

GONE BEYOND

Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras,
The Ornament of Clear Realization,
and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Kagyü Tradition

VOLUME ONE

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c) The focal object of the great supreme dharma is the common nature of the following three—mother prajñāpāramitā, the means of meditative equipoise, and the bodhisattva as the person on this level—being unseen. [The sūtras say:]

The very mother is samādhi. The very samādhi is the bodhisattva.
The very bodhisattva is the samādhi.⁸⁰¹

The aspect is the nonconceptuality of samādhi.⁸⁰² [The sūtras say:]

Since all phenomena do not exist, there are no conceptions. In this way, bodhisattvas do not have conceptions about these samādhis.

Thus, these three [levels] of lesser, medium, and great “supreme dharma” are so called because they are the supreme among mundane dharmas by virtue of their capacity to induce the uncontaminated path right after them.⁸⁰³

These are the lesser, medium, and great degrees
Of the factors conducive to penetration. [I.33cd]

In this order, {36a} each one of the four factors conducive to penetration, during which [the degrees of] focusing on the four realities increase, has three [degrees]—lesser, medium, and great—in terms of the manner in which [the focusing on each level] arises first, in the middle, and at the end.

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2. Explanation of conceptions as the associated phenomena [of the path of preparation]

This has two parts:

- 1) General [topic]
- 2) [Meaning of] the text

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2.1. General topic

This has two parts:

- 1) General identification of conception
- 2) The particular meaning of each [kind of conception] as taught in this text

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2.1.1. General identification of conception

[Conception] is what obscures the disposition for nirvāṇa (the ālaya-wisdom). It has the nature of being the consciousness that entails the dualistic appearances of apprehender and apprehended. This possesses [many] names, such as ālaya-consciousness, impure other-dependent [nature], nonafflicted

ignorance, sentient being, and false imagination.⁸⁰⁴ Just as dreams arise from being asleep, certain coarse [forms of] apprehender and apprehended [arise] from this [conception or false imagination and] are seized as a self by the afflicted mind. Through this, afflictions (such as attachment) [arise], which in turn lead to accumulating various karmas. Thus, we experience suffering. [The conceptions that] apprehend by conflating terms and their referents cling to certain more subtle [forms of apprehender and apprehended] as being different in substance, same in substance, and so on. By virtue of that, the conceptions in terms of the three spheres arise and one falls into [the nirvāṇa of personal] peace. In this way, cloudlike adventitious stains obscure spacelike suchness.

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.2. The particular meaning of each kind of conception as taught in this text

This has two parts:

- 1) The meanings of apprehender and apprehended
- 2) Divisions in terms of their referent objects

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.2.1. The meanings of apprehender and apprehended

[The conceptions] that are taught here [in the AA] are predominantly the conceptions that apprehend [by conflating] terms and their referents. For they are presented in terms of the clinging to real [existence] that fixates on the nonexistent yet appearing bases onto which a self is imputed. Therefore, here, [the clinging to] a self is presented as the conceptions about the apprehender, and [the clinging to] what is “mine,” as the conceptions about the apprehended, but {36b} [these conceptions] do not refer to matter and awareness as being apprehender and apprehended, respectively.

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.2.2. Divisions in terms of their referent objects

The factors to be relinquished in this context of the path of preparation are [the conceptions about the apprehended that consist of] adopting and rejecting purified and afflicted phenomena, respectively, and [the conceptions about the apprehender that consist of] clinging to the skandhas and so on (the entities that are regarded as a person) as either being substantially or imputedly [existent]. The factors to be relinquished through the path of seeing are [the conceptions about the apprehended that consist of] adopting and rejecting the path of bodhisattvas and inferior paths, respectively, and [the conceptions about the apprehender that consist of] clinging to consciousness (the basis that is regarded as phenomena) as either being substantially or imputedly [existent]. The factors to be relinquished through the path of familiarization are solely [the conceptions of] clinging to merely imputed bases onto which [the

These phenomena do not exist in the ways that ordinary childish beings cling to them.⁸⁰⁸

- 2) the skandhas, such as form, that are produced through the karma motivated by this [ignorance]:

Form does not exist because it is the emptiness of the internal.

- 3) clinging to these [skandhas] as a self and what is “mine”:

After having imputed these onto nonexistent phenomena, they cling to name and form.⁸⁰⁹

- 4) regarding these [skandhas] as either permanent or becoming extinct:

They conceive of the two extremes, which do not exist.

- 5) through the power of this, not knowing the faults and qualities of afflicted and purified phenomena, respectively:

They neither see nor understand that form is afflicted or that form is purified.

- 6) by virtue of not understanding this, not abiding on the path of the noble ones:

They do not abide in the pāramitā of generosity and so on.

- 7) through deviating from the path in this way, observing phenomena in a mistaken way:

Bodhisattvas proceed to the knowledge of all aspects by way of not observing it.

- 8) attachment to the aspect of “self”⁸¹⁰ and aversion toward the aspect of “others”:

Bodhisattvas do not observe a self because it is utterly pure.

- 9) the causes that produce the pure phenomena of nirvāṇa and so on (that is, the contaminated virtuous karmas [that cause the attainment of higher realms within saṃsāra]):

Purity is what does not arise, does not originate, and is not formed.

Among these [nine] subdivisions, the first one is ignorance; the third one refers to the views about a real personality; and the fourth one consists of the views about extremes. Therefore, they are the origin [of suffering] that consists of the afflictions. {37b} The second one is the origin [of suffering] that is birth, thus being the nature of affliction. As respectively appropriate, the remaining ones pertain to the shortcomings or the nature of affliction.

B) There are nine conceptions about the apprehended that have purified phenomena as their objects because they cling to nine objects by focusing on them and thinking, "Since these are purified phenomena, they are to be adopted." These nine objects are

1) the purified skandhas, [as expressed in] the sūtras:

Those not skilled in means conceive of and cling to form and so on . . .

2) the āyatanas as the gates of the arising of purified phenomena:

. . . conceive of the eyes and so on . . .

3) the disposition⁸¹¹ as the cause of purified phenomena:

. . .¹¹ conceive of the dhātus of the eyes, form, and the eye consciousness . . .

4) the progressive order of the arising of the dependent origination of purified phenomena:

. . . conceive of ignorance . . .

5) emptiness free from reference points:⁸¹²

. . . conceive of the emptiness of the internal . . . the emptiness of the nature of nonentities . . .

6) the six pāramitās as the causes for the two welfares [of oneself and others] since emptiness as a mere nonexistence is not suitable as their cause:

. . . conceive of six pāramitās . . .

7) the path of seeing, which has the character of the sixteen [moments of] cognition and readiness:

... conceive of the thirty-seven dharmas concordant with enlightenment ...

8) the path of familiarization, whose nature consists of the dhyānas and form[less absorptions]:

... conceive of the dhyānas ... formless absorptions ...

9) the path of nonlearning by virtue of having fully completed the trainings:

... conceive of the ten powers ... the knowledge of all aspects ...

In due order, the first six of these [subdivisions] refer to the entities, the conditions, the cause, the dependent origination, the focal object, and the conducts of purified phenomena, {38a} while the last three refer to their divisions.

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2.2. Explanation of the conceptions about the apprehender
This has two parts:

- 1) Brief introduction
- 2) Detailed explanation

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.1. Brief introduction

Likewise, those about the apprehender are asserted as twofold,
Based on substance and imputation
In terms of the nature of an independent self and so on,
And what is based on the skandhas and so on. [I.35]

There are two [kinds of] objects that are apprehended [here]—the bases onto which a person is imputed are apprehended as being either **substantially** established or **imputedly** existent. Therefore, **based on** these [two types of objects], the conceptions about the apprehender that mentally engage them are also asserted as twofold. The first one is [divided] **in terms of** what has a mental nature ([such as] apprehending an independent self) and the second one is divided in terms of **what is based on the skandhas and so on**. Thus, just like with the conceptions about the apprehended, there are nine [subdivisions] each here too.

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2. Detailed explanation

A) There are nine [kinds of] the conceptions whose objects are substantially existent phenomena that are the bases for imputing a person onto them because there are nine objects to which [these conceptions] cling by focusing on [certain] substances that represent mere phenomena. These nine are

1) apprehending the self as being independent, that is, not dependent on any other apprehender of objects, [as expressed in] the sūtras:

Bodhisattvas do not observe a self . . . and do not observe a seer.

2) apprehending it as something singular without a companion:

. . . do not observe form . . .

3) apprehending it as the cause of consciousness:

. . . do not observe the eyes . . .

4) apprehending it as the watcher and the knower:

. . . do not observe the eyes, form, the eye-consciousness . . .

5) apprehending it as the support of afflicted phenomena:

. . . do not observe dependent origination . . .

6) apprehending it as the support of the mundane path—that which makes one free from desire for inferior levels: {38b}

. . . do not observe the first dhyāna . . .

7) apprehending it as the support of the path of seeing:

. . . do not observe the realities of the noble ones . . .

8) apprehending it as the support of the uncontaminated path of familiarization:

. . . do not observe the eight liberations and the nine meditative absorptions of progressive abiding . . .⁸¹³

9) apprehending it as the support of the path of nonlearning—that in which the welfare of oneself and others has been accomplished:

... do not observe the ten powers ... and the knowledge of all aspects.

The first four of these subdivisions refer to being mistaken about skandhas, dhātus, and āyatanas, thus conceiving them as having the characteristics of a self. The remaining ones are conceptions that are connected to such a self.

B) There are nine [kinds of] the conceptions whose objects are imputedly existent bases for imputing an individual onto them because [these conceptions] focus on nine objects and cling to them as mere imputations. These nine objects are

1) apprehending the five skandhas (such as form) as mere imputations⁸¹⁴ ([the words] “apprehending as mere imputations” apply to the following [entries] as well), [as expressed in] the sūtras:

Subhūti, do you think that form is one thing and an illusion another?

2) the āyatanas, such as the eyes:

Are the eyes one thing and ...?

3) the eighteen dhātus:

Are the eyes, form, and the eye consciousness one thing and ...?

4) the twelve [links of] dependent origination, such as ignorance:

Is dependent origination one thing and illusion another?

5) the thirty-seven purified phenomena, such as confidence:

Are the thirty-seven dharmas concordant with enlightenment one thing and ...?

6) the path of seeing:

Are emptiness, {39a} signlessness, and wishlessness one thing and ...?

7) the path of familiarization:

Are the dhyānas and the formless meditative absorptions one thing and . . . ?

8) the special paths⁸¹⁵ of realizing emptiness, which are superior to the hīnayāna [paths]:

Are all emptinesses one thing and an illusion another?

9) the path of nonlearning:

Are the ten powers . . . and enlightenment one thing and . . . ?

The first four of these subdivisions refer to the mere imputations that are produced by the illusions of karma, and the remaining ones, to those [that are produced] by the illusions of wisdom.⁸¹⁶

2.3.1.2.1.1.2.2.2.3. Explanation of being mentored as the dominant condition

The path of preparation is characterized through its specific features of the triad of focal object, aspect, and cause as well as the conceptions that are the phenomena associated with it. Since its arising depends on being mentored, the spiritual friend—the mentor with three features—is explained in three parts.

1) The feature of skill in means

The mind not being intimidated and such, [I.36a]

By virtue of themselves not being separated from mentally engaging in the knowledge of all aspects, [bodhisattvas] are skilled in the means to make the minds of others to be guided **not being intimidated** by the actuality of profound emptiness **and so on** (that is, not being afraid and not being terrified of it). The sūtras say:

Bodhisattvas who thus engage in the mother will not become cowed, will not be afraid, and will not be terrified.⁸¹⁷

2) The feature of teaching the dharma

Those who teach the lack of nature and so on, [I.36b]