

**The Entrance for the Children of the Conquerors -
A Commentary on the Introduction to the Actions of
Bodhisattvas**

Chapter One: The Benefits of the Mind of Enlightenment

An explanation of the benefits of the mind of enlightenment, as a preparation
for the taking of the bodhisattva vows.

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Table of Contents

Homage by Gyaltsab Je	1
Meaning of the Title	3
Translator's Prostration	3

Meaning of the Text

The Preparatory Actions for Explaining the Stages of the Mahayana Path

Homage

Purpose	5
Summary	5
Meaning of the Words	5

Pledge of Composition

Identifying the Subject	6
Rejecting the Fault of Self-Creation	6
Rejecting Repetition	7
Identifying the Purpose, Essential Purpose and Relation	7

Humility

It was not Written for the Purpose of Others	7
The Reason for Joyful Composition	7
Expressing that It Becomes Meaningful for Others of the Same Fortune	8

The Actual Explanation of the Stages of the Path

Exhorting to Take the Essence of the Basis with Freedoms and Endowments 9

The Method for Taking the Essence

The General Presentation	11
--------------------------	----

Explaining the Individual Meanings

Contemplating the Benefits of the Mind of Enlightenment

The Advice that It Is Suitable to Abandon Non-Virtue and to Accomplish Virtue	12
---	----

Contemplating Extensively the Benefits of Bodhicitta	
Explaining the Benefits of Bodhicitta	
It Has the Power to Destroy all Negativity and Accomplish all Virtues	
Destroying Great Negativity	13
It Can Accomplish Supreme Virtue	13
It Can Accomplish One's Wishes	14
One Will Become Special in Name and Meaning	14
Explaining the Benefits with Example	
Example for How the Lesser Becomes Supreme	15
Example for its Rarity and Preciousness	15
Example for the Unending and Increasing Result	16
Example for its Ability to Rescue from Great Danger	16
Example for How it Destroys Negativity Effortlessly	16
How the Benefits are Explained in the Sutras	17
Identifying the Nature of Bodhicitta	
Divisions by Nature	19
Explaining the Divisions with Example	20
Explaining the Difference in the Benefits of the Wishing and Engaging Minds	
The Benefits of the Wishing Mind	21
The Benefits of the Engaging Mind	21
The Reason for these Benefits Arising	
Stating the Quotation	22
Establishing it with Reasoning	
The Validity of the Benefits of the Wishing Mind	
Great Benefit because of Infinite Applications for Virtue	22
There is no Higher Concern for Others	23
Sentient Beings Do not Generate such a Concern even for Their Own Purpose	23
Praising It as a Summary	23
The Validity of the Engaging Mind	
Actual	25
Its Validity	25
Clearing Away Doubt	26

Praising the Person that has Generated such a Mind	
Suitable for Praise because of Helping out of Compassion Without Being Asked	27
If Even Small Benefit is Praiseworthy then Achieving all Happiness and Benefit is Even more Praiseworthy	27
Praiseworthy because of Becoming the Supreme Field	
The Reason why It Is Unsuitable to be even a Little Disrespectful to a Bodhisattva	28
The Reason Why It Is Suitable to Meditate on Faith	28
They Are Worthy of Praise and Going for Refuge	29
The Title of the Chapter	30

From the *Ornament of Clear Realization*:

Mind generation desires perfectly completed
Enlightenment for the welfare of others.

The Entrance for the Children of the Conquerors - A Commentary on the Introduction to the Actions of Bodhisattvas

I prostrate to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

I bow respectfully at the feet of the pure holy lords endowed with great compassion.

He, whose mind has exhausted all faults and who exalts dancing in the pure sphere of the mandala of the four bodies, ablaze with the glory of marks and signs,

Who emanates out of great compassion light rays of pure speech endowed with sixty aspects to infinite migrators,

Who clears away the darkness of infinite migrators with spontaneous and uninterrupted wholesome actions,

I prostrate respectfully to the feet of the able ones and to the lama, the great being that is the gentle melodious one.

So that I may be guided in all my lifetimes,

And with the thought of benefiting those of equal fortune,

I shall write down, according to the views of those proficient,

The words and meanings of the introduction to the holy actions

Of the children of the conquerors.

Those who are bound by the noose of grasping as supreme the view of self

And who are hence heading straight for the lesser enlightenment,

Who teach that one does not need to realise the suchness of the profound,

Childish ones, listen to dispel your mistaken assertions.

Now, the Conqueror, the Powerful Able One himself initially generated the supreme mind of enlightenment. In the middle he completed the two accumulations by practicing the six perfections of generosity and so forth for several countless great eons. In the end, having become completely enlightened, he turned the three wheels of dharma.

First, he turned the dharma wheel of the four noble truths in twelve aspects, repeating them three times. Merely by showing the four truths to someone belonging to the Hearer lineage whose continuum has ripened, they comprehend dependent arising free from elaborations.

Just as it is explained in Nagarjuna's treatises and by the Master Chandrakirti with quotation in the *Commentary on the Sixty Reasonings*, subtle selflessness is shown explicitly in the Hinayana basket of teachings on several occasions.

Then he turned the second wheel of dharma, such as the small, middling and great wisdom sutras, which comprehensively show the selflessness of person and phenomena. Subsequently he turned the third dharma wheel, the advice of the irreversible wheel endowed with the extensive method aspect.

The introduction to the holy actions generally relates the intent of all the teachings, and specifically it reveals in full the intent of the Mahayana basket. I shall explain this holy dharma, which extensively conveys the way in which all the teachings have to be practiced as part of the path to enlightenment by one individual belonging to the Mahayana family.

The author of this treatise is the master, the superior Shantideva, who fully realised the intent of all the teachings. He is endowed with great compassion that cherishes others over self, and only works for the benefit and happiness of others, not basing his practice on his own personal happiness. Specifically, he practices the highest yoga, which is completely free from elaborations. As such, he is the very essence of a Mahayana practitioner.

His treatise *Introduction to Actions of Bodhisattvas* comes in four points:

- The meaning of the title.
- The translator's prostration.
- The meaning of the text.
- The meaning of the conclusion¹.

¹ This outline comes after chapter ten.

The Meaning of the Title

In Sanskrit: Bodhisattvacharyavatara

In Tibetan: Introduction to the Actions of Bodhisattvas

Out of the four languages of India, the title of this text is in Sanskrit.

- *Bodhi* in Tibetan means jang-chub (enlightenment);
- *Satva* means sempa (brave one);
- *Charya* means jo-pa (action);
- *Avatara* means jug-pa (introduction);

The Translator's Prostration

I prostrate to all buddhas and bodhisattvas

The purpose of the translator's prostration is to pacify the obstacles to the translation and to identify this text as a commentary belonging mainly to the sutra basket of teachings, although in general it is a commentary on all the baskets of teachings.

Meaning of the Text

(the preparatory actions for explaining the stages of the Mahayana path; the actual explanation of the stages)

The Preparatory Actions for Explaining the Stages of the Mahayana Path

(homage; pledge of composition; humility and the reason for joyful composition)

Homage

(purpose; summary; meaning of the words)

Purpose

To the tatagatas possessing the dharmakaya, their children [1ab]
And to all suitable for homage I prostrate respectfully.

By expressing the qualities of special objects and going for refuge, one comes to be understood as a holy being, and the obstacles to the composition of the treatise are pacified. In the end, one attains definite goodness and other disciples will also follow this example. As a result, they too will achieve all accumulations of goodness.

Summary

Shantideva prostrates to the Triple Gem, and all others worthy of homage.

Meaning of the Words

The term *sugata*² can be related to (1) abandonment and to (2) realisation.

1) The qualities of excellent abandonment:

- Similar to a person possessing a good body, if one has exhaustively abandoned the afflictive obscurations, then one has gone to the good or beautiful.
- Similar to having completely purified a contagious disease, one has gone beyond falling into cyclic existence through the power of the afflictions.
- Similarly to a well-filled vase, having gone to all and thus having gone to bliss, through having exhaustively abandoned the non-afflictive ignorance.

‘Bliss’ is referred to as good and ‘gone’ means to have become the living example for that.

The three distinguish respectively from a non-Buddhist that is free from attachment³, from a stream enterer, or a returner and so forth, and from a Hinayana arhat.

2) According to excellent realisation:

Having gone to bliss because of directly understanding the suchness of the two selflessnesses, having stable understanding and understanding all. These distinguish as well respectively from the three kinds of persons.

These words⁴ show the praise to the buddha jewel.

The dharmakaya is the naturally pure sphere free from all stains, which is the dharma jewel, and those possessing it are the ones gone to bliss. The first and second terms⁵ also contain the two form bodies of a buddha, and the second term also represents the truth of cessation and the truth of the path of a bodhisattva. Hence, all Buddha Jewels and Mahayana Dharma Jewels are the object of prostration. *Children* refers to superior bodhisattvas, and with their inclusion the Triple Gem is complete.

Shantideva prostrates respectfully with body, speech and mind to them, and to all others worthy of prostration, such as abbots, preceptors and so forth.

Pledge of Composition

(identifying the subject; rejecting the fault of self-creation; rejecting repetition; identifying the purpose and so forth)

This introduction to the discipline of the tatagata's children [1cd]
I shall formulate in brief, according to the teachings.

Identifying the Subject

This is a compendium that contains all the stages of the path, which cause one to achieve enlightenment, such as the practice of the perfections of generosity and so forth, that were engaged in by the buddhas and bodhisattvas upon initially generating the mind of enlightenment.

A scholar in a commentary relates it⁶ only to vows alone, but this is not the meaning of the word here.

Rejecting the Fault of Self-Creation

Question: Have you not made this up yourself? Who is supposed to believe this?

Shantideva: There is no fault of self-creation. This introduction to all the stages of the Mahayana path is according to the explanations of the scriptural teachings of the Buddha.

Rejecting Repetition

Question: Yes, one generates realisations in dependence on the scriptures, but to what end compose this text?

Shantideva: There is no fault of repetition because I explain the teachings in a condensed way, so that the meaning of the scriptures can be easily realised.

Identifying the Purpose, Essential Purpose and Relation

The Mahayana path and its result are the subject, to understand them in dependence on this treatise is the purpose, to ultimately attain enlightenment in dependence on this is the essential purpose, and that the later does not come about without the earlier is the relation. The purpose of making the pledge of composition is to bring what has been pledged to completion.

Humility

(In Humbleness, it was not written for the purpose of others; the reason for being happy to compose the treatise; expressing that it becomes meaningful for others of same fortune)

In Humbleness, It Was not Written for the Purpose of Others

I do not express anything that did not exist earlier [2]
And I also do not possess poetic proficiency.
Therefore my intent was not for the purpose of others,
I compose this to acquaint my own mind.

Question: If it was written according to the teachings of the Buddha, and one needs to attain realisations in dependence on the teachings of the Buddha, why then did you compose this text?

Shantideva: For two reasons I have not written this treatise for those other people that can easily realise the meaning of the subject matter in dependence on the teachings of the Buddha:

- This text does not express anything that is not already taught in the scriptures.
- Although there is no difference in meaning, I do also not have the poetic proficiency of making changes in the words according to heaviness, lightness, increase and so forth.

The Reason for Joyful Composition

To familiarise with virtue and the strength of my faith, [3ab]

Initially this will increase them.

Shantideva: There is a reason why I compose this treatise. It is for acquainting my mind, so that what I understood earlier does not decrease but increases.

The reason for using the particle 'this' is to either indicate that the text is already complete in the master's mind or that he composing it, but that it is not yet complete.

Argument: If Shantideva composed the treatise for the purpose of self, then, if he did not understand it, then he was unsuitable to compose the treatise. If he understood it, then of course that itself is enough to meditate on, but what need is there then to compose the text?

Shantideva: I composed the treatise to familiarise my mind in an uninterrupted manner with the extensive virtue that I entered into earlier. By putting it in the form of the treatise, it also increases this mind more and more.

Hence, by composing the treatise through the force of my faith, wisdom and compassion, initially all these in my continuum increase. Then, in dependence on that, others of equal fortune to see this treatise will also understand.

Expressing that It Becomes Meaningful for Others of Same Fortune

Should others of equal fortune to myself [3cd]
See this, it will be meaningful for them.

The purpose of others is also definitely accomplished because when other Mahayana practitioners of fortune to equal mine see this text, it will then become as meaningful to them as it is for me.

The *Great Commentary* explains *ci ste* as *in case*. That the commentary was composed for the purpose of self is confirmed by experience. To say “In case others see it, it is also meaningful” has the same meaning, which is to say the commentary was composed for the purpose of others. Although the purpose is shown earlier, these lines should be understood as showing that the commentary is for the purpose of others.

² *Su* - bliss, *gata* - one having gone,

³ A non-Buddhist with at least the first absorption of the form realm, but without the wisdom realizing emptiness.

⁴ To the tatagatas ...

⁵ 1) Tatagatas, 2) Dharmakaya

⁶ Tib: sdom; translated as discipline in line 1c. It refers to something that gathers, brings together etc.

The Actual Explanation of the Stages of the Path

(exhorting to take the essence of the basis with freedoms and endowments; the method for taking the essence)

Exhorting to Take the Essence of the Basis with Freedoms and Endowments⁷

To find such freedoms and endowments is extremely rare. [4]

If I do not do anything beneficial now

To achieve the purpose of sentient beings

How shall I subsequently attain it perfectly?

One needs to make certain that one practices the dharma on this basis that possesses freedoms and endowments because it is very difficult to find such a basis, which possesses the eighteen dharmas, due to it being very rare to establish the causes for it.

To attain merely a human body one needs to practice only a single morality, but to attain a precious human body one needs to practice pure morality as the basis, which then needs to be complemented with the practice of generosity and so forth, and completed with pure prayer. This is exceedingly difficult to find.

Contemplating the Great Meaning of the Freedoms and Endowments:

On this basis, which possesses freedoms and endowments, one needs to accomplish the purpose of others, because one has attained the basis, in dependence on which one can realise the higher status and definite goodness of others, which is their purpose. Hence one should practice with great effort.

Should one not accomplish the happiness of the next life and beyond, due to the idea of one's permanence and the like, then how shall one subsequently attain again perfectly such a base?

Normally we spend most of our time in states of no freedom where it is very rare to achieve the causes for a happy rebirth.

The Difficulty of Achieving Freedoms and Endowments:

From the *Letter to a Friend*⁸:

The hole of a noose on a great ocean in motion

And a turtle meeting it - it is more difficult to be an animal

And to become human even more difficult; work with the human power

To achieve this aim by practicing the holy dharma.

By abandoning the eight states of non-freedom one achieves freedom. The eight states of non-freedom are:

From the *Letter to a Friend*:

*Holding wrong views and birth as animal,
Hungry ghost or hell being,
Without the conqueror's teachings and birth as barbarian
In a border country and being deaf and dumb,*

*And birth as long life god, being born as any of these,
Is called being born without freedom.
Having found freedom free from those
Strive to become free from birth.*

Because in these eight states there is no freedom to practice the dharma they are called states of non-freedom.

The ten endowments: From the *Hearer's Grounds*:

*The five endowments of self:
Human, central born, complete faculties,
Not having transgressed the limits of karma, faith in the source.*

Not having transgressed the limits of karma means not having committed or not having induced others to commit the immediate actions. Having faith in the source means to have faith in the three baskets of teachings.

The five other endowments: From the same text:

*A buddha has come and taught the holy dharma; the teachings abide
and those following; there is affectionate compassion for others.*



⁷ The precious human rebirth with eight freedoms and ten endowments

⁸ Nagarjuna

The Method for Taking the Essence

(the general presentation; explanation of the individual meanings)

The General Presentation

This commentary shows the complete stages of the path to enlightenment. It shows the training in the thoughts of the small and middling beings as preliminaries for the training in the thought of the great capable being and it shows that, having thus generated the mind of supreme enlightenment, one then trains in the six perfections of generosity and so forth.

Initially, to generate the mind for supreme enlightenment, one needs to strongly increase joyful strength through contemplating its benefits well. This is described in the first chapter, which also shows the training in the thoughts of the small and middling being as auxiliary limbs for that mind generation.

Then, to generate the mind of supreme enlightenment, which has the root of love and compassion, one must confess the opposing conditions, i.e., the obscurations, and one must build up the conducive condition, i.e., accumulate merit.

This is done on the basis of having cleaned the place of practice, as if one is expecting a wheel-turning king to come for visit at one's house. Then one needs to take the mind of enlightenment. The former is explained in chapter two and the latter in chapter three.

The fourth chapter demonstrates the need for conscientiousness as the factor that prevents the virtues from training in the perfections upon mind generation from degenerating.

The next chapters provide the way of training in the six perfections. The fifth chapter gives extensive instructions on the way of training in morality by way of protecting one's mind with mindfulness and introspection. The way of training in patience, enthusiasm, mental stabilisation and wisdom are explained in the next four chapters.

The tenth chapter gives a comprehensive overview of the way of training in generosity, with extensive notes on how to train in the mind of giving by dedicating one's body, possessions and virtues to others. The training in generosity is also explained at the time of taking the mind of enlightenment and so forth. The resulting buddhahood is explained in the ninth chapter.

Explanation of the Individual Meanings

(contemplating the benefits of the mind of enlightenment; the way of training in the practices upon having generated the two minds⁹)

Contemplating the Benefits of the Mind of Enlightenment

(explaining the text of the chapter; the title of the chapter)

Explaining the Text of the Chapter

(the advice that it is suitable to abandon negativity and to accomplish virtue; contemplating extensively the benefits of the mind of enlightenment)

The Advice that It Is Suitable to Abandon Negativity and to Accomplish Virtue

Just like a flash of lightening illuminates the [5]
Dark clouded night sky for a moment,
Likewise sometimes, through the power of the Buddha,
Worldly beings receive wisdom and merit occasionally.

Hence, virtue is always meek [6ab]
And powerful negativity dreadful.

Nowadays, when we are of little merit and our negativities are very strong, it is appropriate to meditate on the antidotes to the negativities.

For example: Just as one can see form very clearly for an instant when the dark clouded night sky is illuminated by a flash of lightening, in the same way, for worldly beings the wisdom that establishes virtue thinking, “I have to act meritoriously” arises only occasionally. Beings do not possess such thinking continually.

For that reason they always remain with little virtue, and similar to the dark clouded night sky, they have difficulty overcoming the strong negativities that cause rebirth in the lower realms. Worldly beings take rebirth in very fearful places, which should be understood as very dreadful times, and therefore one should strive to accomplish virtue and abandon negativity.

“Hence, virtue is always meek” is explained in relation to time. It can also be explained in relation to the occasion when virtues are of little power and negativities are very strong.

Contemplating Extensively the Benefits of Bodhicitta

(explaining the benefits of bodhicitta; identifying bodhicitta; the reason why it has these benefits; praising the person that meditates on bodhicitta)

Explaining the Benefits of Bodhicitta

(it has the power to destroy all negativity and accomplish all virtues; one will become special in name and meaning; explaining the benefits with example)

It Has the Power to Destroy all Negativity and Accomplish all Virtues

(destroying great negativity; it can accomplish supreme happiness; it can accomplish one's wishes)

Destroying Great Negativity

How can this be overcome by other virtue [6cd]
That is not the mind of enlightenment?

It is appropriate to meditate on the two bodhicittas because how could this dreadful negativity, that is the cause of the lower realms, be overcome by any other virtue that is not the mind striving for complete enlightenment? It cannot.

This does not relate primarily to the ultimate bodhicitta that can abandon the seed of the obscurations. Rather, it shows mainly the benefit of conventional bodhicitta purifying the earlier accumulated causes for the lower realms, as well as cutting the continuity of later ones.

It Can Accomplish Supreme Happiness

The powerful able ones, who have contemplated this [7]
For eons, see this alone as beneficial.
Through it the immeasurable number of beings
Easily accomplishes supreme happiness.

It is appropriate to strive to meditate on bodhicitta because the able ones, who thought deeply for many countless eons about what is beneficial for sentient beings and the method with which to achieve that benefit, see only this mind generation for enlightenment as beneficial.

This very bodhicitta is the seed with which the immeasurable number of sentient beings can easily and happily, independently of austerities such as tearing out one's hair and so forth, accomplish the supreme happiness.

It is as it was said: Going from happiness to happiness; knowing the mind, who will be lazy?

It Can Accomplish One's Wishes

Those wishing to eliminate the hundredfold sufferings of existence,[8]
Wishing to clear the unhappiness of sentient beings and
Wanting to enjoy many a hundredfold happinesses
Should never give up the mind of enlightenment.

It is appropriate to meditate on bodhicitta since it is the supreme method for accomplishing the purpose of self and others.

Having trained in the motivation of the medium capable being one wishes to destroy the hundredfold sufferings of existence in one's continuum, and having trained in the motivation of the great capable being one wishes to clear the unhappiness of all sentient beings.

Regardless of whether one wishes to enjoy the hundredfold happiness of higher status or definite goodness, there is no better method. One should generate bodhicitta alone, and never give it up or let it degenerate.

One Will Become Special in Name and Meaning

Should one generate bodhicitta, then in one instant [9]
Are those pitiful ones bound in the prison of cyclic existence
Referred to as the children of the tatagatas,
And become objects of prostration for worldly gods and humans.

It is appropriate to strive in generating bodhicitta because once one has generated the wishing or engaging bodhicitta, one will instantaneously attain the distinguished name 'child of the tatagatas', and as the meaning of the name indicates, one will become an object of prostrations for worldly gods and humans.

It is not only the bodhisattvas that have entered the great grounds that have these qualities, but also the pitiful ones bound to the prison of cyclic existence by affliction and karma attain these benefits immediately after generating bodhicitta.

Explaining the Benefits with Example

(example for how the lesser becomes supreme; example for its rarity and preciousness; example for the unending and increasing result; example for its ability to rescue from great danger; example for how it destroys negativity effortlessly; how the benefits are explained in the sutras)

Example for How the Lesser Becomes Supreme

Like the supreme elixir that makes gold, [10]
Having taken this impure body, it transforms it
Into the priceless precious body of a conqueror;
Hence, strongly hold that called 'mind of enlightenment.'

Upon having contemplated these benefits and generated that called the mind of enlightenment, one should hold onto it firmly. Just like one *sang* of supreme gold transforming elixir can transform one thousand *sang* of iron into gold, this mind can transform this body that one has taken, impure both from the point of view of cause and nature, into the priceless precious body of a conqueror.

In the *Array of Stalks* it sums up the benefits of bodhicitta with the example:

One sang of mercury, which appears as gold, can transform one thousand sang of iron into gold.

Example for its Rarity and Preciousness

It is very precious since the sole captain of migrators [11]
Investigated well with immeasurable awareness.
Those that wish to be free from the place of migration
Should hold well onto the precious bodhicitta.

Those that wish to be free from all faults of cyclic existence, the place of migrators, should hold well onto the precious bodhicitta and protect it from degeneration like a powerful king of jewels.

Like the skilful captain, who brought the merchants to the jewel island, the unequalled sole captain of migrators, the Buddha, with his immeasurable wisdom awareness, investigated thoroughly what the best method may be to eliminate the poverty of migrators, and saw that only bodhicitta was that precious, i.e., rare and extremely beneficial method.

Example for the Unending and Increasing Result

All other virtues, similar to the plantain tree [12]
Are exhausted upon bearing fruit.
Since the fruit tree of bodhicitta constantly
Bears fruits, it does not exhaust, it increases.

It is also appropriate for those that wish for unceasing and increasing virtue, to meditate on bodhicitta. Virtues that are not held by bodhicitta are like the plantain tree whose ability to produce a fruit is exhausted after it produces one. On the other hand, the fruit tree of bodhicitta produces fruits unceasingly, like the wish fulfilling field, and even increases further and further.

From the *Sutra of Inexhaustible Wisdom*:

Just as a drop of water that falls into the ocean abides until the end of the eon, the virtue that is dedicated for enlightenment remains until the essence of enlightenment is fulfilled, it does not cease.

Example for its Ability to Rescue from Great Danger

Even having generated extremely terrible negativities, [13]
One becomes liberated from them instantaneously if one relies on it,
Like from great dangers in dependence on a brave one.
Why do the conscientious ones not rely on it?

It is appropriate that the conscientious ones who are patient concerning what has to be practiced and what has to be abandoned rely on bodhicitta. Why don't they?

If one has created very frightful negativity such as harming the Three Jewels or creating the five immediate karmas, then one can become free from the fears of the lower realms in an instant by generating the mind of enlightenment. It is like relying on a powerful brave person that can protect one from the fears of a very dangerous road.

Example for How it Destroys Negativity Effortlessly

Like the fire at the end of the eon, the great negativities [14ab]
Are completely burned by it in an instant.

If one has generated the mind, then one is endowed with great power to destroy negativity. Similarly to the fire at the end of the eon destroying all the

worlds below the first form realm, bodhicitta definitely burns in an instant the strong karma that causes rebirth in the lower realms.

If it can destroy the power of karma that is definitely to be experienced, then what need is there to mention that karma not definitely to be experienced? The great pioneers said that confession complete with the four opponent powers purifies karma definitely to be experienced.

‘Definitely to be experienced’ means that if one does not meditate on the antidote, then it is definitely to be experienced. This is established both with quotation and reasoning.

How the Benefits are Explained in the Sutras

Its boundless qualities [14cd]
Were explained by the aware Maitreya to Sudhana.

The mind of enlightenment definitely creates these benefits because Maitreya, who is endowed with awareness, explained these benefits and infinitely praised this mind in the *Array of Stalks* sutra to the bodhisattva Youthful Sudhana.

From the *Array of Stalks* sutra it explains extensively:

Son of good family, the mind of enlightenment is like the seed of all enlightened dharmas. It is like a field because it increases the white dharmas of all migrators....it is like the pure vase because it perfectly accomplishes all thoughts. It is like a spear because it causes the downfall of the enemy of the afflictions.



⁹ The outline ‘the way of training in the practices upon having generated the two minds’ is the start of Chapter Two Purifying Negativities

Identifying the Nature of Bodhicitta

(divisions by nature; explaining the divisions with example; explaining the difference in the benefits of the wishing and engaging minds)

Divisions by Nature

The mind of enlightenment, if summed up, [15]
Should be known in two aspects:
The mind wishing for enlightenment and
The one engaging in enlightenment.

Take the subject “mind generation for supreme enlightenment” - by way of nature it should be known in brief in two aspects - the wishing mind generation focusing on enlightenment and the engaging mind generation focusing on enlightenment.

The definition of the Mahayana mind generation: The mind that accompanies the aspiration to complete enlightenment for the purpose of others.

By nature, it has the twofold division into wishing and engaging, by example into twenty-two, and by boundary into the four of wishing, pure superior intent and so forth.

The mere wishing and engaging mind generation exists without having attained the special path of accumulation.

The special path of accumulation is the start of the accumulation of three countless great eons, leading up to enlightenment. Here one eliminates the superimpositions with regards to all one hundred and forty-four qualities explained in the *Ornament of Clear Realization*, through listening and contemplation, and one is able for the first time to practice them.

Someone says: The Buddha has no bodhicitta.

Answer: This is a great fault because if the Buddha does not have the engaging bodhicitta, then he does not possess the engaging vows, in which case one would also have to accept that he does not have the vows of individual liberation or the tantric vows. This would mean that the continuity of the vows is cut.

Further, it would also contradict our own acceptance that ultimate bodhicitta is a mind generation.

Although the engaging vows and the engaging mind generations are mutually exclusive, to say that there is another dharma for taking the engaging vows apart from taking the engaging mind generation is a great misunderstanding. The conventional mind generation focuses on the form body, i.e. the conventional body of the Buddha. The ultimate bodhicitta is a mind that realised directly the ultimate mode of abiding of the Buddha, and is presented in many texts as ultimate bodhicitta, but not as Mahayana mind generation.

The mere wishing mind generation is generated independently of a ritual. To combine this with the thought, “I will not give up this mind until enlightenment”, so that it is held by the twofold hook of promise, is taking it with a ritual as explained by Atisha in his instructions. This is taken by someone who can train in the advice that accompanies the wishing mind: the causes for the mind generation not to deteriorate in this life, to abandon the four black dharmas and rely on the four white dharmas etc., so that one will not be separated from the wishing mind in future lives.

The way of taking the vows for the first time and so forth, should be understood from great stages of the path of the perfections that was composed by the great and glorious Losang Dragpa.

The way of newly taking the engaging vows and the advice that comes with it should be known from Lama Tsong Khapa's commentary on the chapter of morality in the *Bodhisattva Grounds*. As I suspect it would be too many words, I do not elaborate on it here.

Explaining the Divisions with Example

In the way one understands the difference between [16]
Wishing to go and going,
In the same way those proficient should
Understand the difference of the two sequentially.

The mind that thinks, “I want to go to that place” while resting and not being held by the action of going, and the mind that thinks, “I shall go to that place” while being held by the action of going, are the same in being an awareness that thinks, “I shall go to that place.”

The difference lies with being held or not being held by the action of going.

The respective difference between the wishing and engaging mind generation should be understood by those that are proficient in the same way. They are

the same in being a mind that thinks, “I shall attain enlightenment for the welfare of others”, but one of them does not depend on being held by the practice of the perfections of generosity and so forth, and one does depend on that.

The master Kamalashila and others explained it in the same way, so I will not elaborate.

Explaining the Difference in the Benefits of the Wishing and Engaging Minds

(the benefits of the wishing mind; the benefits of the engaging mind)

The Benefits of the Wishing Mind

Though from the wishing mind of enlightenment [17]
Great benefit arises while circling,
Continual merit, similar to the mind
Of engaging, does not arise.

From the *Liberation of the superior Jampa*:

Son of the lineage, it is like this: For example, the precious diamond, though broken, outshines the supreme ornaments of gold and so forth, still keeps the name ‘precious diamond’ and eliminates all poverty. Son of the lineage, likewise the precious diamond of the mind generation for omniscient knowledge, even without significance, outshines all the gold of the qualities of the hearers and self-liberators. It keeps the name of bodhisattva and eliminates all the poverty of cyclic existence.

As quoted, though a great result arises while being in cyclic existence from the mind wishing for enlightenment, a similar uninterrupted stream of merits as that which arises from the engaging mind does not arise.

The Benefits of the Engaging Mind

Whoever, from the time they perfectly generate [18]
With an irreversible attitude,
This mind to liberate the infinite
Realms of sentient beings,

From then on, although they sleep [19]
Or become reckless, manifold
Merits of uninterrupted power,
Equaling space, strongly arise.

Whoever, from the moment they perfectly generate the engaging mind not to reverse from the purpose of others for as long as cyclic existence lasts, to completely liberate all realms of beings and place them in the state of enlightenment, from then on, whether they sleep or become reckless with intoxication and so forth, they will still create a manifold uninterrupted power of merit as vast as space.

This is because, the wishing mind is generated merely through aspiring to the result, while the engaging mind is held by the practice of completing the causes for enlightenment.

The Reason for these Benefits Arising

(stating the quotation; establishing it with reasoning)

Stating the Quotation

That this has validity [20]
Was taught by the Tatagata
In the Subahuprccha
For those aspiring to the lesser.

That it is valid that the engaging mind has these benefits was established by the Tatagata himself in the *Sutra Requested by the Bodhisattva Subahu* with reasoning. Why did he do this? It was for those sentient beings who are inclined to the lesser; such as a person whose hearer lineage is not definite, but who is afraid of accumulating vast merit, and thus they turn away from the Mahayana path and aspire to the hearer enlightenment. It was to help them give up their inclination to the lesser, so that they could be placed in the Mahayana.

Establishing it with Reasoning

(the validity of the benefits of the wishing mind; the validity of the benefits of the engaging mind)

The Validity of the Benefits of the Wishing Mind

(great benefit because of infinite applications for virtue; there is no higher concern for others; sentient beings do not generate such a concern even for their own purpose; praising it as a summary)

Great Benefit because of Infinite Applications for Virtue

Even if one thinks: I shall [21]
Alleviate just the headache of sentient beings,
Since it has the intent to benefit

One becomes endowed with boundless merits.
What need is there to mention the wish to alleviate [22]
The boundless unhappiness of each sentient being
And to establish each of them
In boundless qualities?

The captain *Daughter of a Friend*, though generating only the limited thought, “May I free sentient beings from their headaches”, had a true concern for others that generated infinite merit. If that is so, then what need is there to mention that the wish to eliminate infinite unhappiness of each sentient being and to establish each of them with the infinite qualities of a buddha has limitless merit?

There is no Higher Concern for Others

Regardless of whether it is father or mother, [23]
Who has such intent to benefit?
Regardless of whether god, sage,
Or Brahmas, do they possess it?

No one else in the transitory world has such intent to benefit. Who has a father or mother with such a wish to benefit the child, which other person has such a wish to establish supreme happiness? Not the gods or the true speaking sages, and not the brahmas that abide on the four immeasurable thoughts have such a mind to benefit.

Sentient Beings Do not Generate such a Concern even for Their Own Purpose

Sentient beings have not generated [24]
Previously such a mind for their own purpose,
Not even in their dreams;
How would they generate it for others?

Sentient beings have not even previously generated such a mind for themselves, and not even dreamt of it in their dreams. How could they generate it now while awake? They will not.

Praising It as a Summary

Others do not generate this mind for the welfare of others, [25]
Even for their own purpose.
This distinguished precious mind,
Something special unprecedented was born.

This precious superior mind of bodhisattvas, which wishes to attain enlightenment in order to place all sentient beings in happiness and eliminate their suffering, has not been generated even for a moment by other sentient beings, even for their own sake. Hence they should regard the generation of this praiseworthy, exalted mind that has not arisen before, as praiseworthy, and strive in it.

The Validity of the Engaging Mind

(Actual, its validity, clearing away doubt)

Actual

The cause for the joy of all migrators, [26]
The remedy for the suffering of sentient beings,
The merits of the precious mind,
How can it be comprehended?

If the benefits of the wishing mind are very great, then the benefits of the mind that is held by the practice of the perfections is even greater. Since it works to achieve the happiness of higher status and definite goodness of all migrators, it is the cause for their joy and the precious wish-fulfilling jewel that is the medicinal elixir that destroys the sickness of suffering of all sentient beings.

How can one put a measure to the merits of such a mind, since it is infinite?

From the *Sutra requested by Viradatta*:

*The merits of the mind of enlightenment,
If they were put into form
All the sphere of space would be filled
It is even more than that.*

More extensively, one can know from the *Compendium of Deeds* where it quotes the *Array of Stalks Sutra*.

Its Validity

If even the mere intent to benefit [27]
Is far superior to offerings to the buddhas,
What need is there to mention the striving
For the happiness of all sentient beings?

It is taught in the *King of Concentration Sutra* that even the mere motivational thought, “I shall attain enlightenment to rescue all sentient beings” is more meritorious than making offerings to all the buddhas found in the billions of buddha fields.

If this is so, then what need is there to mention the infinite merit of striving extensively in the practice to achieve the highest happiness for all sentient beings?

Clearing away Doubt

Though having the wish to destroy suffering [28]
They run directly to suffering alone;
Though desiring happiness, due to ignorance
They destroy their happiness like an enemy.

Those that are destitute of happiness [29]
And have many sufferings,
I shall satisfy them with every happiness and
Remove all their sufferings.

I shall also eliminate their ignorance [30]
Where else is something as virtuous?
Where else is such a friend?
Where else is such merit?

Question: Sentient beings wish for happiness and do not wish suffering, and by striving in this way, they are able to achieve happiness and abandon suffering. Therefore, are they not proficient in the practice of achieving happiness and abandoning suffering? Why should others strive for their purpose?

Answer: One definitely needs to strive. Although sentient beings have the intent to abandon suffering, through the power of the afflictions they only create the causes for suffering. They run infinitely in cyclic existence and especially towards the sufferings of the lower realms. Though they wish for happiness they are confused concerning the method for happiness, and out of ignorance, they destroy their happiness as if it were their enemy. In this way, they engage mistakenly in the methods for achieving happiness and avoiding suffering.

For that reason, what virtue is equal to the mind that wants to satisfy sentient beings who are confused about the methods of happiness and suffering and who lack happiness and have many sufferings? What virtue, with all the happiness of higher status and definite goodness, wants to cut the continuity of all suffering and clear the ignorance that is confused with regard to what is to be practiced and what is to be abandoned?

What other friend is there that establishes all happiness and rescues from all suffering? What other merit is there that shows correctly what has to be

practiced and what has to be abandoned? There is none. That is why one should strive to generate the mind of enlightenment.

Praising the Person that has Generated such a Mind

(suitable for praise because of helping out of compassion without being asked; if even small benefit is praiseworthy then achieving all happiness and benefit is even more praiseworthy; praiseworthy because of becoming the supreme field)

Suitable for Praise because of Helping out of Compassion Without Being Asked

If any repaying of benefit [31]
Is momentarily praiseworthy,
What need is there to mention the bodhisattva
That does good without being asked to?

One should praise and eulogise bodhisattvas. In worldly terms, someone that repays a kindness is praised, saying, "That is a grateful person." What need is there to mention the bodhisattvas, who achieve all happiness and benefit out of compassion, without being asked to, are worthy of praise by gods and humans?

If Even Small Benefit is Praiseworthy then Achieving all Happiness and Benefit is Even more Praiseworthy

Even giving scornfully just one instance [32]
Of ordinary food, which lasts only half a day,
To a few migrators
Is praised by beings, saying: 'It is an act of virtue.'

What need is there to mention the continual generosity [33]
Of working to complete all mental intentions,
The highest happiness of the tatagatas,
For countless sentient beings for a long time.

In worldly terms, someone that gives inferior ordinary food in an inferior manner, with scorn and not with praise, to a small number of beings, such as one hundred, and the food is even only enough for half a day, such a person will be regarded by the people as a great sponsor who practices virtue.

What need is there to mention that someone that continually gives the superior object, the highest uncontaminated happiness of the tatagatas, with the special benefit that it satisfies each and every thought, in a respectful manner to the expansive field of innumerable sentient beings for as long as cyclic existence remains, is praiseworthy?

Therefore, one should have single pointed respect for the bodhisattvas that have this mind.

Praiseworthy because of Becoming the Supreme Field

(the reason why it is unsuitable to be even a little disrespectful to a bodhisattva; the reason why it is suitable to meditate on faith; they are worthy of praise and refuge)

The Reason why It Is Unsuitable to be even a Little Disrespectful to a Bodhisattva

In case one generates negative minds towards [34]
One bodhisattva patron like this, one needs
To remain in the hells for eons equalling
The number of negative minds, the Buddha taught.

Should one criticise or generate a negative attitude towards those ultimate bodhisattva benefactors, who offer all benefit and happiness to any sentient being, then this negative attitude is the supreme among negativities. If one generates a negative attitude, then it is taught in the *Sutra of Strong Peace definitely abiding Magical Emanation*:

Jampel, should a bodhisattva generate anger or a criticising mind towards another bodhisattva then it is said for that many eons he will remain in the hells. Therefore, wear your armour.

As it is taught here by the Able One, one will remain in the hells for as many eons as the number of moments one generated the negative mind. Therefore, one should be careful concerning this object.

From the *Sutra of the Seal Generating the Power of Faith*:

It generates much more countless negativity to generate a negative attitude and so forth towards a bodhisattva that aspires to the Mahayana then to destroy or burn stupas equalling the number of sand grains in the Ganges.

As support it states that the buddhas are born from the bodhisattvas, and to harm the cause of the buddhas is taught in many teachings and commentaries as supremely negative.

The Reason Why It Is Suitable to Meditate on Faith

But, if one practices a clear mind [35ab]
Its result will increase even more,

However, if a person has a clear mind towards a bodhisattva, then the result of that faith will increase more than the earlier explained result of negativity.

For however many moments of clear mind there were, for a much greater number of eons one will experience the special result. This is taught in the *Sutra of the Seal of the Definitive and Indefinite*.

They Are Worthy of Praise and Going for Refuge

Even great force against the conqueror's children [35cd]
Will not raise negativity, it increases virtue naturally.

This precious holy mind [36]
Whoever has generated it, I prostrate to their body.
Though harmed they remain connected with happiness
I take refuge in this source of happiness.

Even if the great children of the conquerors are confronted with the intent to harm or cause suffering, they will not generate negative minds such as anger and so forth, and their virtue will naturally increase, even when faced with danger or loss of their lives.

If one looks at the commentary, it says that thoughts such as “it is useless for me to abide in anger and so forth” do not arise in the continuum of a bodhisattva. What this is saying is that they do not arise through great force. The meaning is that bodhisattvas do not act negatively, even at the cost of their lives, and their virtue increases naturally.

For those reasons, I respectfully prostrate with three doors to the body of the person that has generated such a precious holy mind.

I take refuge in the bodhisattvas, who are our source of happiness as explained later on in the chapter on patience, that when harmed, not only refrain from retaliating, but only offer happiness, just as in the life story of the king Maitrabala who attained the state of a superior despite five yakshas drinking his blood.

In short, regardless of whether one enters the tantric or perfection path, the door to the Mahayana is the mind generation alone. Therefore, one needs to generate this mind by striving in many methods. As explained earlier, to generate it one must first develop strong heartfelt enthusiasm for the benefits by meditating on them. That one needs the seven limbs with refuge is explained by this supreme commentary on the stages of the path of a bodhisattva, as well as in the *Compendium of Deeds*.

If the aforementioned explained benefits are condensed, then there are two: the temporary and the ultimate benefits. The first has again two: not falling into the lower realms, and being reborn in a happy migration. If one generates this mind generation, then many earlier accumulated causes for the lower realms are purified, and the future accumulation of further causes is interrupted. The causes for a happy migration that one has already accumulated increases due to being held by that mind, and those to be accumulated will be inexhaustible because of arising from that mind.

Ultimately, one easily attains liberation and enlightenment in dependence on this mind, but first one needs to have the spontaneous aspiration to attain those temporary and ultimate benefits because, since these benefits arise from the mind generation, one may say, “I shall generate the mind”, but it will be mere words. If one analyses one’s mind, this will be very clear.

To generate the wish to attain the two benefits of higher status and definite goodness one needs to first train in the motivations of the small and middle capable being, and then meditate on the mind of enlightenment, which is rooted in love and compassion.

A verse that sums it up:

Those that know they have attained a human body with freedoms and endowments

Meditate with effort on the two bodhicittas.

This is the supreme taking the essence of the freedoms and endowments.

Initially meditate on the benefits of that mind.

The Title of the Chapter

This is the commentary on the first chapter called The Benefits of the Mind of Enlightenment from the commentary on the *Introduction to the Actions of Bodhisattvas*, called *The Entrance for the Children of the Conquerors*.