are shown to have no inherent existence. Even these directional facets do not have truly existent parts, and are therefore devoid of inherent existence. They are like space, there is nothing there to touch. Thus the body is just a label stuck onto its parts, and not as much as an atom exists inherently.</p> <p>[...]</p>	<p>One can likewise divide a joint into its most basic components, atoms; and it, too, is not found among them. Once again the whole is designated in dependence on those components, but it is not found to exist independently.</p> <p>An atom can be analytically divided into its directional components—its eastern quadrant, etc. It, too, is not found among those separate parts. If one analytically tries to break down the directional facets into something else, one finds nothing at all. Or one can analyze them [into smaller directional facets] and come to the same conclusion that they have no intrinsic parts. In short, nothing can exist that is devoid of parts or attributes. When one investigates in that way, even atoms are not to be found.</p>	<p>When we dissect the parts into their elemental constituents—molecules, atoms, and so on—these too become unfindable. We can carry on dividing even the atoms themselves in terms of their directional surfaces and find, again, that the very idea <i>atom</i> is a mere mental construct. If we carry on still further, we find that the very idea of matter, or atoms, becomes untenable. In order for anything to be characterized as material, it must have parts. Once we go beyond that and dissect further, what remains is nothing but emptiness.</p>	<p>The hand is therefore a designation on the basis of the various parts that constitute it. Fingers are themselves a designation based on their various parts. For example, the phalanx is a designation based on its own parts, which in turn are designations of the subparts that constitute them and so forth down to the smallest atomic particles, which still depend on their eastern, western, northern, and southern, parts. Even the smallest particles are devoid of intrinsic existence—everything is found to be as empty as space!</p> <p><i>The parts are split into atoms. The atom also is in six sections. The six sections are empty space without parts. Consequently there is no atom.</i></p> <p>Stage by stage we go through the process of proving the nonexistence of the parts of the body. We begin with the hand and go deeper to find that even the nails and the fingers do not exist except as accumulations of small particles. Even the atoms themselves have no ultimate existence.</p>

<i>MEANINGFUL TO BEHOLD</i>	<i>NECTAR OF MANJUSHRI'S SPEECH</i>	<i>THE BRILLIANT TORCH</i>	<i>TRANSCENDENT WISDOM</i>	<i>PRACTICING WISDOM</i>	<i>THE WAY OF AWAKENING</i>	<i>A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA's</i>
Therefore it is Inappropriate to be Attached to this Dream-like Non-truly Existent Body	The Need for Relinquishing Attachment to One's Body	Demonstrating that it is Improper to be Attached to the Body which has no True Existence...				
Having analyzed the body in this way not even the slightest part can be found to have true existence. Therefore what wise and intelligent person would develop attachment to this illusory, dream-like body? It is completely inappropriate to become so attached.	On investigation of its true mode of being, how could anyone cling to this physical form, which is so like a dream, appearing but devoid of inherent existence? It does not make sense to cling to it!	When one investigates the body in this fashion, it is just like the perceptions of horses and oxen and suchlike in a dream. It does not stand up to analysis, even though when we do not examine or analyse it, it appears to be solid, to really exist. No intelligent person who submits the body to ultimate analysis would be attached to it. A body as something pure, which is a misconception stemming from desire, or a truly existent body, which is a misconception stemming from belief in true existence, does not have the slightest existence.	Thus, it is inappropriate for an intelligent person to be attached to form, which is dream-like.	To our commonsense view, things and events appear as if they have some form of independent and objective status. However, as Shantideva points out in the next verse, if we search for the true nature of phenomena, we eventually arrive at their unfindability.	<i>By meditating on and realizing the emptiness of true existence of the body, one succeeds in eliminating attachment to it completely.</i> Whoever is intelligent enough to understand the authentic mode of existence of phenomena, and of the body in particular, can no longer have attachment to what does not exist intrinsically, or by its own nature. This illusory body is like a body appearing in a dream, so how can one be attached to it? In order to eliminate the coarse aspect of attachment to the body, one can meditate on its impurities, but in order to eliminate attachment completely, even subtle attachment, it is necessary to meditate on its emptiness. Meditation on the empty nature of the intrinsic existence of the body is what is known as the close placement of mindfulness of the body. At times we generate attachment to the body because we see it and consider it healthy, strong, and beautiful; to meditate on its impermanent nature, reflecting on the fact that its strength and beauty will not last long because it is subject to continuous change, is also known as the close placement of mindfulness on the body. <i>Close placement of mindfulness</i> means keeping our minds constantly tied to the chosen object.	So, whatever we cling to in the phenomenal world as having true existence can be proven by analytical means not to exist.
87ab						
Through This, Establishing the Non-true Existence of the Person		...and that Corporeal Beings are also Unreal				
Since a person's body lacks true existence, it is impossible for a person to be truly existent. In which case, how can there be such a thing as a truly existent male and a truly existent female body? There can be no such thing. Therefore, there is no reason to have so much attachment and desire for the bodies of the opposite sex.	Since the body is thus without inherent existence, what is the status of its particular character as man or woman? Neither category has ultimate existence.	If the body does not have the slightest inherent existence, there can be no individual that exists inherently—neither man nor woman, who are only different in terms of sex. Using the above mentioned reasoning, this demonstrates that the individual does not exist inherently. Put another way, if in general the body thus has no inherent existence, then neither can its specific instance, a man's or woman's body, exist inherently. This could also be used as an explanation of the absence of inherent existence in phenomena.	The terms "man" and "woman" are designated on the basis of the differences between male and female bodies. Since the bodies that are the bases of those imputations are not found under analysis, how could a man or a woman intrinsically exist?	So, we can see that there is nothing absolute about the objects of our anger and attachment. Nothing is desirable or perfect in the absolute sense. Therefore, in reality, there is no ground for extreme emotional reactions to things and events. Since the body cannot be found when sought through critical analysis, so the designations we make on the basis of the existence of the body—such as differences of gender and race—are also ultimately devoid of essence. So, now, what grounds do we have to generate extreme volatile emotional responses to people of different gender or race?	Since a body endowed with intrinsic nature does not exist, we cannot differentiate between a truly existent female body and a truly existent male body. And given that the body does not exist naturally or intrinsically, how can a person exist naturally or intrinsically? A naturally existing male person does not exist, nor does a naturally existing female person, and therefore no naturally existing person exists.	The next verse explains that with this understanding that there is no identity or existence in anything, we can overcome any disturbing emotion, such as attachment. <i>When the form is like a dream, then who will deliberately fall in love with it? And since there is no body, then what is a woman? And what is a man?</i>
87cd						
Concl.	Once we have developed insight into the non-true existence of the body, to abandon grasping the body as truly existent we should cultivate constant mindfulness of this point. This form of meditation is called a practice of the 'close placement of mindfulness of the body'.	Just as one analyzes one's own body, so too should one analyze the bodies of other living beings, as well as other phenomena in the outer universe, such as mountains and continents, arriving at the firm conviction that they are like space, without inherent existence. Once this has been understood, and when all dualistic clinging to one's body and the bodies of others has been rejected, all that manifests in the postmeditative state should be regarded as illusory—appearing but without inherent existence. And when meditating, one should rest in the natural state, spacious and free from conceptual activity. As it is said in the sutras, "Whoever, O Manjushri, sees that his body is like space is applying to his body the close mindfulness of the body."				Contemplation of the physical body as we just did now is a method for achieving a gross level of understanding of nonexistence. But having come to an understanding that the body has no independent existence, we still tend to have the feeling that phenomena exist, even though we intellectually realize that the body does not exist.

Close Placement of Mindfulness of the Body: Tharpa Publications

GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE (pp. 164-166)	MEANINGFUL TO BEHOLD (pp. 417-420)	THE NEW HEART OF WISDOM (pp. 46-52)	UNIVERSAL COMPASSION (pp. 61-63)	JOYFUL PATH OF GOOD FORTUNE (pp. 529-532)	INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM (pp. 121-124)	EIGHT STEPS TO HAPPINESS (pp. 211-220)
	An Extensive Explanation of the Reasons that Establish Selflessness of Phenomena		Meditating on the Emptiness of Phenomena	The Emptiness of Phenomena		
	Explaining Selflessness of Phenomena by Means of the Four Close Placements of Mindfulness					
	Close Placement of Mindfulness of the Body				The Emptiness of the Body	The Emptiness of Our Body
	Establishing the Non-true Existence of the Body as Possessor of its Parts					
Intro	To ordinary people like us the body appears as truly existent and we grasp at, hold on to and assent to this true existence. In reality, the body has no true existence at all. In what way do we cling to it as truly existent? Instead of regarding it as a phenomenon merely imputed by conception we apprehend it as something existing by its own nature, from its own side. [...] Now we should try to examine clearly the way in which we grasp this body as being truly existent. At times when we think, 'My body is very attractive' and so forth, we are not thinking that our hand or our head is beautiful. We are instinctively apprehending and grasping at a vividly appearing body that is separate from and unrelated to its parts. In this way we apprehend a truly existent body. In fact the body does not exist in the way in which we apprehend it, and it lacks or is empty of this apparent true existence. If the body really were truly existent then it would have to be findable within one of its parts, as a collection of its parts or as something other than these two alternatives. Upon investigation a truly existent body is never to be found in any of these three possible places.	In the <i>Condensed Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i> Buddha says that form and the other aggregates are empty of inherent existence because just as the depth of the ocean cannot be measured by shooting an arrow, if we investigate the aggregates with wisdom we cannot find them. It is clear that if we were to shoot an arrow into the ocean we could not discover the depth of the ocean in this way. Similarly, if we investigate the aggregates using sharp wisdom we will not find anything we can point to and say, 'This is the aggregate of form', and so forth. If we are not content to accept the mere name 'aggregates' but instead try to discover the aggregates themselves we will be unable to find them. The fact that the aggregates cannot be found when investigated with wisdom is a reason used by Buddha to show that the aggregates lack inherent existence. Our inability to find form upon analytical investigation can therefore be used to prove that form is empty. We can take our body as an example of the aggregate of form to illustrate how the reason may be applied. If we are ordinary beings, at present we have a view of our body as being inherently existent. Our body seems to be a single entity independent of the rest of the universe, and does not seem to rely on any conceptual process for its existence – it appears to us to be a solid, discrete object existing under its own power. Viewing our body in this way, we cherish it and react accordingly to cold, hunger, gentle caresses, and so forth. If our body really were inherently existent as it appears to be, we would expect to be able to find it upon investigation. This follows because our body would exist under its own power, independently of other phenomena, and therefore we could physically or mentally remove all objects that are not our body, and our body would still remain, existing by itself. Therefore, if we had an inherently existent body we should be able to point to our body without pointing to any phenomenon that is not our body.	A clear and profound presentation of emptiness is given by Shantideva in the ninth chapter of <i>Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i> . This chapter is very profound and should be read carefully and with strong concentration. No clearer explanation of emptiness can be found. In this chapter, Shantideva says that we should examine the way in which we cling to an inherently existent body. When we think, "I have a strong, healthy body", we are thinking of a body that is appearing vividly to our mind as distinct from its parts. At such times, we are not thinking of our arms, legs, and so on, but of a body that seems to exist separate from its parts, a body that is truly existent. If our body were truly existent, it would have to exist in one of three ways: as one of its parts, as the collection of its parts, or as something other than these two. We should now check to see if it exists in any of these ways.	In the <i>Condensed Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i> Buddha says: Whatever we have understood with respect to ourself we should apply to all other living beings, and whatever we have understood with respect to all other living beings we should apply to all phenomena. If we have realized that both we ourselves and others lack inherent existence we have realized selflessness of persons. We should then investigate other phenomena. By understanding the emptiness of one object we indirectly understand the emptiness of all objects because we can apply the same reasoning to all other bases of emptiness. For example, if we meditate on our own body we first try to identify the negated object, asking ourselves 'What is it that appears to my mind when I think "my body"?' When we grasp at our own body, its parts appear to our mind, but these are not what we are grasping at as our body. We have a mental image of our body as something different from its parts. When we think 'My body is attractive' we are not thinking 'My feet are attractive, my elbows are attractive, my forehead is attractive...' and so forth, but we apprehend an independent body. As before, we should not be in haste to arrive at any conclusions. We first try to get a clear generic image of our inherently existent body. Such a body appears to us all the time and, provided we do not investigate further, we always grasp onto it as existing in the way that it appears. If our body has special features, for example if it is tall, we should think 'My tall body', to provoke a strong sense of our inherently existent body. When we have a clear generic image we think 'This is the body I cherish. This is the body I think about when I think "My body is beautiful".' Then we investigate in the same way as before, using the following lines of reasoning:	<i>Identifying the object of negation</i> The way to meditate on the emptiness of the body is similar to the way we meditate on the emptiness of the I. First we must identify the object of negation. Normally when we think, "my body", a body that exists from its own side, and is a single entity not depending upon its parts, appears to our mind. Such a body is the object of negation and is non-existent. "Truly existent body", "inherently existent body", and "body that exists from its own side" all have the same meaning, and all are objects of negation. <i>Refuting the object of negation</i> If the body exists as it appears, it must exist in one of two ways: as its parts or separate from its parts; there is no third possibility.	To understand how phenomena are empty of true, or inherent, existence we should consider our own body. Once we have understood how our body lacks true existence we can easily apply the same reasoning to other objects. In <i>Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i> , Shantideva says: Therefore, there is no body, But, because of ignorance, we perceive a body within the hands and so forth, Just like a mind mistakenly apprehending a person When observing the shape of a pile of stones at dusk.
						On one level we know our body very well—we know whether it is healthy or unhealthy, beautiful or ugly, and so forth. However, we never examine it more deeply, asking ourselves: "What precisely is my body? Where is my body? What is its real nature?" If we did examine our body in this way we would not be able to find it—instead of finding our body the result of this examination would be that our body disappears. The meaning of the first part of Shantideva's verse, "Therefore, there is no body," is that if we search for our "real" body, there is no body; our body exists only if we do not search for a real body behind its mere appearance. There are two ways of searching for an object. An example of the first way, which we can call a "conventional search," is searching for our car in a parking lot. The conclusion of this type of search is that we find the car, in the sense that we see the thing that everyone agrees is our car. However, having located our car in the parking lot, suppose that we are still not satisfied with the mere appearance of the car and we want to determine what exactly the car is. We might then engage in what we can call an "ultimate search" for the car, in which we look within the object itself to find something that is the object. To do this we ask ourselves:

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Intro cont.						<p>"Are any of the individual parts of the car, the car? Are the wheels the car? Is the engine the car? Is the chassis the car?" and so forth. When conducting an ultimate search for our car we are not satisfied with just pointing to the hood, wheels, and so forth and then saying "car"; we want to know what the car really is. Instead of just using the word "car" as ordinary people do, we want to know what the word really refers to. We want to mentally separate the car from all that is not car, so that we can say: "This is what the car really is." We want to find a car, but in truth there is no car; we can find nothing. In <i>Condensed Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i>, Buddha says, "If you search for your body with wisdom you cannot find it." This also applies to our car, our house, and all other phenomena.</p> <p>In <i>Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i>, Shantideva says:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">When examined in this way, Who is living and who is it who will die? What is the future and what is the past? Who are our friends and who are our relatives?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I beseech you who are just like me, Please know that all things are empty, like space.</p> <p>The essential meaning of these words is that when we search for things with wisdom, there is no person who is living or dying, there is no past or future, and there is no present, including our friends and relatives. We should know that all phenomena are empty, like space, which means we should know that all phenomena are not other than emptiness.</p>
78-79	<p>Neither the feet nor the calves are the body, Nor are the thighs or the loins. Neither the front nor the back of the abdomen is the body, Nor are the chest or the shoulders. Neither the sides nor the hands are the body, nor are the arms or the armpits. None of the inner organs is the body, Nor is the head or the neck. So where is the body to be found?</p>	<p>None of the individual parts of the body is the body. The feet and legs are not the body, nor are the thighs and waist. The stomach and back are not the body, nor are the chest and shoulders.</p> <p>The ribs and hands are not the body, nor are the armpits and back of the neck. They are all parts of the body, but none of them is the body itself. If the individual parts were the body, it would follow that one person would have many bodies.</p>	<p>We can check to see whether we can find our body in this way. If we wish to point to our body, what do we point to? We may point to the centre of our body, around our chest, or we may point to our head, arm, leg, and so on. If, when we point to our chest, we are pointing to our body, it follows that our chest must be our body. If this is so, then equally our head must be our body, our arm must be our body, and so forth. It is clear that these objects are parts of our body, but they are not our body itself. If they are, it follows that we have many bodies since there are many parts of the body. This is obviously nonsense.</p> <p>Alternatively, since we have only one body, if the parts of our body are our body itself, it follows that the parts of our body are a single object. This also is nonsense. We must conclude that when we point to a part of our body such as our chest we are pointing to a phenomenon that is not our body itself. We can be sure, therefore, that upon investigation we cannot find our body among its individual parts.</p>	<p>First we should check to see if the body is one of its parts. Clearly this is not the case, because the arms are not the body, the legs are not the body, and so on. This is because all these things are parts of the body. If each of these were the body, there would be many bodies instead of just one, which is clearly not the case.</p>	<p><i>If my body exists in the way that it appears to me, it must be either one with the parts of the body or separate from the parts of the body.</i></p> <p><i>If the body is one with the parts of the body it follows that one person must have many bodies because there are many parts.</i></p>	<p>If the body is one with its parts, is it the individual parts or the collection of its parts? If it is the individual parts, then is it the hands, the face, the skin, the bones, the flesh, or the internal organs? By checking carefully, "Is the head the body? Is the flesh the body?", and so on, we will easily see that none of the individual parts of the body is the body.</p> <p>It is not difficult to understand that the individual parts of our body are not our body—it is absurd to say that our back, our legs, or our head are our body. If one of the parts, say our back, is our body, then the other parts are equally our body, and it would follow that we have many bodies. Furthermore, our back, legs, and so forth cannot be our body because they are parts of our body. The body is the part-possessor, and the back, legs, and so forth are the possessed parts; and possessor and possessed cannot be one and the same.</p>

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<p>Neither the feet nor the calves are the body, Nor are the thighs or the loins. Neither the front nor the back of the abdomen is the body, Nor are the chest or the shoulders.</p> <p>Neither the sides nor the hands are the body, nor are the arms or the armpits. None of the inner organs is the body, Nor is the head or the neck. So where is the body to be found?</p>	<p>The collection of the parts is also not the body because the body is merely imputed in dependence upon this collection. The collection is the basis of imputation and the body is the imputed phenomenon; but the collection itself is not the body. The body cannot be found separate from the individual parts and their collection. In this way it is shown that the body is merely imputed by the conceptual mind and in no way exists inherently, from its own side.</p>	<p>As we continue to search for our body we may think that the collection of the various parts of our body is our body. We may feel that when we point to the collection of our chest, head, arms, and so forth, we have found our body. We need to investigate this possibility carefully. We have already established that each individual part of our body is not our body. The collection of the parts of our body is therefore a collection of objects that are not a body. We can say it is a collection of 'non-bodies'. It is impossible for a mere collection of non-bodies to be a body, just as it is impossible for a collection of non-sheep, for example goats, to be sheep. Since a collection of sheep is sheep and a collection of books is books, it follows that a collection of non-bodies is non-bodies and cannot possibly be a body. We can conclude, therefore, that the collection of parts of our body is parts of our body, but not our body itself.</p> <p>There is another way to know that the collection of the parts of our body is not our body. If we can point to the collection of the parts of our body and say that this, in itself, is our body, then the collection of the parts of our body must exist independently of all phenomena that are not our body, so it would follow that the collection of the parts of our body exists independently of the parts themselves. This is clearly absurd—if it were true we could remove all the parts of our body and the collection of the parts would remain. Again we can conclude that the collection of the parts of our body cannot be identified as our body itself.</p>	<p>The second possibility is that the body is the collection of its parts; but since none of the individual parts is the body, how can the collection itself be the body? The parts of the body are all non-bodies and so the collection of the parts must also be non-body. The collection of the parts of the body is the basis for imputing body; it cannot be the body itself. A more subtle point, which requires very careful thought, is that the collection of the parts of the body is not the body because it is parts of the body.</p>	<p><i>Furthermore, the parts of the body cannot be the body because they are the parts of the body, and a thing cannot be part of itself.</i></p>	<p>If the body is not its individual parts, is it the collection of its parts? The collection of the parts of the body cannot be the body. Why? The parts of the body are all non-bodies, so how can a collection of non-bodies be a body? The hands, feet, and so forth are all parts of the body, but not the body itself. Even though all these parts are assembled together, this collection remains simply parts; it does not magically transform into the part-possessor, the body.</p>	<p>Some people believe that although none of the individual parts of the body is the body, the collection of all the parts assembled together is the body. According to them, it is possible to find our body when we search for it analytically because the collection of all the parts of our body is our body. However, this assertion can be refuted with many valid reasons. The force of these reasons may not be immediately obvious to us, but if we contemplate them carefully with a calm and positive mind we will come to appreciate their validity.</p> <p>Since none of the individual parts of our body is our body, how can the collection of all the parts be our body? For example, a collection of dogs cannot be a human being, because none of the individual dogs is human. Since each individual member is "non-human," how can this collection of non-humans magically transform into a human? Similarly, since the collection of the parts of our body is a collection of things that are not our body, it cannot be our body. Just as the collection of dogs remains simply dogs, so the collection of all the parts of our body remains simply parts of our body—it does not magically transform into the part-possessor, our body.</p> <p>We may find this point difficult to understand, but if we think about it for a long time with a calm and positive mind, and discuss it with more experienced practitioners, it will gradually become clearer. We can also consult authentic books on the subject, such as <i>The New Heart of Wisdom</i> and <i>Ocean of Nectar</i>.</p> <p>There is another way we can know that the collection of the parts of our body is not our body. If we can point to the collection of the parts of our body and say that this is, in itself, our body, then the collection of the parts of our body must exist independently of all phenomena that are not our body. Therefore it would follow that the collection of the parts of our body exists independently of the parts themselves. This is clearly absurd—if it were true, we could remove all the parts of our body and the collection of the parts would remain. We can therefore conclude that the collection of the parts of our body is not our body.</p>

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80	If you say that the body is distributed Among all its different parts, Although we can say that the parts exist in the parts, Where does a separate possessor of these parts abide?	<i>Other schools:</i> We maintain that the body does exist as a phenomenon separate from its parts. <i>Prasangika:</i> Does the body exist partially amongst all its different parts or does the entire body exist in each part? In the former case there is nothing wrong in maintaining that the body's parts exist in the hands, legs, and so forth, but other than these parts where would a separate body as a possessor of these parts exist? It cannot be within its parts or separate from them. Therefore it is seen to be merely imputed in dependence upon them.	So far we have been unable to find our body among the individual parts of our body or the collection of the parts of our body. The only remaining place to find our body is completely separate from the parts of our body. If our body existed in such a way we could remove all the parts of our body and our body would still remain. Quite clearly this is not the case. We must conclude that we cannot find anything separate from the parts of our body that we can point to as our body.	The third possibility is that the body exists as something other than its parts or the collection of its parts, perhaps as a separate possessor of its parts. If the body exists in this way, where is it to be found? Whenever we point to the body, we point to a part of the body, and not to an object that is separate from the parts of the body but that possesses them. When we look at the body, we see only parts of the body. If there were no parts, there would be no body, so there is no body separate from its parts. Therefore, the body does not exist within its parts and it does not exist separate from them. It exists merely as a phenomenon imputed upon its parts.	<i>If the body were separate from the parts of the body it would be possible to find the body existing elsewhere, but we cannot point to anything outside the limbs and the other parts of the body and say 'There is my body.'</i> <i>Furthermore, if the body were separate from the parts of the body it would not make sense to say 'My body is hurt' when our foot is injured.</i>	If the body is not its parts, the only other possibility is that it is separate from its parts; but if all the parts of the body were to disappear, there would be nothing left that could be called the body. We should imagine that all the parts of our body melt into light and disappear. First the skin dissolves, then the flesh, blood, and internal organs, and finally the skeleton melts and vanishes into light. Is there anything left that is our body? There is nothing. There is no body separate from its parts.	Since the body cannot be found within its parts, either as an individual part or as the collection, the only possibility that remains is that it exists separately from its parts. If this is the case, it should be possible mentally or physically to remove all the parts of our body and still be left with the body. However, if we remove our arms, our legs, our head, our trunk, and all the other parts of our body, no body is left. This proves that there is no body separate from its parts. It is because of ignorance that whenever we point to our body we are pointing only to a part of our body, which is not our body.
81	And if you say that the entire body exists Within each part, such as the hand, It follows that there are as many bodies As there are different parts!	In the latter case, if the entire body existed in each part, the absurd consequence would follow that the hands and all other parts are individually bodies. Therefore, there would be as many bodies as there are parts.	[See commentary to verse 78.]	[See commentary to verse 78.]	[See commentary to verse 78.]		[See commentary to verse 78.]
82	If a truly existent body cannot be found either inside or outside the body, How can there be a truly existent body among the parts such as the hands? And since there is no body separate from its parts, How can there be a truly existent body at all?	Upon such an investigation it will be seen that a truly existent body is not to be found either inside or outside the body. Therefore how can there be a truly existent body among the hands and the other parts, and how can there be a truly existent body separate from them? Thus, it is proved that there is no truly existent body at all.	We have now considered all possible places where we can find our body and have failed to locate it. If our body really did exist inherently as it appears to, we would be able to find it by isolating it from all other phenomena. Since we cannot succeed in doing this, we can come to the firm conclusion that our body that we normally see does not exist at all.		If we check in this way we shall not be able to find our body and we shall have to conclude that our body does not exist from its own side. Our sense of an inherently existent body that is independent of everything else will become unclear and we shall eventually lose it, apprehending only emptiness. At that time we are realizing the emptiness of our own body. We can then proceed to examine each part of our body in the same way. For example, we can search for our face until we find only emptiness. Finally, even the atoms of our body will be found to be empty.	We have now exhausted all possibilities. The body is not its parts and it is not separate from its parts. Clearly, the body cannot be found. Where previously there appeared an inherently existent body, there now appears an absence of that body. This absence of an inherently existent body is the emptiness of the body.	We have now searched in every possible place and have been unable to find our body either among its parts or anywhere else. We can find nothing that corresponds to the vividly appearing body that we normally grasp at. We are forced to agree with Shantideva, that when we search for our body, there is no body to be found. This clearly proves that our body that we normally see does not exist. It is almost as if our body does not exist at all. In fact, the only sense in which we can say that our body does exist is if we are satisfied with the mere name "body" and do not expect to find a real body behind the name. If we try to find, or point to, a real body to which the name "body" refers, we will not find anything at all. Instead of finding a truly existent body, we will perceive the mere absence of our body that we normally see. This mere absence of our body that we normally see is the way our body actually exists. We will realize that the body we normally perceive, grasp at, and cherish does not exist at all. This non-existence of the body we normally grasp at is the emptiness of our body, the true nature of our body.

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83	<p>Therefore, there is no body, But, because of ignorance, we perceive a body within the hands and so forth, Just like a mind mistakenly apprehending a person When observing the shape of a pile of stones at dusk.</p>	<p>In reality there is no truly existent body, but because our confused mind apprehends the parts of the body as truly existent, we then apprehend a truly existent body. For example, at dusk we can easily mistake a pile of stones shaped like a man for a real man. Similarly, within the hands and other parts there is no truly existent body, but nevertheless we mistakenly apprehend them as being a truly existent body.</p>	<p>Unless we investigate in this way we naturally hold the view that we have a body that has its own independent existence. We feel that we can see and point to this self-existing body. However, in truth, whenever we see or point to our body we are seeing or pointing to parts of our body, which are not our body. We should investigate this point carefully. When we say we see our body, what in fact do we see? We see only the parts of our body—our arms, legs and so forth. When we look at our body there is nothing that we see that is not a part of our body, and if something is a part of our body it is necessarily not our body. As already pointed out, if each part of our body were our body it would follow that we have many bodies. We may propose that the collection of the parts of our body is our body, but the collection of the parts of our body is still just parts of our body. When we see the collection of the parts of our body we see only parts of our body.</p> <p>If we apprehend a body that is other than the parts of the body, that apprehended body is what is called the ‘inherently existent body’. This is the negated object of the emptiness of our body. However hard we search we will never find such a body. When we look for our body we perceive only the parts of our body. Other than these parts there is no body to be found.</p>	<p>Even though there is no truly existent body, nevertheless, because our mind is confused <u>and apprehends the parts of the body as truly existent, we perceive a truly existent body.</u> In <i>Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i> Shantideva gives the analogy of someone walking in the countryside at dusk who, seeing a pile of stones, mistakes it for a person. Similarly, in the darkness of our ignorance we mistakenly apprehend the parts of the body as a truly existent body. Thus, Shantideva says:</p> <p>Therefore, there is no body, But, because of ignorance, we perceive a body within the hands and so forth, Just like a mind mistakenly apprehending a person When observing the shape of a pile of stones at dusk.</p>		<p>The term <i>true nature</i> is very meaningful. Not being satisfied with the mere appearance and name “body,” we examined our body to discover its true nature. The result of this examination was a definite non-finding of our body. Where we expected to find a truly existent body, we discovered the utter non-existence of that truly existent body. This non-existence, or emptiness, is the true nature of our body. Aside from the mere absence of a truly existent body, there is no other true nature of our body—every other attribute of the body is just part of its deceptive nature. Since this is the case, why do we spend so much time focusing on the deceptive nature of our body? Right now we ignore the true nature of our body and other phenomena, and concentrate only on their deceptive nature; but the result of concentrating on deceptive objects all the time is that our mind becomes disturbed and we remain in the miserable life of samsara. If we wish to experience pure happiness, we must familiarize our mind with the truth. Instead of wasting our energy focusing only on meaningless, deceptive objects, we should focus on the true nature of things.</p>
84	<p>For as long as the causes of mistaking the stones for a person are present, There will be a mistaken apprehension of the body of a person. Likewise, for <u>along as the hands and so forth are grasped as truly existent,</u> There will be an apprehension of a truly existent body.</p>	<p>For as long as the causes for mistaking a pile of stones for a man are present, we shall mistakenly apprehend a man. Likewise, for as long as we continue to grasp the hands and so forth as truly existent, we shall continue to grasp at a truly existent body.</p>		<p>If our body has the nature of emptiness, why do we perceive it as solid and substantial? In <i>Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life</i> Shantideva says that although there is no body we develop the mind apprehending body because due to ignorance we develop the mind apprehending hands and so forth. We do so not because our body actually exists in that way, but because we have always had ignorance grasping at our body as inherently existent. The parts of the body and the collection of the parts are the basis of imputation for the body, and the body is the imputed object. What we see directly are the parts of the body, and seeing these we mistakenly apprehend an independent body that exists from its own side over and above the parts of the body. The mind that apprehends the body in this way is self-grasping of phenomena. We have had this ignorance since beginningless time.</p> <p>Although it is incorrect to assert that the body is identical with the collection of the limbs, trunk, and head, there is no fault in saying that the body is imputed upon this collection. Even though the parts of the body are plural, the body is singular. “Body” is simply an imputation made by the mind that imputes it. It does not exist from the object’s side. There is no fault in imputing a singular phenomenon to a group of many things. For example, we can impute the singular “forest” to a group of many trees, or “herd” to a group of many cows.</p>	<p>As with the I, the fact that the body cannot be found upon investigation does not imply that the body does not exist at all. The body does exist, but only as a conventional imputation. In accordance with accepted convention, we can impute “body” to the assembly of limbs, trunk, and head; but if we try to pinpoint the body, hoping to find a substantially existent phenomenon to which the word “body” refers, we find no body. This unfindability of the body is the emptiness of the body, the ultimate nature of the body. The body that exists as mere imputation is the conventional nature of the body.</p> <p>The way to familiarize our mind with the true nature of the body is to use the above reasoning to search for our body, and then when we have searched in every possible place and not found it, to concentrate on the space-like emptiness that is the mere absence of the body that we normally see. This space-like emptiness is the true nature of our body. Although it resembles empty space, it is a meaningful emptiness. Its meaning is the utter non-existence of the body that we normally see, the body that we grasp at so strongly and have cherished all our life.</p>	

	Establishing the Non-true Existence of the Parts of the Body				
85	Just as the body lacks true existence, so do its parts such as the hands; For they too are merely imputed upon the collection of their parts, the fingers and so forth. The fingers, in turn, are merely imputed upon the collection of their parts, such as the joints; And, when the joints are separated into their parts, they too are found to lack true existence.	<i>Prasangika:</i> Just as the body is merely imputed upon the collection of its limbs and other parts, so is the hand, for example, merely imputed upon the collection of its parts: the fingers, nails, palm, joints, knuckles and so forth. In this way the hand also lacks true existence. Likewise a finger lacks true existence because it too is merely imputed upon its parts: the collection of joints, nails and so on. The joint too is only imputed upon the collection of its parts and hence also lacks true existence.	When we search for our body we are unable to find it. We may think that although we cannot find our body itself, at least we can find its parts—the head, the arms and so forth. However, if we investigate more carefully, taking our head as an example, we again experience difficulty in finding the object of our investigation. When we try to point to our head we point to our nose, eyes, cheek, and so forth. The same arguments that were used to show that the parts of our body are not our body can be used to demonstrate that the parts of our head are not our head. Similarly, the collection of the parts of our head is not our head, nor can our head be found anywhere else. In this way we can realize that our head does not exist inherently.	[See commentary to verse 82.]	
86	The parts of the joints are merely imputed upon a collection of atoms, And they, in turn, are merely imputed upon their directional parts. Since the directional parts, too, can be further divided, Atoms lack true existence and are empty, like space.	The individual parts of the joint are merely imputed upon the collection of particles that make them up and so they also lack true existence. The particles in turn are merely imputed upon their directional parts—north, east, south, and west—and are therefore not truly existent; likewise even the parts of the directions can be further divided. Thus a lack of truly existent parts is revealed, empty like space.	We can apply the same reasoning to demonstrate that our nose, the living cells of our nose, and even the molecules and atoms making up the cells are all empty, like space.	[See commentary to verse 82.]	All phenomena exist by way of convention; nothing is inherently existent. This applies to mind, Buddha, and even to emptiness itself. Everything is merely imputed by mind. All phenomena have parts because physical phenomena have physical parts, and non-physical phenomena have various attributes that can be distinguished by thought. Using the same type of reasoning as above, we can realize that any phenomenon is not one of its parts, not the collection of its parts, and not separate from its parts. In this way, we can realize the emptiness of all phenomena.
87ab	Therefore, what intelligent person Would develop attachment for this dream-like form?	Having analyzed the body in this way not even the slightest part can be found to have true existence. Therefore what wise and intelligent person would develop attachment to this illusory, dream-like body? It is completely inappropriate to become so attached.	The emptiness of our body and its parts can be illustrated by considering the example of a toy snake. If someone places a toy rubber snake in our room, the first time we see it we may believe that it is a real snake and be quite startled by it. Even though there is no actual snake in our room, a snake appears vividly to our mind. For a short time we may cling to this appearance as real and develop fear as a result. However, if we look more carefully we will discover that the snake does not exist in the way that it appears. Clearly there is no real snake existing from its own side; we have merely imputed a snake with our conceptual mind. Apart from the mere appearance of a snake to our mind, there is no real snake to be found anywhere in our room. When we realize this, all our fears associated with the snake immediately subside. If we check carefully, we discover that our body and the snake that appears to our mind in the above analogy exist in a very similar way. Just like the snake, our body appears vividly to our mind and seems to exist from its own side. However, as with the snake, if we investigate we are unable to find our body and we discover that it has no existence of its own but is merely imputed by our mind. Like the snake, our body is a mere appearance to our mind. As long as we believe that it has its own inherent existence our body can be a source of fear and pain, but when we realize that it is merely imputed by our mind these fears and so forth will decrease and eventually disappear, just as our fear of the snake is overcome when we realize that it is only imputed.	It is particularly helpful to meditate on the emptiness of objects that arouse in us strong delusions, such as attachment or anger. By analyzing correctly, we will realize that the object we desire, or the object we dislike, does not exist from its own side—it's beauty or ugliness, and even its very existence, are imputed by mind. By thinking in this way, we will discover that there is no basis for attachment or anger.	Through becoming familiar with the experience of the space-like ultimate nature of the body, our grasping at our body will be reduced. As a result we will experience far less suffering, anxiety, and frustration in relation to our body. Our physical tension will diminish and our health will improve, and even when we do become sick our physical discomfort will not disturb our mind. Those who have a direct experience of emptiness do not feel any pain even if they are beaten or shot. Knowing that the real nature of their body is like space, for them being beaten is like space being beaten and being shot is like space being shot. In addition, good and bad external conditions no longer have the power to disturb their mind, because they realize these to be like a magician's illusion, with no existence separate from the mind. Instead of being pulled here and there by changing conditions like a puppet on a string, their minds remain free and tranquil in the knowledge of the equal and unchanging ultimate nature of all things. In this way, a person who directly realizes emptiness, the true nature of phenomena, experiences peace and happiness day and night, life after life.

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87cd	And since there is no truly existent body, Who is truly existent male and who is truly existent female?	Since a person's body lacks true existence, it is impossible for a person to be truly existent. In which case, how can there be such a thing as a truly existent male and a truly existent female body? There can be no such thing. Therefore, there is no reason to have so much attachment and desire for the bodies of the opposite sex.	Although the snake and our body exist in a very similar way, there is an important difference. When we discover that the snake is really a toy snake and realize that the real snake was merely imputed by our mind, we conclude that a real snake does not exist at all in our room. However, when we realize that our body is merely imputed by our mind, according to the common view it would be a great mistake to conclude that our body does not exist at all. It is true that the inherently existent body that normally appears to our mind has no more existence than the real snake that appears to be in our room—both are completely non-existent—but a body that is empty of inherent existence and is merely imputed upon the collection of the parts of our body does exist. A merely imputed body exists because the parts of our body are, by convention, a suitable basis on which to impute a body because they can perform the functions of a body. A length of striped rubber, on the other hand, is not a suitable basis on which to impute a real snake because it cannot perform the functions of a snake. Therefore, in the example described above, we say that a real snake does not exist at all in our room. Both the snake and our body are merely imputed by our mind, but our body is imputed correctly whereas the snake is imputed incorrectly. To overcome the sufferings associated with our body, we need to understand that the body that we normally see, the inherently existent body, does not exist; but to perform our daily activities, we need to accept that the merely imputed body does exist.	When we have realized the emptiness of our own body we need to sustain this realization in space-like meditative equipoise. Again, in our meditation break we practise illusion-like subsequent attainment. Then we try to understand the emptiness of all other phenomena so that, eventually, we can meditate with space-like meditative equipoise on the emptiness of all phenomena. After meditating in this way, we improve our understanding so that we realize the subtle conventional nature of all phenomena—that they are merely imputed by conception, existing merely as names. What remains after negating all negated objects are mere names. For example, when we meditate on the emptiness of our body we strongly refute the inherently existent body and perceive only emptiness. When we arise from our meditation, if we check 'What remains?', only the name 'body' remains. Accepting the mere name we can talk sensibly about our body, saying such things as 'My body is strong', and we can carry on our usual work and communicate and function just like everyone else; but our understanding is different because we know that if we check behind the mere name we cannot find the thing to which it refers.	Due to our bad mental habits arising through beginningless familiarity with self-grasping ignorance, whatever appears to our mind appears to exist from its own side. This appearance is utterly mistaken. In fact, phenomena are completely empty of existing from their own side. Phenomena exist only through being imputed by mind. By familiarizing ourselves with this truth, we can eradicate self-grasping, the root of all delusions and faults.	We need to distinguish between the conventionally existent body that does exist and the inherently existent body that does not exist; but we need to be careful not to be misled by the words into thinking that the conventionally existent body is anything more than a mere appearance to mind. It may be less confusing to simply say that for a mind that directly sees the truth, or emptiness, there is no body. A body exists only for an ordinary mind to which a body appears.	Shantideva advises us that unless we wish to understand emptiness we should not examine conventional truths such as our body, possessions, places, and friends, but instead be satisfied with their mere names, as worldly people are. Once a worldly person knows an object's name and purpose, he is satisfied that he knows the object and does not investigate further. We must do the same, unless we want to meditate on emptiness. However, we should remember that if we did examine objects more closely we would not find them, because they would simply disappear, just like a mirage disappears if we try to look for it.

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Concl.	Once we have developed insight into the non-true existence of the body, to abandon grasping the body as truly existent we should cultivate constant mindfulness of this point. This form of meditation is called a practice of the 'close placement of mindfulness of the body'.		If we engage repeatedly in analytical meditation, searching in this way for our body, we will lose our normal appearance of our body and an emptiness will appear instead. This emptiness is the lack of inherent existence of our body. We should focus on this emptiness single-pointedly, holding it with strong mindfulness. This meditation is known as "close placement of mindfulness of body".			The same reasoning that we have used to prove the lack of true existence of our body can be applied to all other phenomena. This book, for example, seems to exist from its own side, somewhere within its parts. But when we examine the book more precisely we discover that none of the individual pages is the book and the collection of the pages is not the book, yet without them there is no book. Instead of finding a truly existent book we are left beholding an emptiness that is the non-existence of the book we previously held to exist. Because of our ignorance the book appears to exist separately from our mind, as if our mind were inside and the book outside, but through analyzing the book we discover that this appearance is completely false. There is no book outside the mind. There is no book "out there," within the pages. The only way the book exists is as a mere appearance to mind, a mere projection of the mind. All phenomena exist by way of convention; nothing is inherently existent. This applies to mind, to Buddha, and even to emptiness itself. Everything is merely imputed by mind. All phenomena have parts—physical phenomena have physical parts, and non-physical phenomena have various parts, or attributes, that can be distinguished by thought. Using the same type of reasoning as above, we can realize that any phenomenon is not one of its parts, not the collection of its parts, and not separate from its parts. In this way we can realize the emptiness of all phenomena, the mere absence of all phenomena that we normally see or perceive. It is especially helpful to meditate on the emptiness of objects that arouse strong delusions in us like attachment or anger. By analyzing correctly we will realize that the object we desire, or the object we dislike, does not exist from its own side. Its beauty or ugliness, and even its very existence, are imputed by mind. By thinking like this we will discover that there is no basis for attachment or anger.

Syllogistic Reasoning Example

Write out the three parts of the syllogism in the labeled spaces below. Of the conclusion (Lat. *probandum*), the subject is the factor or part *already* established and not in question, while the predicate is the factor *to be* established.

In the house	there is a fire	because	there is smoke.
<i>subject</i>	<i>predicate</i>		<i>reason</i>

To see if the probandum is incontrovertibly established by a conclusive reason, contemplate whether the reason is qualified by the three modes. The first mode checks whether the reason given is *relevant* to the subject. The second and third modes check whether the reason applies to the predicate *in general*, and not just with this *particular* subject.

In the house	there is smoke.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Property of the subject <i>(the subject has the characteristic of the reason)</i>
<i>subject</i>	<i>reason</i>	
Wherever there is smoke	there is a fire.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Forward pervasion
<i>If the reason always applies...</i>	<i>...then the predicate must apply.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> natural relationship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> causal relationship
If there is no fire	there is no smoke.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Reverse pervasion
<i>If the predicate does <u>not</u> apply...</i>	<i>...then the reason must also <u>not</u> apply.</i>	

Based on the instructions given in the “Subsequent Cognizers” chapter of *How to Understand the Mind* by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso.

Syllogistic Reasoning Worksheet

Write out the three parts of the syllogism in the labeled spaces below. Of the conclusion (Lat. *probandum*), the subject is the factor or part *already* established and not in question, while the predicate is the factor *to be* established.

<i>subject</i>	<i>predicate</i>	<i>because</i>	<i>reason</i>
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To see if the probandum is incontrovertibly established by a conclusive reason, contemplate whether the reason is qualified by the three modes. The first mode checks whether the reason given is *relevant* to the subject. The second and third modes check whether the reason applies to the predicate *in general*, and not just with this *particular* subject.

<i>subject</i>	<i>reason</i>
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<i>If the reason always applies...</i>	<i>...then the predicate must apply.</i>
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<i>If the predicate does <u>not</u> apply...</i>	<i>...then the reason must also <u>not</u> apply.</i>
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- 1. Property of the subject
(the subject has the characteristic of the reason)

- 2. Forward pervasion
 - natural relationship
 - causal relationship

- 3. Reverse pervasion

Based on the instructions given in the “Subsequent Cognizers” chapter of *How to Understand the Mind* by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso.