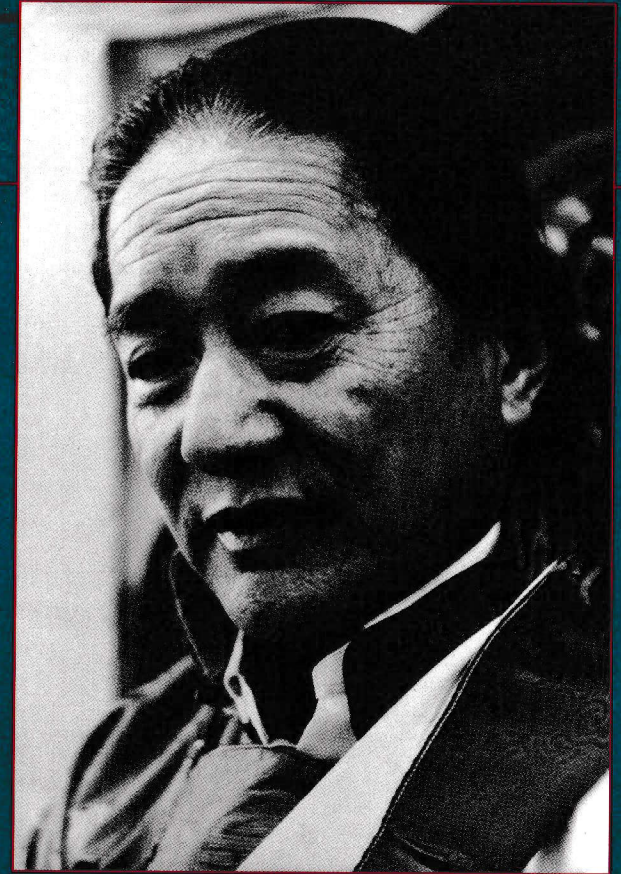


A TORCH
LIGHTING *the* WAY to FREEDOM



Complete Instructions on the Preliminary Practices

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TRANSLATED BY THE PADMAKARA TRANSLATION GROUP

- To not consciously tell lies.
- To place everyone on the profound path of the Great Vehicle.
- To respect and praise sublime beings.
- To act with superior intentions with regard to sentient beings.

On these he says:

To follow sublime beings and praise their qualities,
 To encourage beings to practice pure virtue,
 To consider Bodhisattvas as one's teachers,
 And, with superior motivation, to bring about benefit
 and happiness for beings—
 These are the four perfect white actions: rely on them!

b. THE PRECEPTS OF BODHICHITTA IN ACTION

There are three parts: maturing oneself by training in the six transcendent perfections; maturing others by training in the four ways of attracting disciples; and training the mind, incorporating the essential practice of the above two precepts.

i. Maturing oneself: training in the six transcendent perfections

Having taken up the discipline of bodhichitta, one now trains in the Bodhisattva activities, principally the six transcendent perfections, as described in *Letter to a Friend*:

Generosity and discipline, patience, diligence,
 Concentration and the wisdom that knows thusness—
 Those measureless perfections, make them grow,
 And be a Mighty Conqueror who's crossed the ocean
 of existence.¹¹⁰

Of these six, the first is generosity.

(1) Generosity

The essence of generosity is to completely give away one's possessions with a mind free of attachment. Its function is to get rid of other people's poverty. It should be motivated by the thought of striving for perfect enlightenment for the benefit of others. There are three kinds of generosity, depending on what it is that one gives.

(a) Material giving

Material giving involves freely giving away the different parts of one's body (inner gifts) and all one's wealth and possessions (outer gifts), avoiding the four improper aspects of generosity and adopting the four proper aspects—these four referring to one's intention, the gift itself, the recipient, and the manner of giving.¹¹¹ We should give in particular to the four fields.* In this, both the intention and the deed should be perfect, with no trace of stinginess, as if we were merely giving a piece of grass.

(b) The gift of protection from fear

This is to use whatever means are appropriate and within our power to protect those who are in danger from the authorities, savage beasts of prey, enemies, robbers, fire, water, illness, negative forces, and the like, thereby relieving them of their fear.

(c) The gift of Dharma

So that others have faith and we do not ourselves degenerate, we should practice the sublime Dharma by giving up improper actions with our body, speech, and mind and adopting proper ones. In this way we become worthy of being a spiritual friend, and the others are pleased and develop respect, thus bringing about the right conditions for disciple and teacher to come together. At that time, with our minds free of personal considerations, we should be skillful in the different means for expounding the teachings of the Greater or Lesser Vehicle to those who seek the Dharma, matching the instructions with the disciples' capacities and thereby setting them on the most appropriate path.

(2) Discipline

The essence of discipline is embodied in the four virtues—in short, in taking vows and keeping them.¹¹² Its function is to reduce the torments of evil. It should be motivated by a real interest in training the mind, inspired by determination to be free, together with a parallel resolve to abandon negative actions. The precepts are divided into three.

(a) The discipline of refraining from negative actions

This involves: keeping all the precepts perfectly (the common vows of the seven kinds of ordination for individual liberation,¹¹³ the uncommon

* See glossary, *four fields*.

Bodhisattva vows that originate from the two charioteers,* and the extraordinary vows of the Bodhisattva, which are in the stream of actions, negative in their intention, and which constitute shameful physical, verbal, and mental actions, to refrain from them in the future.

(b) The discipline of gathering positive actions

Gathering positive actions means doing without any tainted positive actions related to physical, verbal, and mental concentration backed by wisdom.

(c) The discipline of working for the benefit of others

The *Bodhisattva Levels* describes eleven ways of working for the benefit of others¹¹⁴—in which a Bodhisattva benefits others by acting physically, verbally, and mentally solely for other beings, and by carrying out any actions one can to actually help others.

(3) Patience

The essence of patience is to think nothing of the hardships of trying to accomplish the one and get rid of the afflictions, to remove the anguish of being angry and in pain, and to train so that our altruistic attitude is unshakable in the face of those who hurt us with their ingratitude. There are three kinds of patience.

(a) Patience in remaining imperturbable

If you get angry with those at whose hands you have been struck and beaten, or suffered other hardships, you should remember the following and remain calm in losing one's temper:

All the good works gathered in a lifetime
Such as deeds of generosity,
Or offerings to the Blissful Ones—
A single flash of anger shatters them.

* The Two Charioteers are Nagarjuna and Asanga.