
The Tathagata Essence

Great Vehicle Treatise on the Sublime Continuum differentiating the Lineage of the Three Jewels

(*mahayanottaratantra-ratnagotravibhanga*)

by Maitreya

[With amplification by Mi-pam-gya-tso (1846-1912)]

CHAPTER ONE

*translated into English from Tibetan sources by
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Chapter One: The Essence of a One Gone Thus

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

- 1 Buddha, doctrine, community, basic constituent, enlightenment, Qualities, and finally, Buddha activities—
The body of the entire treatise is in brief
These seven diamond topics.
- 2 These [seven] in connection are to be known by way of their own natures
In this order in the [*Questions of*] *King Dharanishvara Sutra*—
The [first] three from the introduction
[And the other] four from the divisions of the attributes of the intelligent
[Bodhisattvas] and of Conquerors.
- 3 From Buddha, the doctrine. From the doctrine, the community of Superiors.
From the community, the basic constituent of essential exalted wisdom is attained.
Finally from exalted wisdom is attained the supreme enlightenment endowed with the qualities
Of the powers and so forth and effecting the welfare of sentient beings.
- 4 Obeisance to the one who has no beginning, middle, or end
Who is quiescent, who through buddhification became buddhified in self-arisen aspect
And having become buddhified, taught the path of fearlessness and permanence so that those who had not realized it might realize it,
And who, carrying the supreme sword and diamond of knowledge and mercy, cuts the sprouts of suffering and destroys the walls of doubt that are surrounded by the darkness of various views.
- 5 Buddhahood has [the eight qualities of] being un compounded,
Spontaneous, not being realized through the cause of others,
Knowledge, mercy, and power,
As well as being [the fulfillment of] the two aims [of oneself and others].
- 6 Because of having a nature without beginning [i.e., without production],
Middle [abiding], or end [cessation], it is *uncompounded*.
Because of possessing the quiescent Truth Body,
It is said to be *spontaneous*.

- 7 Because of being realized by oneself individually,
It is *not realized through the cause of others*.
Because of realizing [those] aspects in that way, it is *knowledge*.
Because of teaching the path, *merciful*.
- 8 It is *power* because of removing suffering
And afflictive emotions through exalted wisdom and compassion.
Through the first three, *one's own welfare* [is accomplished];
Through the latter three, *others' aims*.
- 9 Obeisance to the sun of excellent doctrine, not non-existent,
Not existent, not existent and non-existent, and not analyzable as other than
existent and non-existent, devoid of description,
Known by oneself individually, quiescent, undefiled, illumined with the light
rays of exalted wisdom,
And thoroughly destroying desire, hatred, and obscuration with respect to all
objects of observation.
- 10 Due to being unthinkable, without the two [i.e., contaminated actions and
afflictive emotions],
Without conceptions, pure, clear, and antidotal,
The doctrine is that which is and that by which there is the [state]
Devoid of passions—having the character of the [last] two truths.
- 11 This devoid [and making devoid] of passions is included
Within true cessations and paths.
Respectively those are also to be known
By way of three qualities each.
- 12 It is *unthinkable* because of being unanalyzable, inexpressible, and known by
Superiors.
Due to being quiescent it is *without the two*,
And it is *without* [improper] *conceptions*.
The three, purity and so forth [i.e., clear and antidotal] are like the sun.
- 13 Obeisance to those who, having thoroughly realized the limit or quiescence of
selflessness in all transmigrators
Through perceiving the non-[inherent] existence of the entities of the afflictive
emotions due to the natural clear light of the mind,
Perceive perfect Buddhahood as residing in all, to those whose intelligence is
unobstructed,
And who are endowed with sight of the exalted wisdom that has as its objects
the purity and infinity of sentient beings.

- 14 Because the perception of [their] internal exalted wisdom
Of the mode and of the varieties is pure,
The community of irreversible intelligent ones
Is endowed with unsurpassed qualities.
- 15 Due to realizing the quiescent nature of transmigrating beings, [that is, all
persons and phenomena
They [perceive] the very mode [of being of phenomena],
This being because of the natural thorough purity
And because the afflictive emotions are extinguished from the start.
- 16 Because the awareness realizing objects of knowledge and [their] finality
Sees that the nature of omniscience
Exists in all sentient beings,
They have [knowledge of] the varieties.
- 17 Those realizations in that way
Are just perceptions by their own consciousness individually.
In the basic element of non-defilement there are no passions
And no obstacles, thus those are pure.
- 18 Because the sight of [these] wisdoms is pure,
It is [close to being] the unsurpassed wisdom of a Buddha.
Therefore, an irreversible Superior
Is a refuge for all embodied beings.
- 19 In order to [show the qualities of] teacher, teaching, and learners
The Three Refuges were posited
In terms of those of the three vehicles
And those devoted to the three observances [of the individual refuges].
- 20 Because [the verbal doctrine is] abandoned, because [the realizational doctrine
in the continuum of a Bodhisattva Superior] has the quality of deception,
Because [a cessation is] a [mere] non-existence, and [non-Buddhas] have fright,
The two forms of doctrine and the community of Superiors
[Respectively] are not the supreme eternal refuge.
- 21 Ultimately the refuge of transmigrators
Is just the sole Buddha,
Because the Subduer has the Body of Doctrine [and thus is the doctrine]
And because [a Buddha] is the finality of the Community.
- 22 Because of appearing rarely, because of being without defilement,
Because of having power, because of being the ornament of the world,

Because of being just superior, and because of being changeless,
[They are called] Jewels [literally, Superior Rarities].

- 23 Those from which the three virtuous Jewels arise—
Reality with defilement and without defilement,
The qualities of undefiled Buddhahood, and the Conqueror's activities—
Are objects just of those [directly] perceiving the ultimate.
- 24 The lineage of these Three Jewels
Is an object [only] of those perceiving all,
For it is inconceivable due to four reasons
In accordance respectively with those four aspects.
- 25 Because [the basic realm is] pure but [appears to be] afflicted,
Because [enlightenment is] unafflicted but [appears] to be purified,
Because [the Buddha qualities are] undifferentiated phenomena [even at the
time of common being but are not manifest],
And because [the Buddha activities are] spontaneous but without conceptuality
[these four are inconceivable by common beings].
- 26 [The basic constituent that is] the object to be realized, [the enlightenment that]
realizes it.
[The Buddha qualities that are] branches of this, and [the Buddha activities that
are] for the sake of causing realization—
Of these, respectively the first topic [the basic constituent] is the cause
Of purification; the [other] three are conditions [of purification].
- 27 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.
- 28 Because the exalted Buddha-wisdom dwells in the multitudes of sentient beings
And because the undefiled nature is non-dual
And the Buddha lineage is designated [a Buddha, this being the name of] its
effect,
It is said that all transmigrators have the Buddha-essence.
- 29 *The entity* [of natural purity], *the causes* [that serve as means of purification], *the
effect* [of separation from all defilements], *the function*[of causing adoption
and discarding upon seeing the disadvantages of pain and advantages of
pleasure], *the possession*[of the qualities of cause and effect], *manifestation* [of
differences in reality by way of the persons on whom it depends],
States [of difference], and similarly *the meaning of omnipresence* [that is, reality

- pervading all],
Immutability at all times [in terms of good qualities], and *undifferentiability* [of the
final] qualities
Are said to be the intended meaning of the ultimate basic element.
- 30 Like the [natural] purity of a jewel, space, and water,
The nature [of the basic constituent] is always unafflicted.
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].
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
[The lineage] has the function of [bringing about] aversion for the suffering [of
cyclic existence]
And the aspiration as well as the wish to attain the peace [of nirvana].

- 35 In brief the fruits of these [four causes, devotion to the Great Vehicle and so forth,
Are attainments of the four qualities] distinguished as
Purity and so forth [i.e., self, bliss, and permanence] through being antidotes
That are opposite to the four erroneous aspects [impurity and so forth] with
respect to the Truth Body.
- 36 Because that [Truth Body] is naturally pure [from the start]
And because [the adventitious defilements as well as] the predispositions are
abandoned, [this possession of the two types of purity] is [a perfection of]
purity.
Because the elaborations of [the conception of] of self [imputed by the Forders]
and of the selflessness [conceived by Hearers and so forth]
Have been pacified, it is [a perfection of] holy self.
- 37 Because the [subtle] aggregates which have a mental nature
And their cause [the level of the predispositions of ignorance] have been
removed, it is just [a perfection of] bliss.
Because cyclic existence and nirvana are realized as equal [in nature]
It is [a perfection of] permanence [that is, unbroken (fulfillment) of the two
aims].
- 38 Eliminating with wisdom all attachment to self [as well as its latencies, they do
not dwell in cyclic existence],
But due to being attached to sentient beings [with great compassion they do not
forsake them], whereby the compassionate [Bodhisattvas] do not [fall to an
extreme of peace], attaining a [solitary] peace.
In that way, in dependence on [the two] methods [for attaining]
enlightenment—the awareness [realizing selflessness] and the mercy [of great
compassion]—
Bodhisattva Superiors [do not fall to the two extremes], not being in cyclic
existence of in nirvana.
- 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.

- 41 Just as a great ocean [contains countless jewels and immeasurable water, so the basic element of a Superior's qualities is] the source
Of countless jewels of good qualities and the inexhaustible [water of compassion and thus it possesses the features of a cause].
Because of being an entity endowed with the indivisible qualities [of clairvoyance, uncontaminated exalted wisdom, and uncontaminated abandonment,
It possesses the features of an effect] like an oil lamp['s
Having] the indivisible [qualities of illumination, warmth, and color].
- 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 color [subsist] indivisibly.
- 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.
- 46 Impure, [both] impure and pure,
And very pure are respectively
Called the element of a sentient being,
Bodhisattva, and 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].

- 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].
- 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.
- 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].
- 52 Just as the world [of the environment] in all ways
Is [initially] produced and [finally] disintegrates in space [but space is not
produced and does not disintegrate],
So the sense powers [of sentient beings] are [initially] produced and [finally]
disintegrate
In the basic element which is not produced [by causes and conditions, but that
basic element is not produced and does not disintegrate].
- 53 Just as space has never been burned in the past
By the fires [of the end of an eon, hells, or ordinary fire],
So this [essential constituent] has not been burned
By the fires of death, sickness, and aging.
- 54 [The sphere of] earth [forms in dependence] upon water;
Water [depends] on wind; wind subsists in space,
But space [does not depend on causes and conditions and thus] does not subsist
[In dependence] upon the constituents of wind, water, and earth.

- 55 Similarly, the mental and physical aggregates, constituents, and sense powers
Subsist on [contaminated] actions and afflictive emotions [as their causes].
Actions and afflictive emotions always subsist [in dependence]
Upon improper mental application [such as conceiving the impermanent to be
permanent].
- 56 Improper mental application subsists on [the basic element
Of natural clear light,] the purity of the mind.
The phenomena included in the [clear light] nature of the mind
Do not subsist on any [improper mental application, contaminated actions, or
afflictive emotions, and so forth].
- 57 The [five] aggregates, the [twelve] sources, and the [eighteen] constituents
Are to be known as like the earth.
The [contaminated] actions and afflictive emotions of embodied beings
Are to be known as like the water constituent [on which the sphere of earth is
established].
- 58 Improper mental application is to be viewed
As like the wind constituent [on which the sphere of water depends].
The nature [of the mind], like the space constituent,
Does not [depend] on [another] basis [and thus] does not subsist [on anything].
- 59 Improper mental application [that apprehends in discordance with the nature
of things]
Subsists, [in the manner of an obstruction,] on the nature of the mind.
Improper mental application opens the way for [contaminated] actions
And afflictive emotions [just as wind serves as the basis of water].
- 60 From the water of [contaminated] actions and afflictive emotions,
The aggregates, sources, and constituents [included within contaminated
suffering] arise [like the arising of the earth from the churning of the mass of
water].
Just as that [world of the environment] disintegrates and is formed [in the
sphere of space],
So [sentient beings] are produced and disintegrate [in the unproduced basic
element].
- 61 The nature of the mind, like the space constituent,
Is without [substantial] causes and [cooperating] conditions.
It does not involve a collection [which is an aggregation into one entity and therefore]
Is not produced [in the beginning], does not abide [in the middle], and
disintegrate [in the end].

- 62 This which is the [essence of One Gone To Bliss,] the clear light nature of the mind,
Is immutable just as space [is not changed by clouds and so forth].
Through adventitious defilements such as desire and so forth, which arise
From incorrect conceptuality, reality does not become afflicted [since it is naturally pure].
- 63 This [essential constituent] is not produced
By the water of [contaminated] actions and afflictive emotions.
It will also not be burned by the awful
Fires of death, sickness, and aging.
- 64 The three fires of death [change in life], sickness [change in constituents], and
aging [change in youth]
Are to be known as similar
Respectively with the three—fire
At the end of an eon, the fire of a hell, and ordinary fire.
- 65 [Bodhisattva Superiors] who have been released from birth [the new
establishment of mental and physical aggregates], death [the ceasing of the
continuum], aging [change in the continuum], and sickness [generating
suffering],
Realize the nature of this [essence of a One Gone To Bliss] just as it is.
[Therefore, such a Bodhisattva] is devoid of the misery of birth and so forth
[and thus immutable].
But by reason of [having realized the basic element just as it is], intelligent
[Bodhisattvas] display [birth and so forth] due to generating [great]
compassion for transmigrators [who have not realized it. Thus, they appear
to others to be impure and mutable.]
- 66 [Since] Superiors [on the first Bodhisattva ground directly realize the immutable
basic element of a Superior's qualities],
They have exhaustively abandoned the suffering of death, sickness, and aging.
For [beings] are born by the power of [contaminated] actions and afflictive
emotions
And they do not have those, whereby they do not have [birth].
- 67 Though due to seeing reality as it is
They have transcended birth and so forth,
Having a nature of compassion they display
Birth, death, aging, and sickness [thereby ripening sentient beings].

- 68 That Conqueror Children, having realized this immutable reality,
Are seen [undergoing] birth and so forth]
By those [whose eye of wisdom] is blinded
By [the cataracts] of ignorance is wonderful!
- 69 Those who have attained [direct perception of the reality] that is the object of
activity of Superiors
Make a display in the objects of activity of children [i.e., birth, aging, sickness,
and death].
[These are] the methods and the supreme compassion [which is the cause of the
methods
Of the friends of transmigrators for their sake.
- 70 Though [Bodhisattvas on the second through seventh grounds] have
transcended all of the world [through the power of wisdom],
They do not stir from the world [through the power of [compassion]].
For the sake of [ripening] the world, they act in the world
Without being polluted by the defilements of the world.
- 71 Just as a lotus grown in water
Is not sullied by the water,
So these [Bodhisattvas] are born in the world [for the sake of others]
But are not sullied by worldly phenomena [such as afflictive emotions and
faults].
- 72 The awarenesses [of eighth and ninth ground Bodhisattvas] always blaze in
achieving activities [for the sake of others]—
Like fire [blazing of its own accord in dry fuel]—
And [simultaneously] are always set evenly in the meditative equipoise
Of the concentration pacifying [fictional elaborations].
- 73 Due to the impulse [of aspirational wishes and so forth] earlier [on the ninth
ground and below]
And because of being devoid of all [motivational] conceptuality
[Tenth ground Bodhisattvas in their last lifetime] do not [need]
To strive [and exert themselves] for the sake of ripening embodied beings.
- 74 However, those [Bodhisattvas] know whatever [methods
Are suitable] for taming any] trainee,
Whether these be through teaching [doctrine in accordance with their thought],
or [displaying various] form bodies [appropriate to trainees' interests],
Or the [powerful] deeds [of Bodhisattvas for the welfare of others], or styles of
behavior.

- 75 In that way [through activities without striving], those intelligent [Bodhisattvas]
Thoroughly engage [in activities] for the sake of [ripening] sentient beings,
Always spontaneous and unimpeded,
For transmigrators in endless space.
- 76 This mode [of tenth ground Bodhisattvas' engaging in activities]
Subsequent to meditative equipoise [is seen]
In the world to be equal with Ones Gone Thus
In thoroughly releasing sentient beings from suffering [since they have attained
the special qualities of the six clairvoyances, the ten forces, and so forth].
- 77 Nevertheless, [in terms of fulfilling their own welfare] the difference
Between [the qualities of] Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
Is as [very great as] the difference
Between the [great] earth and a particle or between the ocean and [the water] in
the hoofprint of an ox.
- 78 [The Truth Body that is the pure basic element of a Superior's qualities is a
permanent] changeless entity because of possessing qualities inexhaustible
[even in the remainderless nirvana].
It is the [non-deceptive] refuge of transmigrators because of [providing refuge]
continuously [throughout] endless [cyclic existence] in the future.
That [undefiled basic element] is always quiescent [without the duality of cyclic
existence and nirvana] because of not conceptualizing [their defects and
benefits].
It is the [unalterable] non-disintegrating reality because of being a nature
uncompounded [by actions and afflictive emotions].
- 79 [This pure basic element is] without birth [in the beginning], death [in the end],
Harm [through sickness in the middle], and aging [or changing]
Respectively because of being permanent, because of being stable,
Because of being quiescent, and because of being unalterable.
- 80 [The essential constituent] is without birth [initially]
By actions of mental nature because of [not changing and] being permanent.
[The essential constituent] does not die [in the end] with inconceivable
transmigration
Because of being [non-deceptive and] stable.
- 81 It is not harmed [in the middle] by the sickness of the subtle [obstructions]
which are the latencies [of ignorance]
Because of being just the quiescence [of dualistic apprehension and so forth].
Because of [not disintegrating and] remaining unalterable even by

- uncontaminated activities,
It is without aging [thus what need is there to speak of ordinary birth and so forth!]
- 82 With respect to [proving birthlessness and so forth], through two lines and likewise two lines,
As well as two lines and two lines respectively,
The meaning of the uncompounded basic element
Being permanent and so forth is to be understood.
- 83 Because [the Truth Body] possesses qualities inexhaustible [in the sphere of the remainderless nirvana],
It has the meaning of an immutable permanent essence.
Because it is equal with the limit [of cyclic existence],
It has the meaning of a stable entity of refuge.
- 84 Because of being a nature not conceptualizing [the two extremes],
It has the meaning of quiescent reality without the duality [of cyclic existence and peace].
Because of [possessing uncompounded] qualities not fabricated [by causes and conditions]
It has the meaning of [utter] indestructibility, unalterability.
- 85 Because [the basic constituent at the time of purity] is the Truth Body [of all Buddhas and it is] the Ones Gone Thus,
It is [also] the truth of Superiors as well as the ultimate nirvana
Thus [since those are just variants in name], just as the sun and [its] rays [are indivisible, the Truth Body which is the final nirvana and its] qualities are indivisible [in entity].
Hence there is no [fully qualified] nirvana aside from Buddhahood.
- 86 In brief, the uncontaminated basic element
Is to be known in terms of four variants in name—
The Truth Body and so forth—
By way of four distinctions in meaning.
- 87 [The essential constituent is called the *Truth Body* from the viewpoint of] being indivisible from the qualities of Buddhahood [such as the powers and so forth].
It is called *One Gone Thus* from the viewpoint of] having attained [or manifested the Buddha] lineage just as it [has abided beginninglessly].
It is called the *ultimate truth* because of] being the never false, [always] non-deceptive [or unchanging] reality [which is the object of Superiors].

It is called *nirvana* because of] being naturally [pure and] quiescent [of all adventitious defilements] from the start.

- 88 As the enlightenment clearly and perfectly [knowing] all aspects [of objects of knowledge—the mode and the varieties—is called Buddhahood]
And the abandonment of [adventitious] defilements as well as their latencies [is called nirvana],
Buddhahood [which is designated to complete realization] and nirvana [which is designated to complete abandonment]
Are ultimately non-dual [in the nature of the one essential constituent].
- 89 That which [in the uncontaminated basic element] is indivisible in character
From the qualities complete in all types, innumerable, unthinkable, and undefiled [due to the purification
Of the two obstructions as well as their latencies] is liberation.
That liberation is [also] the One Gone Thus [from the viewpoint of directly realizing suchness].
- 90 For example, painters who are skilled
In [only] individual [parts such as the head or limbs]
Would not ascertain how to paint
Parts other than those they know.
- 91 In [such a situation] the mighty ruling king gives to them a canvas with his order,
“On this all of you paint my form!”
Having heard that from him, they start to work
On painting [the part that they know].
- 92 From among those working on [the painting] one has gone to another area.
Since he who paints [the head, for instance,] has gone to another area,
That part [which is his lot] is not complete whereby the painting
Is not complete in all parts. So it is to be known here too.
- 93 The painters [of those parts are all the factors of method]—
Giving, ethics, patience, and so forth [i.e., effort, concentration, and wisdom].
[The Truth Body which is] the emptiness endowed
With all the supreme aspects [of method] is depicted (in the example) as the (king's) form.
[In brief, if from among the individual painters even one is not present, the complete form will not occur since that particular part will not be complete.
In the same way, the final emptiness is the Truth Body, and, like the painting of a complete form, if even one of the factors of method is not present, it is

not achieved whereas it is achieved when all are present. Thus, there is no way to separate abandonment and realization, qualities and nirvana, emptiness and appearance.]

- 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, 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].
- 95 Therefore, without attaining Buddhahood [in which all defilements are purified]
A [fully qualified] nirvana is [also] not attained [as aside from completing abandonment and realization together, it does not happen that they are completed individually],
Just as the sun cannot be seen
Separately from light and light rays.
- 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].
- 97 Like a Buddha [dwelling inside] an ugly lotus, honey in [the middle of many] bees,
A kernel inside a husk, gold within filth,
A treasury [of jewels] in the earth [under the house of the destitute, the capacity of growing] stalks and so forth [existing] in a small seed,
The image of a Conqueror [made from a precious substance] inside a tattered garment,
- 98 A lord of humans [who is a Universal Monarch] inside the womb of a lowly woman,
And a precious [golden] image in an earthen [mold],
This [naturally pure] essential constituent dwells in sentient beings
Obscured with the adventitious defilements of afflictive emotions.
- 99 The [obscuring] defilements are similar to a lotus, living [bees], husk, filth, earth, Fruit, tattered garment, woman pained by burning suffering, and earth constituent.
The precious essential constituent [naturally] undefiled [from the start, which is

- what is obscured] is similar
To the Buddha, honey, kernel, gold, treasure [of jewels],
Nyagrodha tree, precious image, supreme lord of the continents, and precious
statue.
- 100 For example, a One Gone Thus blazing with the thousands [of magnificences]
of the major [and minor] marks,
Dwelling inside a lotus of ugly color
Is seen by someone having the undefiled divine eye
And is taken out from the lotus petals [to be shown to others].
- 101 Similarly, the One Gone To Bliss sees with the [undefiled] Buddha eye
The reality of natural [clear light] even in those [transmigrators] dwelling in the
Most Torturous Hell,
And having a nature of compassion, dwells [here] at length undefiled,
Releasing [trainees gradually] from defilement.
- 102 Just as one with the divine eye sees a One Gone Thus dwelling
Inside an ugly closed lotus and cuts away the petals [so that it may be seen],
So the compassionate Subduer sees the essence of a perfect Buddha [dwelling in
all] transmigrators
Obstructed by the coverings of the defilements of desire, hatred, and so forth
and [engages in activities] to destroy those defilements [of the basic
constituent].
- 103 Just as a person, who is skilled [in analyzing honey], upon seeking it
Sees honey [of excellent taste and potency] surrounded [and protected] by a
swarm of bees,
And thoroughly removes it from the swarm of bees
Through [various] methods [such as using smoke and thereby gets the honey],
- 104 So the great sage [Buddha], having perceived with the all-knowing eye
The essential constituent of [individual] knowledge like honey,
Works at totally removing the obstructions, like bees,
To that [basic constituent].
- 105 Just as a person seeking honey, [having seen] honey obstructed by many
thousands of ten millions of bees
Removes those and makes use of the honey [for medicine, food, and so forth]
according to wish,
So the Conqueror—skilled in destroying the afflictive emotions, like bees,
[which obstruct] the uncontaminated knowledge [of individual insight], like
honey,

Existing in [all] embodied beings—is like a person skilled [in taking honey].

- 106 Just as kernels of grain in their husks
Cannot be used by people
And just as those seeking food and so forth
Remove them from the husks,
- 107 So the Conqueror [i.e., basic constituent] which exists in [all sentient beings
But is mixed with the defilements of the afflictive emotions—
As long as it is not freed from the mixture with the [adventitious] defilements of
the afflictive emotions—
Does not manifest the [inconceivable] deeds of a Conqueror in the three
existences [of the Desire, Form, and Formless Realms].
- 108 Just as kernels of rice, buckwheat, and barley not removed from the husks and
still with bristles
Do not serve as delicious food to be used by people [due to] not having been
prepared well,
So the body [or essence] of a Lord of Doctrine which exists in sentient beings,
but is unreleased from the covering of the afflictive emotions,
Does not afford the taste of the joy of doctrine for transmigrators beset by the
covering of the afflictive emotions.
- 109 Just as a person's gold which had fallen into a place of rotten filth
When that person was going about [on the road],
Would remain for many hundreds of years
There as it was before due to having the attribute of indestructibility,
- 110 And just as a god with the pure divine eye,
Having seen it there, says to someone,
“[Take out] this supremely precious gold that is here,
Cleanse it, and make something [such as a statue or ornament] that is to be
made from a precious substance,”
- 111 So the Subduer, having perceived the qualities [of the basic constituent
Existing in] sentient beings, sunk in the afflictive emotions which are like filth,
Makes fall the rain of excellent doctrine for all beings
In order to wash away the mud of the afflictive emotions.
- 112 Just as a god who has seen gold fallen into a place of rotten filth
Earnestly shows its supreme beauty to someone so that it is thoroughly cleansed
[of mud],
So the Conqueror, having perceived in sentient beings the precious [essence of]
a perfect Buddha fallen in the great filth of the afflictive emotions

Teaches doctrine to embodied beings so that that [basic constituent] is purified.

- 113 Just as an inexhaustible treasure exists
Under the home of those destitute
But those persons do not know of it
And that treasure does not say to them, "I am here,"
- 114 So because of not realizing this which is like a treasure of jewels inside the
mind,
[Naturally] undefiled [and thus] having a nature [ultimately] without
[Newly] establishing [qualities] and removing [faults that earlier existed],
All these beings continuously undergo many forms of the suffering of poverty.
- 115 Just as to a poor person under whose house a treasure of jewels is concealed
That treasure of jewels does not say, "I am [here]", and that person does not
know of it,
So the Sage is born in the world [and teaches doctrine] in order that sentient
beings, like poor persons,
In whose home of the mind the treasure of the [uncontaminated element of a
Superior's] qualities resides, could attain it.
- 116 Just as a seed [capable of producing a tree] which exists in a fruit of a mango
tree and so forth—
[The seed being] undivertible [from giving rise to a sprout when it meets with
favorable conditions]—
Gradually turns into the phenomenon of a majestic tree,
Through the plowing of the ground, water, and so forth,
- 117 So the [uncontaminated] virtue which is the essential constituent of the
[Superior] qualities
Inside the covering of the skin of the fruit of ignorance and so forth of sentient
beings
Gradually becomes the phenomenon of a King of Subduers
In dependence upon this and that virtue [which is with the essential
constituent].
- 118 Just as a tree grows from within the skin covering a mango or palmyra fruit
By way of the conditions of water, sunlight, air, earth, season, and space,
So the sprout of the seed of a perfect Buddha contained inside the fruit-skin of
the afflictive emotions of sentient beings
Increases into [direct] perception of the [element of Superior] qualities due to
this and that virtuous condition [of the two collections of merit and wisdom
which serve as the causes of liberation].

- 119 Just as a god, having seen an image of the Conqueror
Made from a precious substance, wrapped in a tattered smelly cloth,
And abiding on a road, speaks to someone about the fact of its dwelling on the
road
So that it could be released [from that tattered garment],
- 120 So [the Buddhas] endowed with the eye of unimpeded [perception of all
things]—
Having seen that the phenomena of a One Gone Thus, wrapped in the
[adventitious] afflictive emotions of various types,
[Exists] even in animals—teach methods likewise for the sake
Of freeing [the basic constituent].
- 121 Just as one with the divine eye, having seen the image of a One Gone Thus that
has the nature of a precious substance
Abiding on a road, wrapped in a smelly cloth, reveals this to someone in order
that it might be freed,
So, having perceived that the basic constituent dwelling on the road of cyclic
existence, bound in the tattered garment of the afflictive emotions
[Exists] even in animals, the Conqueror teaches doctrine so that it might be
freed [from obstructions].
- 122 Just as an ugly woman without protector,
Dwelling in a rest-house with no protector
But holding in her womb a glorious king,
Does not know that a lord of humans dwells in her belly [and thus suffers the
derision of others and so forth],
- 123 So being born in cyclic existence is like the dwelling-place without protection
[from various sufferings];
Impure sentient beings are like the woman endowed with a womb;
And the undefiled basic constituent is like [the king] dwelling in her womb
As it is due to possession of this that is protection [from suffering].
- 124 Just as, although a lord of the earth dwells in the womb of a woman wearing
smelly clothing on her body and having an ugly form,
She undergoes supreme suffering in a protectorless dwelling-place,
So although there is a protector dwelling inside their own [minds],
transmigrators having a protectorless mind
Dwell in a state of suffering due to a mind made unpeaceful by the power of the
afflictive emotions.

- 125 Just as having seen a statue [made from] melted gold inside [an earthen mold],
Of full [size with all features, its own entity being] quiescent of defilement [but]
its outside having a nature of an earth [mold],
One who knows this removes the external obstruction
In order to cleanse the gold inside,
- 126 So having perceived that the defilements
Of the natural clear light are adventitious,
Transmigrators who are like [the earthen mold which is] the location of the
precious substance
Are cleansed of defilements and become supremely enlightened.
- 127 Just as one skilled [in making statues]—knowing that a statue contained inside
an earthen [mold]
Made from blazing undefiled gold has a nature of quiescence [since it is without
defilement]—removes the earthen [mold],
So the omniscient [wisdom of the Buddha], knowing the quiescent mind like
pure gold,
Removes the obstructions through exposition of the doctrines [which are
methods for this] by means of accomplishing [the gentle pressure of] the
stroke [that removes the earthen mold].
- 128 Like a Buddha, honey, kernel,
Gold, treasure, tree,
Precious image, universal
Monarch, and golden statue,
- 129 In an [ugly] lotus, [swarm of] bees,
Husk, filth, earth,
Peel of a fruit, tattered garment, womb
Of a woman, and an earthen mold,
- 130 The coverings of the afflictive emotions in the continuums of sentient beings,
Because of not being related [with the nature of the mind, are adventitious but
have abided] beginninglessly [together with the element of a Superior's
qualities.
However] the undefiled nature of the mind
Is said to [have abided as the great pure nature without being polluted by those
faults] beginninglessly.

- 131 The nine forms of defilements—(1-3) [the latencies or seeds of] desire, hatred, and obscuration [which are overcome by the exalted wisdom of a Superior], (4) the strong arousal [or manifestation] of those [three poisons], (5) The level of] the predispositions [of ignorance which are the means of achieving the uncontaminated actions and the mental body in the continuum of a Foe Destroyer and which are to be overcome by the exalted wisdom of the great enlightenment], (6) the objects to be abandoned by the path of seeing [which obstruct a common being from seeing reality], (7) the objects to be abandoned by the path of meditation [in the continuum of a Learner Superior], (8) The objects to be abandoned by the [seven] impure [grounds which are to be overcome by the pure grounds], And (9) the defilements dependent on the pure grounds [which are to be overcome by the vajra-like meditative stabilization],
- 132 Are indicated by [the nine] examples
Of the covering of a lotus and so forth,
But the divisions of coverings of afflictive emotions
Are beyond the limits of number.
- 133 These nine defilements—desire and so forth—
Are briefly indicated respectively
By the nine examples
Of the covering of a lotus and so forth.
- 134 [By way of possessing] impurity [mainly] through four, one,
Two, and two of these defilements respectively
Childish [common beings], Foe Destroyers,
Learners [on the four paths], and [impure and pure] intelligent [Bodhisattvas
are obstructed from direct perception of the element of a Superior's qualities
in them].
- 135 Just as a lotus born from mud
Pleases the mind when it is [newly] present,
But later [when old] does not please,
So [when the latencies of] desire [become manifest attachment through
improper mental application, one is] happy [but when it ceases one is
unhappy, due to which it is like the pleasure of seeing a lotus].
- 136 Just as bees, having become greatly disturbed,
Sting [and thereby generate pain],
So [manifest anger] is generated [from the latencies of hatred]
Whereby [pangs of] suffering are generated in [one's own and others'] hearts.

- 137 Just as a kernel of rice and so forth is [not seen
When] obstructed on the outside by the husk,
So perception of the factuality of the essence [of a One Gone To Bliss]
Is obstructed by the egg-shell of ignorance.
- 138 Just as filth is disagreeable,
So, because of being a cause of [many faults such as] reliance [on the attributes
of the Desire Realm
Through] the desires of those having attachment [to the Desire Realm],
That which is aroused [by the three poisons is a source of renunciation] like a
pile of filth.
- 139 Just as [a great treasure of] wealth is obstructed [by the earth]
And therefore [the poor] do not know of it and do not obtain the treasure [as
an object of use],
So for beings [bereft of the wealth of good qualities] the self-arisen [exalted
wisdom of inexhaustible] good qualities
Is obstructed by the level of the latencies of ignorance [and thereby is not seen].
- 140 Just as through the gradual growing of the sprout [of a tree] and so forth
The covering over the seed is gradually rent asunder,
So through [gradually generating the exalted wisdom] seeing suchness
[The afflictive emotions] which are to be abandoned by the path of seeing are
overcome.
- 141 From relation with the path of Superiors [directly seeing the reality of the four
truths],
The objects of abandonment by the exalted wisdom of the path of meditation
Of those who have overcome the essence [or main of the objects of
abandonment—the false view of] the transitory collection [as inherently
existent I and mine and so forth]—
Are indicated as like tattered garments [in that they lack a core of hardness].
- 142 The defilements dependent upon the seven [impure] grounds
Are similar to the defilement of the covering of a womb [since what one has is
not seen or since those defiled states of mind involve exertion].
Like being freed from the covering of the womb, [the arising of] the exalted
non-conceptual wisdom [without exertion on the pure grounds]
Is like [the birth of] a developed [universal monarch, in that such does not
depend upon exertion].
- 143 The defilements related with the three [pure grounds]
Are to be known as like an earth [mold] that covers [a golden statue].

They are overcome by the vajra-like meditative stabilization
Of those great beings [at the end of the continuum of being a sentient being].

- 144 In that way, the [nine] defilements—desire and so forth—
Are similar to the examples—lotus and so forth.
Because of having three natures, the basic constituent
Is qualitatively similar with [the nine examples of] a Buddha so forth.
- 145 The [three] natures of this [essence]—the Doctrine Body of self-arisen exalted
wisdom],
The [unchangeable] suchness, and the lineage [for achieving Buddhahood]—
Are to be known [respectively] through the [first] three examples,
One [example, gold,] and the [remaining] five [examples].
- 146 The Doctrine Body is to be known as having two aspects—
The very undefiled element of [a Superior's] qualities [the actual realizational
Doctrine Body that is the object of the exalted wisdom of individual insight],
And the teaching, causally concordant with [realizing] that, of the mode
Of the profound [emptiness] and the mode of the various [vast
conventionalities such as the grounds and paths that are taught in
accordance with the interests of trainees—the imputed Doctrine Body, the
verbalized doctrine].
- 147 Since the [realizational Doctrine Body] is beyond the world,
An example [capable of illustrating it] is not observed in the world.
Therefore [the body of] a One Gone Thus and the basic constituent
Are indicated to be similar.
- 148 The teaching of the mode of the subtle profundity [of emptiness]
Is like the single [sweet and delicious] taste of honeys.
The teaching of the mode of the various aspects of [method]
Is to be known as like [the various] kernels [of grains dwelling] in the covering
of various [husks].
- 149 [The suchness which is] the nature [of phenomena] is [always] changeless [such
that even though it appears to be related with afflictive emotions, there is no
change in its own entity just as gold does not change by falling into filth],
And it is [naturally] virtuous [and supreme just as gold is beautiful and valuable,
and in another way, it is virtuous in the sense that just as gold is fit to be
crafted into adornments, so virtue is generated when suchness is observed],
and [the entity of the basic constituent] is pure [just as gold is pure of
defilement].

Therefore this suchness is said
To be similar to the form of gold.

- 150 Like a treasure [that naturally remains under the ground] and a fruit tree [that gradually grows with exertion]
The lineage is to be known as having two aspects—
[The pure element of a Superior's qualities] that naturally abides since beginningless [time]
And [the developmental lineage of] supreme virtue [newly] aroused [through the exertion of hearing and so forth that are concerned with the naturally abiding lineage].
- 151 It is asserted that the Three Bodies of a Buddha
Are attained through these two causal lineages;
Through the first, the first body [the Doctrine Body, is attained];
Through the second, the latter two [Bodies of Complete Enjoyment and Emanation are attained].
- 152 [The natural purity and] beauty [of good qualities] of the Nature Body
Is to be known as like an image [made from] a precious substance,
For [that which abides] naturally [from the start] is not made [through new exertion]
And the qualities [of the powers and so forth] are a treasure of precious substances. [A statue made of precious substance does not depend upon its own compositional activity.]
- 153 Because of possessing the great [wealth of] the kingdom of the Great [Vehicle] doctrine [of the profound and the vast,
The Complete Enjoyment Body which] completely enjoys [or makes use of the Great Vehicle doctrine] is like a Universal Monarch [who controls the glorious wealth of the seven precious substances and the four continents].
Because of having the nature of a reflection [of appearances in accordance with whatever will tame trainees]
An Emanation [Body] is like a gold image.
- 154 The ultimate [essence] of self-arisen [Buddhas, spontaneous and uncompounded]
Is to be realized through just faith [by common beings, Hearers, Solitary Realizers, and Bodhisattvas who have newly entered their vehicle and is not realized by them just as it is.
For example] the blazing light of the disc of the sun
Is not seen by the eyeless.

- 155 This [basic constituent of the pure nature] has no [previously existent faults of afflictive emotions] to be removed,
And not the least [factor of good qualities] to be [newly] established.
The reality [which is the mode of subsistence devoid of superimposition and deprecation] is to be viewed as reality [by means of the ultimate wisdom].
When [upon developing familiarity with meditative equipoise] reality is seen [just as it is], there is release [from the two obstructions].
- 156 The essential constituent is empty of the adventitious [defilements]
Which have the character of being separable [from its entity].
It is not empty of the unsurpassed [qualities of the powers and so forth]
Which have the character of not being separable [from it].
- 157 Throughout [the scriptures of the middle wheel of the doctrine] it is said that
all objects of knowledge are empty in all respects
Like clouds [which are unstable and lack inherent existence], dreams [which, although experienced, lack inherent existence], and a magician's illusions [which, although appearing, lack inherent existence],
But why has the Conqueror said here [in the scriptures of the final wheel of doctrine]
That the essence of a Buddha exists [from the start spontaneously in the continuums of] sentient beings?
- 158 It was set forth so that persons having the five faults might abandon them—
[The fault of] a discouraged mind [and non-enthusiasm for the path, which is to think that enlightenment cannot be achieved; this is due to not knowing that the ultimate basic element exists in oneself, and such discouragement is an obstacle to generating the intention to become enlightened; the fault of non-respect] despising others as lowly, [thinking that these sentient beings are low; this is due to not knowing of its existence in others and is an obstacle to assuming the care of others;
The fault of] incorrect conception [falsely holding that the adventitious defilements exist in the basic element whereas from the start they do not; this is due to not knowing of its existence in all others and is an obstacle to the wisdom realizing the true mode of subsistence; the fault of] deprecating the true qualities [thinking that good qualities which are indivisible in entity with the basic element do not exist whereas they do;
And the fault of] excessive attachment to oneself [due to not knowing that the nature of the element of a Superior's qualities is equal in oneself and others, this being an obstacle to realizing oneself and others as equal].

- 159 The limit of reality [the naturally pure basic element] is devoid
Of compounded phenomena in all respects.
[The three phenomena of which it is empty—] the afflictive emotions, actions [of
non-virtue and so forth], and the fruitions [of those, these being the mental
and physical aggregates and so forth—]
Are said to be like clouds and so forth.
- 160 The afflictive emotions are said to be similar to clouds [in that they pervade and
adventitiously obstruct the basic element of sentient beings].
Contaminated actions [which are motivated by those afflictive emotions] are
like objects used in a dream [since they are generated by an erroneous
awareness and are objects of a mistaken consciousness].
The [mental and physical] aggregates which are the fruitions of afflictive
emotions and [contaminated] actions
Are like a magician's illusions, emanations, [and so forth in that although they
appear variously in dependence upon conditions, when analyzed they are not
true].
- 161 Having made the presentation earlier [in the middle wheel of doctrine that all
phenomena, though appearing, are empty of inherent existence],
Again here [on the occasion of teaching] the sublime continuum [the unbroken
continuum of the element of a Superior's qualities],
It was taught [with many variants in verbalization and with many examples and
reasons that] "The basic constituent just exists,"
In order that the five faults might be abandoned.
- 162 For, not hearing in this way that [the basic constituent exists],
Some—whose minds are discouraged due to the fault
Of deriding oneself [thinking, "How could one such as I attain enlightenment!"]—
Do not generate the intention to become enlightened [in which one thinks, "I
will actualize the nature, the ultimate Buddha."]
- 163 Some who have generated the intention to become enlightened
Fancy, "I am supreme [a Bodhisattva],"
Whereby they discriminate [others] who have not generated
The intention to become enlightened as lower [than themselves].
- 164 In those who think thus [that the Buddha-essence does not exist],
Knowledge of reality [the mode of subsistence free from superimposition and
deprecation] is not generated.
Thereby, they hold [a view superimposing] the unreal
And, not knowing the meaning of reality, [deprecate it].

- 165 Because of being fabricated [by conditions] and being adventitious,
The faults [i.e., the afflictive emotions and so forth] of sentient beings do not
[exist as they own] reality.
In reality those faults are selfless
[And thus the basic constituent has from the start] a pure nature of good
qualities.
- 166 [The Bodhisattva] who possesses an attitude of holding unreal faults [as the
reason for viewing that the basic constituent does not exist]
And who deprecates the true qualities [of the powers and so forth]
Does not attain the [great] love seeing
Oneself and sentient beings as equal.
- 167 From hearing in this way [that the naturally pure realm exists without
difference in all],
One generates enthusiasm [for the path upon seeing that Buddhahood can be
achieved], respect [for other sentient beings that values them even] like the
Teacher [Buddha],
The wisdom [knowing that the conventional defilements do not inherently
exist], the exalted wisdom [realizing the entity of the basic constituent in
which the basic element and knowledge are indivisible], and the great love
[which is the equality of oneself and others].
Due to generating those five [beneficial] phenomena [in the mental
continuum],
- 168 There is no unseemliness [because of being free from discouragement of mind
and so forth; one views] self and other as equal [without low and high;
One knows the fact that the adventitious defilements of] faults do not exist [by
way of their own entityness] and that good qualities are [naturally] possessed;
[And one attains the great] love which is the equality of oneself and sentient
beings [as having the essence of a Buddha].
From [those five] Buddhahood is quickly attained.

Thus is the first chapter, “The Essence of a One Gone Thus”, in Maitreya’s *Great Vehicle Treatise on the Sublime Continuum, Discriminating the Lineage [of the Three Jewels]*.

Colophon:

The text was translated into English from Tibetan sources, in part by Paul Jeffrey Hopkins (b.1940), and, in part by Joe B. Wilson (b.1947). It was compiled by Paul G. Hackett (b.1964) in the year of the Buddha’s Enlightenment 2541 (year of the Common Era 1997) in the town of Charlottesville, in the state of Virginia, in the country of the United States of America.