

Prayer of Arya Maitreya
and
The Easy and Pleasant Path to Enlightenment
by Mendong Tshampa Rinpoche

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༡༡། །འཕགས་པ་བྱམས་པའི་སྒོན་ལམ།།

།སངས་རྒྱས་ཀུན་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །བྱང་སྐོང་ལྷ་མིག་ལྡན་པ་ཡི།
།བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་རྣམས་དང་ཡང་། །ཉན་ཐོས་རྣམས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། ༡

།རན་འགོ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྒྲོག་བྱེད་ཅིང་། །མཐོ་རིས་ལམ་ནི་རབ་སྒོན་ལ།
།ཀ་ཤི་མེད་པར་འདྲེན་བགྱིད་པ། །བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། ༢

།སེམས་ཀྱི་དབང་དུ་གྱུར་བས་ན། །བདག་གིས་སྒྲིག་པ་ཅི་བགྱིས་པ།
།སངས་རྒྱས་སྐྱབས་རྒྱུ་མཆིས་ནས་སྟ། །བདག་གིས་དེ་དག་བཤགས་པར་བགྱི། ༣

།བདག་ལས་རྣམ་པ་གསུམ་གང་གི། །བསོད་ནམས་ཚོགས་ནི་བསྐྱེད་པ་སྟེ།
།བདག་གི་ཀུན་མཁྱེན་ས་བོན་ཏེ། །བདག་ལ་བྱང་ཆུབ་མི་ཟད་ཤོག ༤

།སྟོགས་བཅུ་དག་གི་ཞིང་རྣམས་སྟ། །སངས་རྒྱས་མཚོན་པ་གང་བྱུང་བ།
།སངས་རྒྱས་མཁྱེན་པས་ཡི་རང་བ། །དེ་ལ་བདག་ནི་ཡི་རང་ངོ། ༥

།སྒྲིག་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་བཤགས་པར་བགྱི། །བསོད་ནམས་ཀུན་ལ་ཡི་རང་ངོ།
།སངས་རྒྱས་ཀུན་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །བདག་ནི་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོག་ཐོབ་ཤོག ༦

ལྷོགས་བཅུ་དག་གི་ལྷོགས་རྣམས་སུ། །ས་བཅུ་དག་ལ་གནས་བ་ཡི།

ལྲང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་བྲང་ཆུབ་མཚོག། །འཚང་རྒྱ་བགྱིད་པར་བསྐྱུལ་མ་འདེབས། ག

ལྲང་ཆུབ་དམ་པར་སངས་རྒྱས་ཤིང་། །སྤེད་བཅས་པའི་བདུད་བཏུལ་ནས།

ལྷོག་ཆགས་ཀུན་ལ་སྦྱོན་སྦྱད་དུ། །ཚོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་བསྐྱོར་གྱུར་ཅིག།

ཚོས་རྩ་ཚེན་པོའི་སྐྱ་ཡིས་ནི། །སྤྱུག་བསྐྱུལ་སེམས་ཅན་མཐར་བགྱིད་ཤོག། ཉ

ལསྐྱུལ་བ་བྱེ་བ་བསམ་ཡས་སུ། །ཚོས་སྟོན་མཛད་ཅིང་བལྟགས་གྱུར་ཅིག།

འདོད་པའི་འདམ་དུ་བྱིང་གྱུར་ཅིང་། །སྤེད་པའི་སྤྲད་བུས་དམ་བཅིངས་པ།

འཚིང་བ་ཀུན་གྱིས་བཅིངས་བདག་ལ། །རྐང་གཉིས་མཚོག་རྣམས་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ། ཏ

སེམས་ཀྱི་དྲི་མར་བགྱིས་བ་ལ། །སངས་རྒྱས་རྣམས་ནི་སྟོད་མི་མཛད།

སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ལ་བྱམས་བྲུགས་ལྡན། །སྤེད་པའི་མཚོ་ལས་སྐྱོལ་བར་ཤོག། ཉ༠

ལྷོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་གང་བལྟགས་དང་། །གང་དག་འདས་དང་མ་བྱོན་པ།

དེ་དག་རྗེས་སུ་བདག་སྟོབ་ཅིང་། །བྲང་ཆུབ་སྤྱད་པ་སྤྱོད་གྱུར་ཅིག། ཉ༡

ལ་རོལ་ཕྱིན་དུག་ལྷོགས་བགྱིས་ནས། །འགྲོ་དུག་སེམས་ཅན་ཐར་བགྱིད་ཤོག།

མངོན་ཤེས་དུག་པོ་མངོན་བགྱིས་ནས། །བླ་མེད་བྲང་ཆུབ་རེག་གྱུར་ཅིག། ཉ༢

།མ་སྐྱེས་པ་དང་མི་འབྱུང་དང་། །རང་བཞིན་མ་མཆིས་གནས་མ་མཆིས།
།རྣམ་རིག་མ་མཆིས་དངོས་མ་མཆིས། །སྟོང་པའི་ཚོས་ནི་རྟོགས་པར་ཤོག། ༡༩

།སངས་རྒྱས་དྲང་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོ་ལྟར། །སེམས་ཅན་མ་མཆིས་སྟོག་མ་མཆིས།
།གང་ཟག་མ་མཆིས་གསོ་མ་མཆིས། །བདག་མ་མཆིས་པའི་ཚོས་རྟོགས་ཤོག། ༡༩

།བདག་འཛིན་བདག་གིར་འཛིན་པ་ཡི། །དངོས་པོ་ཀུན་ལ་མི་གནས་པར།
།སེམས་ཅན་ཀུན་ལ་སྐྱབ་སྐྱད་དུ། །སེར་རྣ་མ་མཆིས་སྐྱབ་གཏོང་ཤོག། ༡༩

།དངོས་པོ་དངོས་པོར་མ་མཆིས་པས། །བདག་གི་ལོངས་སྟོད་ལྷན་འགྲུབ་ཤོག།
།དངོས་པོ་ཐམས་ཅད་རྣམ་འཛིག་པས། །སྐྱབ་པའི་པ་རོལ་སྐྱབ་རྫོགས་ཤོག། ༡༩

།བྲིམས་ཀྱི་ཚུལ་བྲིམས་སྐྱོན་མེད་ཅིང་། །ཚུལ་བྲིམས་རྣམ་པར་དག་དང་ལྡན།
།རྫོམ་སེམས་མེད་པའི་ཚུལ་བྲིམས་ཀྱིས། །ཚུལ་བྲིམས་པ་རོལ་སྐྱབ་རྫོགས་ཤོག། ༡༩

།སའམ་ཡང་ན་ཚུ་འམ་མེ། །རྐྱང་གི་ཁམས་ལྟར་མི་གནས་ཤིང་།
།བཟོད་པ་བྲོ་བ་མ་མཆིས་པར། །བཟོད་པའི་པ་རོལ་སྐྱབ་རྫོགས་ཤོག། ༡༩

།བརྩོན་འགྲུས་བརྩམས་པའི་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ཀྱིས། །བརྩོན་སྟོ་ལེ་ལོ་མ་མཆིས་ཤིང་།
།སྟོབས་དང་ལྡན་པའི་ལུས་སེམས་ཀྱིས། །བརྩོན་འགྲུས་པ་རོལ་སྐྱབ་རྫོགས་ཤོག། ༡༩

།སྐྱུ་མ་ལྷ་བུའི་ཉིང་འཛིན་དང་། །དཔའ་བར་འགོ་བའི་ཉིང་འཛིན་དང་།

།རྡོ་རྗེ་ལྷ་བུའི་ཉིང་འཛིན་གྱིས། །བསམ་གཏན་ཕ་རོལ་ཕྱིན་རྫོགས་ཤོག

༣༠

།རྣམ་པར་ཐར་བའི་སྐོ་གསུམ་དང་། །དུས་གསུམ་མཉམ་པ་ཉིད་དང་ཡང་།

།རིག་གསུམ་མངོན་སུམ་བགྱིས་པ་ཡིས། །ཤེས་རབ་ཕ་རོལ་ཕྱིན་རྫོགས་ཤོག

༣༡

།སངས་རྒྱས་ཀུན་གྱིས་བསྐྲུགས་པ་དང་། །འོད་དང་གཟི་བརྗིད་འབར་བ་དང་།

།བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་གྱིས། །བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་རྫོགས་གྱུར་ཅིག

༣༢

།དེ་ལྟར་སྤྱད་པ་སྤྱོད་བྱེད་ཅིང་། །བྱམས་པ་གྲགས་དང་ལྡན་པ་ཡིས།

།ཕ་རོལ་ཕྱིན་དུག་རྫོགས་བགྱིས་ནས། །ས་བཅུའི་སྤོ་ལ་རབ་གནས་ཤོག།།

༣༣

Root Text in English

I prostrate to all the buddhas
And to the bodhisattvas,
Endowed with the divine eye of the sages,
And to the sravakas as well. [1]

I prostrate to bodhicitta
Which counteracts [birth in] all lower realms,
Perfectly shows the path to the higher realms,
And leads to no ageing nor death. [2]

Whatever negative actions I have done
Under the influence of an [afflicted] mind,
In the presence of the buddhas,
I fully acknowledge them [all]. [3]

By the accumulation of any merit I have created
Through the three kinds of activities,
May my seed of omniscience [grow]
And may I [attain] awakening that never ends. [4]

Whatever offerings to the buddhas
[That can be found] in realms of the ten directions
Are known to the buddhas who rejoice in them;
I rejoice in [all] these [offerings]. [5]

I fully acknowledge all negative actions
[And] rejoice in all merit.
I prostrate to all the buddhas.
May I attain supreme primordial wisdom. [6]

I earnestly request the bodhisattvas,
Who reside on the ten levels
In all the directions of the [worlds in the] ten directions,
To awaken into supreme enlightenment. [7]

Once you have awakened into genuine enlightenment
And tamed the maras and their hordes,
May you tum the wheel of Dharma
So that all living beings may be healed.
With the sound of the great Dharma drum

May you free all sentient beings who are suffering. [8]

Throughout inconceivable millions of kalpas

May you remain and teach the Dharma.

Mired in the swamp of desire,

Entangled in the strands of cyclic existence,

I am fettered by all that binds.

I supplicate those, supreme among humans, to look upon me. [9]

The buddhas do not blame

Sentient [beings] who are flawed.

With a loving heart for all sentient beings,

May [the buddhas] free them from the ocean of cyclic existence. [10]

Any perfect buddhas who are present,

Those who have passed away, and those yet to come,

May I train following in their way

And engage in enlightened conduct. [11]

Having perfected the six paramitas,

May I liberate the six [families of] sentient beings.

Having actualized the six extraordinary faculties

May I reach unexcelled enlightenment. [12]

[Future phenomena] are not born and [those past] will not occur;

[Present phenomena] have no [inherent]

nature. There is no [actual] location.

There is no perception; there are no [outer] things.

May I realize the dharma[dhatu] which is empty. [13]

According to the buddhas, the great sages,

There are no [truly existent] sentient beings nor life force;

There is no [truly existent] individual [and] no nurturing [of a self].

May I realize the dharma[ta] where the self is not present. [14]

An entity [such as] grasping onto a self and "mine"

Is not present within any [of the paramitas].

To benefit all sentient beings,

May I give with generosity free of avarice. [15]

Since things do not exist as entities,

May my wealth appear spontaneously.

Since all things totally disintegrate,

May I perfect the paramita of generosity. [16]

Endowed with a flawless ethics [that is guided by] rules,
And an ethics that is completely pure,
With an ethics free of an arrogant mind
May I perfect the paramita of ethics. [17]

Just as the elements of earth, water, fire, and wind,
[Bodhisattvas] do not remain [caught by mental constructs];
[By attaining] patience, anger never arises,
May I perfect the paramita of patience. [18]

Through [the power of] previous perseverance
Having become stable, enthusiastic, and free of laziness,
And through a strong body and mind,
May I perfect the paramita of perseverance. [19]
Through the samadhi [where all] is illusionlike,
Through the samadhi of the hero's stride,
And through the samadhi that is like a vajra,
May I perfect the paramita of meditative concentration. [20]
Through actualizing the three gates of full liberation,
The equal nature of the three times,
And the three types of knowing as well,
May I perfect the paramita of prajna. [21]
Through persevering in a bodhisattva's [practice],
[May I attain] the [kaya] praised by all the buddhas,
The lurrtinous [kaya], and the [kaya] blazing with majesty.
[Thus] may my intention be fulfilled. [22]
May [I be like] the famed Maitreya,
Who engaged in such a practice,
Perfected the paramitas,
And perfectly abides at the zenith of the tenth level. [23]

An Easy and Pleasant Path to Enlightenment
A Short Commentary on the *Aspiration Prayer of Maitreya*
Composed by Mendong Tshampa Rinpoche¹

Namo Guru Arya Maitriye.

Having prostrated at the feet of my lama,
Inseparable from the protector Maitreya, powerful regent on the tenth level,
I have arranged as a mere summary to nourish my faith
The meaning of this aspiration prayer for pleasantly travelling the excellent path to
enlightenment,
Which relies on sailing the great vessel of skillful means.
Lama, protector Maitreya, please grant your blessings.

The Aspiration Prayer of Maitreya is given in the forty-first chapter of the *Ratnakuta Sutra* (*Heap of Jewels Sutra*).

Its meaning will be explained under three [main] headings:

1. The generation of bodhicitta, which is the root
2. Being skilled in means, the seven branch [prayer]
3. The actual aspiration prayer to be recited

1.1. Establishing favorable conditions (p.56)

[1.2. Clearing away adverse conditions]

[1.3. The actual generation of bodhicitta]

*I prostrate to all the buddhas
And to the bodhisattvas,
Endowed with the divine eye of the sages,
And to the sravakas as well. [1]*

*I prostrate to bodhicitta
Which counteracts [birth in] all lower realms,
Perfectly shows the path to the higher realms,
And leads to no ageing nor death. [2]*

Respectfully through the three gates [of body, speech, and mind], I prostrate to all the buddhas without exception, who abide in the ten directions and embody the three kayas and the five wisdoms.

I prostrate to the descendants of the Victorious One, who [travel] the great, direct way of the unswerving madhyamika that abandons the two extremes, and to the

bodhisattvas, who have the unblemished divine eye, arisen from meditation. Further, I prostrate to the noble sravakas and pratyekabuddhas as well.

For [anyone who] merely gives rise to it, bodhicitta burns away in an instant a mass of negative actions, and thus counteracts [inferior rebirths by] closing off the gate that leads to birth in the lower realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, or animals. I prostrate to precious bodhicitta, which shows the path [to] the temporary attainment of a perfect physical support-the body of a god or a human being in the higher realms-and which, once the two obscurations along with their habitual patterns are purified, leads ultimately to the level of buddhahood, which is permanent, stable, and peaceful, the immutable kaya, where there is no birth, ageing, sickness, or death.

Here [in the root verse], the term *sravaka* [refers] in general to two [types]: those emanated [by buddhas and bodhisattvas] and actual sravakas.² There are indeed occasions when the latter are also said to be objects of refuge for ordinary people, but here, [these] are taken as an object for prostrations in order to [accumulate] merit. In this way, after teaching directly about the Buddha and the sangha, under the term *bodhicitta*, [the prayer] teaches the Dharma to be realized in the mahayana-relative and ultimate bodhicitta. In this way, these are [shown to be] the three supreme [ones;³ and] with these [lines] are also taught going for refuge, gathering the [two] accumulations, and remembering the beneficial qualities of bodhicitta.

1.2. Clearing away adverse conditions (p.58)

*Whatever negative actions I have done
Under the influence of an [afflicted] mind,
In the presence of the buddhas,
I fully acknowledge them [all]. [3]*

Since from time without beginning my mind has been under the power of afflicted mental states [or] the three poisons, this self they produced has committed every imaginable negative action. In the presence of all the buddhas, with regret in the depth of my heart, I fully acknowledge them all and vow to refrain from these in the future.

1.3 The actual generation of bodhicitta (p.58)

*By the accumulation of any merit I have created
Through the three kinds of activities,
May my seed of omniscience [grow]1
And may I [attain] awakening that never ends. [4]*

Through the three gates [of body, speech, and mind], I have accumulated wholesome activity, having the nature of the three aspects of generosity, ethics, or meditation. May the accumulation of any merit so created and collected bring about the growth of the developing potential⁴ this seed of mine that is the cause for the attainment of omniscient buddhahood.⁵ May I attain the great awakening, where the fruition of positive qualities never comes to an end. According to Taranatha, this [section] is not just an aspiration prayer, but the formal adoption of the bodhicitta of aspiration.

2. Being skilled in means, the seven branch prayer

2.1. Offering (p. 59)

*Whatever offerings to the buddhas
[That can be found] in realms of the ten directions
Are known to the buddhas who rejoice in them;
I rejoice in [all] these [offerings]. [5]*

If material [offerings] are set out, take them simply to represent clouds of all imaginable offerings, suitable to present to the buddhas and filling the vast reach of space. [The offerings include] all of however many offering substances, not belonging to anyone, that there may be in the realms of the ten directions, and [also offerings] created by dharanis, by magical power, and by the strength of devotion. The buddhas' knowledge encompasses [these offerings]; they rejoice [in them], and are pleased.

Except for the [buddhas], no one else can conceive of these [gifts]. With joy and appreciation, I rejoice in such [offerings].

2.2. Fully acknowledging [faults] (p. 60)

I fully acknowledge all negative actions [6a]

This accords with the previous explanations [in 1.2.].

2.3. Rejoicing (p. 60)

[And] rejoice in all merit. [6b]

I rejoice by respecting and taking joy in all the accumulation of merit and virtue, defiled and undefiled, of noble and of ordinary beings.

2.4. Prostrating (p. 60)

I prostrate to all the buddhas. [6c]

This is like the previous explanations [in 1.1.].

2.5. Dedicating (p.60)

May I attain supreme primordial wisdom. [6d]

Through however much virtue I have accumulated or will accumulate in the three times, may I and all sentient beings attain genuine, supreme, and unexcelled primordial wisdom.

2.6. Earnestly requesting (p. 61)

*I earnestly request the bodhisattvas,
Who reside on the ten levels
In all the directions of the [worlds in the] ten directions,
To awaken into supreme enlightenment. [7]*

*Once you have awakened into genuine enlightenment
And tamed the maras and their hordes,
May you turn the wheel of Dharma
So that all living beings may be healed.
With the sound of the great Dharma drum
May you free all sentient beings who are suffering. [8]*

In all the directions of the worlds in the ten directions, you first generated bodhicitta, in the middle, you engaged in the practices of a bodhisattva, and afterwards passed from the first bodhisattva level to the summit of the tenth, the level of the Regent Maitreya. All the bodhisattvas abiding on these levels, however many there may be, I request with palms joined together to swiftly perfect the levels and paths and manifest awakening into supreme enlightenment, the ultimate goal. May you awaken into genuine, unexcelled enlightenment, and once enlightened, also terrify and tame the whole dark side—the hordes of maras with all their divisions, who are hostile to liberation and produce obstacles. [Having accomplished this,] may you turn the wheel of unexcelled Dharma so that all sentient beings, (the living beings to be tamed), may be healed. By turning [the wheel of Dharma] and with the sound of the great Dharma drum, you awaken from the sleep of ignorance all sentient beings tormented by the three sufferings. May you establish them in the bliss that is genuine liberation.

2.7. Supplicating (p. 62)

*Throughout inconceivable millions of kalpas
May you remain and teach the Dharma.
Mired in the swamp of desire,
Entangled in the strands of cyclic existence,
I am fettered by all that binds.
I supplicate those, supreme among humans,*

to look upon me. [9]

The buddhas do not blame

Sentient [beings] who are flawed.

With a loving heart for all sentient beings,

May [the buddhas] free them from the ocean of cyclic existence. [10]

However many buddhas there may be, who wish to demonstrate the act of seeming to pass into nirvana, which appears to the [minds of] beings to be tamed in the realms of the ten directions, [I supplicate them] not to pass into nirvana for inconceivable millions of kalpas, [but] to remain and teach the Dharma to sentient beings. Since beings in the desire realm are attached to the *five* sense pleasures, they are mired in a swamp that is difficult to cross.

The beings in the two higher realms [are caught by] latent desire: they cling tenaciously to the samadhi of their meditative equipoise, which is turned inwards and confused with liberation; [thereby,] they are [also] bound by the desire [found in] cyclic existence. This is difficult to recognize, and they are as if entangled by [thin] strands.

In brief, since myself and all sentient beings are bound in the suffering of change, the suffering of suffering, and all-pervasive suffering by the three [poisons of] desire, hatred, and dullness respectively, I supplicate the buddhas, supreme among humans, to look with their compassionate eyes upon [those like us who] are fettered by all that binds.

Through the power of being stained by afflictions, sentient beings have gathered unwholesome karma, and so they [experience] the resultant suffering.

[Our] teachers, the buddhas, do not blame or abandon sentient beings as incurable, for they are helpless when faced with the power of afflictions.

Therefore, as they see that the stains of afflictions are temporary and can be removed, with a heart of loving-kindness and affection for all sentient beings, may [the buddhas] teach the Dharma by taming every being in whatever way suitable through great compassion and skillful means. Through this, may [sentient beings] clear away the two obscurations along with their habitual patterns, and thus be freed from the vast ocean of cyclic existence.

3. The actual aspiration prayer to be recited

3.1. A brief exposition (p.64)

[3.2. A detailed explanation]

[3.3 The benefits of the aspiration prayer]

Any perfect buddhas who are present,

Those who have passed away, and those yet to come,

*May I train following in their way
And engage in enlightened conduct. [11]*

Since I have generated the motivation to accomplish unexcelled enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, I must train in its practice, and therefore, may I train following the buddhas of the three times, the perfect buddhas in the pure realms of the ten directions: those who are now present, living and teaching the Dharma, however many may be; those who have come before and shown the way of passing into nirvana, and those who have not [yet] come, [but] will come in the future. May I engage in the oceans of enlightened conduct.

3.2. A detailed explanation

3.2.1. [The section of the] aspiration prayer related to the main practice (p. 65)

[3.2.2. (The section of) the aspiration prayer related to ultimate reality [or] emptiness

[3.2.3. (The section of) the aspiration prayer with a detailed explanation of the six paramitas

[3.2.4. (The section of) the aspiration prayer related to the ultimate fruition]

*Having perfected the six paramitas,
May I liberate the six [families of] sentient beings.
Having actualized the six extraordinary faculties
May I reach unexcelled enlightenment. [12]*

Having trained in and completely perfected the six paramitas that condense the ocean of a bodhisattva's practices, may I further engage in the activity, which through the six paramitas, progressively brings all sentient beings, comprised by the six [families of] beings, into higher births and the level of liberation.

Since due to the power of samadhi they have the power to accomplish such benefit for self and others, the six extraordinary faculties are more noble than those of the sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, and so forth. Since they benefit all universes, they are vast. Since they engage in manifold aspects, they are complete. Since they do not depend on exertion in meditative equipoise, they are unimpeded. Having actualized [all these], may I swiftly reach [and actually] attain the unexcelled enlightenment that remains in neither extreme [of samsara or nirvana].

The six extraordinary faculties are the following: the extraordinary faculty of [demonstrating] miracles, such as [manifesting] a variety of emanations and flying in the sky; the extraordinary faculty of the divine ear, which understands and hears all sound regardless of distance; the extraordinary faculty [related to] another's mind, such as knowing another's mind and so forth; the extraordinary faculty of remembering previous places, such as the place of a previous birth, body, life span, karma and so forth; the extraordinary faculty of the divine eye, which knows future births and deaths, and the extraordinary faculty of [being certain] that what is

defiled has come to an end, which knows that karma and afflictions have come to an end and will not arise [again].

3.2.2. [The section of the] aspiration prayer related to ultimate reality [or] emptiness

3.2.2.1. The aspiration to realize the no self of phenomena (p. 66)

[3.2.2.2. The aspiration to realize the no self of the individual]

[Future phenomena] are not born and [those past] will not occur;

[Present phenomena] have no [inherent] nature. There is no [actual] location.

There is no perception; there are no [outer] things.

May I realize the dharma[dhatu] which is empty. [13]

In this way, all phenomena, comprised by both a perceived object and a perceiving subject, are only delusive appearances [and] ultimately not truly [existent]. [Phenomena] cannot withstand examination, because future phenomena are not born, past phenomena will not occur, and present phenomena have no [inherent] nature. Furthermore, the world, the vessel or location, does not exist, [and also] there is no perception, [referring to] the inner perceiving mind, and mental factors and no things or outer perceived objects: all [phenomena are] just names, mere appellations, or simply imputations. Since [things] do not truly exist, may I directly realize reality-the unchanging dharmadhatu, the perfect nature, empty of the imaginary and dependent natures.

3.2.2.2. [The section of the] prayer aspiring to realize the no self of the individual (p.67)

According to the buddhas, the great sages,

There are no [truly existent] sentient beings nor life force;

There is no [truly existent] individual [and] no nurturing [of a self].

May I realize the dharma[ta] where the self is not present. [14]

All sentient beings innately grasp onto an "I": focusing upon the mere assemblage of body and mind, they apprehend as if existent an 'I' that is [taken to be] self-sufficient, permanent, single, and independent. The self of the individual is [also] taken [to exist] by non-Buddhists, who [profess] philosophical systems that are erroneous, and who in addition to the [innate self], assert [the existence of] an imputed self with many attributes. This [self] does not exist, but is [merely] a way of perceiving, to which a mistaken intellect has become accustomed.

Therefore, according to the teachings of the buddhas, the great sages, there are also no [truly existent] sentient beings, who are apprehend as self and other.

There is no [truly existent] life force of these [sentient beings], which is taken to be severed at death. There is also no [truly existent] individual, who is taken with the assumption that any fault or positive quality [truly] exists, and who is corrupted by grasping onto [the self] as the one who performs [various] actions. There is no nurturing to apprehend a self that has been nurtured, or a self to be nurtured. May I directly realize the dharmata where there is not even the smallest particle of an "I" [or] self that is permanent, single, or independent.

In general, the terms *sentient being* and so forth,⁶ are synonyms, yet more precisely, [it is said that] the first four can appear⁷ as objects for the collection of the six [kinds of consciousnesses] and that the latter [the self,] does not appear [to a consciousness] and is merely imputed by thought.

Since the incomplete realization of the no self of phenomena⁸ exists for non-Buddhists as well, and since its full [and] perfect realization does not exist for the lower [schools of] Buddhists either, dividing non-Buddhists from Buddhists in terms of the incomplete [realization of] the no self of phenomena has too broad an application. If one [divides them] in terms of the completely perfect [realization of the no self of phenomena], this would not apply to all schools of Buddhists. Therefore, Buddhists can only be distinguished from non-Buddhists with certainty [on the basis of] the no self of the individual. For this reason, the eminent Lord of the Jonangpas said that [the verse specifically] states: "according to the buddhas, the great sages."

3.2.3. [The section of the] aspiration prayer with a detailed explanation of the six paramitas

3.2.3.1. The aspiration in relation to the characteristics common [to all the paramitas] (p. 68)

[3.2.3.2. The aspiration in relation to the basis that illustrates [the particular characteristics belonging to each of the paramitas]

An entity [such as] grasping onto a self and "mine"

Is not present within any [of the paramitas].

To benefit all sentient beings,

May I give with generosity free of avarice. [15]

Exemplified by grasping onto a self and grasping onto "mine", there is tenacious clinging to the marks⁹ of the three [spheres of] agent, object, and action; [such grasping onto a paramita as a truly existent] entity is not present within any of the paramitas.¹⁰

Since [the activity of] the first five [paramitas] is permeated by non-conceptuality in relation to the three spheres, and since [the activity of] the last [paramita] is

permeated by great compassion, skillful means and prajna are united, and thus the result [of their activity] is (1) never exhausted.

Since the point of the practice is to benefit all sentient beings, (2) its purpose is great. Since for the respective [paramitas] what opposes them-[namely,] avarice (which is explicitly mentioned here), corrupted ethics, anger, laziness, distraction, and corrupted prajna¹¹ is absent, as are [also] the hope of a reward, the ripening of a result, and so forth, there is (3) no [attachment to] material things.

Since all six paramitas are practiced with all qualities complete¹² and without interruption, [the practice] is (4) vast. May I practice the six paramitas endowed with these four qualities as taught in the *Mahayanasutralankara*.

3.2.3.2. The aspiration in relation to the basis that illustrates [the particular characteristics belonging to each of the paramitas]

3.2.3.2.1. Generosity (p. 69)

*Since things do not exist as entities,
May my wealth appear spontaneously.
Since all things totally disintegrate,
May I perfect the paramita of generosity. [16]*

All things, such as the material objects of one's body and wealth, or the scriptures of the Dharma, do not exist as entities with an [inherent] nature.

Therefore, by previously accumulating the roots of virtue and the power of aspiration prayers, may the objects I give, such as wealth and so on, spontaneously arise without effort [and] without the flaws of negative actions or extreme hardship. Though [these objects] have appeared, may I not be attached to them. Since all things are [phenomena which] completely disintegrate and [from which I] will be separated, [things] are taken to have an essence when they do not. Therefore, may I give [without attachment] whatever I have along with the result of [that] virtue, to all sentient beings, headed by the four supreme recipients [of generosity]¹³ May I thus swiftly perfect the paramita of generosity.

3.2.3.2.2. Ethics (p. 70)

*Endowed with a flawless ethics [that is guided by] rules,¹⁴
And an ethics that is completely pure,
With an ethics free of an arrogant mind
May I perfect the paramita of ethics. [17]*

One takes up [the vows] correctly, [has] pure intention, repairs [one's ethics] when it declines, and remains respectful and fully mindful so that it does not deteriorate. Through the bodhisattva's ethics possessing these four qualities, one's ethics do not have the fault of being corrupted, and are not sullied by the stain of afflictions, the

cause of downfalls, or by the stain of considering one's own benefit. For all these reasons, this [kind of] ethics is endowed with perfect purity. Through an ethics that is also free of the flaw of an arrogant mind that clings [to it as] truly [existent], considers it to be superior, and so forth, may I swiftly perfect the paramita of ethics .

3.2.3.2.3. Patience (p. 71)

*Just as the elements of earth, water, fire, and wind,
[Bodhisattvas] do not remain [caught by mental constructs];
[By attaining] patience, anger never arises,
May I perfect the piiramitii of patience. [18]*

By training in patience through the many gates of training, bodhisattvas become familiar with [patience] and master it. They are never disturbed by harm, suffering, and so forth. Just as the elements of earth, water, fire, or wind, bodhisattvas do not pay heed [to these] and nor do they remain in any extreme of mental constructs or apprehending signs¹⁵ such as "I will be patient with the harm this [person] has done." or "I was patient with it." By attaining a patience that is [spacious] like the sky, with never an opportunity for anger or irritation [to arise], may I swiftly perfect the paramita of patience.

3.2.3.2.4. Perseverance (p.72)

*Through [the power of] previous perseverance
Having become stable, enthusiastic, and free of laziness,
And through a strong body and mind,
May I perfect the paramita of perseverance. [19]*

At the outset, through the power of peerlessly maintaining armor-like perseverance and [the power of] previous familiarization with it, [then] in the middle, perseverance in terms of application [arises].

This is stable since no condition whatsoever can counteract it, and without the flaw of laziness, [since] through taking delight [in virtue], one does not disregard the [seemingly] insignificant aspects of virtue and does not become discouraged by those that are vast. Since suppleness has become manifest, a strong body and mind bring to perfection a perseverance that is irreversible. Thus, may I swiftly perfect the paramita of perseverance.

3.2.3.2.5. Meditative concentration (p. 72)

*Through the sanmdhi [where all] is illusion-like,
Through the sanmdhi of the hero's stride,
And through the sanmdhi that is like a vajra,
May I perfect the piiramitii
of meditative concentration. [20]*

Although the enumerations of the great bodhisattvas' samadhis are legion, three among them are central. Through the power of becoming familiar with the primordial wisdoms that are to be actualized from the eighth bodhisattva level onwards, one directly realizes that all apparent phenomena are interdependently arisen and resemble an illusion; thereby, one purifies completely the obscurations [to generating] emanations.¹⁶ This is the samadhi that has mastery over producing whatever emanations one wishes.

The primordial wisdom of the tenth bodhisattva level has the ability to demonstrate spontaneously and without effort whatever limitless miracles [are needed] to tame diverse sentient beings; [this] is the function of compassionate affection and wisdom inseparable. Therefore, [it possesses] measureless qualities similar to [those] of the tathagatas. This is the samadhi of the hero's stride.¹⁷

The primordial wisdom at the end of the continuum of the ten levels, consists of the unimpeded path¹⁸ to enlightenment, following which the knowledge that [all of the afflictions] have come to an end and will not arise again definitely occurs, thereby vanquishing the two obscurations¹⁹ along with their habitual patterns. This is the vajra-like [samadhi] that makes manifest in the next moment the stage of buddhahood, where there is no more learning.

Through [these three] samadhis, may I swiftly perfect the paramita of meditative concentration.

3.2.3.2.6. Prajna (p. 73)

*Through actualizing the three gates of full liberation,
The equal nature of the three times,
And the three types of knowing as well,
May I perfect the paramita of prajna. [21]*

[The first] gate to full liberation is emptiness, disengaged from conceptualizing mind, which is the opposite of abiding reality or ultimate reality. [The second] gate to full liberation is the absence [of grasping onto] signs; [it is] a pacification where no signs appear in relation to objects or directions. [The third] gate to full liberation is not having any longing: since the subject is essentially free of bewilderment, there is no longing for saṃsāric existence.

[These are] the three [gates to full liberation].²⁰ All the phenomena of the three times have an equal nature, which just like space is free of arising, abiding, and ceasing.

Further, [there is] *the knowing of previous limits* or recall of previous places, which recalls former places [of birth]. *The knowing of future limits*, or the divine eye, knows the transference that is death and [also future] births. *The knowing of the extinction of defilements* recognizes that [these] have come to an end and will not arise [again].

Through actualizing this reversal of all ignorance related to phenomena of the three times, which is the bodhisattvas' three types of knowing, may I swiftly perfect the paramita of prajna.

Indeed, the three gates of full liberation are also related to the non-observation²¹ of the three [types of] phenomena, past, present, and future, or to the non-observation of the three [aspects] of things-their essential nature, cause, and result-or to basis, path, and fruition madhyamika. Here, however, they have been structured according to the teaching in the *Madhyamakavatara*. It is said that [the explanation of] the three types of knowing is similar in meaning to the explanations in the section on the extraordinary faculties.

3.2.4. [The section of] the aspiration prayer related to the ultimate fruition (p. 75)

*Through persevering in a bodhisattva's [practice],
[May I attain] the [kaya] praised by all the buddhas,
The luminous [kaya], and the [kaya] blazing with majesty.
[Thus] may my intention be fulfilled. [22]*

Having completely perfected in this way the six paramitas, which encapsulate the ocean of bodhisattvas' practices, through the power of having persevered in the practice of a bodhisattva and in aspiration prayers, may I easily attain [buddhahood] itself, endowed with the three kayas and the five [types of] primordial wisdom.²² Praised by all the buddhas, the ultimate dharmakaya possesses inconceivable qualities of freedom, such as the [ten] powers, the [four] fearlessness, and so forth. [This kaya is attained for] one's own benefit. The relative form kayas, which benefit others, possess measureless qualities of full maturation, such as the major marks and the minor characteristics: the sambhogakaya blazes with light [and] appears to those to be tamed who are pure; the nirmanakaya, blazing with majesty, appears to ordinary beings to be tamed.

[Having obtained these] may I swiftly fulfill the intention that I am striving for, namely, the continuous, extensive, spontaneous, and effortless enlightened activity of bringing all beings into enlightenment.

3.3. The conclusion of the aspiration prayer along with recalling its benefits (p. 76)

*May [I be like] the famed Maitreya,
Who engaged in such a practice,
Perfected the paramitas,
And perfectly abides at the zenith of the tenth level. [23]*

In this way having generated unexcelled bodhicitta, by engaging in its practice and striving to [train in] this most superior aspiration prayer, [may I become like Maitreya who,] from the time that he first gave rise to the thought of noble loving-

kindness as Gelong Lodro Tenpa, persevered in practicing this very prayer, and thereby attained the vast samadhi of loving-kindness without taking a long time. Due to this [realization], by merely stepping over the threshold of a city's gates, [he caused] a mind of loving-kindness to arise effortlessly in all the people of that city. In this way, he brought countless sentient beings into the samadhi of loving-kindness; therefore, from that time onward, he carried the most famous name of Maitreya [loving-kindness].

Even though he had easily perfected the six paramitas countless kalpas ago and had already become truly and perfectly enlightened, Maitreya remained in the kaya of a bodhisattva at the zenith of tenth level, called "The Cloud of Dharma," the summit where there is but one rebirth [until buddhahood].

The incomparable Munindra²³ placed his very own crown upon [Maitreya's] head, and [so he] received empowerment into the level of the great regent. Having totally perfected and brought to completion the purification of buddha fields, the full maturation of sentient beings, conduct, and aspiration prayers, he is preparing to come in this fortunate kalpa as the fifth consummate guide. Now [he] abides perfectly, having attained mastery over [sending out] inconceivable emanations just as the Buddha. May I swiftly become like him.

[There are] reasons why this aspiration prayer is particularly superior. It is stated in a sutra: "The Buddha said, 'As he fully possessed skill in means and, therefore, was not compelled to engage in extensive hardships, through an easy and pleasant vehicle, an easy and pleasant engagement, and an easy and pleasant path, noble Maitreya accomplished unexcelled enlightenment.'

Then Ananda asked, 'What was the noble Maitreya's skill in means?' The Buddha replied, 'Ananda, when the bodhisattva mahasattva Maitreya previously engaged in the practice of a bodhisattva, after wrapping his upper robe around his shoulder, kneeling down, and placing his palms together, he imagined himself in the actual presence of the Buddha [and] saying, "I will make this aspiration prayer," he recited this very aspiration prayer three times during the day and three times at night. Then, Ananda, through his skill in means, for the bodhisattva Maitreya wherever he abided, the vehicle was easy and pleasant and the engagement was easy and pleasant. This was his skill in the means which fully accomplishes unexcelled, perfectly complete enlightenment.'"

In this way, this easy and pleasant [method reflects] a different' skillful means for accomplishing enlightenment; however, [this difference applies] only to beginners or to those on the level of practice based on belief;²⁴ once the [first] noble bodhisattva level is attained, there is no difference.

It is said that since the Regent Maitreya's life story is inconceivable, one should not cling to one aspect of it from one perspective of his activity, enlightenment was

indeed accomplished in [this] pleasant way, yet this was mainly to instruct his disciples.²⁵

Through clinging to ego-fixation, ordinary individuals like ourselves are not free of a mind that cherishes a self, and so although we have generated bodhicitta, we are not able to train in the great waves of practice. It is right, therefore, [for us] to make efforts in [practicing] such a mahayana aspiration prayer, brief in words and vast in meaning, which was spoken by the Bhagawan. Being vast in meaning, it contains without exception all the topics of the ocean of mahayana sutras. It is said that complete within this aspiration prayer are all the topics of the treatise, *Mahayanasutralankara*²⁶ [composed] by the Regent Maitreya himself. Said to have the same mind as the glorious Karmapa Chodrak Gyamtso²⁷ and a Dharma throne equal [in height] to his, the great pandita Shakya Chokden²⁸ gave a wondrous commentarial explanation that combined together the *Mahayanasatralankara* and this aspiration prayer.

Taking literally a mere corner of Chagme Rinpoche's²⁹ teaching [,which was given] on one occasion with a hidden intention, some think that those who wish to be born in Dewachen should not recite this prayer. It is important, however, that they should realize correctly the intended meaning of Araga Rinpoche. Thinking in this way, I have added these side remarks, which should suffice.

This wondrous aspiration prayer spoken by the Buddha [is]

The skillful means to easily perfect the ocean of bodhisattva practices.

By the virtue of explaining succinctly and clearly the meaning of its words

As cording to the teachings of genuine [masters],

When the fifth perfect guide appears in this world,

May I receive the nectar of the supreme vehicle and a prophecy of unexcelled enlightenment.

May I become a supreme guide for our mothers, all sentient beings.

Taking onto the path the aspiration [to accomplish] the mahayana, this mani reciter, a yellow clad Ngedon Tengye, wrote this down in order to refresh his memory.

Based on the illuminating words of genuine lamas, lords of Dharma, it was composed while staying alone³⁰ in utter solitude where a great river gently flows.

May it be the cause for virtue and excellence to increase.

Sarva mangalam.

Under the. guidance of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche and with the assistance of Karl Brunnholz, Tenpa Gyaltzen Negi, and Chryssoula Zerbini, translated by Michele Martin, 1994-1996.

Endnotes

1. sMan.sDong mTshampa Rin.po.che. This edition of the commentary on the *Prayer of Maitreya* is found in: *bZang.sPyod sMon.Zam, Byams.pa sMon, sPyod. 'Jug sMon.lam, bDe sMon, Phyag.Chen sMon.Lam Dang lTung dShags bCas Kyi 'Grel.pa bZhugs.so*, by sMan.sDong bLa.ma Rin.po.che Karma Nge.Don bsTan.rGyas and Karma mKhan.po Rin.po.che Dar.rGyas, published by Thrangu Rinpoche's Vajra Vidhya Institute, Sarnath, India, 1995, pp. 56-79.
2. "Actual sravakas" refers to actual human beings, who have attained this level of realization. Emanated sravakas are emanations appearing in the manner of sravakas, which are generated by buddhas and bodhisattvas when they are performing the enlightened activity of the mahayana.
3. The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.
4. In general, treatises refer to two types of potential: *rgyas 'gyur gyi rigs*, the developing potential, and *rang bzhin gnas pa'i rigs*, the naturally abiding potential. The first term refers to the aspect of bodhicitta, which can change: it increases or develops through the accumulation of merit. The second term, the naturally abiding potential, is a synonym for the buddha nature or the tathagatagarbha, whose essential nature is unchanging. The two potentials have the same nature, but reveal different aspects. Their relationship can be illustrated by two examples: the abiding potential is like water and the developing potential is like milk and sugar added to the water to make it flavorful, or one could say that the abiding potential is like gold and the developing potential is like making ornaments or a Buddha statue out of the gold. The developing potential is the cause or seed for the attainment of omniscience.
5. "Omniscient" usually translates *thams chad mkhyan pa*. Here, the Tibetan is *kun mkhyan*, which refers to the fact that the Buddha knows all the objects of knowledge, so the term means "omniscient", but contrary to *thams chad mkhyan pa*, the term *kun mkhyan* can also be used for a great teacher and then it means the one who knows the path to enlightenment.
6. Such as *kang zag*, "individual", *bdag*, "self", and *srog* "life force", all of which are in the root verse.
7. Referring to the first four terms of the root verse-sentient beings, the life force, the individual, and nurturing a self. These all can appear on the level of apparent or conventional reality, but not, of course, ultimately.
8. *Nyi tshé ba*, here translated as "incomplete", also means "limited", "restricted", "a small part of", or "circumstantial"; "short-lived". On a coarse level or in a partial way, the no self of phenomena is realized by non-Buddhists, and even scientists today will admit that outer objects do not exist. So their perception of nonexistence can be included within a larger context that is the realization of the no self of phenomena, but it is not ultimate. For example, knowing that a vase is not truly existent pertains to the

realization of no self, but this perception of it as dream-like or illusion-like is not ultimate.

9. One clings to the actual existence of an object through latching onto its perceptible characteristics. For example, one thinks, "This is white." "That is red." "That is clean." "This is dirty." While having such a thought, one sees the outer object as if it were truly existent. Since clinging to objects as truly existent in this way leads to increasing afflictions, such conceptualizations are to be given up.

10. Another way to say this is that the six paramitas are not taken to be an entity nor are they clung to as truly existent.

11. As avarice opposes or works against the first paramita of generosity, these five faults refer respectively to the particular faults that counteract the other paramitas: corrupted ethics counteracts ethics; anger counteracts patience or perseverance; laziness counteracts diligence; distraction counteracts meditative concentration, and corrupted prajna counteracts prajna.

12. "These qualities" could refer to the three previous qualities of being inexhaustible, having a great purpose, and being free of attachment to material things. Since the practice has these three, it is considered vast. These four qualities describe the practice of the paramitas with an emphasis on their characteristics. Another set of four qualities could also apply here and they describe the practice with an emphasis on its function: (1) it diminishes what is opposite to it; (2) it is endowed with nonconceptual primordial wisdom; (3) it perfectly fulfills all wishes, and (4) it matures sentient beings.

13. These four are described in *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*: "Recipients are of four kinds: those distinguished (a) by virtues, as for instance a spiritual teacher and the Three Jewels; (b) by having been helpful like a father and mother; (c) by misery such as sick persons and orphans and (d) by harmfulness, namely, enemies and others of their type." trans. Herbert V. Guenther, published by Shambala, Boston, 1986, p. 156.

14. In Tibetan, the word for ethics, moral conduct or discipline is made up of two syllables: *tshul* "way, manner, or custom" and *khrims* "law or rules". The way the buddhas and bodhisattvas conducted themselves in body and speech was the original, profound way or behavior. For the disciples who followed after them, this profound manner became their ethics or way of moral discipline.

15. Alternatively, this could mean: "they do not remain in any extreme view where mental constructs are apprehended as signs." From another perspective, mental construct and sign are synonyms. "Mental constructs" refer to the proliferation of concepts that we direct towards objects or that we experience once we have settled into a dualistic mode of perception. "Apprehending signs" refers to the way we perceive something to be truly existent by mentally grasping selected characteristics of an object. We think a cup exists because we have seized onto some of its attributes-white, with a handle, made of clay, and so forth-that make up the image of a thing we think is really there.

16. Previous to the eighth bodhisattva level, there are blockages to generating whatever emanations or skillful means that are needed in order to benefit beings; at the eighth level, these obstructions are cleared away. For example, Milarepa was able to create various emanations in order to vanquish the pride Rechungpa had developed because of his travels to India.

17. The metaphor of a hero's stride points to the ability of this samadhi to act like a conquering hero and remedy obscurations with such efficacy that they cannot rise up again.

18. *Bar chad med lam*, "the unimpeded path" is paired with the term *rnam grollam*, "the path of being fully liberated." They both apply to the first nine bodhisattva levels. "The unimpeded path" refers to the particular wisdom of a certain bodhisattva level, which when realized, acts as a remedy to eliminate the obscuration to be overcome at that level and thus makes it possible to proceed to the next. The knowledge that this has happened, (in effect one has passed to the next level), is known as "the path of being fully liberated." The situation of the tenth level is different from the other nine, because once the most subtle obscurations to omniscience are eliminated, enlightenment is attained; there are no more obscurations to be eliminated, and hence the process ends here with the ultimate path of being fully liberated.

19. The obscurations of afflictions and cognitive obscurations or obscurations to omniscience.

20. Usually, the three gates to full liberation are presented as: the cause being free of grasping onto signs, the fruition being free of expectation, and this present thing being empty, or possessing the nature of emptiness. If one thinks about it, this is a bit strange, since between cause and effect, there is no thing; however, this gate is understood here from the perspective of not making a distinction between cause and effect: the two are lumped together as a thing and that thing is able to perform a function. For example, our body has the cause of our parents and our consciousness, and the fruition of being able to produce itself again. If, however, one just looks at this present body made of five skandhas, it is able to perform various functions; it is from this standpoint that one speaks of a thing that is essentially empty. From the view point of mind's true nature, all three, cause, effect, and thing, are posited by the conceptualizing mind, and therefore, they ultimately do not exist.

21. *Mi dmigs pa* can also be translated as "non-existence" with the reasoning that if something cannot be observed, it is non-existent for the person who does not perceive it.

22. Mirror-like wisdom, the wisdom of equality, discriminating wisdom, all-accomplishing wisdom, and the wisdom of the dharmadhatu.

23. A name for the Buddha.

24. "Practice based on belief" refers to the paths of accumulation and junction.

25. Maitreya performed various deeds to advise and teach his followers. For example, during twelve years in retreat, the great scholar Arya Asanga meditated on Maitreya, but he did not appear to Asanga. When Asanga left retreat in despair, he came upon a dog with a festering wound. When he knelt down to help it, the dog vanished and Maitreya

appeared, thereby instructing Asanga that what he had needed to develop was great compassion.

26. *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras*, one of the five main texts composed by Maitreya through Asanga. The other four are: *Abhisamayalan;ikiira*, *Ornament of Higher Realization*; *Mahayanottaratantrasastra* translated into English as *The Changeless Nature*; *Dharmadharmatiivibhanga*, *Distinguishing Phenomena and their Actual Nature*, and *Madhyiintavibhanga*, *Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes*.

27. The VIIth Karmapa (1454-1506), who was in particular renowned for his text, *An Ocean of Treatises on Logic*, which remains the main text on valid cognition for the Kagyu lineage.

28. Gser.mdog Pan.chen Sha.kya mChog.ldan (1428-1507), a great scholar, who is particularly wellknown for his theories related to the view of the shentong school.

29. Karma Chags.med Raga Asya, also called Araga Rinpoche, 1613-1678. Chagme Rinpoche was a great lama, who was accomplished in both the Nyingma and Kagyu traditions and had many great disciples.

30. Literally, "like a rhinoceros" which is often a synonym for a pratyekabuddha or for a siddha who stays alone in isolated retreat. It seems that since the rhino has only one horn, it became the symbol for staying in solitude, and also for being focused on practice. They are also known for staying alone as opposed, for example, to birds who flock together.