

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

Chapter Seven: The Way of Training in Enthusiasm

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Translator's Introduction

This chapter, *The Way of Training in Enthusiasm*, comes under the second of the four outlines belonging to the main heading that introduces chapter six, *The Way of Training in the Remaining Four Perfections*.

I am translating the fourth perfection as the perfection of enthusiasm, because the definition for the Tibetan word *brtson 'grus* is *joy in virtue*, which is clearly a mental state.

Once one has joy in virtue, then what is called *enthusiastic action*, will come about naturally, but if this joy is lacking, virtuous actions will be few and far between.

Terms such as *enthusiastic action* give the mistaken impression that the fourth perfection concerns primarily actions of body and speech, while in fact in chapter five it is very clearly refuted as such. Rather, the clear joy for meditation is identified as a necessary immediate mental condition to achieve calm abiding and the mental stabilizations, which would happen in a retreat situation in isolation, and with as little physical and verbal action as possible.

The Way of Training in Enthusiasm¹

Explaining the Text of the Chapter

(Exhortation in the Need to Strive in Enthusiasm; the Way of Striving in Enthusiasm)

Exhortation in the Need to Strive in Enthusiasm

(Actual, Identifying Enthusiasm)

Actual

Being thus patient commence with enthusiasm. [1]
Enlightenment abides in those striving in this way.
Just as there is no movement without wind,
Merit will not arise without enthusiasm.

If one wishes to attain enlightenment quickly by being patient with austerities and harm by others, as explained before, then one needs to commence the practice of enthusiasm. Enlightenment abides in those striving in this way in the actions of the perfections. Just as without wind there is no movement of the candle flame and so forth, the accumulations of merit and transcendental wisdom will not arise without enthusiasm. Since the highest enlightenment depends on enthusiasm one should make an effort.

From the *Introduction to the Middle Way*,

All qualities follow enthusiasm, the cause of
Both accumulations of merit and wisdom.

Identifying Enthusiasm

What is enthusiasm? It is joy in virtue. [2a]

Since joy for the afflictions is laziness, what then is enthusiasm? It is the joy for a virtuous object. It has the divisions of:

- Armour-like enthusiasm
- Enthusiasm of application
- Enthusiasm of non-disheartenment and non-disturbance
- Enthusiasm of non-satisfaction

¹ This is the second of the four subheadings of the outline “The Way of Training in the Remaining Four Perfections,” which initiates chapter six.

The Way of Striving in Enthusiasm

(Abandoning the Conditions Obstructing Enthusiasm; Increasing the Antidote, the Power of Enthusiasm)

Abandoning the Conditions Obstructing Enthusiasm

(Identifying the Obstructing Conditions; the Way of Abandoning Them)

Identifying the Obstructing Conditions

I shall explain its antithesis: [2bcd]

Laziness, grasping at the negative,
And discouragement putting oneself down.

I shall explain the antithesis of laziness. There is:

- The laziness that grasps at the happiness of lazing around, where body and mind are non-pliant.
- The laziness that grasps at the negative.
- The laziness that puts oneself down, thinking 'I cannot do this', after having become discouraged.

The Way of Abandoning Them

(Abandoning the Laziness that Has Gotten a Taste for Lazing Around; Abandoning the Laziness that Grasps at Negative Actions; Abandoning the Laziness of Discouragement)

Abandoning the Laziness that Has Gotten a Taste for Lazing Around

(Abandoning Laziness upon Investigating Its Cause; the Way of Abandoning)

Abandoning Laziness upon Investigating Its Cause

Experiencing the taste of lazing around [3]

And through craving based on sleep

One does not tire of the sufferings of cyclic existence

And generates an affinity for laziness.

Should it be asked what the causes for laziness are: If one views lazing around without engaging in virtue to be happiness, one develops a taste for this happiness and grasps at it. This, and the craving based on sleep generate laziness, which causes one to be not the least afraid of cyclic existence and to not tire of its sufferings. Through this in turn one develops an affinity for laziness.

Therefore strive in abandoning laziness upon having identified its causes!

The Way of Abandoning

(Abandoning Laziness by Contemplating the Disadvantages of This Life;
Abandoning Laziness by Contemplating the Sufferings of the Next Life)

Abandoning Laziness by Contemplating the Disadvantages of This Life

(Explaining with Example How One Is Destroyed by a Quick Death; Since One Is Under the Control of Death, Acting Leisurely Is Unsuitable; If One Does Not Strive in Virtue, One Shall be Overcome by Suffering)

Explaining with Example How One Is Destroyed by a Quick Death

(One Sees Directly How One Is Destroyed by Death; Explaining this with Example)

One Sees Directly How One Is Destroyed by Death

Having fallen into the trap of the afflictions [4]
One is snared by the trap of birth
And finds oneself in the mouth of the lord of death.
How can you still not know this?

Similar to animals that cannot escape death because they are ensnared in a trap, one has fallen into the trap laid by the hunter that is the affliction of laziness and so forth. Being thus controlled one is snared by the trap of birth that connects one with the next life and hence one finds oneself in the mouth of the lord of death. How can you still not know this? Strive in virtue!

Explaining it with Example

He is killing our kind gradually, [5]
Do you not see it?
Those relying on sleep
Are like the butcher and the buffalo.

Do you not see directly that the lord of death is killing the old, young and middle-aged of your kind? You see it, and yet you develop craving based on sleep. This is unsuitable, for example, like the buffalo that is seeing directly that the butcher is killing sequentially the other buffalos, and yet he is unworried and abides leisurely.

Since One Is Under the Control of Death, Acting Leisurely is Unsuitable

(One Should Not Be Lazy As One Is Under the Control of the Lord of Death; Strive in Virtue Since You Will Die Soon; The Time of Death Is the Wrong Time to Abandon Laziness; One Should Not Be Lazy Since One Can Die Adventitiously, Without Finishing One's Work)

One Should Not Be Lazy As One Is Under the Control of the Lord of Death

Having closed off all roads, [6]
The lord of death has cast his eye on us.
How can you enjoy food?
How can you enjoy sleep?

The butcher that is the lord of death has closed off all roads leading to the deathless city and has already cast his eye on us. How can you be careless like the buffalo and enjoy eating food or crave for sleep. This carelessness is unsuitable.

Strive in Virtue Since You Will Die Soon

Since one is certainly going to die soon [7ab]
One should build up the accumulation until then.

Argument: I still have some leisure.

Answer: One is certainly going to die soon and hence one should build up the two accumulations as long as one is not captured by the lord of death.

The Time of Death Is the Wrong Time to Abandon Laziness

Though one abandons laziness then, [7cd]
What shall one do when one meets an untimely death?

Though one may abandon laziness when one is held by death, what is striving at the wrong time supposed to accomplish? One will not achieve the slightest purpose.

One Should Not Be Lazy Since One Can Die Adventitiously, Without Finishing One's Work

This started without completing it, [8],
This one left half done,
With the lord of death coming all at once
One thinks, 'oh no, I am doomed.'

Since one will die soon, this work one will leave undone or just started, the other one will leave half done. When the lord of death comes all at once then regretfully one thinks, 'oh no, I am doomed.' When one is regretful from fear what shall one do? Strive in virtue from right now onwards.

If One Does Not Strive in Virtue, One Shall Be Overwhelmed by Suffering
(At Death Time One Shall Be Overwhelmed With Misery; If One Does Not Strive in Virtue Starting Right Now, One Will Not Achieve One's Aims)

At the Time of Death One Shall Be Overwhelmed With Misery

With swollen red eyes due to misery [9]
And tears running down their faces,
Near and dear ones lose hope
And I look into the faces of the lord of death's messengers.

At the time of one's untimely death, near and dear ones, with swollen red eyes due to misery and tears running down their faces, lose hope, and one, though being afraid, will have to look into the faces of the lord of death's messengers.

If One Does Not Strive in Virtue Starting Right Now, One Will Not Achieve One's Aims

When overwhelmed by the memory of one's negativities, [10]
And covering one's body with excrement
As one becomes mad with fright because one
Hears the sounds of the hells, what shall one do then?

When being overwhelmed by the memory of the negativities that one created before, and one covers one's body with excrement as one becomes mad with fright, thinking 'I too have to go there', because one hears the sounds of the great

sufferings of hell that one will definitely experience, such as being burned and so forth - at this time, when it is unsuitable to practice enthusiasm, what shall one do? One needs to strive in virtue straight away.

Abandoning Laziness by Contemplating the Sufferings of the Next Life

(Sufferings Will Definitely Arise; They Are Difficult to Bear; It Is Contradictory to Wish for Happiness and Not to Strive in Virtue; Exhorting to Strive in the Method for Becoming Liberated from Suffering)

Sufferings Will Definitely Arise

Since one will have dangers in this life, [11]
Like a flapping live fish,
What need is there to mention the unbearable sufferings
Of hell, created by negativity.

When you die you will have sufferings like a live fish flapping on hot sand. Hence, what need is there to talk about what happens when you experience directly the unbearable sufferings of hell due to the results of the negativity you created?

They Are Difficult to Bear

Having created the karma for the hells [12]
Where one's delicate flesh is burned
When scalded with hot water,
Why does one abide happily?

It is unsuitable to be lazy because of the many negativities created previously and also if one analyses the various causes for the lower realms one is still creating every day.

Why does one abide happily now, having created the karma to be reborn in the lower realms, where one's body of delicate flesh will have to experience the sufferings of being burned intensely when scalded by the hot water that boils angrily in the hell realms.

One should strive in virtue like being on fire.

It Is Contradictory to Wish for Happiness and Not to Strive in Virtue

Those wishing for results without effort [13]
And who are sensitive receive much harm
And, like the gods gripped by death,
Wail, 'Alas, I am overwhelmed by suffering.'

Those wishing for the result of happiness without striving in its cause, virtue, and who are sensitive even towards the smallest of sufferings, will receive much harm. Like the gods gripped by death whose wish for a long life will not be fulfilled, and who will receive what they do not wish for, one will wail, 'Alas, I am overwhelmed by suffering.'

Exhorting to Strive in the Method for Becoming Liberated from Suffering

In dependence on the human boat [14]
One will be liberated from the great river of suffering.
Since this boat will be difficult to find later on,
Deluded one, do not fall asleep at this time.

If it is asked, 'How then should one act?':

Since one can attain liberation if one strives in dependence on the basis that has attained freedoms and endowments, Shantideva says, 'Liberate yourself from the great stream of suffering in dependence on the boat of the human body. The freedoms and endowments have great purpose.'

Since the achievement of the freedoms and endowments is extremely rare, it is very difficult to find this boat again later on. Hence, deluded one, at this time of having found this boat do not fall asleep, but liberate yourself from the great stream of cyclic existence by way of practicing the paths of the small, medium and great capable beings.

This shows that one needs to strive while having found the difficult-to-find freedoms and endowments.

Abandoning the Laziness That Grasps at Negative Actions

Having abandoned the supreme happiness of the infinite [15]
And holy dharma, which is the cause for happiness,
Why do you like the distraction, mental excitement
And so forth, of the causes of suffering?

Having abandoned the supreme joy in practicing the infinite methods of the holy dharma, which are the causes for all the happiness of this and future lives, why do you like unsuitable actions resulting in suffering, such as negativities, the distractions of many different thrills, mental excitement and so forth? It is unsuitable to like them because they are the causes of suffering.

Abandoning the Laziness of Discouragement

(Advice to Strive in the Antidotes to Discouragement; How It Is Taught in the Scriptures to Practice the Antidote; One Can Attain Enlightenment if One Strives, by Stopping Laziness)

Advice to Strive in the Antidotes to Discouragement

Without discouragement, with armies, [16]
Sincerity and self-empowerment,
Equalize self and others,
Exchange self and others.

Kings conquer their enemies with the four types of armies. Similarly, bodhisattvas initially lift up their minds and generate the armour-like enthusiasm² free from despondency that intends to train in the path.

Then they generate the enthusiasm of application³ that builds up the army of the two accumulations⁴ as preparation.

At the time of the main part they sincerely practice introspection and mindfulness, and thus gain control over themselves as their body and mind become serviceable.

² Enthusiasm at the motivational stage.

³ Enthusiasm at the time of practice.

⁴ The accumulations of merit and wisdom.

Having done that, one should equalize and exchange self and others as explained below.

How It Is Taught in the Scriptures to Practice the Antidotes

Do not be despondent, [17]
Saying 'How could I become enlightened?',
Since the Tatagata speaks the truth,
He taught also this truth thus.

Do not be despondent, saying, 'The Buddha alone, being of very sharp faculty, achieved his aim by practicing for many countless great eons the extremely difficult trainings and accumulated infinite merits by making an effort in enthusiasm. Since I am not like this, how could I attain enlightenment?'

Since the tatagata speaks the truth, he thus also taught this truth, which is suitable to accept since he has no cause to speak deceptively.

Question: In what manner did he teach?

Answer: From the *Sutra requested by Subahu*:

Further, bodhisattvas should practice correctly and with emphasis like this: They should think, 'If those that turned into lions, tigers, dogs and jackals, vultures, cranes, crows and owls, worms, bees, flies and mosquitoes become awakened in highest enlightenment, then now, while I am a human, I need to practice the enthusiasm that achieves enlightenment, even at the cost of my life.'

The same is also taught in the *Clouds of Jewels Sutra*.

One Can Attain Enlightenment if One Strives, by Stopping Laziness

(Considering that One Can Attain Enlightenment If One Generates the Power of Enthusiasm; The Austerities that Accomplish Enlightenment are Suitable to Bear Since they Do Not Possess Even Partially the Sufferings of the Lower Realms; They Are Suitable to Bear Since the King of Physicians Heals Great Diseases with Gentle Methods; It Is Suitable to Like the Austerities Since They Lack Suffering and Are Strengthened by Happiness)

Considering That One Can Attain Enlightenment If One Generates the Power of Enthusiasm

Those that became flies, mosquitoes [18]
Bees and likewise worms,
Even they, if they generated the force of enthusiasm,
Attain the difficult to attain highest enlightenment.

One like oneself, who has been born into the human race, [19]
And knows what is beneficial and what is harmful,
If one does not give up the practice of enlightenment,
Then why should one not attain enlightenment?

As it was taught earlier, even those that became flies, mosquitoes, bees and likewise worms, will attain the difficult to attain highest enlightenment if they generate the force of enthusiasm and build up the accumulations.

Since it is taught like this, then someone like oneself, having been born into the special human race, knowing what is beneficial and has to be adapted, what harms and has to be abandoned to attain the aim of the wish for enlightenment, if one takes up the practices of enlightenment and does not give them up, then why should one not attain enlightenment? Determine that you can definitively attain it.

The Austerities That Accomplish Enlightenment Are Suitable to Bear Since They Do Not Possess Even Partially the Sufferings of the Lower Realms

(Fear of the Austerities of Giving Up Legs, Arms, and so forth Is Unsuitable; One Does Not Need to Experience the Sufferings of the Lower Migrations Even Partially; The Example of How It Is Suitable to Bear Small Sufferings to Destroy a Big Sickness)

Fear of the Austerities of Giving Up Legs, Arms, and so forth Is Unsuitable

If: 'Well, because one has to give up [20]
Legs and arms I am afraid.'
Not discerning between heavy and light
One becomes afraid due to ignorance.

For innumerable tens of millions of eons [21]
One has been cut many times,

Stabbed, burned and slashed,
But one has not attained enlightenment.

Objection: Well, though one can achieve it through enthusiasm, I am afraid, because one needs to practice the generosity of giving away one's legs, arms, head, and so forth, and I am not able to engage in these difficult practices.

Answer: Though one needs to practice generosity with these, without having distinguished well between heavy and light suffering one is ignorant with regards to what has to be abandoned and what has to be adopted, and one is afraid, although it is unnecessary to be afraid.

While circling in cyclic existence since beginningless time one has experienced the sufferings of one's body being cut, stabbed, burned by fire and slashed by weapons not only once, but many times for innumerable tens of millions of eons in the hells. But, however much one has experienced this, it has only exhausted purposelessly the power of one's body, and one has not achieved highest enlightenment.

One Does Not Need to Experience the Sufferings of the Lower Migrations Even Partially

There is a measure to [22]
One's sufferings in attaining enlightenment,
Similar to the sufferings of a bodily procedure
To clear the harm of paralysing pain.

If one considers the sufferings of the lower migrations, then the sufferings of the austerities of attaining enlightenment are of small measure and last a short time by comparison. They are also easy to bear, similar to being able to bear the sufferings of a bodily procedure to clear the harm of paralysing pain.

The Example of How It Is Suitable to Bear Small Sufferings to Destroy a Big Sickness

All physicians make unpleasant sickness [23]
Go away with cures.
Hence, one is able to bear small unpleasantness
To destroy many sufferings.

All physicians will employ slightly disagreeable cures to make an unpleasant sickness go away. Likewise, since the austerities to achieve enlightenment are very small sufferings, one should bear the small suffering of the austerity to destroy the many sufferings of cyclic existence. In this way one pacifies boundless sufferings of self and other.

They Are Suitable to Bear Since the King of Physicians Heals Great Diseases with Gentle Methods

(The Buddha Shows Methods to Cure Great Diseases Without Having to Experience the Slightest Suffering; It Is Forbidden to Give One's Body for as Long as One Has Difficulty; They Are Not Difficult Since the Time Taught for Giving One's Body Is When One Is Habituated to Give It Like a Vegetable)

The Buddha Shows Methods to Cure Great Diseases Without Having to Experience the Slightest Suffering

The supreme physician does not act [24]
In accordance with common cures;
He cures boundless great diseases
With extremely gentle methods.

While one is working to achieve enlightenment, the supreme of physicians, the Able One, does not employ austerities like the common cures to cure sicknesses. He heals the boundless heavy sickness of having to wander in cyclic existence due to the afflictions with the method of a happy path leading to a happy result, without the extremes of being tired and exhausted or sensual decadence. Therefore, how is it suitable to be afraid of the austerities?

It Is Forbidden to Give One's Body for as Long as One Has Difficulty

The guide induces one to initially train [25]
Even in the generosity of vegetables and such.
Having become habituated, then subsequently
One gradually also offers one's flesh.

Initially, when one is not even habituated to offer vegetables and the like, the guide, the Buddha, induces one to train in the generosity of food, drink, vegetables and so forth. When one has become habituated to do this without difficulty, then subsequently one also gradually offers one's flesh.

It Is Not Difficult Since the Time Taught for Giving One's Body Is When One Is Habituated to Give It Like a Vegetable

Once one has generated the awareness [26]
Of one's body as a vegetable or the like,
Then one offers one's flesh and the like.
Where lies the difficulty in that?

Once one has, through familiarity, generated the awareness of the generosity of one's body as the generosity of a vegetable or the like, then one can offer one's flesh and such.

Where lies the difficulty in that? Since there is not the slightest difficulty, it is unsuitable to be afraid.

It Is Suitable to Like the Austerities Since They Lack Suffering and Are Strengthened by Happiness

(Though a Person Who Is Unskilled in the Sequence of Training in the Path Has Physical and Mental Unhappiness, Those Who Are Skilled Do Not Have the Suffering of Austerities; There Is No Cause Then for a Great Bodhisattva To Be Tired of Cyclic Existence; For These Reasons They Are Said To Be More Skilled in Achieving the Path than a Hinayana; Hence, It Is Unsuitable to Be Discouraged from the Actions of a Bodhisattva)

Though a Person Who Is Unskilled in the Sequence of Training in the Path Has Physical and Mental Unhappiness, Those Who Are Skilled Do Not Have the Suffering of Austerities

No suffering because of having abandoned negativity, [27]
No dislike because of being skilful.
Therefore, wrong conceptions
And negativities harm mind and body.

Bodhisattvas with the pure thought of compassion do not have physical suffering when they offer their body, because they have abandoned all the negativities of the three doors, and they also do not experience mental dislike because they are skilful regarding the time for offering the body.

Therefore, for those reasons, the wrong conceptions of grasping at the self of person and grasping at mine, and the negativities of killing and so forth, harm mind and body, yet the great bodhisattvas have abandoned these causes for harm.

There Is No Cause Then for a Great Bodhisattva To Be Tired of Cyclic Existence

If the body is happy through merits [28]
And the mind is happy through skill,
Though remaining in cyclic existence for the purpose of others
Why should those with compassion be tired?

Bodhisattvas have physical happiness through the merits of generosity and so forth, and they have mental happiness, like the bodhisattva Evercrying, through being skilful regarding what has to be adapted and what has to be rejected, and the meaning of emptiness. So, since there is no cause for suffering, why should those with compassion tire even though they remain in cyclic existence for the purpose of others?

For These Reasons They Are Said To Be More Skilled in Achieving the Path than a Hinayana

They exhaust previous negativities [29]
Through the power of the mind of enlightenment,
And they contain an ocean of merits.
Therefore they are said to be superior than the hearers.

Since those with compassion exhaust previous negativities with the power of the mind of enlightenment and because they contain an ocean of accumulations of merits and wisdom they are said to be superior in progressing along the path than the hearers.

Hence, It Is Unsuitable to Be Discouraged from the Actions of a Bodhisattva

Therefore, mounting the horse of bodhicitta [30]
That dispels all tiredness and weariness,
Who, that knows the mind that goes
From happiness to happiness, will be discouraged?

Therefore, having mounted the powerful horse of the mind of enlightenment that dispels all mental tiredness and physical weariness, who of those proficient that know the mind that goes from the path of mental and physical happiness to the result of happiness, will be discouraged? It is unsuitable to be discouraged from practicing the bodhisattva actions.

Increasing the Antidote, the Power of Enthusiasm

(Increasing the Powers That Are the Conducive Conditions for Enthusiasm; Being Sincere About Practicing the Actions with Mindfulness and Introspection; Empowering Oneself to Achieve the Actions)

Increasing the Powers That Are the Conducive Conditions for Enthusiasm

(A Short Presentation by Way of Identifying the Four Powers; An Extensive Explanation)

A Short Presentation by Way of Identifying the Four Powers

The armies for accomplishing the purpose of sentient beings [31]
Are belief, stability, joy and relinquishment.
Belief is generated by reflecting on its benefits
And the fears of suffering.

Giving up the opposite in this way [32]
Strive in increasing enthusiasm through
Belief, pride, joy and relinquishment
And the power of diligence and control.

Regarding the generation of the armies that destroy the opposing factors of enthusiasm so as to achieve the purpose of sentient beings: Similar to the king's four armies destroying his opponents, the four powers are the conducive conditions for enthusiasm.

They are:

- a) Belief that is aspiration regarding the practice of adapting and abandoning, generated through contemplating karmic cause and effect.
- b) Stability that does not start something without investigation, and which finishes what was started.

- c) Joy that engages in effort without satisfaction, but with uninterrupted joy, like a child engaged in play.
- d) Relinquishment that takes a break when body and mind are tired through the practice of enthusiastic effort, only to start straight away again once refreshed.

Explaining them by taking the power of belief as an example, they are generated by contemplating the fears of the suffering of cyclic existence and the benefits of the respective power, i.e., here belief.

Giving up the opposing factors of not engaging in virtuous dharmas through seeing that one is able to, or the discouragement of thinking, 'I am not able to do this', one generates the conducive conditions of the four powers of belief, the pride of stability, joy and relinquishment.

Then, during the actual practice one diligently practices enthusiasm with mindfulness and introspection, and through the power of subsequently gaining control over body and mind one increases enthusiasm further and further. Strive in such a way.

An Extensive Explanation

(The Power of Belief; The Power of Stability; The Power of Joy; The Power of Relinquishment)

The Power of Belief

(The Object of Belief; The Result of Belief; The Cause for Belief; Concluding Summary)

The Object of Belief

(Abandoning Faults; Taking Qualities; Analyzing What One Has Done And What One Has Not)

Abandoning Faults

One should destroy the boundless
Faults of self and others. [33]

Even if for each individual fault
It will take an ocean of eons,

If it is not observable that one has [34]

Started to exhaust faults even partially,
One becomes an abode for boundless suffering.
Why does one's heart not burst?

One should destroy the boundless faults of self and others because one has made that promise at the time of generating the mind. When one destroys these faults one meditates on the antidote for an ocean of eons even for each individual fault. Since it will come like this, if one does not observe the beginning of having started to abandon faults even partially on oneself, then one will have to experience the sufferings of the lower realms, since one cannot bear to meditate on the antidote even that much. Since one will become an abode for boundless suffering, why does one's heart not explode? One's heart is completely made of stone, I say.

Taking Qualities

One should establish many qualities [35]
Of self and others.
If one meditates for an ocean of eons
For each individual quality,

One has not generated meditation [36]
On even a part of one's qualities.
This birth that one has somehow found now,
It is strange that I make it meaningless.

One should establish the many qualities of one's own and others' liberation and enlightenment because one has promised to do so.

Not to mention all the qualities, if it is necessary to meditate for an ocean of eons even for one individual quality of the marks and signs, then one has not started to even partially meditate on those qualities. It is strange that I make meaningless this birth, with its freedoms and endowments, for this and future rebirths, now when somehow I have found it after such a long time. This is an expression of despair.

Analysing What One Has Done And What One Has Not

I did not make offerings to the tatagatas [37]
Nor did I offer the happiness of great celebrations.
I did not do anything for the teachings
And I did not meet the needs of the destitute.

I did not offer fearlessness to those in danger. [38]

Nor did I give happiness to the wretched. Hence,
I have only given pain and suffering
While in the mother's womb.

Previously I did not make offerings to the Three Jewels, who are represented by the tatagata, nor did I offer the happiness of great celebrations that praise sentient beings and the tatagata. I did nothing for the teachings since I did not practice accordingly the presentation of the objects of abandonment that have to be abandoned and antidotes that have to be adopted. I also did not accomplish the wishes of the sentient beings who are destitute. I did not offer protection to those in danger from enemies or sicknesses. I also did not offer satisfaction to those that are wretched due to suffering, and hence I have not practiced the holy dharma at all and have only caused pain and suffering while being in the mother's womb.

This is the regret of not having done anything for others.

The Result of Belief

(It Is Unsuitable to Give Up the Belief in the Dharma; The Reason for This)

It Is Unsuitable to Give Up the Belief in the Dharma

Through being separated from belief in dharma, [39]
Previously and in the present,
I have received this destitution.
Who would give up the wish for the dharma?

Through having been separated from belief in the holy dharma, both by way of ascertaining and faith⁵, in the present and in the past, I am experiencing the destitution of being held by the degenerations of cyclic existence. Who that is proficient would give up the belief for the dharma? Those that wish to be liberated from degeneration should generate belief for the dharma.

The Reason for This

The Able One taught that the root [40ab]
Of every class of virtue is belief.

⁵ Belief of the sharp-facultied and dull-facultied. Although in Buddhism there is faith based on reason, here *faith* refers to faith without analysis.

The Able One taught that the root of every class of virtue is the belief that has trust in the virtuous objects the way they have been ascertained. It is taught like this in the *Sutra of the Moon Lamp*.

The Cause for Belief

(Showing the Cause for Belief; Explaining the Cause of Belief)

Showing the Cause for Belief

Its root is continual meditation [40cd]
On the ripening results.

The root of belief in turn is to meditate on belief in the virtuous and non-virtuous karmas and their ripening results. If one has not ascertained karmic cause and effect well, then one has not found a realization of the dharma that will please the buddhas. Therefore one should strive in it.

The fact that some who say they have ascertained emptiness, then disregard karmic cause and effect, invalidates their understanding of emptiness.

Explaining the Cause of Belief

(Contemplating Mixed Karmic Cause and Effect; Contemplating Singular White Karmic Cause and Effect; Contemplating Black Karmic Cause and Effect)

Contemplating Mixed Karmic Cause and Effect

Sufferings and mental unhappiness, [41]
The many different horrors,
And being separated from one's wishes
Arise from negative behaviour.

By creating the virtue intended in one's mind, [42]
Wherever one migrates to
There one will, through these merits,
Be honoured by the resulting qualities.

Because the physical sufferings of migrators, their mental feelings of unhappiness, the different horrors of human and non-human existences and separation from the objects of one's wishes such as friends, relatives, wealth and so forth all arise from the cause of negative behaviour, one should strive in abandoning negativity.

Having created the virtue one intended to do in one's mind, motivated by the mind of abandoning, whichever birthplace one then migrates to, there one will, through these merits, be honoured by the resulting qualities of the ripening result.

Although those creating negativity wish for happiness [43]
Wherever they migrate to,
There they will, through this negativity,
Be destroyed by the weapons of suffering.

This will however not follow just the wish for happiness or suffering. Although the person acting non-virtuously wishes for happiness, by nature, wherever they migrate to, there they will, through that negativity, be destroyed by the weapons of suffering. Therefore one should strive in abandoning negativity. The qualities of the result are the mode of the nature of the result.

Contemplating Singular White Karmic Cause and Effect

In the centre of an expansive fragrant fresh lotus flower [44]
Splendour is born from the nourishing melodious teachings of the conqueror
Possessing a supreme body born from a lotus unfolded by the Able One's luminosity,
Abiding before the conquerors, they become the tatagata's children by virtue.

Through having meditated on virtuous dharmas the children of the conquerors take rebirth in the Land of Great Bliss and the like.

They abide in the centre of a lotus that is the characteristic of birthplace, a beautiful, fresh, vast and expansive fragrant lotus that generates bliss just by touching it.

Instead of living off worldly foods they listen to the more distinguished melodious teachings of the buddha that possess the sixty qualities of enlightened speech and generate splendour and complexion through the food of the realization of its subject, emptiness.

To arise from a lotus opened and unfolded by the luminosity of the Able One, the tatagata, is the characteristic of birth. They possess the characteristic of body, a

supreme body with the marks and signs. As the characteristic of teacher they abide in front of Amitabha Buddha and the like and are carried by their dharmas.

By way of these characteristics the children of the tatagatas come about solely through white virtuous karma.

Contemplating Black Karmic Cause and Effect

Extremely tormented as one is fully skinned by the minions of Yama, [45]
Copper molten by extreme heat is poured onto one's body,
Pierced by flaming swords and daggers the flesh is carved up in hundreds of pieces,
Fallen on the blazing iron ground, comes about due to the many non-virtuous karmas.

Due to the karma of killing and so forth one will be extremely tormented by suffering as all one's skin is being pulled off by the minions of the lord of death. The characteristic of engagement, which is that copper molten by the extreme heat is poured over one's body, is difficult to bear. Not only this, but one will be pierced by flaming swords and daggers and one's flesh will be carved up into many hundreds of pieces.

The experience of being tormented by the characteristic of place, which means that one falls onto the blazing iron grounds, comes about through the many non-virtuous karmas such as the immediate karmas, the karma of abandoning dharma and the like.

Concluding Summary

Therefore one should practice belief in virtue [46ab]
And meditate on it with great respect.

Therefore, having contemplated the way of karmic cause and effect, one should practice belief in virtue and meditate on it with great respect by way of having belief.

The Power of Stability

(Striving Steadfastly; Abiding Steadfastly After Having Started)

Striving Steadfastly

(Starting Upon Having Investigated Well; The Fault of Giving Up After Having Started)

Starting Upon Having Investigated Well

Having started through the ritual of Vajradhvaja [46cd]
One should meditate on pride.

One should first investigate the action [47]
And then start or not start.
To not start is supreme
But having started one should not stop.

The sixth dedication of the *Arya Vajradhvaja Sutra* says:

Lha'ibu, just as the rising sun, without being stopped by blindness or uneven mountains, illuminates the objects that are suitable, bodhisattvas who arise for the purpose of others, ripen and liberate those suitable to be subdued, without being stopped by the various faults of sentient beings.

Having started a virtuous action through this ritual one should meditate on the pride of bringing it to completion.

Before engaging in an action one needs to analyse with one's mind whether or not one has the capacity for this action. If one is able, then one starts the action; if one is not able, then one does not. To not start the action is supreme, but once one has started then one should not stop until it is completed.

The Fault of Giving Up After Having Started

One will be habituated to it in other lives [48]
And negativity and suffering will increase.
One is diminished at other times and
The time of the result; one will not achieve.

Query: What is the fault of stopping something one has started?

Answer: Through the concordant cause of having acted like this before one will in other lives also be habituated to giving up. The action similar to the cause of a person that breaks a promise is that their negativity increases, and the ripening result is that their suffering increases.

Further, one will be diminished later at different times, when starting other actions or at the time of the result of this action, which has become greatly prolonged. The other actions one will also not achieve as well.

Abiding Steadfastly After Having Started

(Explaining It Condensed; Explaining It Individually)

Explaining It Condensed

Action, affliction and ability, [49ab]
Practice pride regarding those three.

Practice pride in the three, which counteracts discouragement and increases strength: pride in the action after having commenced the action, pride in afflictions being an object of abandonment and pride in the ability to engage and abandon.

Explaining it individually

(Pride of Action; Pride in Ability; Pride Against the Afflictions)

Pride of Action

(Identifying Pride of Action; The Reason for Practicing It Now; Practice the Pride That Also Carries the Burden of the Inferior Actions of Others)

Identifying Pride of Action

Saying 'I will do the action alone', [49cd]
Is the very pride of action.

Seeing that others could do the action as well, one thinks 'I shall do this alone'. The strength of mind one generated here is the pride in action.

The Reason for Practicing It Now

These worldly beings with no control due to afflictions [50]
Cannot achieve their own purpose.
Hence migrators cannot act like oneself
And therefore one needs to do this.

One needs to achieve the works of sentient beings by oneself, independently from others, because these worldly beings, which have no control due to their afflictions, cannot achieve even their own purpose.

Hence migrators cannot strive in virtue for the purpose of others like one can, and even if one were to rely on them it would be useless. Therefore think, 'I have to do the actions for the benefit of others all by myself'.

Practice the Pride That Also Carries the Burden of the Inferior Actions of Others

When others engage in inferior actions [51]
How can one remain?
Acting without pride,
Not to have pride one is supreme.

When others engage in inferior actions such as fieldwork, how can one, who has accepted to carry the great burden of sentient beings on one's head, remain with leisure? One should work.

When others engage in inferior work one may think, 'I should act with pride and engage in purer actions'. Do not engage in these actions with such pride as it is supreme not to have afflicted pride. It should be abandoned because through it one will go to the lower realms.

Pride in Ability

(The Fault of Not Having Pride in One's Abilities; The Benefits of Being Proud; Abiding on the Pride That Is the Antidote; It Is Unsuitable to Generate Afflicted Pride; The Benefits of Pride That Is the Antidote)

The Fault of Not Having Pride in One's Abilities

When they meet a dead snake [52]
Even crows act like garudas.
If one is humble
Even small downfalls will harm.

The discouraged who have given up striving [53ab]
How can they be liberated from destitution?

One should generate the force of the antidote to destroy the afflictions, because even crows act like garudas when they meet with a dead snake. Similarly, if one's antidotes are weak, then even small downfalls will harm the path with obstruction. When one is destitute due to having given up the striving for the purpose of self and others due to discouragement, then how can one be liberated? Being destroyed by laziness, one's actions of body and mind degenerate.

The Benefits of Being Proud

Through generating the effort of pride [53cd]
It will be difficult to be overcome even by something great.

Therefore, with a steadfast mind [54]
One should destroy all downfalls.
If one is conquered by a downfall
The wish to conquer the three realms becomes a joke.

Through the pride that generates a forceful antidote and the generation of striving through application it will be difficult to be overcome even by great objects of abandonment. Therefore, with a steadfast mind one should destroy the downfalls, because if one is overcome by the downfalls then the wish to conquer the three realms becomes a joke.

Abiding on the Pride That Is the Antidote

I should conquer everything [55]
And nothing should conquer me.
I, the child of the lion king,
Shall abide on this pride.

Then, one should abide on the supreme pride that thinks, 'I should conquer all my faults but I should not be conquered even by one of the objects of abandonment of the three realms.'

If it is asked: Who is doing this? It is oneself, the child of the lion king, who frightens the animals that are demons⁶ and forders⁷.

⁶ Mara

⁷ Non-buddhists holding extremist views.

It Is Unsuitable to Generate Afflicted Pride

(Disparaging Afflicted Pride; The Faults of Pride; It Is Suitable to Abandon It)

Disparaging Afflicted Pride

Any migrator that is destroyed by pride [56]
Is afflicted and does not possess pride.
Those that possess pride are not controlled by the enemy,
They are controlled by the enemy of pride.

Any migrator that is destroyed and overcome by the pride that is a puffed up mind, is controlled by the afflictions and not a person possessing great pride. Those possessing pride are suitable not to fall under the control of the enemy. But the migrators with a puffed up mind fall under the control of the enemy of the affliction of pride.

The Faults of Pride

Being filled up with the affliction of pride [57]
One will be led by pride to the lower realms,
It destroys the joys of being human;
A slave eating others' leftovers

Dumb, ugly and weak [58ab]
One will be derided by all.

The following faults will occur if one is filled with afflicted pride:

- One will be led by pride to the lower realms.
- Even if one is reborn a human, it destroys the joys of being human, such as mental happiness.
- One will live as a beggar without food.
- One will be a slave controlled by others and have to eat their food.
- One will be mentally stupid; ugly and weak.
- Even though one is not harmed directly by others one will always be derided by all others verbally and physically.

Therefore one should abandon the pride of the puffed up mind.

It Is Suitable to Abandon It

If even the ascetics⁸ filled with pride [58cd]
Belong to the proud,
Then what is there to say about the inferiors?

If even the ascetics who overcome difficulties with a mind filled with and controlled by afflicted pride belong to the very proud, then what is there to say about the inferiors that are objects of compassion? Since they are controlled by the enemy, it is unsuitable to be proud.

The Benefits of the Pride That Is the Antidote

Those who hold pride to conquer the enemy of pride, [59]
They possess pride. The victorious heroes themselves
Definitely destroy the rampage of the enemy of pride
And complete the result of a conqueror, as migrators wish.

Query: Who is someone with pride?

Answer: Since those that hold the pride that is the antidote in order to conquer the enemy of the afflictions possess a strong counter-positive force, they are called proud.

Those that are heroes because they were victorious against the enemy are also like that. Why? Because upon having definitely destroyed from the root the rampage of the enemy of pride, they complete the temporary and ultimate result of a conqueror, including the enlightened activities, in accordance with the wishes of migrators, also those that are divine. That is why they are called victorious against the enemy.

Pride Against the Afflictions

(One Should Generate the Force of the Antidote Against the Afflictions; One Should Not Fall Under Their Control at All; One Should Generate the Special Thought to Generate a Stable Antidote)

One Should Generate the Force of the Antidote Against the Afflictions

⁸ Heroes.

When in the midst of affliction's types, [60]
I shall stand up to them in a thousand ways,
And not let myself be touched by the host of afflictions,
Like the lion and the foxes and such.

When abiding in the midst of types of afflictions such as anger I shall stand up to them in a thousand ways through the power of the antidote. For example, like the foxes that do not touch the lion, one should act not to be touched by the host of afflictions.

One Should Not Fall Under Their Control at All

Just as one protects one's eyes [61]
When great danger occurs,
One should take care not to be controlled by the afflictions
When danger occurs.

When great danger, the great danger of afflictions, occurs, then humans protect their eyes with great concern. Similarly, when there is the danger of falling under the control of the afflictions one should take care not to be controlled by the afflictions.

One Should Generate the Special Thought to Generate a Stable Antidote

It is easy for one to die by being burnt [62]
And even to be beheaded,
But one should not at all bow to
The enemy of the afflictions.

Likewise, at all occasions, [63ab]
One should only act appropriately.

The measure of having a stable antidote: It is easy for one to die through being burnt by fire or having one's head chopped off, but one should not at all bow to the enemy of the afflictions.

Likewise, one should on all occasions destroy the objects of abandonment and make the antidote stable. Thus one should not act in any way other than appropriately.

The Power of Joy

(One Should Strive in Virtue Independently of the Ripening Result; Accomplishing Virtue by Keeping the Result in Mind; The Way of Relating It to the Power of Joy)

One Should Strive in Virtue Independently of the Ripening Result

Just like desiring the resultant happiness of play, [63]
Whatever the engaged activity is,
Hold onto these actions,
Like them without satisfaction.

Just like children desire the resultant happiness of play so should bodhisattvas have joy and grasp at their actions for the purpose of others, such as listening, contemplating and meditating on bodhicitta. One should be so joyful that one desires the actions continually without being satisfied by them.

Accomplishing Virtue by Keeping the Result in Mind

Although working for the purpose of happiness [64]
It is uncertain whether it will become happiness or not.
The very action that becomes happiness
How can one be happy not doing it?

If one is not satisfied by sense pleasures, [65]
Which are like honey on a razor's edge,
Then how can one be satisfied by the merit
Of the ripening result of peaceful happiness?

Though worldly beings engage in actions such as fieldwork in order to attain mental and physical happiness, it is uncertain whether the result will be happiness or not. Only the actions of bodhisattvas are certain to bring about temporary and ultimate happiness, and if one does not engage in these actions then how could one attain the resultant happiness?

Sensory happiness of forms, sounds and so forth are like honey on a razor's edge: when tasted with one's tongue then, although experiencing some taste, one experiences the suffering of being cut on the tongue. If one is not satisfied by cyclic existence, no matter how much one is engaging in it, then how can one be satisfied by the merit of generosity and so forth, which is the cause to attain the

temporary happiness of higher rebirth of gods and humans and the ultimate happiness where all suffering has been pacified. One should meditate on them insatiably.

The Way of Relating It to the Power of Joy

Therefore, to complete one's actions, [66]
One should engage in the action
Like an elephant tormented at noon
That, when coming upon a lake, immerses itself in it.

Because it is an action suitable to engage in, therefore, in order to complete the intended action one should engage in it like an elephant tormented at noon by heat and thirst that comes upon a lake and immerses itself joyfully in it.

The Power of Relinquishment

(Temporary Relinquishment; Certain Relinquishment)

Temporary Relinquishment

If one is affected by weakening strength [67ab]
One should relinquish to start again.

If one is affected by one's weakening strength, if one is physically and mentally exhausted by one's practice of virtue, one should relinquish temporarily, to then start again when one is rested.

Certain Relinquishment

If it is well completed one relinquishes, [67cd]
Because one wishes to do it later again and again.

If an action is completed well, then one relinquishes it because one wants to repeat that action again and again.

Being Sincere About Practicing the Actions with Mindfulness and Introspection

(One Should Be Sincerely Conscientious; Being Sincere About Mindfulness and Introspection; Not Giving an Opportunity for Faults with Mindfulness and Introspection; If a Fault Arises One Needs to Stop It Immediately; One Should Strive in Suitable Actions)

One Should be Sincerely Conscientious

Like the seasoned warrior that is engaged [68]
In a fencing duel with the enemy
One should avoid the weapon of the afflictions
And look to attack the enemy of the afflictions.

The seasoned warrior that is engaged in a fencing duel with an enemy that is skilled in weapons and the art of war, will evade the enemy's weapons and attack the enemy. Similarly, upon evading the weapons that are one's own afflictions, one should stop them and not be destroyed by them. Instead one attacks the enemy of the affliction with the weapons of the antidotes and cuts them off at the root.

Being Sincere About Mindfulness and Introspection

If one's weapon falls down in battle [69]
Then, out of fear, one will pick it up quickly.
Similarly, if one loses the weapon of mindfulness
Then, out of fear of the lower realms, one should quickly pick it up.

If one's weapon falls out of one's hand in the midst of battle, one quickly picks it up out of fear of being killed by the enemy. Similarly, if one loses the weapon of mindfulness, which does not forget the virtuous object, then out of fear of the lower realms, by remembering how one will be born there if one is destroyed by the afflictions, one quickly picks up the antidote of mindfulness and introspection.

Not Giving an Opportunity for Faults with Mindfulness and Introspection

Just as poison will spread [70]
In dependence on the blood,
So faults will pervade the mind
If they find an opportunity.

Just as a person that is carrying a jar filled with mustard oil [71]
In front of someone wielding a sword
Will be careful not to spill anything out of fear of death,
In the same way should an ascetic be attentive.

If one is hit by a poisoned arrow, then just as the poison will spread through one's body in dependence on the blood that is coursing through one's veins, so will the faults of anger and so forth pervade the mind, if they find an opportunity of lapsed mindfulness and such due to afflictions. Therefore one should stop even the smallest affliction.

Query: How should one be attentive?

Answer: A person that is carrying a jar filled with mustard oil along a slippery road in front of someone carrying a sword, under the threat of being killed if they spill even just one drop, will be very attentive. A practicing bodhisattva should be similarly attentive in holding the antidote of bodhicitta and so forth with mindfulness and introspection.

If a Fault Arises One Needs to Stop It Immediately

Therefore, just as one leaps up quickly [72]
If a snake comes into one's lap,
If sleep and sloth come
One should stop them quickly.

With each fault that arises [73]
One should criticise oneself
And motivate strongly:
'I shall act that this never happens again'.

Since one will go to the hell realms if one's virtue is destroyed by afflictions, one should, out of fear of the hell realms, quickly stop sleep and sloth, which cause one to withdraw involuntarily if they come, just as one would leap up quickly if a poisonous snake would come into one's lap.

Query: How then should one stop them?

Answer: With each fault that arises one should criticise oneself, saying 'When I acted like this in the past many unwished-for things happened and I did not achieve what I wanted. Do I really still have to act like this?' Then one confesses with the four powers and motivates for a long time: 'I shall make an effort that this fault never arises again.'

One Should Strive in Suitable Actions

Say: Thus I shall meditate on mindfulness [74]

On these occasions.

Through this cause, when perhaps meeting,

I shall desire the suitable action.

'Thus, in order for faults not to arise and to eliminate those already arisen, I shall meditate on mindfulness on these occasions that call for sincere conscientiousness and introspection'. Through the cause of the motivation saying this to oneself, I shall desire suitable actions, valid according to the teachings, when I meet with the Mahayana guru, or even if I do not meet the guru immediately.

Empowering Oneself to Achieve the Actions

(Being Light in Taking up Virtue Due to Mental and Physical Pliancy; Relating the Example and the Meaning)

Being Light in Taking up Virtue Due to Mental and Physical Pliancy

In order to have strength for anything [75]

Before engaging in an action

By remembering the advice regarding conscientiousness

I shall arise lightly.

In order to have the power of strong enthusiasm for any virtuous action beforehand, I shall remember the advice regarding conscientiousness and arise lightly in the virtuous action without the harm of a negative action.

Relating the Example and the Meaning

Just like the coming and going [76]

Of the wind controls the cotton,

Letting oneself be controlled by joy,

One will achieve.

Query: How should one act then?

Answer: Just like the coming and going of the wind controls the cotton, letting one's actions of body and speech be controlled by joy in virtue one will achieve one's virtuous actions of the three doors quickly.

In short, as it says in the *Sutra of Close Placement by Mindfulness*,

The one basis for the afflictions

Is laziness; who has it?

Wherever one laziness exists

There all dharmas become non-existent.

One should strive in generating enthusiasm that stops laziness. To this end one needs to make an effort to clear the opposing factors of enthusiasm and to generate the conducive conditions of the four powers.

The opposing factors are that, though seeing that one is able to engage in a virtuous action one does not do so, or one thinks, 'How could I be able to do this?'

The first again has two: procrastinating by thinking, 'I still have time' or being overwhelmed by attachment to negative actions.

The first one should abandon with the antidote of contemplating that one's body will soon disintegrate, that after death one will fall into the lower realms and that the freedoms and endowments are difficult to find.

The antidote to the second is to reflect on how the holy dharma is the cause for infinite joys in this and future lives and that the distractions of meaningless talk and so forth harm the great purpose of this life and are the source for many sufferings in the future.

With regards to discouragement there are again three: 1. Thinking, 'I cannot attain the infinite qualities of a buddha'; 2. Thinking, 'I cannot accomplish the infinite difficult actions such as offering arms, legs and so forth'; 3. Thinking, 'I cannot bear the sufferings of the infinite births in cyclic existence that I would have to take.'

The antidote against the first is to think, 'Also the buddhas had not completed the path from the start but in the beginning were just as myself. Then they evolved and became buddhas. Since the Buddha taught that even beings much lower than me can attain enlightenment, then why should I not attain enlightenment as long as I do not stop practicing?'

The antidote against the second is to think, 'As long as it appears difficult for me to give up arms, legs and so forth, it is not the right time to do so. Only when I can give them up as easily as a vegetable, then it is the right time to do so.'

The antidote against the third is to think, 'Bodhisattvas do not experience suffering because they have abandoned its cause, negativity. They also do not have mental suffering because they realize that the sufferings of cyclic existence are like an illusion, lacking inherent existence. Since one is strengthened by mental and physical happiness there is no reason to be tired despite remaining in cyclic existence.'

Summarising Verse

To sincerely achieve the aspiration for liberation

Depends on the practice of enthusiasm to

Complete what one initially started and is engaged in.

Hence one should generate enthusiasm complete with the four powers.

The name of the chapter

This is the commentary on the seventh chapter called *Explaining Enthusiasm* from the commentary on the *Introduction to the Actions of Bodhisattvas*, called *The Entrance for the Children of the Conquerors*.