

The six general faults of samsara: nothing can be relied upon to provide true and lasting benefit.

- 1 **Uncertainty** Friends become enemies, enemies become friends; happiness never lasts; samsaric relationships and pleasures cannot be trusted; happy rebirths come to an end; wealth is easily lost. As nothing is stable in samsara, attachment and hostility are meaningless, only the thought of liberation makes sense.
- 2 **Unsatisfying** Not content with what we have, dissatisfaction drives us away from happiness in mad pursuit of the unattainable. We have drunk more milk and cried more tears than all the oceans; wasted our bodies for senseless desires. Insatiable desire is a major personal fault; we must change our direction towards liberation.
- 3 **Repeatedly losing our bodies and lives** No matter how attractive are our bodies as gods or humans, they let us down and we are reborn ugly in ugly places. Physical pleasures are ephemeral; samsaric actions are useless.
- 4 **Having to be reborn again and again** The molten metal we have drunk in hell, the filth we have eaten as dogs and pigs, the tears we have shed, the separations we have experienced, the times we have been killed, the manure we have eaten as worms are all immeasurable. The only way out of the wilderness of samsara is to become disenchanted with its illusory pleasures and turn towards liberation with courage and determination.
- 5 **Losing status** Collections disperse, birth leads to death, high become low, friends are parted. The gap between divine pleasure and suffering of hell is small. All pleasures end undesirably.
- 6 **Always being alone** Born alone, we live and die alone. Friends cannot alleviate our inner sorrow nor always accompany us. The only trustworthy friend is virtue; it leads to a better life, a higher rebirth, and final liberation. There is no need to think about whether samsara in general is endless or not. Each of us has to resolve to find a way of terminating our personal samsara.

The eight specific sufferings experienced by humans

1 Birth

- The pain of birth itself.
- New body and mind possess the potentials for unceasing pain and problems during life.
- Birth is the source of the sufferings of sickness, ageing, and death.
- Birth is the source of the causes of suffering – the disturbing emotions and karma.
- Birth leads to unwanted separation from all the things you come to love and desire in life.

2 Ageing

- Loss of physical beauty and health.
- Loss of strength and vitality.
- Weakening of sense and mental faculties.
- Ability to enjoy sense objects diminishes.
- Life passes and death approaches.

3 Sickness

- Loss of power and control over bodily functions.
- Pain and despair increase and are constantly present.
- Loss of desire for enjoyments.
- Forced to experience unpleasant treatments, restrictions.
- Knowing your life is ending.

4 Death

- Parting from attractive and enjoyable possessions.
- Separating from close relatives.
- Separating from close companions and friends you work with.
- Separating from your cherished body.
- Much unhappiness, pain, and misery at the actual time of death.

5 Being parted from what we like (gurus, family, friends, possessions; like jailed persons)

- Separation from loved ones causes mental grief.
- Separation from loved ones induces sobbing, wailing, and screaming.
- Separation from loved ones can lead to self-inflicted harm.
- Memories of the good qualities of the departed cause yearning and depression.
- You can never experience 'the good times' again.

6 Meeting what we do not like

- Merely encountering an enemy makes you unhappy (actual enemies are the afflictions).
- Constant fear that the enemy will harm you.
- Fear that the enemy will spread malicious rumours about you.
- Fear of dying.
- Fear that, due to your non-virtue, you are destined for a lower rebirth.

7 Not getting what we want and work for

- Desiring but not getting wealth, fame, honour, and love causes mental grief.
- Desiring but not getting these induces sobbing, wailing, screaming.
- Desiring but not getting these can lead to self-inflicted harm.
- Nostalgia for past pleasures causes yearning and depression.
- You cannot experience these past pleasures again.

8 Our body and mind being always under the control of karma and disturbing emotions

- Through attachment and aversion our aggregates automatically create karma for future suffering.
- They are vessels of suffering that already exists, the suffering of pain, and the suffering of change.
- Unable to avoid attachment to pleasure and its object, when these inevitably cease we feel sorrow.
- Our bodies cannot maintain any pleasure without becoming exhausted or damaged.
- Objects upon which we rely for pleasure are contaminated products of karma and afflictions, they cannot be relied upon and do not possess intrinsic pleasure as we wrongly see.
- Happiness depends upon conditions: when karma runs out we cannot find happiness, when the mind is unhappy it is difficult to become happy, and anger drives away friends.
- The body and mind are vessels of conditioned (pervading) suffering: impure aggregates under the control of karma, afflictions, and death.

The three types of suffering

1 The suffering of change (contaminated happiness) The relief of pouring cool water on a burn is called 'pleasant' but it is just a lesser degree of pain. It will not last long and the stronger pain will return. Similarly, the pleasures of eating, drinking, touching, lying down are just relief, by nature they have no real abiding pleasure. When enjoying a meal, bad news will destroy the pleasure. Suffering of change includes not just the *feeling* but the main mind and mental factors associated. It also includes the objects that produce those feelings. Unlike the pleasure of food, which doesn't get better all the time, meditating on love, compassion, and wisdom gives stable happiness that always improves. Stable mental happiness does not come from external objects, it only comes from Dharma practice (virtue) and is not suffering of change.

Mark Twain, *Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven*:

You see, happiness ain't a thing in itself – it's only a contrast with something that ain't pleasant. That's all it is. There ain't a thing you can mention that is happiness in its own self – it's only so by contrast with another thing. And so, as soon as the novelty is over and the force of the contrast is dulled, it ain't happiness any longer, and you have to get something fresh."

2 Suffering upon suffering: one problem is followed by another. If we rub a burn the pain gets worse. This suffering also includes the main mind and mental factors associated with that feeling as well as the object that produces it.

3 The suffering of conditionality When we neither rub a burn nor pour cool water on it, it still hurts. The nature of the burn is suffering. This suffering pervades all experience within samsara, including neutral feelings. Samsaric birth is inseparably connected with karma and afflictions, the conditions for suffering. This suffering is not the feeling alone, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, it includes the entire body-mind continuum associated with that feeling. Due to the power of wisdom being enhanced by bodhicitta, upon attaining the path of seeing, bodhisattvas abandon contaminated aggregates and achieve a mental body. This is no longer a true suffering and is not a basis for suffering or creating negative karma. Theravadin practitioners only achieve a mental body upon attaining nirvana.

The sufferings of demigods *Asuras* are smaller than the *suras*, less intelligent, and fight among themselves. They have greater pleasures than humans but are consumed with jealousy for the pleasures enjoyed by divine beings in the heavens of Four Great Kings and Thirty-Three. This jealousy leads to constant battles with the gods, which the asuras never win. As the men are dying in battle, their wives and children see what is happening through images on the surface of a lake. The victorious gods plunder the *asura* cities and steal their beautiful women. Asuras can practise the spiritual path only to a limited degree. Karmic obscurations prevent them seeing reality. The *suras*, however, are capable of attaining the path of seeing.

Suffering of the divine beings of the desire realm (*suras*) The divine beings who fight with the *asuras* experience the suffering of being killed and wounded in battle. Their wounds heal and even severed limbs grow back; the only way they can be killed is for their heads to be cut off. The divine beings of the four higher levels do not have the problem of battle. They have no lack of material things, no hunger, no thirst. They do, however, suffer the anguish of being banished by more powerful gods, and the misery of loss of status as their good karma becomes exhausted and death approaches. The *suras* have karmic awareness of their previous life – the causes of their present situation – and their future life. As their karma for the present life becomes exhausted, they know they are going to be reborn in lower states, but even that is insufficient to motivate them to practise Dharma. Their death is heralded by distant signs: the body loses its healthy radiance, they become restless, flower garlands fade and turn brown, their heavenly robes become soiled and creased, and their bodies begin to sweat for the first time and they start to smell. Their beautiful friends with whom they have enjoyed so much pleasure and played for such a long time become their enemies and will not come near them. Close signs of death are that their bodies become much less radiant, water adheres to their bodies when they wash, their jewellery makes unpleasant sounds, and their eyes start to blink. Forced to remain in isolated places, they have so much sorrow not only for having lost their enjoyments but also because they realise they have wasted their time, they have exhausted their merit and must be reborn in lower places. During the last seven days of their lives, much longer than a human day, the divine beings experience more unhappiness than humans experience in an entire lifetime.

Suffering of the divine beings of the form and formless realms These *suras* only experience the result of virtuous karma. They do not have the first two types of suffering but still have the pervading suffering of being under the control of afflictions, karma, and death. The first form realm has no unpleasant physical feelings or mental unhappiness. In the second form realm and above there is no bodily pleasure. In the fourth form realm and above there are only neutral feelings. Their afflictions are either non-manifest or, when manifest (subtle ignorance, desire, or pride), not strong enough to agitate the mind and disturb their tranquillity. They use up virtue and are reborn in lower levels.

The four Arya truths: comprise one set of cause and effect on the impure side of afflictions and one on the pure side of path to liberation. Suffering was taught first because if we are not moved to renounce samsaric suffering we will not want to abandon its causes.

1 True suffering is every aspect of our karmically-acquired mind and body except pure love, compassion, wisdom, and renunciation generated in meditation where afflictions are non-manifest. True suffering includes the environment and has four qualities:

- (i) **Change** Whatever arises from causes and conditions has the nature of moment-by-moment change. Attachment to the illusion of the five aggregates being unchanging is true suffering.
- (ii) **Misery** Our bodies and minds are in the nature of misery because they are controlled by karma and afflictions. Karma is unreliable and, as there is underlying distortion due to ignorance, anger, and attachment, everything produced by karma and affliction is necessarily contaminated and is in the nature of misery. Our contaminated environment is not a continuous source of happiness. This overcomes the misconception that true sufferings are pure, clean, and blissful.
- (iii) **Emptiness** The impure aggregates are empty of being a permanent, partless, and independent self (self-powered, independent of the aggregates) or of being objects of use of such a self. All things are empty in that they are *not associated* with a supervisory self, like a shepherd and his flock. This is an intellectual wrong view.
- (iv) **Selflessness** The aggregates are selfless in that they do not *constitute* a self: they are not a self that exists self-sufficiently (independent of causes, conditions, and imputation) and substantially (able to appear to mind without depending upon the appearance of something else). Such a self appears like a head salesman. Wisdom seeing this opposes innate self-grasping ignorance.

True origins are karma and afflictions, particularly craving. Their four aspects are:

- (i) **Cause** Craving for the self is the root cause of the impure aggregates, as a seed is the cause of a fruit. This dispels the wrong conception that things occur by accident, bad luck, or without a reason. Constantly arising karma and afflictions are the causes of all suffering.
- (ii) **Sources** Karma and afflictions produce suffering in all its forms again and again. Craving for rebirth is the main factor in producing the aggregates, as fruit arises from a sprout. This counters the wrong belief that suffering has one cause: a permanent divine creator or permanent time.

(iii) **Strong production** of suffering. Craving for rebirth is the immediate cause of aggregates as a flower is immediate cause of fruit. True origins cause not just an unbroken stream of suffering but ensure that it is intense and frequent.

(iv) **Conditions** for suffering because craving rebirth is also a co-operative condition for the aggregates as earth, water etc., are conditions for producing fruit. Craving for rebirth determines the suffering manifested in that rebirth. This opposes the belief that suffering is caused by the will or premeditated thought of a divine creator.

True cessation Realisation of emptiness removes all afflictions forever.

(i) **Cessation** is total extinguishment of suffering and its causes by its antidote. Bondage of samsaric existence has come to an end. This counters the view that there is no liberation from samsara.

(ii) **Pacification** The total extinguishment of suffering by its antidote is true pacification because the torment of afflictions is abandoned and the mind is at peace. This opposes belief in contaminated states to be liberation (the absorptions merely suppress afflictions).

(iii) **Auspiciousness** True cessation is highly auspicious as there is no superior source of happiness. This counters belief in a higher state of liberation, such as the bliss of single-pointed concentration, or belief that liberation must be boring.

(iv) **Definite emergence** Samsaric existence never returns: stops belief that liberation is reversible.

True paths In general, 8-fold noble path; specifically, the wisdom directly realising subtle selflessness.

(i) **Path** The wisdom of selflessness is a path because it causes one to proceed to liberation.

Opposes assertions that there are no paths to liberation from cyclic existence.

(ii) **Suitability** This wisdom is suitable because it is the right antidote to ignorance. Counters idea that it is not a path of liberation and that something which is a form of suffering is the true path.

(iii) **Achievement** This wisdom unmistakably realises nature of mind and definitely leads to liberation. Counters belief that worldly concentrations, asceticism, etc., are paths to liberation.

(iv) **Deliverance** This wisdom leads to irreversible liberation, extinguishing all sufferings and their causes. Counters the belief that there is no total eradicator of suffering.

The six root afflictions An affliction is a mental factor whose nature is disturbing and which prevents mental peace. The one root affliction is ignorance; the three root afflictions are ignorance, hostility, and attachment; and the six root afflictions are presented as five non-views and five afflicted views:

1 Attachment sees a contaminated object as attractive and wishes to acquire it. A non-aversion to cyclic existence, it grasps at exaggerated attractiveness of object and wishes to not separate from it; it wants happiness but results in suffering by disturbing mind. Love and compassion do not exaggerate; are only concerned with the welfare of others; and increase our sense of well-being. Seeking virtue is not attachment if the mind is peaceful. Attachment seeks the pleasures of all three realms of samsara. Other afflictions are easy to abandon, like washing dirt from cloth, attachment is difficult because it believes its projections to be true and cannot bear to be separated from the object, or it pines for objects not possessed. It is like oil on cloth, difficult to separate.

2 Hostility observes a contaminated object, exaggerates its bad qualities, sees it as undesirable, and wishes to harm it. Hostility can be directed towards a sentient being, suffering in own continuum, or an inanimate object. Harmfulness is a state of internal agitation and it disturbs our environment.

3 Pride arises from I-grasping ignorance and feels own qualities are superior to others. Inflated opinions about self with respect to our power and influence in society, our physical strength and appearance, wealth, family background, knowledge, and so on. Pride functions to have no respect for others and to belittle them; it makes the mind agitated and unhappy. It is an obstacle to virtue, to admitting mistakes and applying the four opponent powers. Arrogance (haughtiness) focusses only on own qualities and doesn't compare them with others. There are seven types of pride:

(i) *Simple pride* feels we are better than those who are socially inferior to ourselves.

(ii) *Superiority* even amongst our peers we feel we are special, we are actually better than them.

(iii) *Extreme pride* feels superior even to those who are higher than us.

(iv) *Egotism* pride of our body and mind; "I look so good." Aloofness regarding our education.

(v) *Pretension*: wrongly assuming spiritual realisations, we act in a contrived holy manner.

(vi) *Slight inferiority* or false modesty: we act in a humble way in the presence of greatly superior persons but feel we are almost like them.

(vii) *Wrong pride*: Arrogantly thinking we are above ordinary morality, we think we are virtuous whereas in reality our mind is non-virtuous.

4 Ignorance as a non-view, is mistaken understanding of the reality of phenomena, a mental darkness, especially of cause and effect. As a view, ignorance is the self-grasping that is opposite to the wisdom realising selflessness. Within our general unknowing of how things actually exist, things appear to exist in a wrong way. This wrong appearance of true self-existence is an illusion that appears to our mind as a result of imprints from past lives. Not knowing any better, we grasp at these false appearances to be true and behave accordingly. Believing in a truly existing “I” and “mine,” we become self-centred in our attitude to the world and the afflictions of pride, attachment, anger, and so on are unleashed.

5 Deluded doubt wavers between the correct and incorrect understanding of selflessness, cause and effect, etc., and obstructs the attainment of liberation and enlightenment. Specifically, it refers to doubt in relation to the reality of the Four Noble Truths. It is called *deluded doubt* because it is not simply a mind which cannot decide, it is a mind which leans towards the incorrect conclusion.

6 Afflicted views ‘Views’ are beliefs held as true; they are innate or acquired.

(i) **View of the perishable group as real I and mine** observes the I and mine of own continuum of body and mind and holds the I to be intrinsically existent. It regards the five aggregates to be a truly existing self or the possessions of a truly existing self

(ii) **Extreme view** observes the I or mine of one’s own continuum and conceives the I to be either eternal or annihilated at death.

(iii) **Holding one’s false view as supreme** regards one’s perishable, extreme, or wrong view to be correct and best for gaining realisations. It also arises in relation to one’s heaps.

(iv) **Holding wrong morality and asceticism as supreme** sees physical, verbal, or mental wrong actions to be correct and superior methods for attaining liberation.

(v) **Wrong view** intellectually-acquired mistaken idea denying existence of karma, rebirth, etc., things that are necessary to understand in order to attain liberation and enlightenment.

The twenty secondary afflictions are derived from one or more of three poisons:

1 Belligerence (wrath) makes our mind unhappy when we are close to an object of anger. Anger disturbs our mind simply when we think about our enemy, belligerence arises when the object is close by and is an intense attitude wanting to inflict harm.

2 Resentment: continual anger, grudge-holding, lasting belligerence; from hostility.

3 Concealment is the attitude of hiding our faults and not accepting previous faults. It increases the strength of negative karma and should be opposed by immediate confession. Arises from attachment.

4 Spite is the wish to abuse others, it arises from anger and resentment, especially in situations when someone points out our faults.

5 Jealousy (envy) is being disturbed upon seeing the good qualities of others. Jealousy comes from anger but there is also desire for the good things possessed by others. When we are jealous we can never be happy because we are disturbed simply by seeing the good things possessed by others.

6 Miserliness (avarice): mind holds on to objects of attachment with intensity and we are unable to give them away. It is a branch of attachment and can be overcome by cultivating generosity.

7 Deceit: in order to deceive others and obtain something from them, we claim to possess a power, such as clairvoyance, that we do not have. It comes from ignorance and attachment.

8 Dishonesty: from attachment and ignorance; through desire to receive offerings, we hide faults by pretending to be clever. From the point of view of Dharma, this is a stupid action because no matter how much we pretend to be intelligent we cannot hide our faults from Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

9 Haughtiness (arrogance), a cause of *excitement*; a puffed-up mind delighting in social status, bodily appearance, education, cleverness, youth, friends, possessions, power or authority, feeling that we have superior qualities that we do not, in fact, possess. Derived from attachment.

10 Harmfulness (cruelty) is a lack of compassion, wishing to disturb or harm the minds or bodies of others. Without any love we directly harm others, order someone else to harm them, or simply rejoice at the news or the sounds of others being hurt. Buddha strongly condemned harmfulness, saying that anybody who indulged in harmfulness in any of these ways was not a disciple of his. From anger.

11 Shamelessness opposite to virtuous factor of shame, can arise from any root affliction, and is an attitude of not restraining from a negative action by not caring about a personal code of ethics.

12 Inconsideration, non-embarrassment, opposite to virtuous factor of consideration. One continues unwholesome activity without caring about others’ opinion or effect of one’s actions upon them. Factors 11 & 12 accompany every non-virtuous state of mind. From ignorance and attachment.

13 Lethargy accompanies all root and secondary afflictions; darkens mind and makes body heavy and inflexible, unwilling to do virtue or meditate. Indirectly prevents concentration because through its force laxity and excitement arise. **Laxity** is a darkness that obstructs clarity and *shamatha* and

is distracted inwardly while cultivating virtue; being in the retinue of a virtuous mind, it is not the same as lethargy.

14 Excitement comes from attachment. Mind is disturbed by thinking about contaminated, sensory objects and cannot remain focused on a virtuous object. It is a major obstacle to concentration.

15 Non-faith, opposite of three types of faith, is a branch of ignorance. By not believing truth, such as Buddha's explanation of cause and effect, it functions as a basis for laziness.

16 Laziness, a branch of ignorance, has no delight in virtuous activity and is distracted by wish to sleep or be amused. Only seeks happiness of this life; future lives and liberation are ignored.

17 Non-conscientiousness, opposite of conscientiousness, can arise from any of three root afflictions, is associated with not abstaining from bad actions but continuing on with them.

18 Forgetfulness from ignorance: mindfulness clouded by afflictions, forgets virtue.

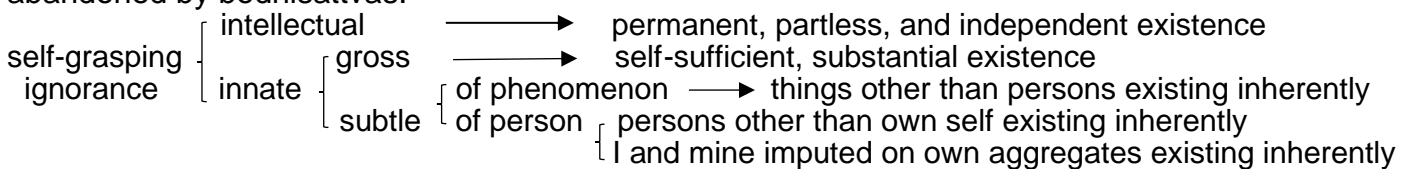
19 Non-alertness is a type of deluded knowledge. It is the opposite of discriminating alertness – knowledge which sees things correctly.

20 Distraction causes mind to leap away from virtuous object and follow an object of the three poisons. Virtuous distraction is where the meditating mind strays towards a virtuous object; neutral distraction is when a sense consciousness arises and the mind goes towards the external object. The mental factor of excitement is a distraction that specifically goes to objects of desire.

Stages in the development of the afflictions and karmic deeds

- 1 **Wrong appearance** Due to innate imprints, things appear as inherently existing self-entities.
- 2 **Grasping at wrong appearance as true** Mind automatically grasps at this wrong appearance to be true. This leads to self-grasping of person and self-grasping of phenomenon.
- 3 **Inappropriate attention**, or improper engagement, induces afflictions by exaggerating or superimposing good or bad qualities upon pleasing or displeasing objects.
- 4 **Afflictions** cling to exaggerated good or bad qualities with attachment or with aversion and hostility.
- 5 **Karmic activities** Through the afflictions we perform karmic actions.

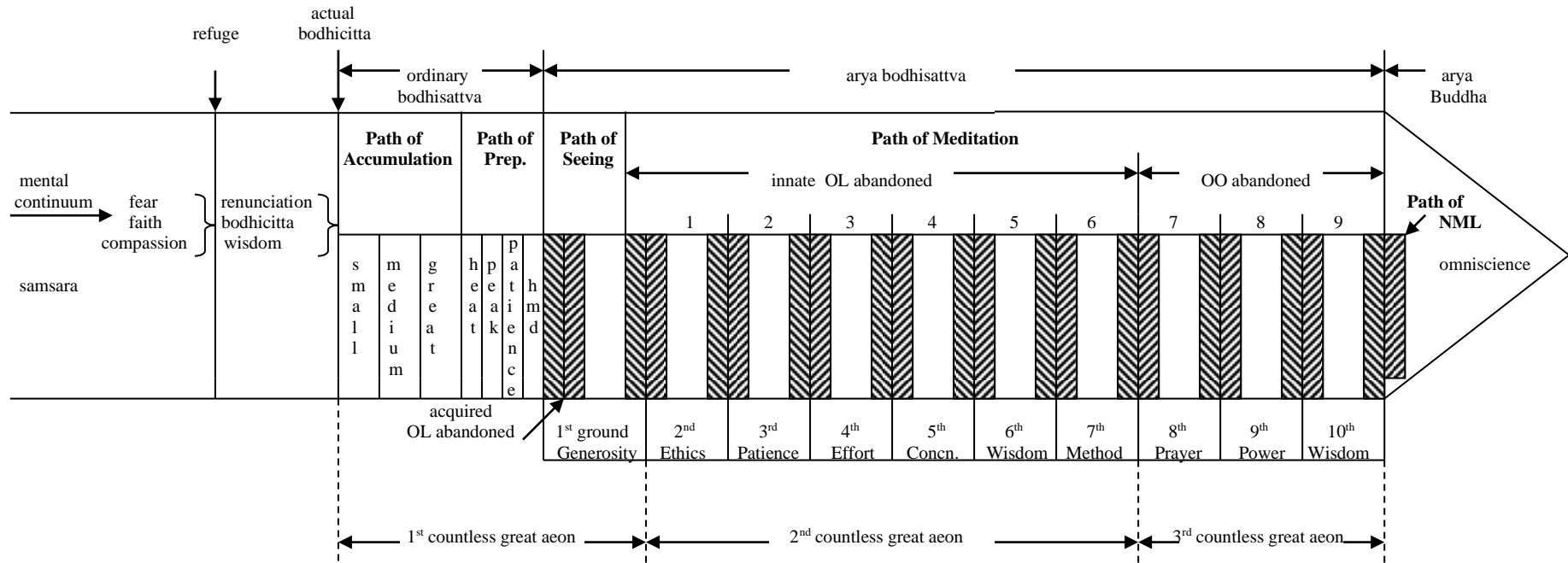
When we think, "I," both the mere I and a truly existent I appear. Conceiving the I to exist truly as it falsely appears is **self-grasping ignorance**, the primary object of abandonment by hearers and solitary realisers. **Self-cherishing** holds onto the I apprehended by self-grasping as most important and wants to protect it from unhappiness. It is not an affliction, and is cultivated by hearers and solitary realisers: "I want nirvana." Both self-grasping and self-cherishing are objects to be abandoned by bodhisattvas.



The Eight-Fold Noble Path

- 1 **Correct view**, knowledge which opposes the five wrong views
- 2 **Correct realisation** refers especially to wisdom that analyses and realises subtle emptiness. The emptiness of a permanent, partless and independent self and the emptiness of a self-sufficient and substantial self are both gross emptiness. Subtle emptiness is the emptiness of inherent or true existence. Seeing and teaching subtle emptiness without mistake.
- 3 **Correct speech**: verbal vows of restraint against wrong actions taken by the laity or by monks and nuns, and teaching emptiness without contradiction.
- 4 **Correct aim** of actions is following the vows and restraining from non-virtuous actions.
- 5 **Correct livelihood** is not obtaining source of living by harming animals, cheating, stealing and so on. Livelihood that depends upon harming animals or exploiting the Three Jewels, such as selling statues, should be abandoned.
- 6 **Correct effort** is having enthusiasm in doing virtuous activities and abandoning non-virtue.
- 7 **Correct mindfulness** is maintaining mindfulness upon the virtuous objects of meditation.
- 8 **Correct concentration** is generating single-pointed concentration on virtuous objects of the paths.

The Bodhisattva's Path (Madhyamika Prasangika presentation)



Obscuration to be abandoned {
 { obscurations to liberation (OL) } acquired
 { obscurations to omniscience (OO) } innate

Path of Seeing {
 { contemplative wisdom } uninterrupted path (hatched bar)
 { liberated path } (hatched bar) UP is a single-pointed equipoise on reality that directly opposes its particular obscuration to be abandoned
 { contemplative wisdom that is neither UP nor LP } LP is a single-pointed equipoise on reality occurring immediately after the obscuration has been abandoned
 { post-meditational wisdom } For example, single-pointed equipoise on gross selflessness
 { neither contemplative nor post-meditational wisdom } A clear realization of truth in the mind of a Bodhisattva who has arisen from the LP
 (example): non-manifest bodhicitta in the mind of a Bodhisattva on the uninterrupted path