

The fundamental potential for enlightenment

Contents

Sources.....	3
Commentaries:	3
Texts of Maitreya:	3
Buddha Shakyamuni:	3
Definitions, Divisions & Boundaries	4
Hinayana	5
Four aspects of the disposition of the exalted:	5
Summary:	6
Mahayana	7
Buddha potential from the Mind-Only view as found in <i>Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras</i> :	7
Nine points from Maitreya's <i>Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras</i> :.....	8
Buddha potential according to the Prasangika Madhyamika view as found in the <i>Sublime Continuum of the Mahayana</i> :.....	18
Outline.....	18
In brief.....	19
Explaining the clear light nature of mind through the presentation of ten aspects	21
Summary:	33
Establishing the obscurations as adventitious through nine examples	34
Summary	45

Sources

Commentaries:

- Geshe Tashi teachings at Jamyang, London.
- Geshe Sönam Rinchen teachings at Tibetan Library, Dharamsala.
- General Meaning of Buddha Potential - Jetsün Chökyi Gyältsen
- The Fundamental Potential for Enlightenment - Geshe Acharya Thubten Loden
- The Tathagata Essence - Gyaltsep Dharma Rinchen 1364-1432 (vs. 23-168) Translation Gavin Kilty.
- The Naturally Abiding Lineage that is the Basis for Mahayana Achievings, according to *Sublime Continuum* from Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsep's Ocean of Sport (Roltso) translation Jampa Gendun

Texts of Maitreya:

- Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras (Mind Only)
- Sublime Continuum of the Mahayana (Madhyamika) (Translation Hopkins & Joe B. Wilson)
- Ornament for Clear Realisation (Svatantrika Madhyamika)

In these three texts is found the most extensive presentation of buddha potential in Mahayana literature.

Buddha Shakyamuni:

- Tathagata Essence Sutra + many others

Definitions, Divisions & Boundaries

DEFINITION

Buddha lineage: “That which is suitable to be transformed into the body of a buddha.”

DIVISIONS

Naturally abiding lineage: “The emptiness of a mind with stains which is suitable to transform into a nature truth body.”

Developmental lineage: “That which is suitable to transform into the compounded body of a buddha.”

BOUNDARY

It exists in the continuum of all beings yet to enter a learners path, and in the continuum of those on the learners path through the last moment of the continuum of a sentient being.

“O Monks! Mind is devoid of mind, the nature of the mind is clear light.”

Comm. Pg. 88 *“The essential basis for sentient beings to attain enlightenment is this natural purity within the minds of sentient beings because through focusing and meditating on it, it becomes the source that produces the qualities of the buddha.”*

Hinayana

They talk of the disposition (*rig*) of becoming an exalted (aryas), but not disposition of buddhahood. No mention of buddha potential. This means we all have the innate disposition to realise the uncontaminated exalted wisdom of an arya being.

What is this seed? **The mf *non-attachment* which is virtuous. Directly or indirectly the cause for the paths of insight of the exalted being.**

Non-attachment - having few desires and being content. An antidote to being attached. *Whilst being attached it will be very difficult to gain the paths of insight - to engage into authentic spiritual practice.*

Greed - we want this and that. Even if we have food, clothing and shelter - we are still not happy, we want something better.

Four aspects of the disposition of the exalted:

Great Exposition School draws from the *Vinaya Sutra*:

1. Being content with poor (simple?) foods
2. Being content with poor clothes
3. Being content with poor place to live
4. Liking for getting rid of what we need to get rid of and meditation

GESHE TASHI explanation

- 1) Being content with basic clothes & shelter
- 2) Being content with basic food and drink
- 3) Being content with basic environment
- 4) Has great joy in discarding the unwholesome things which are to be abandoned and to engage into virtue that is to be adopted.

Superior being nature - *is what the Buddha used in the sutra (never used buddha potential).*

These are the signs that these people have the potential to become arya beings - also the indirect causes for becoming an arya being. 4 is the direct cause for them to become a superior being.

- 1-3 gets rid of strong manifest forms of attachment to what we possess.
 - *By practicing according to these first three lines, manifest attachment to “mine” will be averted. GATL*

- 4 getting rid of = 3rd NT, true cessation and gradually uprooting all the faults and limitations. Meditation refers to the 4th NT - true paths, cultivating all we need to cultivate.
 - *By practicing according to the fourth line, attachment to “self” will be completely exhausted. GATL*

You have to live a simple life and make effort into what you need to cultivate and overcome what needs to be overcome. To do this we need to practice meditation and for this we need to isolate ourselves from a busy life and seclude our mind from all our busy thinking. Who is this easiest for? Someone who is not greedy and is content with what they have.

GTT: We might have the feeling it's something shiny and eternal within us! But this topic is practical.

Practice contentment with what one has.

Summary: Great Exposition & Sutra schools don't speak of Buddha potential, but about the disposition of the exalted and the four factors.

Mahayana

Buddha potential from the Mind-Only view as found in *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras*:

- Followers of scripture (Asanga and brother Vasabandhu) assert 8 types of consciousness. They assert that the seed for uncontaminated wisdom is present in the mind basis-of-all.
 - They follow Maitreya's *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras* where the innately abiding and developmental dispositions are explained in 9 points (see below).
- Followers of reasoning (Dignaga and Dharmakirti) don't assert the extra two consciousnesses. The seed for the uncontaminated mind is contained in the mental consciousness (6th type).

While seed is dormant = **innately abiding disposition**

When it is awakened = **developmental disposition**

Nine points from Maitreya's *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras*:

*Existence, superiority, and characteristics,
Signs and divisions of the potential,
Faults and benefits,
Two examples. [each has] four aspects.*

1. **Existence of the potential:** *explains that within the continuum of sentient beings there are three potentials: Hearer potential, solitary-realiser potential and bodhisattva potential, and therefore potential exists.*

*Because of **different inclinations,**
Beliefs and practices,
And **different results** being perceived,
[It is] said that potentials definitely exist.*

- 1) Living beings have the disposition for one of the three final vehicles (hearer, solitary-realiser or Mahayana). That's where they are heading - these three final vehicles. (Like to practice with others, like to practice alone, like to practice solely for the welfare of others).
- 2) This leads to them having different aims/beliefs.
- 3) This leads to different styles of practice.
- 4) This leads to different results.

2. **Superiority of the mahayana potential:** *explains that the Mahayana potential is superior to the hinayana potential of the hearers and solitary-realisers.*

*The virtues are superior,
[The basis of] all, great benefit,
And inexhaustible. For those reasons
It is said the potential is indeed superior.*

- 1) The best is the Mahayana because one creates very special virtue. When it is awakened it leads to bodhicitta and this is oriented completely to the welfare of others and so one creates very powerful virtue through that. Even whilst asleep or lacking conscientiousness. All other virtues are like the plantain tree etc.
- 2) It acts as a basis for the development of all good qualities which the other dispositions can't do. For example, great love, great compassion, bodhicitta and therefore the five mahayana paths, the six perfections, the ten grounds. It is thus the basis of the four resultant buddha bodies. The hinayana potential alone cannot serve as the basis of such qualities.
- 3) Having this acts as a cause for amassing the two collections which leads to Buddha so it leads to what is of great importance. The other two vehicles are incapable of leading to this result.
- 4) In the other two vehicles since the virtue was dedicated to the end result of nirvana, the virtue comes to an end then. But as a Buddha dedicated the virtue to every sentient being until they reach full enlightenment, the virtue continues. This is why the mahayana disposition is the supreme disposition. It enables our good qualities to increase and increase.

3. **Characteristics of the potential:** *defines the two types of potential: the natural potential and the developed potential.* The mahayana disposition has the two aspects of the innately abiding disposition and developmental disposition and the developmental relies on the innately abiding. A division is made into buddhas and sentient beings. Sentient beings have the disposition, but buddhas do not.

*Natural and developed,
They are basis and based,
Specifically **existent** and **non-existent**, and understood
As the means for qualities of liberation.*

- 1) Natural potential is the basis
- 2) Developed potential is that which is based on the natural potential

The two potentials are:

- 3) Existent on the path of learning
- 4) Non-existent on the path of no-more learning



4. **Signs of awakening:** Before entering the mahayana path, there are these four signs that one's Buddha potential is awakening.

*Prior to engaging,
Compassion, belief, patience, and
(perseverance) in pure virtuous actions,
Are known as signs of the potential.*

- 1) One feels great compassion which extends to all living beings without exception.
- 2) One has great interest in mahayana teachings.
 - a. It is because we had a lack of belief in the Dharma previously that we engaged into non-virtue and thus have a lack of experience of happiness now.
- 3) One is able to bear great hardships in working for living beings.
- 4) One has terrific interest and enthusiasm in training oneself in the six perfections.

5. **Divisions of the potential:** Before entering the mahayana path, there are these four signs that one's Buddha potential is awakening.

*The potential is definite, indefinite,
Unlosable through conditions,
And losable. These, in short, are
Four divisions of the aspects of the potential.*

- 1) There are those who are of definite mahayana lineage, no attraction to the hinayana from the start.
- 2) Some start out in the mahayana vehicle and fall to the lower vehicle. Or some enter the hinayana and then later enter the Mahayana.
- 3) Having entered the mahayana path of accumulation, one is not perturbed by those criticising the mahayana.¹
- 4) On the small path of accumulation one can be moved away from the mahayana by other systems.²

¹ Gen Sonam Rinchen: Some enter the hearer vehicle and don't reach the end because they don't have the right conditions so they go into the solitary-realiser vehicle.

² Gen Sonam Rinchen: Some see the many faults in cyclic existence and long for liberation but don't long for any particular type of liberation. But they have uncontrived renunciation. They have no definite disposition.



6. **Faults obstructing the potential:** obstacles which prevent the Mahayana disposition from awakening. These are to be avoided and we should cultivate their opposite.

*Acquaintance with delusions, bad companions,
Poverty and being completely controlled by others:
These, in short, are known as
Four aspects of faults of the potential.*

- 1) If we are very familiar with the disturbing emotions - they are very strong. For example, with anger we are unable to develop great compassion. All delusions hinder the awakening of the buddha potential.
- 2) Coming under the influence of bad friends. “A misleading friend will not necessarily be someone with horns on his head!”
- 3) Being very poor and not having the basic necessities. Having to struggle to survive all the time.
 - a. Inner poverty: not having the faculties of faith, joyous effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.
- 4) If you aren’t free but are oppressed - like some countries where you aren’t allowed to practice a spiritual path. Think of the freedoms and endowments.

7. **Benefits of awakening the mahayana potential:** If one has awakened this potential and has the signs of compassion, belief, patience & joyous effort.

*Delaying going to lower realms,
Released quickly,
Experiencing slight suffering there,
And, with distress, ripening sentient beings.*

- 1) Even if we have done actions which will lead to a bad rebirth, it will be delayed, if not purified.
- 2) If we do go there, we bounce in and out again like a ball.
- 3) If we do have to stay for this short time, suffering will be much less.
- 4) You are able to ripen the lineage in others.³ “Instead of being obsessed with their own suffering, they will be more inclined to help others.”

³ Gen. Sönam Ngödrub, July 1st 2011.

8. Analogy of the innately abiding potential: a gold mine having four features.

*Potential is known as like gold,
A source of limitless virtue,
Possessing wisdom and purity,
Also a source of powers.*

- 1) Holds great reserves of gold: *it is a source of limitless virtues, renunciation, bodhicitta, wisdom.*
- 2) Holds that which is bright and shining: *source of the wisdom perceiving emptiness.*
- 3) Holds that which is stainless: *not polluted by the defilements.*
- 4) Holds that which is malleable: *it is the source of limitless powers such as the six clairvoyances, the superior concentrations and so on.*

9. **Analogy of the developmental potential**: A treasury full of jewels which are perfect in quality, shape, colour and size.

*The potential is known as like (a treasure of) supreme jewels:
By reason of great enlightenment,
Great wisdom, superior concentration,
And source of benefit to many sentient beings.*

- 1) Perfect quality: *the developmental potential brings many qualities, especially the supreme quality, perfect enlightenment.*
- 2) Perfect shape: *the developmental potential brings about perfect wisdom which outshines all the other wisdoms.*
- 3) Beautiful colours: *the developmental potential is the source of superior concentration which remains absorbed on its object of observation.*
- 4) Perfectly sized: *the developmental potential is the source of the capacity to perfectly meet the needs of all sentient beings.*

Buddha potential according to the Prasangika Madhyamika view as found in the *Sublime Continuum of the Mahayana*:

Outline

1. The chapter teaching the constituent - The resultant Three Jewels, Buddha Dharma & Sangha + the basic element (buddha nature).
2. The chapter teaching enlightenment - enlightenment
3. The chapter teaching good qualities - the good qualities of the buddhas
4. The chapter teaching enlightened activity - the enlightened activity of the buddhas
5. The chapter teaching the benefit - benefits of generating the resultant refuge Jewels in ones continuum

Previous in the text there was a brief explanation the seven vajra-like topics, and the first three topics in detail; Buddha, Dharma & Sangha.

1. The four causes and conditions
 - 1) **General presentation (vs. 23-26)**
 1. Establishing inconceivability by four reasons
 - 2) Individual presentation of the causes and conditions
 1. The causal phase; an explanation of the basic element of tathagata essence
 - 1) **Brief presentation: the tathagata essence briefly explained by three points (vs. 27-28)**
 - 2) Its establishment: an expanded explanation
 1. Establishing the basic element to be pure by nature by way of the ten presentations (vs. 29-96)
 2. Establishing obscuration of the basic element by adventitious defilement through nine similes (vs. 97-153)
 3. The consciousness that perceives the basic element (vs. 154)
 4. Identifying the nature of the basic element (vs. 155-156)
 - 3) **The purpose of teaching that sentient beings possess the basic element (vs. 157-168)**
 2. An explanation of enlightenment and so forth

In brief

How can it be asserted that all beings have the potential for enlightenment?

Vs27: *Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive,
Because suchness is without differentiation,
And because a [Buddha] lineage exists, all embodied
Are always in possession of a Buddha essence.*

Tathagata Essence Sutra: *"All embodied beings are constantly endowed with the essence of buddha."*

- **Reason one:** Because the dharmakaya reaches all sentient beings, all sentient beings are capable of engaging with the enlightening deeds of the buddhas. *All our virtuous minds arise from the influence of the buddhas dharmakaya.*
- **Reason two:** There is no difference in entity between the buddhas minds and our minds. The base is different, but the emptiness is the same.
- **Reason three:** Buddha potential exists in all sentient beings, because all living beings have some degree of virtuous minds. Virtuous minds = developing potential. Emptiness of these minds = innately abiding potential. Therefore all sentient beings possess Buddha potential.

Reasons why we are receptive to enlightenment

1. We have the seed and when the right conditions are there it is activated.
 2. The reality of an enlightened beings mind and the reality of our mind are the same in their nature.
 3. The nature of the mind is clear light: *wherever the mind is - it has these two characteristics.*
 - a. Conventional clear light nature - clear and knowing
 - b. Ultimate clear light nature - lack of intrinsic existence
- If the stains were part of the mind then we'd be getting rid of the mind as we got rid of the stains!
 - If we just still the water, and the pollution sinks to the bottom - have we got rid of the pollutants?

ACTIVATING: = listening, reflecting, meditating.

“Oh Monks! Mind is devoid of mind, the nature of the mind is clear light.”

“Because the mind is empty of inherent existence, we say the nature of the mind is clear light, that is, it is empty of inherent existence and the afflictions are adventitious.” *Geshe Chonyi*

“‘Mind does not exist in mind’ indicates that mind does not inherently exist. It is thus an ultimate truth, and the Buddha is referring to the natural potential. ‘Because the nature of the mind is clear light’ indicates the conventional nature of the mind. It is a conventional truth and refers to the developed potential.” *Geshe Acharya Thubten Loden*

- Nature of the mind is clear light:
 - Ultimate clear light nature of the mind = also free from stains is the emptiness of that mind.
 - Conventional clear light nature = clear and knowing nature, with stains but they are not an integral part of the mind, they can be removed.
- Establishing the nature of the mind as pure (10 points) - the afflictions don’t penetrate the nature of our minds.
- Showing that the afflictions are adventitious (9 analogies) - the afflictions are temporary and can be removed.

Explaining the clear light nature of mind through the presentation of ten aspects

The naturally abiding lineage (and by inference the developmental lineage) are examined through the following ten aspects.

Comm. Pg. 149 *“These presentations have concentrated on explaining the basic element in terms of its natural purity, while its adventitious defilement has been explained incidentally. The next section [nine analogies] is the reverse of that.”*

1. Nature (of the potential)
2. Causes (of its purification)
3. Result (of its purification)
4. Function (of the potential)
5. Possession (of qualities)
6. Categories of manifestation (of the potential in general)
7. Branches
8. All-pervading character
9. Eternally unchangeable
10. Indivisible quality

1. **Nature:** the Tathagata essence in its three aspects and the manner of its division into three.

*30ab: Like the [natural] purity of a jewel, space, and water,
The nature [of the basic constituent] is always unafflicted.*

*31: Because of [having] the power [of fulfilling hopes], of not changing to anything other [in nature],
And of being a nature whose entity is moist [with compassion],
[The basic constituent] is qualitatively similar to the features
Of a precious [wish-granting] jewel, space, and water.*

- Simile:
 - Wish-fulfilling jewel
 - Space
 - Water
- Significance
 - Dharmakaya: possess inconceivable power to accomplish all hopes and wishes.
 - Emptiness: does not change into anything else, therefore suchness with defilement does not change from its nature of being empty. Buddha lineage that has always existed.
 - Lineage: has the quality of moistening, it is moistened by compassion for sentient beings. Can also be like a seed (the lineage) which when moistened by water (also the lineage) develops into the buddha.

2. **Causes:** These three causes enable the threefold nature to emerge by purifying the obscurations to it.

30cd: It arises from (1) devotion to the [Great Vehicle] doctrine, (2) the higher wisdom [realizing selflessness], (3) [The immeasurable] meditative stabilization [endowed with bliss], and (4) compassion [for sentient beings].

32: (1) Hatred for the [Great Vehicle] doctrine, (2) view of self,
(3) Fear of the sufferings of cyclic existence [and thus seeking one's own peace and happiness],
And (4) not having concern for the welfare of sentient beings
Are the four forms of obstructions [preventing manifestation of the Buddha nature respectively]
Of (1) those of great desire [who do not at all abandon cyclic existence], (2) Forders, (3) Hearers, and (4) the Self-Arisen.
The causes of purifying [those] are the four aspects
Of the practices of special devotion [to the Great Vehicle] and so forth.

33: Those who have the seed which is devotion to the Supreme Vehicle,
The mother which is the wisdom giving birth to the Buddha qualities,
The womb which is the bliss of concentration, and the nurse which is compassion
Are the [Bodhisattva] children born from [the mind of] the Subduer.

Antidotes	Analogy	Obstacles in going to the Mahayana	Four persons who have these
Devotion to the Mahayana	Seed	Hatred for the Mahayana	Those of great desire
Wisdom	Mother	View of self	Forders
Bliss of Concentration ⁴	Womb	Fear of the sufferings of cyclic existence [and thus seeking one's own peace] - not having concern for the welfare of sentient beings. ⁵	Hearers & solitary-realiser
Compassion	Water		

⁴ Not a direct antidote to the fear - this concentration is an actual meditative stabilisation (not a preparation). The actual antidote is higher compassion. This meditative stabilisation is giving power to the other three antidotes so its not an antidote on its own. Compassion in this sense is the antidote to both the 3rd & 4th views.

⁵ These ideas in the two types of person make 2, thus four in total.

Those who would travel the Mahayana path must abandon these four obstacles. All these stop one approaching the Mahayana. The root is strong self-cherishing. Sequence to remember: Trust, Aspiration, Joyous Effort ... Devotion for the Mahayana refers to faith/trust (faith of conviction?) *comm. pg 48*. Trust overcomes disinterest or lack of conviction in the Mahayana.

Extremes of existence and peace

FALLEN INTO/ABIDING IN

- Conventional point of view/Bodhisattva point of view:
 - Samsara in dependence on karma and afflictions - fallen into/abiding in...
 - Peace - hinayana nirvana of having cut off karma and afflictions - fallen into/abiding in...
- Ultimate point of view:
 - Samsara being truly established - holding this view = fallen into/abiding in...
 - Nirvana being truly established - holding this view = fallen into/abiding in...

3. **Results:** These are the four results which arise from the four causes mentioned above.

34: *The perfection of the qualities of purity, self, bliss, And permanence [of the Truth Body which is the fruit of purifying the obstructions through their antidotes] is the fruit.*

- Transcendental purity: the buddhas truth body is *pure by nature and is free from the afflictive obscurations*.
- Transcendental self: the truth body is *free from all conceptual elaborations of self*.
- Transcendental bliss: the truth body is *free from the obscurations to omniscience*.
- Transcendental permanence: *the truth body is a final cessation which directly perceive that both samsara and nirvana are equally empty of inherent existence*.

Comm. Pg. 63

4. **Function:** These are the four results which arise from the four causes mentioned above.

*39: If the basic Buddha element did not exist,
Discouragement with the suffering [of cyclic existence] would not occur
And the desire for nirvana as well as seeking [methods for attaining it]
And wishing [for it] would also not exist.*

*40: These perceptions of the disadvantageous sufferings of transient existence
And the advantageous happiness of nirvana
Are functions of the existence of the lineage,
Since these do not exist in those without the lineage.*

- Seeing the faults of suffering and the benefits of happiness in samsara and nirvana respectively is the functioning of the lineage.
- When hearing the faults of samsara and the benefits of liberation, and when hearing the mere sound of the teachings on emptiness causes tears to come to the eyes and the hairs of the body to stand on end, it is a sign of the awakening of the buddha lineage.

See commentary pg 72 - for debates

5. **Possession:** The buddha lineage possess qualities of the cause and the qualities of the result. The qualities of the cause are likened to a great ocean and the qualities of the result are likened to a lamp.

42: Because (1) of containing the basic element [or cause] of the Truth Body [devotion (to the Great Vehicle)], (2) of attaining a Conqueror's exalted wisdom [deep wisdom], And (3) [of the operation of great] compassion, [This basic constituent] is shown to be similar to an ocean Through [correspondence] with (1) a vessel, (2) [having] jewels, and (3) [having] water.

43: Because the [five] clairvoyances, [uncontaminated] exalted wisdom, the undefiled suchness, [And the abandonments of thorough transformation Subsist] indivisibly in the undefiled basis, it corresponds To an oil lamp in which illumination, warmth, and colour [subsist] indivisibly.

- **Qualities of the cause:** A great ocean bed is a base (trust) for the water (compassion) which contains an inexhaustible supply of precious jewels etc (wisdom and concentration)
 - Trust is a cause for purifying the obstruction to the nature truth body, thus belief can be said to hold all qualities and realisations.
 - Mahayana CA & SI are the uncommon causes for achieving the wisdom truth body. Likened to precious jewels.
 - Great compassion is the cause of all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, hearers and solitary-realizers (Chandrakirti quote?) it softens the hearts of all sentient beings and nurtures their potential for enlightenment.
- **Qualities of the result:** Just as light, heat and colour are inseparable from a flame, likewise these seven (divided into 3) are inseparable from nature truth body.
 - The first five clairvoyances are like the light of lamp, dispelling darkness.
 - Divine eye: the whereabouts of teachers, friends, students of this and previous lives appears clearly and directly to the mind.
 - Knowledge of others minds: the presence or absence of desire and so on
 - Memory of previous lives
 - The knowledge of the extinctions of contaminations is like the heat of a flame which burns the fuel of negative karma and delusions.
 - The stainless abandonment is like the colour of the flame. This is the buddha cessation and has two factors of clarity and purity.

6. *Categories of manifestation:* Its entity in different categories (7-10).

- Suchness is located in bases such as ordinary beings, arya beings and buddhas. These are the manifestations by base.
- Suchness exists as three types: within the non-purification of defilement, within those 'not falling to one side', and within the extinction of all obscuration. This is manifestation by type.

*44: [Stemming] from the manifestation of difference in suchness
In common beings, [Learner] Superiors, and perfect Buddhas,
The Perceiver of Suchness [the Buddha] taught [fortunate] sentient beings
About this essence of the Conquerors.*

*45: Common beings err [with respect to the true mode of subsistence].
[Superiors] seeing the truth are the opposite.
Ones Gone Thus [perceive] how things are without error
[And having overcome the predispositions of the two obstructions] are without fictional elaboration.*

- Ordinary beings = those with error
 - Have the four recognitions of impermanent as permanent etc.
- Arya beings = those seeing the truth
 - Have abandoned some of those errors
- Buddhas = perceive all phenomena as they are and as many as they are.

7. **Branches:** Heading from commentary: *By nature indivisible; divided only by different states.*

46: *Impure, [both] impure and pure,
And very pure are respectively
Called the element of a sentient being,
Bodhisattva, and Buddha.*

- Suchness of ordinary beings is impure (basic element of ordinary beings)
- Suchness of arya beings is said to be both pure and impure (basic element of the minds of arya beings)
- Suchness of buddhas is very pure (a buddha)

47: *The basic constituent that is contained
Within these six topics of entity and so forth [i.e., causes, effect, function, possession, manifestation, and states]
Is indicated with [those] three names in terms of these three states
[Whereas in its entity there is not the slightest difference].*

- Suchness however is the same in all three categories, the differentiation is made on the basis to which it is obscured temporarily by obscurations to liberation and enlightenment.

Debate: Scripture (comm. Pg. 92) sounds like we have the dharmakaya all the time?

8. **All-pervading character:** Establishing it to be of a single nature but pervading every state.

48: *Just as space which has a non-conceptual [and unobstructed] nature*

Pervades [undifferentiably] all [physical things],

So the nature of the mind, the undefiled basic element,

Pervades all states of persons.

49: *[The pure basic element] pervades the general character of all phenomena,*

[Thus] it pervades [all states of] faulty [common beings,

Bodhisattvas] with good qualities, and [Buddhas of] final [qualities]

Just as space is omnipresent in low, middling, and supreme forms [such as earth, copper, and gold vessels].

- Space does not have the intention to pervade everywhere, nevertheless it abides everywhere.
- Likewise emptiness of the minds of all beings, and all established bases.
- The nature of the mind = the undefiled basic element, not touched by the slightest impurity.
- The base of emptiness is different, but the emptiness is the same.
- A crow or an eagle both fly through the same thing - space.
- With defilement = basic element of sentient beings
- Without defilement = called the dharmakaya

Analogies see comm. Pg. 95

9. *Eternally unchangeable*: Immutable by nature.

Comm.pg 96-134, Vs 50-84

*50: [Even when the essential constituent is together with defilement,] those faults are adventitious [and suitable to be removed, thus they are not its nature],
And its good qualities are naturally indivisible [unfit to be removed and thus not adventitious].
Therefore, as it was before [when in cyclic existence] so it is later in [nirvana,
Always] of unchangeable nature.*

- The suchness of the mind is the mere absence of inherent existence and this remains its unchanging reality throughout the three stages of ordinary being, superior being and buddha.

*51: Just as space pervades all [physical phenomena]
But due to being subtle is not affected [by the faults of the impermanence and so forth of forms],
So this [essential constituent] dwelling in all sentient beings
Is not affected [by the faults of sentient beings].*

- Space is not affected by atoms etc.,
- Subtle because it is only apprehended by the mental concs. [check] or only directly apprehended by the mental concs.?
- Likewise the basic element is pure and not affected by the stains.

10. **Indivisible quality:** Establishing indivisibility from the qualities of freedom at the time of total purity.

Vs 85-95, Comm. Pg.134-149

94: *The wisdom [knowing the mode of being], the exalted wisdom [knowing the varieties], and the release [from objects of abandonment] Because of being clear, radiant [illuminating], and pure And because of not being different [from the nature of the one basis element] are [respectively] Similar to the light, rays, and [pure] disc of the sun [and the non-difference of those three].*

- The sun, its light and its rays are inseparable.
- Likewise these three qualities of enlightenment are inseparable:
 - Wisdom: *ultimate wisdom directly perceiving phenomena **as they actually are**, seeing ultimate truth. Light makes things clear.*
 - Pristine awareness (exalted wisdom): *knowing the conventional nature of all phenomena - **as many as there are**. It illuminates all the different aspects of objects of knowledge.*
 - Release: *final path of release from all the obscurations. Pure.*

Summary:

Through these ten points we are able to establish the existence of the pure nature of the mind, which is, in fact, buddha potential.

Vs.96, Comm. Pg. 149

*96: Thus the ten presentations [ranging from entity through qualities]
Of the essence of Conquerors have been expressed.
That [such an essential constituent now] dwells inside the covering of afflictive emotions [of sentient beings]
Is to be known by way of examples [as its entity is not now known].*

Benefits of reflecting on these ten:

The defilements do not penetrate the nature of the mind, therefore we understand they can be separated from the mind.

- Analogies: nature of water/pollution; clouds/sky; gold/tarnish.



Establishing the obscurations as adventitious through nine examples

Through these nine, we are able to establish that the obscuring defilements to this pure nature are temporary/adventitious.

Vs. [96cd?] 97-153, Comm. pg.151-196

1. A buddha in a decaying lotus
2. Honey amidst a swarm of bees
3. Grain within its husk
4. Gold covered by filth
5. Precious treasure under the ground
6. The potential of a seed within a fruit, to sprout into a tree
7. A precious buddha statue covered in rags
8. A unborn child who will become a king in a poor woman's womb
9. A golden buddha statue encased in a clay mould

- Nine similes for that which is obstructed - establishing by illustrations the adventitious nature of the obscurations
 - Teaches :
 - defilements can be removed and are therefore adventitious
 - the removing of the defilements
 - how the obscuration is removed
- Nine similes for the obstructions (pg. 152)

	That which is obscured (phen. of purity) vs 100-127		
1.	Dharmakaya	Dharma of realisation (buddha form)	
2.		Dharma of teaching	Teachings that express UT (honey)
3.			Teachings that express CT (grain kernels)
4.	Suchness (gold)		
5.	Lineage	Nature	Naturally Abiding Lineage (natural treasure)
6.			Developmental Lineage (tree)
7.		Ability	NAL having the potential to transform into the truth body (self-arisen precious statue)
8.			DL having the potential to transform into the enjoyment body (universal emperor)
9.			DL having the potential to transform into the emanation body (golden buddha image)

Obscuration (phen. of affliction) 135-143		Person who has these (vs 134)
1.	Seed of attachment (lotus)	Ordinary beings who are separated from the afflictions of the desire realm, therefore create throwing karma for the form and formless realms.
2.	Seed of hatred (bees)	
3.	Seed of ignorance (husks)	
4.	The three poisons forcefully manifested (filth)	Ordinary beings creating karma for the desire realm
5.	Ground of predispositions of ignorance (earth)	Hinayana arhats creating non-afflicted karma
6.	Hinayana path of seeing abandonments (fruit seed)	Ordinary beings who have entered the path and the Hinayana aryas
7.	Hinayana path of meditation abandonments (rags)	
8.	Obscurations of the seven mahayana impure grounds (low-caste pregnant woman)	Arya bodhisattvas
9.	Obscurations of the three mahayana pure grounds (clay mould)	

1. *The example of a buddha statue in a decaying lotus*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of dormant desire

Vs 100 (simile) 101 (meaning & purifying the basic element of defilement) 102 (expanded explanation) Comm. pg.156-157

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: buddha nature, specifically the dharmakaya of realisation

SIMILE: Buddha statue with all major and minor marks

- Simile: a buddha statue with the complete marks and signs hidden in a withering and discoloured lotus, which is sign by someone with clairvoyance (the divine eye) who then removes the rotten lotus leaves to reveal the statue.
- Meaning: the buddha sees within all sentient beings, even those in the relentless hells, the buddha potential. Due to their great compassion, the buddhas teach methods to remove the obscurations (e.g. desire) so they too can attain the dharmakaya.

“The meaning [of the first simile is as follows]: the element [of buddha] - the sugata essence - in the continua of all sentient beings, when freed of all obscurations, transforms into a nature body.” Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 135 Comm. pg.182-183

OBSCURATION: Seed of attachment

SIMILE: Lotus

*“The obscuration, dormant attachment, is likened to a lotus. As soon as a lotus grows from water and mud, its appearing before one generates attraction and delight. Later on, with age, the petals wither and, as Sublime Continuum says, “One’s attraction and delight, generated by attachment produced by improper mental application, fade.” Though having generated attraction and delight for a desirable object such as a woman, later, with age and the passing of youth, proportionately, one’s previous delight will disappear.”
Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen*

2. *The example of honey amidst a swarm of bees*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of dormant anger

Vs 103 (simile) 104 (meaning & purifying the basic element of defilement) Comm. pg.158

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: buddha nature, specifically the dharmakaya of scripture teaching ultimate truth

SIMILE: honey

- Simile: a person will need to be clever to first remove the bees that surround the honey, before they are able to taste the pure, one-taste of the honey.
- Meaning: the buddha sees within all sentient beings the basic element, so by turning the wheels of Dharma, they eradicate forever the obscurations which cover the naturally pure basic element of sentient beings.

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 136 Comm. pg.183

OBSCURATION: Seed of anger

SIMILE: Bees

“The dormant hatred obscuring [the element of buddha] is likened bees. When insects, bees, are strongly disturbed, they harm others by stinging and so forth, creating suffering for themselves and others. Likewise, when hatred arises in one’s continuum, the disturbed mind creates suffering in the continuum of both oneself and others.” Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen

3. *The example of grain within its husk*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of dormant ignorance

Vs 106 (simile & meaning) 107 (purifying the basic element of defilement) 108 (explanation) Comm. pg.158-160

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: buddha nature, specifically the dharmakaya of scripture teaching conventional truth

SIMILE: grain kernel

- Simile: when a grain or kernel has not been prepared and still in their husks, they cannot be made into the many different types of meals for humans.
- Meaning: the defilements need to be removed from the potential, and the buddhas enlightened activity (teaching the dharma) does this - however, the actual removers of defilement must be the disciples themselves. Then the potential of the nature body can be revealed and extend the bliss of buddha-activity through the three realms.

107 speaks of the disadvantages of being obscured, but their removal is implied.

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 137 Comm. pg.183

OBSCURATION: Seed of ignorance

SIMILE: Husk

“Dormant confusion is likened to the husk of grains. Just as a grain, due to being concealed by the husk of the grain, is not directly seen, likewise, due to being obscured by confusion - the ignorance conceiving true existence - the element [of buddha], the sugata essence, is not directly seen.” Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltzen

4. *The example of gold covered by filth:*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of the three poisons made manifest

Vs 109-110 (simile) 111 (meaning & removing the obscuration) 112 (explanation) Comm. pg.160-161

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: buddha nature, specifically the emptiness of it

SIMILE: gold

- Simile: a man is walking along a road and drops his gold into a filthy pit. There it remains for 100s of years. Later a god with clairvoyance (divine eye) see it and tells a human to take it out, clean it and make something beautiful from it, as its nature remained unchanged.
- Meaning: the buddhas see the naturally pure basic element as a quality of all sentient beings sunk in the filth of the afflictions. They teach the dharma to wash away the filth of the obscurations, so that they can purify the basic element and make use of it.

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 138 Comm. pg.183

OBSCURATION: The manifest three poisons

SIMILE: Filth

“Excrement is disgusting and unbearable. Likewise, the strong arousal of the three poisons is repugnant because it leads to wrong behaviour, which is a cause for reliance on the desire realm in those with attachment.” Gyaltsap Dharma Rinchen

5. *The example of precious treasure under the ground*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of the predispositions of ignorance

Vs 113 (simile) 114 (meaning) 115 (explanation) Comm. pg.161-163

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: lineage, its nature, specifically the naturally abiding lineage

SIMILE: treasure

- Simile: a man has under his house a pile of inexhaustible treasure, but he doesn't know it, and the treasure doesn't announce itself by saying, "I am here."
- Meaning: in the minds of sentient beings, lies the potential for every excellent quality. This reality of our mind with defilement exists in all sentient beings, but we don't see it and so we suffer in many ways, being deprived of liberation. To dispel such suffering, buddhas appear in the world.

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 139 Comm. pg.183

OBSCURATION: The predispositions of ignorance

SIMILE: ground

"The level of the latencies of ignorance obscuring [the element of buddha] is likened to the great ground. Just as a treasure hidden by the great ground is not seen or obtained by ordinary people, likewise, as long as the self-arisen, naturally existing element [of buddha], the sugata essence, exists obscured by the latencies of ignorance, a nature body is not attained, but when freed of that obscuration, it transforms into a nature body." Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen

6. *The example of the potential of a seed within a fruit, to sprout into a tree*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of path of seeing abandonments

Vs 116 (simile) 117 (meaning) 118 (explanation) Comm. pg.163-164

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: lineage, its nature, specifically the developmental lineage

SIMILE: seed

- Simile: a seed in a fruit such as mango or a lemon, has the potential to develop into a seedling. By conditions such as ploughing, water, fertiliser etc., it will develop into a majestic tree.
- Meaning: behind the skin of the affliction is the seed of buddhahood, which when it meets the right conditions of listening, contemplating and meditating, will develop into the mahayana dharma and continue to grow and become a buddha.

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 140 Comm. pg.183

OBSCURATION: The path of seeing abandonments

SIMILE: fruit

“The objects of abandonment of the hinayana path of seeing obscuring [the element of buddha] are likened to a seed that has the ability to produce a sprout. Just as a sprout gradually grows, splits the seed, and when free, the sprout manifests, likewise, the uninterrupted path of the hinayana path of seeing that directly realizes suchness, the selflessness of persons, dispels the objects of abandonment of the path of seeing. Having eliminated the objects of abandonment of the hinayana path of seeing, the path of release of the hinayana path of seeing is attained.” Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen

7. *The example of a precious buddha statue covered in rags*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of path of meditation abandonments

Vs 119 (simile) 120 (meaning & removing the obscuration) 121 (explanation) Comm. pg.165-166

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: lineage, its ability, specifically the naturally abiding lineage's ability to develop into the truth body

SIMILE: statue

- Simile: a buddha statue of gold is wrapped in rags and left on the street where people just walk over it. This is seen by a god who points out the statue in order to have it removed from the rags and stop people walking over it.
- Meaning: the buddhas see that since beginningless time, suchness with defilement exists even in animals, but is covered by the affliction - so they teach the dharma in order to liberate those sentient beings from samsara.

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 141 Comm. pg.183

OBSCURATION: The path of meditation abandonments

SIMILE: smelly rags

"The objects of abandonment of the hinayana path of meditation [obscuring the element of buddha] are likened to rags. Connected with the superior's path, the abandonments of the hinayana path of meditation - what remains to be abandoned after the hinayana path of seeing directly realizing the selflessness of persons has abandoned the afflicted acquired view of the transitory collection - are likened to rags, because they are what are destroyed by the vajra-like stabilization of the hinayana path of meditation." Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen

8. *The example of a child who will become king in a poor woman's womb*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of the defilements found on the impure grounds

Vs 122 (simile) 123 (meaning) 124 (explanation) Comm. pg.166-167

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: lineage, its ability, specifically the developmental lineage's ability to develop into the enjoyment body

SIMILE: child who will become a king

- Simile: a poor and ugly pregnant woman is staying alone in an unguarded house, and although her womb conceals a glorious universal emperor, she is unaware of this lord of men within her.
- Meaning: there is a protector living inside sentient beings, and yet the afflictions disturb their unguarded minds. To pacify those afflictions, the buddhas teach the dharma.

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 142 Comm. pg.183

OBSCURATION: The defilements found on the impure grounds

SIMILE: womb of a poor woman

"The respective stains of the impure grounds of a conqueror's child obscuring [the element of buddha] are likened to an enclosing womb. The exalted wisdom of the eighth ground, having depended on the exalted wisdom of the seventh ground, is free from the respective stains of the seven impure grounds. The coming out upon taking birth of a baby abiding in a womb, who is the cause for becoming a universal king, is likened to being free from the stains of the enclosing womb. Likewise, a consciousness at the previous time of cyclic existence, when the exalted wisdom of the seventh ground is free of the respective stains of the seven impure grounds, becomes the entity of the non-conceptual exalted wisdom of the eighth ground." Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltzen

9. *The example of a golden buddha statue encased in a clay mould*

Establishing by illustration the adventitious nature of the defilements found on the pure grounds

Vs 125 (simile) 126 (meaning & removing the obscurations) 127 (explanation) Comm. pg.168-169

THAT WHICH IS OBSCURED: lineage, its ability, specifically the developmental lineage's ability to develop into the emanation body

SIMILE: a golden buddha statue

- Simile: inside a clay mould is a form of the buddha made from molten gold with all the features complete. Those who see and understand this remove the outer clay covering in order to clean the gold.
- Meaning: the buddhas know the natural purity of the mind to be pure like gold, therefore they teach the dharma of the three vehicles to remove the adventitious defilement.

That which obscures the basic element

Vs 143 Comm. pg.183

OBSCURATION: The defilements found on the impure grounds

SIMILE: womb of a poor woman

"The respective stains of the three pure grounds are likened to a clay mould. When the mould is removed, the gold image becomes clearly manifest. The respective stains of the three pure grounds are destroyed by the vajra-like meditative Naturally Abiding Lineage stabilization in the continuum of the great being at the end of the continuum. When they are abandoned, the three bodies manifest."
Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen

Summary

- Obscured phenomena:
 - (vs 128) Like a buddha, honey, kernel, gold, treasure, tree, precious image, universal monarch, and golden statue,
- Obscuring phenomena:
 - (vs 129) In an [ugly] lotus, [swarm of] bees, husk, filth, earth, peel of a fruit, tattered garment, womb of a woman, and an earthen mould,

Comm. pg 170

Comm pg. 185 Vs 145:

“The three fold nature of this basic element, which was taught as being the reason why it pervades all sentient beings, comprises the dharmakaya, suchness and lineage, and these three are illustrated respectively by three, one and five similes.”S