



SUPPLICATION

TO THE ULTIMATE
ILLUSTRIOUS TARA

Elucidation of the Seven Verses

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Part One

1.1 Homage and Meaning of the Title

Homage:

*Your body is Dharmakaya,
essence of primordial emptiness,
Your unceasing enlightened speech
is the soothing sound of Dharma.*

*Your wisdom mind is the
embodiment
Of profound vast knowing and love,
Mother of all Buddhas,
Goddess Tara, to you I bow.*

Thus having begun with words of
veneration,

I shall elucidate the *Seven Verses of
Supplication to Tara for Protection,*

A text that arose from the expanse
of the awakened mind of the
Venerable Jigten Sumgön

When he beheld a vision of
*Illustrious Tara, Mother of
all the Buddhas.*

This great being, whose life is
heralded by prophecies in multiple
sutras and *tantras*,

Refuge lord of the Drikung lineage,
master over the three worlds,
Revealed the seven verses...

After he had triumphed over the
four *maras*

And already become a buddha.

The text can be sectioned into three parts:

1. Virtue in the beginning with the introduction,

2. Virtue in the middle with the main body of the text,

3. Virtue in the end with the concluding section.

Meaning of the Title

The Seven Verses of Supplication to Tara for Protection:

Set into seven verses analogous to
the seven aspects of primordial
wisdom...

Referring to the union of emptiness
and compassion
On the ultimate truth level.

**On the relative truth level,
the seven verses**

- **Represent the seven Taras**

Tara of the Five Buddha Families

Represents of the five wisdoms on
the Ultimate Level

1. All-Pervading Wisdom
2. Mirror-like Wisdom
3. Wisdom of Equanimity
4. Wisdom of Discriminating Awareness
5. All-Accomplishing Wisdom

One is only a sentient being
as long as,

One does **not** recognize
the nature of mind

And is under the power
of the *kleshas* (the negative emotions).

The Five Kleshas

1. Ignorance, delusion
2. Hatred, aggression, anger
3. Desire, attachment
4. Pride
5. Jealousy, envy

Once that nature of mind is
recognized
And one realizes the wisdom...

Of the indivisibility of emptiness
and compassion,

Free from negative emotions,

*This very wisdom is the
Ultimate Tara.*

**There is no Tara to be found
outside of this.**

It is stated in the text

*Meditation and Recitation of
Amitabha*

(here the word “Amitabha” is replaced with “Tara”):

*To behold intrinsic awareness,
the form of Tara,
Mother of the Buddhas,*

*Look at the mind free from
subject-object grasping.*

*There is no Tara to be found
anywhere else.*

*The Dharmakaya of innate
awareness – how incredible!*

Thus, primordial wisdom
is not found anywhere outside
Of the nature of one's own mind.

Part Two

Virtue in the Middle

2.1 General Depiction of Dharmadhatu

མ་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པའི་ཚོས་དབྱེང་ན།

MA KYEWA MEPAI CHÖYING NA

**In the realm of the unborn mother,
the Dharmadhatu...**

MA - mother, essence of the
Perfection of Wisdom

From practicing Ultimate Tara,
the Illustrious Ones arise

From the illustrious beings
come the teachings:

1. What to accept
2. What to reject

*Both bring benefit for sentient
beings*

Tara the Mother, Perfection of Wisdom:

- 1. Gives birth (of wisdom) to all the
Illustrious Ones**
- 2. Brings forth all altruistic activity
to benefit others**

Eight Extremes

Unceasing

Unborn

Not void

Not eternal

Without coming

Without going

Not disparate

Not one

Nagarjuna

Root Text of Middle Way

Mula-Madhyamika

Four Extremes

- Not arisen from itself
- Nor from another
- Not from both
- Not without a cause

Nagarjuna
Root Text of Middle Way
Mula-Madhyamika

- When we realize the meaning
of *unborn...*

We realize the meaning of the
perfection of wisdom –

the nature of emptiness

In the nature of
emptiness-wisdom...

the dualistic clinging,
that perceives dualistic appearances,
is dissolved

Which is **Dharmadhatu**,
the basic space of phenomena.

The “unborn mother”
and “Dharmadhatu”
are inseparable.

Tara

Appearance and
Luminosity and
Bliss and
Awareness and

Dharmadhatu

Emptiness
Emptiness
Emptiness
Emptiness

Therefore,
“Blessed Mother,
Illustrious Arya Tara”

Is the representation of
Dharmadhatu,
*Basic space of phenomena,
emptiness.*

Part Two

Virtue in the Middle

2.1 General Depiction of Dharmadhatu

The main section has two parts,
General depiction of *Dharmadhatu*
– the sphere of phenomena –
And a more extensive explanation.

First, for the general depiction of
Dharmadhatu,

the first line of the root text reads:

མ་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པའི་ཚོས་དབྱེང་ན།

MA KYEWA MEPAI CHÖYING NA

**In the realm of the unborn mother,
the Dharmadhatu...**

Generally when we say “*MA,*”
we envision the relative-
truth level *Illustrious Tara,*

appearing in her divine form
with face, hands,
and so forth.

However, on the ultimate level,
“MA” or “mother”

Refers to the essence of the...

Perfection of Wisdom,
Mother of all the Buddhas,
Appearing as the manifestation of
Illustrious Tara

Also, it is from practicing
Ultimate Tara,

None other than perfection of
wisdom,
that all of the illustrious beings
have arisen.

From the illustrious beings
come the teachings:

1. What to accept
2. What to reject

Both bring benefit for
incalculable sentient beings

For that reason,
the Mother, Perfection of Wisdom
is known as

“She who gives birth to all the
Illustrious Ones” ...

And “she who brings forth all
altruistic activity to benefit
others.”

**These two understandings for
the exalted mother
are seen in several commentaries
on the perfection of wisdom.**

The meaning of the expression
KYEWA ME (unborn)

Is explained in the section of
veneration in the

Mula-Madhyamika (Root Text of the
Middle Way)

by Nagarjuna as follows:

*Whatever is dependently arisen
Is unceasing and unborn,
Neither void nor eternal,
Without coming and without going,*

Not disparate (multiple) and not one.

*The peaceful nature free
from all conceptual trappings.*

*I prostrate to this sublime truth
taught in the teachings
Of the Perfectly Awakened
Buddha.*

Eight Extremes

Unceasing

Without coming

Unborn

Without going

Not Void

Not disparate

Not Eternal

Not one

Nagarjuna
Root Text of Middle Way
Mula-Madhyamika

“Unborn,” or “non-arisen,”
is the main meaning
mentioned here in the text,
It refers to that state
beyond the eight extremes,

Because once we understand what
is meant by *unborn*,
The rest is easy to understand.

To quote from the Mula-Madhyamika again:

Not arisen from itself,

Nor from another,

Not from both.

Not without cause,

All things whatever they are,

Have never arisen at all.

Four Extremes

- Not arisen from itself
- Nor from another
- Not from both
- Not without a cause

Thus, using logic and reasoning
by refuting the four extremes,

We can establish that birth
and the others *lack true
existence.*

When we realize the meaning
of *unborn*

We realize the meaning of the
perfection of wisdom –

The nature of emptiness

In the nature of
emptiness-wisdom,
The dualistic clinging that *perceives*
dualistic appearances,
Is dissolved.

This is what is referred to
by the term “*Dharmadhatu,*”
the basic space of phenomena.

The “unborn mother”
and “Dharmadhatu”
Are inseparable.

That is what we are referring to
when we say:

**“appearance and emptiness
inseparable,”**

or “luminosity and emptiness
inseparable,”

or “bliss and emptiness
inseparable,”

or “awareness and emptiness
inseparable.”

Since she is never outside of...
or beyond

The basic space of phenomena –
Dharmadhatu –

*“Blessed Mother,
Illustrious Arya Tara”*

Are the words spoken to symbolize
the basic space of emptiness,
which Tara represents.

This shows the nature of

Dharmadhatu:

Tara

Dharmadhatu

Appearance and Emptiness

Luminosity and Emptiness

Bliss and Emptiness

Awareness and Emptiness

The second line of the root text:

ཡུམ་རྗེ་བཅུན་ལྷ་མོ་སྒྲོལ་མ་བརྟུགས།

***YUM JETSUN LHAMO DROLMA
ZHUK***

...abides the Blessed Mother,
the deity Tara

As expressed above, the ultimate Tara,
Mother of all the Buddhas,
Refers to that very state of
Dharmakaya,

Abiding in the realms and mind
streams of all sentient beings.

In the *sutra* it reads:

*Pure, lucid, luminous, undisturbed,
Unconditional true nature:
This is the buddha nature (sugata garbha),
The Dharmata,
always primordially present.*

In the *Gongchig* (Singular Wisdom Mind)
it is said:

*All the buddhas have always been
present in the mind stream of the
sentient being.*

Thus, it has been taught that in the
mind streams of all sentient
beings...

Buddha has always,
already abided,

As the nature of primordial
buddhahood,

This nature is:
the **basic space of emptiness**,
the *wisdom of omniscience*,
the **awakened mind**,
which is *Dharmakaya*.

So how do we realize this
Dharmakaya
in our own mind stream?

We have to be introduced to the
inconceivable secrets of
awakened **body,**

The inconceivable secrets of
awakened **speech,**

The inconceivable secrets of
awakened **mind**,

The inconceivable secrets of
awakened **qualities**,

And the inconceivable secrets
of enlightened activity.

In this way, when we say

“basic space of emptiness”

We understand this to mean

*the inconceivable secret
awakened qualities.*

These *inconceivable secret*
awakened qualities can be
understood as

The four manifestations of
great bliss,
namely...

1. The union of *appearance* and emptiness
2. The union of *luminosity* and emptiness
3. The union of *bliss* and emptiness
4. The union of *awareness* and emptiness

It is through these four unions
that we are introduced to the
True Ultimate Mother Tara,

And recognition of that basic nature,
just as it refers

To the union of basic space and
wisdom –

*The nature of emptiness,
Dharmakaya.*

དེ་སེམས་ཅན་ཀུན་ལ་བདེ་སྤྱིར་མ།

***DE SEMCHEN KUNLA DAY
TERMA***

**She bestows happiness to all
sentient beings**

This line refers to the *enlightened activities* of the buddhas, who are imbued with skillful means and great compassion.

With the non-dual wisdom of
awakened mind,
The buddhas appear in accord
with the **needs,...**

...**Inclination** (preference),
And, **capacities** of sentient beings
In order to tame them
in whatever ways are necessary,

Even sometimes in the form of
those belonging to the extreme
views of:

Eternalism, nihilism, and so forth.

This is because,

By the power of **previous
aspirations**

The buddhas will manifest
in any and every possible way -
if it is of benefit for taming sentient
beings.

This is illustrated in the
Nirvana Sutra as follows:

*Not blind,
yet appearing as though blind,*

*Not crippled,
yet appearing as though crippled,*

*Not a child,
yet appearing in the guise (aspect)
of a child,*

*The buddhas manifest
to ripen sentient beings.
Sometimes in the costume of
Shiva and Brahma,*

*Sometimes in the costume
of the maras,*

*The way that enlightened ones
enact benefit for sentient
beings*

*Cannot be fathomed (understood)
by ordinary people of the
world.*

The reason the Awakened Ones
bring about the benefit of
sentient beings

Through a multitude of skillful
means is this:

When they are on the path of
training,
They recognize the wisdom of
Prajñaparamita,
The *Dharmakaya*, to dwell
within themselves,

And, they practice based upon
this understanding,
Gaining realization.

Once they attain the state of
an **Illustrious One**,

By the power of great
compassion and
bodhicitta intention,

They do **not** just stay fixed in the
pacified state of nirvana,

But rather, as the singular cause of
benefit and happiness for
countless beings,

The teach the Dharma
in league (combination)

With beings' constitutions (character),
faculties (capabilities),
and inclinations (preferences).

To beings who do not know what
to accept and what to reject,

**Who due to ignorance create only
the causes of more samsara
And thus stay stuck there,**

The buddhas give teachings
with great love and compassion
On how to become free from
suffering.

They show the paths to achieve
temporary and ultimate
happiness.

Thus they engage in the benefit
and happiness of sentient
beings,

Revealing skillful means
through great compassion.

Recognizing the indivisible nature
of skillful means and wisdom,
They themselves become free
from fear,

**And they bring others to that state
of fearlessness.**

བདག་སེམས་པ་གུན་ལས་སྐྱོབ་ཏུ་གསོལ།

DAG JIGPA KUNLE KYABTU SOL

I pray to you, protect us from all
kinds of fears.

If oneself and all infinite sentient
beings can recognize

That primordially, we have always
been the *Ultimate Tara*,

Then as it says in the scriptures:

You are your own protector.

No one else can be your protector.

On the **level of relative truth,**
as it appears to our confused
perceptions,

All of us sentient beings
experience all sorts of
terrifying sufferings.

However, on the **ultimate level**,
we have always been one
With the awakened qualities of
Illustrious Mother Tara,

For all of Tara's awakened qualities
have always been
Inherently present within the mind
streams
Of ourself and all beings.

**Apart from the mere distinction of
recognition or non-recognition,
All sentient beings have always been
buddhas.**

If we go for refuge from this
understanding,
That is ultimate refuge.

From the perspective of the
relative level

As it appears to our confused
perceptions,

Sentient beings, because of not
recognizing,

Or rather not realizing,
the true nature

**Find themselves tormented
by all sorts of
Fears and terrors of samsara.**

We are thus supplicating that
very nature of *Dharmadhatu*,
Which is personified in the
relative truth appearance of
Illustrious Tara appearing
with face and hands.

We are seeking refuge in
and protection from Tara

*Until we ourselves realize the
nature of ultimate reality.*

Part Two

Virtue in the Middle

2.2 Extensive Explanation of Dharmadhatu

2.2.1 Faults of the Negative Emotions

རང་ཚོས་སྐྱེ་ཡིན་བར་མ་ཤེས་བར།།

***RANG CHÖKU YINPAR MA SHEY
PAR***

Not realizing oneself as Dharmakaya

The meaning of this is encapsulated
by two lines from the

Abhisamaya- Alamkara

*Omniscient wisdom itself is
expressed as Dharmakaya*

As expressed above, the primordial nature of mind is empty, essence of clear light.

Mind's innate nature itself is
Dharmakaya,

And the meaning of Dharmakaya is:

1. that primordial knowing, *the union of luminosity and emptiness*

2. that primordial knowing,
the luminosity-emptiness

That is none other
than the **momentary** thought.

Wisdom, or rather *Dharmakaya*, is
not apart from this.

*This itself – the clear awareness
of the present moment*

*Is the true face of relative truth
phenomena.*

*Without altering this,
if you know its nature,
This itself is ultimate truth.*

Just as expressed in the above
verse,
when a positive or negative
thought or emotion arises...

If we do not look deeper into it,
And instead simply get caught up
in its display,

This accrues karma, becoming
causes of samsara.

However, when we examine the
thought or emotion,

Look into the essence of the
thought,

It naturally ceases in its own nature,

And never truly existed.

Recognizing this
is the cause of **Nirvana.**

That is, *awakening to primordial
knowing Dharmakaya.*

This Dharmakaya is present in all beings.

The *Uttaratantra* states:

*Since the perfectly awakened
buddha form is pervasive,*

*Since the suchness nature is
inseparable,*

*Since beings are in the family of
Buddha,*

*All sentient beings are always
imbued with buddha nature.*

Thus, sentient beings are pervaded
by emptiness – the *Dharmakaya*.

The suchness nature of Buddha
Is no better, no different,
Than the suchness nature of
sentient beings,

*For the suchness nature is
inseparable.*

Beings who are **bound in samsara**
are **still** in the family of Buddha,
still have buddha nature.

The **Dharmakaya** is there as the
ground, path, and fruit...
Present in everyone.

The *Gongchig*

(Singular Wisdom Mind) states:

The innately pure nature has the qualities of innate awakening and re-awakening.

What the above line illustrates
Is that in the *basic ground*,
The innately pure buddha nature
Is always present in sentient
beings,

And like the sun and its rays,
It is already imbued
with all the innate qualities
Of purity and fruition.

This already perfect state
Has always been innately
present in all beings,
Spontaneously.

Even though temporary,
adventitious obscuration
(happening by chance)

Can never defile or injure the innate
nature of mind,

Which is the very essence of
buddhahood,

Just as clouds can veil the direct
view of the sun's rays,

Adventitious obscurations veil the
direct view of the Dharmakaya,
of its innately perfect qualities of
purity and fruition.

*On the path, through the two
accumulations (wisdom and merit),*

We can clear away the obscurations
And directly actualize
the state of buddhahood imbued
With the *two purities* –
innate and realized.

All sentient beings are permeated by
Dharmakaya buddha,

But they do not know it.

Analogies for this are given in the
Uttaratantra:

*Like a buddha in an ugly
colored lotus,
Like honey amidst bees,
A grain in its husk,
Gold buried in feces,*

*A treasure underground,
A shoot sprouting from a tiny fruit,
A statue of a buddha inside tattered
clothes,*

*A ruler of men in the belly of a
destitute woman,
And a precious gem inside earth,
The buddha nature abides within
all sentient beings.*

Thus as demonstrated by the
above nine analogies,
All sentient beings have the fruit
of Dharmakaya,
But they do not know it is there.

The reason for this is stated
in the second line
Of the second verse
of the Tara supplication:

སེམས་ཉོན་མོངས་དབང་དུ་གྱུར་བ་ཡི།

*SEM NYONMONG WANGDU
GYURPA YI*

...The minds of sentient beings are
possessed by negative emotions.

As explained above, all of us
sentient beings,
Do not recognize this...

Even though the Dharmakaya
has always been innately
present as our own minds.

We are under the power
of the negative emotions,
as expressed in a *sutra*:

*All sentient beings are actually
buddhas,*

*But they are temporarily obscured
by adventitious defilements.*

**The adventitious obscurations
described here
Are divided into two categories,**

As explained in the treatise

Madhyāntavibhāga

*(Distinguishing the Middle from the
Extremes):*

*These are shown to be
the obscurations of the
negative emotions
And the subtle obscurations
to omniscience.*

Why you may ask, are the
obscurations classed into
Two definitive categories?

The highest goal to be attained
by a person or individual
is twofold, namely...

1. The attainment of **supreme liberation from samsara**
2. And the attainment **omniscient buddhahood.**

Out of these two attainments,
what is it that obstructs

Our attainment of liberation
from samsara?

It is the negative emotions,
born from the *grasping* at
“I” and “mine” that obstruct
us from liberation.

**What is it that obstructs the
second attainment,
The attainment of omniscience?**

It is the *ignorance* of not
actualizing the nature of
phenomena (emptiness).

These two obscurations lead to
the grasping at a **self-nature**
of the person

And grasping at an **inherent**
nature of external phenomena.

Until this grasping at the
realness-of-self

And the **realness-of-phenomena**
is released,

The two obscurations are there.

In the *Madyamika Ratna-Avali*
(*Middle Way Treatise Mala of Jewels*)

It is explained:

*As long as there is clinging to a body,
There is self-clinging.
If there is self-clinging,
then there is karma,
And from karma comes rebirth.*

It has thus been taught
that as long as we have
grasping at a self,
We will not be liberated from
samsara.

If you want to know whether the self-grasping can be released or not,

You can find the answer through
many scriptural verifications
And through reasoning, as
expressed in the
Madhyamika and Pramana.

The teachings reveal the antidotes
to help us actualize this
By showing how to meditate
And cultivate loving-kindness
and so forth,

As well as the antidote
to completely uproot self-grasping
Through the wisdom that realizes
selflessness.

According to the Buddhist scriptures,
the differences between the three
vehicles, or *yanas*,

Relates to the differing approaches
to purifying these two
obscurations.

The shravakas (hearers) and
pratyekabuddhas (solitary realizers)
of the individual liberation path,

**Meditate solely on the selflessness
of the individual person**

**As an antidote to the obscuration
of negative emotions,**

Through which all their negative
emotions are exhausted,
And it becomes impossible for
them ever to fall back into
samsara.

However, since they have not
perfected the meditation on
the selflessness of phenomena,

**They do not become free of the
subtle obscuration to
omniscience.**

The *Illustrious Ones* of the
Mahayana path,

Beginning from the path of seeing
(the first bodhisattva *bhumi*, or stage),

Gradually purify both of the two
obscurations,

And these are purified
simultaneously.

Then, when the *Illustrious Ones*
reach the eight *bhumi*,
In the manner of effortlessly
entering the *Dharmata*,

Even the subtle subliminal (inner)
sense of self-grasping

And all negative emotions are
completely exhausted.

From that point onward,
through the next three *bhumis*,
Known as the pure stages,

The subtle habitual imprints of
dualistic perception,
Or rather the subtle obscuration to
omniscience is purified alone.

Following 10 slides are directly from the book.

See slides below for clarification of this next paragraph on book pages 46 to 48.

Aside from a buddha, it is impossible for anyone who is still on the path to be unhindered by even subtle obscurations.

Here, when we speak of the selflessness of phenomena, there are two contexts.

**One is the selflessness of
phenomena that is common to all
the vehicles of Buddhism.**

The other is the selflessness of
phenomena specific to the
Mahayana.

There is what is known as the grasping at the self-nature of phenomena that takes a focal object,

and the grasping at the self-nature
of phenomena that ensues from
dualistic perception.

Out of these three categories,
the first one is purified on the first
bodhisattva bhumi.

The second one,
grasping at the self-nature of
phenomena without focal object,
is purified on the eighth bhumi.

The second one,
grasping at the self-nature of
phenomena without focal object,
is purified on the eighth bhumi.

The following slides are clarifications to pages 46 to 48 in the book.

Aside from a buddha,
It is impossible for anyone who is
still on the path

To be unhindered by even subtle
obscurations.

There are two contexts:

1. The context that is common to all vehicles (yanas)
2. The context that is specific to Mahayana
 - A. With focal object - thoughts
 - B. Without focal object - perception

The first context is the selflessness of phenomena **that is common** to all the vehicles of Buddhism.

The second context is the selflessness of phenomena **that is specific** to the Mahayana.

In the Mahayana,
is what is known as

- A. the grasping at the self-nature of phenomena that takes a focal point object, and
- B. the grasping a self-nature of phenomena that ensues from dualistic perception.

The three categories:

1. That which is common to all vehicles (yanas) -

The Afflictive Emotions

2. That which has a focal object
in the Mahayana vehicle -
Dualistic Thought

3. That which is without focal
object in the Mahayana vehicle -
Dualistic Perception

The first category:

The Afflictive Emotions is already purified before entering the bodhisattva path at the first bodhisattva bhumi level.

The second category:
Dualistic Thought is purified on
the 1st through 7th bodhisattva
bhumi levels

The third category:
Dualistic Perception of grasping
at the self-nature of phenomena
without a focal object,
is purified on the 8th bhumi level

**Following slides return to the text
of the book page 48**

The *Lalitavistara Sutra*
(The Play in Full) states:

When you are able to have the
forbearance to handle the
knowledge that there is neither
birth nor death,
at that time, I, Dipamkara, will
prophecy your enlightenment.

Here, the word “forbearance” refers to the ability to forbear, or handle, the truth that phenomena are unborn.

**This occurs on the 8th
bodhisattva bhumi level.**

The stage of realization,
the realization of selflessness of
phenomena that is free from
dualistic perception,
is only realized when one
becomes a buddha.

Because we have accrued all kinds of erroneous and perverted habitual imprints in our minds,

conditioned existence arises
unceasingly in all sorts of
dreamlike appearances.

*All this is made only of the stuff
of mind, and nothing other.*

Therefore,
as long as mind is under the
power of attachment and other
negative emotions,

we will automatically enter and
get caught up in the play of
samsara - the three realms

and even the hand of the
Tathagata (Buddha) cannot make
it stop.

Only when we become free of
obscurations and gain control
over our own mind
will we finally gain control over
all phenomena.

It is not like we are fleeing a bad place and running off somewhere else to a better place.

. Without having to rely on anything outside of mind, if we simply recognize this nature of mind, **the Mahamudra,**

**this is how we become free of
obscurations
and attain liberation
and the omniscient state of
buddhahood.**

Not recognizing the true nature
of mind and
falling under the power of
attachment and
the other negative emotions

is how we become confused and
wander in samsara.

Whether we become confused or
liberated is rooted in
whether or not we realize the true
nature of our own mind.

To cite a doha by Sarahapa:

*Emanating samsara and nirvana,
Bestowing the fruit of our desires,
To this wish-fulfilling jewel-like
mind, I prostrate!*

Going back to the Tara prayer, the third line reads:

**MA KHOR WAR KHYAM PAI
SEM-CHEN LA**

These beings wandering in
samsara, who are my mothers.

With full realization of the true
nature just as it is,

she appears for the sake of others
in a relative truth form-body as
Illustrious Mother Tara,
and here we are calling out to her
with longing.

It is like a poor family who does not know that in their home is a precious wish-fulfilling gem,

so they continue to experience the uninterrupted suffering of poverty and destitution.

Sentient beings have always abided
as the very nature of buddhas,
but not recognizing this,

they continue to cycle around in
samsara through **the twelve links
of interdependence** that lead to
rebirth.

Here I will summarize the twelve links:

The first link is ignorance.

This is the basic motivating factor that propels one to take rebirth.

It refers to the ignorant grasping at
a self where there is no self

It is likened to a blind person who wants to travel on a safe and easy road,
but is unable to see where to go and involuntarily falls down a precipice.

Though we desire happiness,
because of **ignorance**
we do not know how to accomplish
the causes of happiness,

so we accrue **non-virtuous karma**,
thus creating uninterrupted
suffering for ourselves in samsara.

The second link is **conditioned factors,**

referring to the karma that propels the consciousness into a future rebirth.

This relates to all the positive and negative actions accrued through the three avenues of body, speech, and mind...

...stemming from ignorance that
cause beings to powerlessly cycle
in samsara.

The analogy is of a potter's wheel,
which can spin all sizes and shapes
of pots.

The third link is **consciousness**,
referring primarily to mental
consciousness.

The consciousness at this point has not yet accrued any karma.

This refers to the **mental consciousness** where karma is accrued from one embodiment to the next,
where karma is stored until the potency of that karma ripens.

For example,
it is like a monkey that cannot stay
in one place but jumps all around.

This **consciousness** is unable to stay on one focal object; it wanders off to all sorts of objects.

The fourth link is **name and form**.

Here, **name** refers to the four **skandhas** minus **form**,

namely, **feeling, perception, cognition, and consciousness**.

Form refers to itself, the **skandha** of form.

This refers to the body that we take due to previous karmic causes from our past life and bardo state.

From this life until we travel to our
future life,
we have taken a body in samsara,
and we are engaged in that body.

It is like the duration of travel on a ship overseas.

It lasts until the ship reaches the next shore.

The fifth link is **sensory fields** -
sense organs and sense stimuli.

This refers to the **sensory fields** in the body

that are forming prior to the completion of a full cycle of the **twelve links.**

It refers to the sense organs themselves - the eyes, ears, and so forth - but without the placement of the eye consciousness, ear consciousness, and so forth,

in other words,
prior to the act of actual seeing,
hearing, and so forth.

It refers to the sense organs and sensory capacity, but without, or rather prior to, the sense faculties being experienced through consciousness.

At this point,
only mental consciousness is
present.

It is like a completed house with
many windows that is still vacant.

The sixth link is **touch**.

This is where the sensory objects,
the sense faculties, and the
consciousness come together...

...and the mind that seeks to
interact with phenomena
on a sensory level comes about.

When the sensory objects,
sense faculties,
and consciousness come together,

a basic sense of **touch**,
as in smooth or rough, occurs,
but still it is not at the level of
interpreting that touch
as pleasurable or painful sensation.

It is like, for example, children kissing.

Aside from the mere coming together of sensory objects, sense faculties, and consciousness,

children are not able to feel any greater sensation beyond that.

Later on,
gradually they will experience
happiness or joy from sensations.

The seventh link is **feeling**.

This refers to the mind as
experiencing **sensation** or **feeling**.

The consciousness is becoming more potent and now can experience pleasure or pain, happiness or suffering,

in **dependence** upon sensations of heat or cold, smooth or rough, and so forth.

It is like, for example,
if one's eyes were struck by an
arrow.

The pain would be incredibly sharp,
and one would not be able to see anything around one.

In the same way,
during the phase of **feeling**,
the sensations of pleasure and pain
are very heightened.

The eighth link is **craving**.

This refers to the desire that has the power to enact karma in a full cycle of the **twelve links**.

This refers to the **desire** and **craving** increasing toward an object of desire.

It is like a person who drinks alcohol and the more he drinks the more he **craves**.

The ninth link is **appropriating**.

This refers to the desire that yearns strongly to partake of the object of one's focus.

This refers to the increase of **desire** and **attachment** for outer and inner phenomena such as form, sound, and so forth,

which is the **desire** that leads one
to reach out for
and try to **appropriate** that object
of desire.

It is like, for example,
a monkey eating a piece of fruit
and at the same time reaching out
for the next one and the next one.

The tenth link is **becoming**.

This is the karma that will propel
one to take one's future rebirth.

When the conditioned karma that was accrued in the previous life via the **third link, consciousness,** reaches its maturity,

one turns toward one's future
rebirth, for example,
gathering in the womb of one's
future mother
or in the egg of a bird, and so
forth.

The eleventh link is **birth**.

This encompasses the actual taking birth of that embodiment where the **links of interdependence** have come together.

This refers to the period from conception to taking birth.

For example, this is covered by the nine months in the mother's womb and culminates in the actual taking of birth.

The twelfth link covers both **aging and death.**

This covers the time from birth onward, as the body grows and ages **until it is left behind.**

Aging refers to the changes that take place as youth fades,

and **death** refers to the point where the body is left behind.

Death is represented, for example,
by the indication of a corpse being
carried off.

*Ignorance, conditioned factors,
and consciousness are the three
links that propel one.*

Craving, appropriating, and becoming are the three links that produce one.

*Name and form, sensory fields,
touch, and feeling are the four links
that are propelled.*

Birth, aging, and death are the elements that complete the chain.

The **twelve links** also can be subsumed into the first two of the **Four Noble Truths** –
the **truth of suffering** and the **truth of the source of suffering**.

In the Abhidharmakosha, it is stated:

*The first, eighth, and ninth links are subsumed in the **negative emotions.***

*The second and tenth links are subsumed in **karma**.*

*The remaining ones are subsumed in **suffering**.*

Thus it has been explained.

In order to make it easy to understand the order of the **twelve links of interdependence** insofar as they function as the source of samsara,

I have shown them by way of the past, present, and future life, and I have explained them in terms of their functions.

For instance, the first one,
ignorance,
and the second, conditioned
karma,
begin from the previous life.

The third link, consciousness,
up to the tenth link, craving,
influence the present life.

**Birth and aging and death
lead to the future life.**

Thus, for all of the sentient beings
experiencing suffering in the realm
of samsara

by way of the **twelve links of
interdependence,**

the prayer continues:

**YUM LHAMO KHYÖ-KYI
KYAB-TU-SOL**

**O, Blessed Mother, please protect
them.**

Here we are praying,
“Please protect these beings from
the different kinds of terrors.”

We are saying,

“In me and in all sentient beings,
the Dharmakaya buddha abides.

Yet, because of obscurations,
we sentient beings do not
recognize the abiding nature.

**By the power of negative emotions,
beings experience immeasurable
suffering in the realm of samsara.**

O, Divine Mother,
you who has actualized self-benefit
through realizing Dharmakaya
and holds all sentient beings in
your great love and compassion,

please protect all these sentient beings who are experiencing uninterrupted suffering in the six realms of samsara via the twelve links of interdependence.

Please rescue them from their delusion!”

This is really a prayer of protection
to the ultimate nature of great
compassion,
personified in the relative form as
the Illustrious Tara,

to protect us until the causes of
samsara - deluded perceptions –
are all exhausted.

2.2.2 Cultivating Wisdom through Listening, Contemplating, and Meditating

For the second subsection, instructions are given on the necessity of cultivating wisdom through listening, contemplating, and meditating.

In the Tara prayer the first line of
the third verse reads:

**CHHÖ NYING NE GYÜ-LA MA
KYE-PAR**

Not truly implanting the Dharma
Teachings in my heart, . . .

With this line we are reminded of the four Dharmas of Gampopa.

The first is indicated in the prayer,
“Please grant blessings for the mind to turn toward the Dharma.”

The meaning of this line is that even though we may practice sublime Dharma, we have to make sure that the Dharma is taking root in our own mind stream, not just on an external level.

It is for this reason that the holy beings of the past have all taught extensively

on the **four thoughts that turn the mind** as methods for turning the mind away from samsara.

Since we sentient beings, as taught
in the Buddha Dharma,
have been cycling since time
immemorial within this samsara,

the mind streams of sentient beings have amassed strong habits of self-grasping—

the cause of samsara and karmic imprints.

Therefore, it is not easy to renounce.

The reason for this is, **first of all**,
the sheer length of time we have
been gathering **habitual imprints**.

During this time they have become
quite strongly planted in us.

The **second reason** is that
in this modern century we have
excessive availability of the sense
pleasures,

so even if we try to apply an
antidote,
the allure of the desirable sense
pleasures is too strong,
and this makes it very difficult for
us to subdue - much less let go of
our desires.

In one of his talks, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said:

“In olden days many Dharma practitioners, even if they did not have a great deal of exposure to and knowledge of many Teachings,

since they did not meet with many conditions in their environment that would provoke them, there were many who accomplished their practice.

Nowadays there are exceeding amounts of factors in our society that would influence us, so unless someone has sufficiently listened to and contemplated the Dharma,

it is very easy for the mind to change or be swayed in other directions.

Therefore, everyone, please carefully listen to the Teachings and contemplate their meaning fully.”

Through such words and others like them, we can understand this point.

In short, if we are unable to awaken genuine renunciation within our own mind streams,

we will not be able to find freedom from the suffering of samsara, and there would be no way to achieve the peace of nirvana, the states of shravaka or pratyekabuddha arhats, or the state of buddhahood.

Therefore,
if we repeatedly familiarize
ourselves with the reality of how
difficult it is to obtain **the freedoms
and endowments...**

...and with the **impermanence** of
life,

we will see the dissolution of our
clinging to and fixation on this
present life.

If we repeatedly familiarize
ourselves with and bring to mind
the infallibility of
karma - the law of cause and effect,
and the **suffering of samsara,**

we will see the dissolution of our clinging and attachment to future samsaric lives.

**We will not be chained to the hope
of obtaining the pleasures and
happiness in the higher realms.**

Without any longing or hunger for heights of samsaric enjoyment, an irreversible drive toward liberation should blossom in the mind stream.

If this does not arise,
it means that Dharma has not truly
taken root in our heart-mind,

and if it does,
it means that Dharma has taken
root.

That is also the sign of mind
successfully turning toward
Dharma.

The next line of the third verse
reads:

**THA-NYE TSIG-GI JE DRANG
NE**

... and following after words, ...

Even if one already has awakened a
mind of renunciation,
the Dharma might not go along the
right path.

This could happen because of following after words and labels in the teaching.

That is why Gampopa prays in his
Four Dharmas,

“Grant blessings for the Dharma to
go along the right path.”

There are many instances in which words of Buddhist texts seem to be similar to non-Buddhist teachings,

and many instances in which different philosophical traditions within Buddhism seem to be saying the same thing.

However,
in truth there are tremendous
differences among them,
as big as the difference between the
sky and the earth.

That is why Buddha taught the four superior ways of relying,
and one of these ways is to
“rely on the meaning, not on the words.”

This is a case in which one needs to develop wisdom through listening to teachings.

If you have the wisdom of listening, you will be able to awaken the precious bodhichitta.

A bodhisattva is one who, out of
compassion,
does not abide in the extreme of
nirvana,

and who, out of wisdom,
also does not abide in the extreme
of samsara.

When one has wisdom,
one looks at the sentient beings of
conditioned existence,
the beings who are lost in samsara,

and sees that it is because they are
ensnared in the web of self-
grasping ...

...and the great abyss of ignorance
that they are tormented by
ceaseless suffering.

It is from that recognition that
great compassion is born,
and it is from compassion that
supreme bodhichitta can arise.

If you have bodhichitta,
it means your Dharma has gone
along the right path.

The third line reads:

DRUB-THA NGEN PE LÜ-PA-LA

... beings who are deceived by
delusory philosophical views and
dogmas ...

Even though one may have
awakened compassion and
bodhichitta,
one might not be able to dispel
confusion about how to practice
and meditate properly on the path.

Enter Gampopa's third prayer from
his Four Dharmas,

**“Grant blessings to dispel confusion
along the path.”**

People who strive for liberation and omniscient buddhahood

must diligently apply themselves to the methods for internalizing the pure view of selflessness.

**Not satisfied merely with obtaining
food and clothing for this life,
one should really question, is there
an afterlife or not?**

If there is a future life,

are the resulting experiences of
happiness and suffering,
and the happiness and suffering we
are experiencing in the present life,
due to specific causes and
conditions?

If so, what are they?

Not only should we have an understanding of these issues,

we should also be thinking about
the ways in which we can dispel
suffering and engender happiness.

What distinguishes the human race from less evolved life forms in the animal kingdom is that human beings have intelligence and the capacity for critical thinking.

Not simply content with the fleeting attainment of food and clothing, we are looking for something deeper, thinking about how to attain everlasting happiness.

We should rely on the wisdom that realizes the absolute nature in order to realize the view of selflessness, beyond all extremes.

The reason is that without the
wisdom that realizes the absolute
nature

we will not be able to completely
uproot the three types of suffering.

That is why we must study the
meaning of **interdependent
origination**

to understand the meaning of
selflessness.

In order to understand **selflessness**,
we need certain clarity regarding
the subtle and grosser levels of
selflessness
as they are presented according to
the different philosophical systems.

I will briefly explain the different assertions here.

There are two kinds of philosophy:

One brings an outlook on life that a person has naturally without relying on religious studies or philosophical exposure.

In other words,
this refers to a view a person has
when he or she does not
study any particular philosophy.

The other kind is
one that changes the mind,
a philosophy that one arrives at
after studying and pondering.

An example of the first kind,
an outlook of an unchanged mind,
is the case of someone who has
never listened to or studied...

...nor pondered the teachings at all
and who does not question or
examine anything more deeply.

This person's basic outlook, or
“philosophy”,
is simply the drive to accomplish
pleasure and happiness in the
present life.

The second category refers to someone whose mind is committed to a belief system based on studying relevant scriptures or applying mental analysis.

The second category can be further divided into the classes of non-Buddhist schools and Buddhist schools.

There are many non-Buddhist schools, but to name a few here, they are the traditions of Vaishna, Shaivite, Jain, Kapilavasta, and Charvaka.

The first four mentioned follow the extreme view of eternalism.

The last one follows the extreme view of nihilism.

Traditions of eternalistic views generally teach the importance of engaging in moral conduct and abstaining from sin, or non-virtue,

and they have many positive features,
including encouraging the cultivation of altruism and compassion and such.

However,
they believe in an intrinsic and
eternal self and in a creator,
or lord, of the world.

The second class I will discuss here is the Buddhist tradition.

To belong to the Buddhist class one goes for refuge from one's heart in the Three Jewels.

The purveyor of Buddhism, Lord
Buddha,

taught us to abstain from causing
harm to others and refuted the
existence of a permanent, singular,
free will–possessing self.

**There are four major levels within
Buddhism.**

Lord Buddha first gave rise to
bodhichitta and then proceeded to
gather the two accumulations in the
middle

and finally manifested the
attainment of perfect buddhahood.

Before the gathering of the first five human disciples,
he turned the wheel of the Dharma of Four Noble Truths in Varanasi.

Those who follow after the meaning
of the first turning of the wheel of
Dharma and who take those
teachings as the ultimate sermon of
Buddha...

...are said to belong to the
foundational yana of Buddhism
and are known as **shravakas**.

They belong to the two sub-schools
of **Vaibhaishika** and **Sautantrika**.

Then, in Rajghir on Vulture Peak,
during the middle turning of the
wheel of Dharma,
Buddha taught the Dharma beyond
characteristics to the disciples of
sharp faculties.

Those who took the meaning of that as the ultimate sermon and followed that are known as **Madhyamikas.**

They belong to the two sub-schools
of **Rangtong**,
“Self-Empty Middle Way” school
and **Shentong**, or
“Other-Empty Middle Way” school.

In Vaishali and other indefinite
places,
during the final turning of the
wheel of Dharma,

Buddha taught the Dharma
distinguishing provisional and
definitive teaching
to disciples of diverse faculties.

Those who took from that sermon
that the ultimate teaching is the line
“phenomena are only mind”
belong to the **Chitamatin**,
or **Mind-Only** school.

Those who took from that sermon
that the ultimate is the line

“mind, whose essence is empty and
whose nature is luminosity,

pervades all sentient beings”
belong to the **Shentong** school of
Madhyamika.

The latter is Jigten Sumgön's
position ...

and belongs to the definitive
teaching of the third turning of the
wheel.

I give a clear explanation of this in
my commentary
Gongchig Gongdon
(Meaning of the Awakened View of
the Gongchig).

In summary,
all four schools of Buddhism are one
insofar as they all teach that
**phenomena by nature are devoid of
inherent self-existence.**

However,
the dependent origination of the
absolute nature spoken of here is
suchness itself.

It is the subtle level of
interdependence of the aggregates
that serves as
the basis of imputation.

In other words,
by establishing this as the basis of
reasoning,
we see that there is an ultimate
nature to be actualized, and this is
the ultimate, subtlest level of
interdependence. To

**In other words,
by establishing this as the basis of
reasoning,**

we see that there is an ultimate nature to be actualized, and this is the ultimate, subtlest level of interdependence.

To understand this,
first we need to understand the
**interdependence of dependent
causation.**

To understand **dependent causation**,
we need to understand the
interdependence of cause and effect.

Simply put,
to understand the subtle,
we first start by understanding it on a
crude or grosser level.

In modern terminology,
we need to understand it on the:

- material or physical science level,
- the psychological level,
- the level of chemistry,
- and so forth.

Even in these fields of science,
the **doctrine of interdependent
origination** is incorporated.

**All phenomena are completely
subsumed within interdependent
origination.**

It is for this reason that
Maitreyanatha said in the
Abhisamaya-Alamkara:

*Without studying the five subjects of
learning until becoming adept,
Even the Supreme Illustrious One
could not have become omniscient.*

Out of the five subjects of learning,
if we expand just the field of
mechanics or mechanical
engineering,
all the crucial points of today's times
can be subsumed within this field.

Because of this,
we can see that in order to know
Dharma exactly and perfectly,

we need to use critical thinking
and to analyze with the wisdom of
discernment
to understand all the many different
systems of Buddhist and
non-Buddhist schools of thought.

With this basis of understanding,
gradually we can ascend to more
advanced doctrines,
and each time we move to a more
evolved philosophy the more
profound the view becomes.

Therefore,
in order to avoid pitfalls and traps in
our view,
and to gain certain understanding of
the range of subtle and gross
meanings of **selflessness**,

it is very helpful if we not only know our own Buddhist philosophy, but all the philosophical tenets and viewpoints of non-Buddhist schools as well, both ancient and modern.

Thus,
for the sentient beings who are
misled and who are ignorant of the
differences and salient
characteristics of the philosophical
systems,

the fourth line of this verse reads:

**YUM YANG DAG-GI LHAMÖ
KYAB-TU-SOL**

O, Perfect Mother, please protect
them.

Here we are praying for all these
sentient beings that are wandering
down erroneous paths...

...because of ignorance,
because of not knowing the antidote
to samsaric suffering -
which is renunciation, bodhichitta,
and the view of interdependent
origination.

We are praying,
“May confused perceptions arise as
wisdom

In other words,
we are supplicating this very wisdom
itself - the wisdom that knows the
ultimate truth-nature,
the **authentic path** free from
confusion.

We are supplicating this wisdom
personified in the form of
Mother Tara

to protect beings and prevent them
from entering paths of confusion.

2.2.3 Mindfulness and Awareness through Meditative Experience

For the third subsection,
even though the ultimate truth is
beyond articulation,

the importance of giving rise to
mindfulness and awareness through
meditative experience is taught.

The first line of the fourth verse
reads:

TOG PAR KAWA RANG-GI-SEM

Difficult to realize is one's own mind.

The nature of one's own mind is extremely difficult to realize and is beyond the framework of an ordinary person's intellect of conceptual mind.

In the Uttarat Tantra it is stated:

“Since it is so subtle, it cannot be an object heard and so forth.

Since it is ultimate truth, it cannot be thought about.

*Since the Dharmata is profound,
an ordinary worldly level
Meditation and so forth cannot
objectify it.”*

Since it is so incredibly subtle,
you cannot hear about it as the topic
of an ordinary worldly discourse.

Since it is ultimate truth,
it is beyond being the subject of
ordinary worldly contemplation.

**Since Dharmata is extremely
profound,**

**it cannot be the object of meditation
of an ordinary worldly meditation.**

On this topic, Mahasiddha Tilopa
said:

*“I, Tilopa, have nothing to show.
If you just see yourself, you will be
free.”*

Saying this,
Tilopa simply whacked Naropa on
the head with his shoe.

It is not that
the ultimate truth is something there
that he was unable to show,

but rather that
the very nature of it is something
that cannot be shown,
because it is beyond language,
beyond word, and beyond metaphor
or symbol.

In the praise to the Mother of the
Buddhas, the **Prajnaparamita**,
when we say, “Ma-Sam-Jömed,” or
“beyond articulation, beyond
thought, beyond expression,”

we are not saying there is something
there that can be articulated,
thought of, or expressed
or that we simply lack the ability to
do so,

but rather that this nature itself is
beyond word, thought, and
expression.

Although such a nature is beyond the conceptual mind of ordinary worldly people like us,

during the path of accumulation
we can focus on listening to the
teachings
and contemplating this absolute
nature.

Then,
during the **path of approach**
we envision this nature
in our meditation on the essence of
Dharmadhatu.

Once we achieve some degree of
meditative stability,
after that comes the path of seeing:
THONG NE GOM PAR MI-JE-PAR

*Seeing,
but not familiarizing with it through
practice, . . .*

On the **path of seeing** (the first bhumi of the bodhisattva),
the glimpse into the absolute truth nature of **Dharmata** is...

...compared in the Uttاراتantra
to a newborn baby seeing the sun for
the first time.

The baby at that point
can only see light and cannot
recognize that he or she is seeing
the sun.

In the same way,
illustrious beings in the beginning
see a **glimpse** of the absolute nature,
but at that point it is still unclear.

If they become conversant with this nature they have glimpsed, they can dispel obscurations and bring about all the awakened qualities without exception.

Therefore,
give rise to diligence when
meditating.

Even though the absolute nature is
beyond signification and beyond
words,
it can be realized,
for it is the nature of reality.

**This nature that cannot be described
is always with you,
connected to your own mind stream.**

In fact,
it has always already been **the nature**
of your own mind.

This indescribable nature **is not**
worsened or degraded
when you are under the control of
the negative emotions.

This indescribable nature **is not**
improved or enhanced

when the innate awakened qualities
in your mind stream are unfurling
and your realization is growing.

Regarding this indescribable nature
and meditation, as Saraha says,
**there is not anything you are
meditating “on,”**

but at the same time there is not the slightest wavering or deviation, because there is nowhere else for mind to wander.

Without anything to meditate on,
and without the slightest wandering,
letting mind rest in its natural state
without modification –
this nature of mind is what we call
“Mahamudra.”

In this “meditation”
with mind being aware and not
wandering,

if we remain under the watchful eye
of awareness without contrivance
(invention),
this is how we will awaken the
wisdom of meditation.

JAWA NGEN PE YENG PA LA

. . . those who are lost in the
distraction of unwholesome worldly
activities, . . .

This line refers to those who, though they have the instructions on how to sustain the natural awareness of mind's nature,

do not remain in the natural
uncontrived state of mind as
expressed above,
but instead succumb to the
distraction of ignorance, laziness,
and idleness.

Saraha makes this point:

*It is this very mind itself that is the
seed of everything -
Emanating samsara and nirvana,
Bestowing the fruit of our desires:
To this wish-fulfilling jewel-like mind,
I prostrate!*

In other words,
all the **defects** associated with
samsara arise in dependence upon
the mind.

Similarly,
all the **good qualities** associated with
nirvana arise in dependence upon the
mind.

When we do not apply ourselves to recognizing the nature of mind, which we do not yet recognize,

and instead
we remain lost in the distraction of
unwholesome activities,
this is called “samsara.”

Recognizing the nature of mind is the path of nirvana, but without this recognition, sentient beings are lost in the distraction of unwholesome worldly activities.

Thus we pray:

**YUM DREN PAI LHAMO
KYAB-TU SOL**

... O, Mother, embodiment of perfect
mindfulness, please protect us.

Though sentient beings may have
glimpses into the innate nature of
mind,
so difficult to realize,

because they do not have
experience familiarizing themselves
with this nature,
they become lost in the distraction
of meaningless activities.

**We are supplicating innate
awareness –
the ultimate mindfulness...**

...to take form in the relative truth
appearance of Mother Tara
and protect us from the distraction
of unwholesome activities.

2.2.4 Defects of Dualistic Grasping and Necessity of Dissolving Duality

The fourth subsection of the main section identifies the defects of dualistic grasping and shows the necessity of dissolving duality.

The first line of the fifth verse of
the Tara prayer reads:

**SEM RANG-JUNG NYI-MED
YESHE LA**

The absolute nature of mind is self-
arisen, non-dual Buddha wisdom.

The meaning of “mind self-arisen”
is that mind is not something new
to be found or something
fabricated.

This self-arisen mind has always
been primordially

the indivisibility of luminosity and
emptiness.

This nature of mind is
primordially free from arising,
ceasing, and dwelling.

In the Mahamudra Upadesha on
the Banks of the Ganges River,
it is stated:

*To be beyond all duality of subject
and object is the king of all views.*

As expressed above,
since it cannot be found to dwell
anywhere,

**there can be no inherent existence
of an external object.**

Since no conceptual mind can
grasp it,

there is no inherent existence of
an internal grasping subject.

Completely beyond all outer object
and inner subject,
mind as resting naturally in this
absolute nature of suchness itself...

...and experiencing it as it is,
this is the king of all views.

From the vantage point of mind's
nature,
**we are buddhas not sentient
beings.**

However,
not recognizing that we have
always been buddha,
we sentient beings meaninglessly
experience the suffering of
samsara.

For example,
ice can freeze and take all sorts of
shapes and forms,
but in essence there is nothing in
any of those ice sculptures apart
from water.

In the same way,
no matter how many different
appearances arise in the outer
world,
in essence they are nothing other
than the nature of mind.

However,
referring again to the ice example,
due to **temporary conditions** of
temperature,
water and ice appear to be totally
separate entities.

In the same way,
due to karma and negative
emotions - that is, because of
self-grasping –
the confused perception of
dualistic appearance of samsara
came to be.

Although there are all kinds of conditions that lead to water freezing,
ice has never been devoid of the nature of water.

Similarly,
no matter how many different
kinds of sufferings we experience
in the world of samsara,

the nature of our minds has never
changed,
has never been anything other than
the essence of primordial
awareness -
the Dharmakaya.

The Dongpo Köpa (Sutra of the Array of Trunks) states:

*Some world realms
Are burning in immeasurable fires,
But when the sky burns it remains
unchanging.
Such is the self-arising primordial
wisdom.*

As expressed above,
the nature of mind remains the
same, never changing,
but as the next line of the fifth
verse of the Tara prayer reads:

NYI-SU DZIN PAI BAG CHAG-KYI

Yet,
because of habitual grasping to
duality.

The true nature of phenomena is
non-dual wisdom-awareness,
but not recognizing that,

all kinds of appearances
arising out of the confusion of
dualistic perception come about.

all kinds of appearances
arising out of the confusion of
dualistic perception come about.
This confused way of perceiving
reality is not causeless.

We have **accumulated** all kinds of karmic imprints in our minds, and because of **grasping** at an objective reality, we develop **attachment and clinging** to a self.

Due to that,
we become confused,
mistakenly perceiving the six
realms of beings that arise in a
dreamlike appearance.

In the Pramana-vartika, it is stated:

*If there is a self,
then there must be cognition of
other.*

*From the duality of self and other,
attachment and aversion arise.*

*From the interconnection with
these two - all vices arise.*

*Thus,
as long as we have attachment and
aversion,
we will be bound to the realm of
samsara.*

Thus the third line:

***JI-TAR JYE KYANG CHING PA
NAM***

*... beings are bound no matter
what they do.*

If the cause is there,
namely, grasping at an inherent
self of the individual and an
intrinsic self-nature of
phenomena, then no matter what
one does, one will stay bound in
samsara.

If the cause is there,
namely, grasping at an **inherent
self of the individual**
and an **intrinsic self-nature of
phenomena,**

The obscurations of the **kleshas**,
or negative emotions,
bind one to samsara,

and these obscurations come from
the grasping at a self of the
individual.

The subtle obscurations to
omniscience,
which come from grasping at an
intrinsic self-nature of
phenomena,
also bind sentient beings,

and these subtle obscurations are
there

until the arising of the vajra-like
samadhi,

which comes into play **only after**
one has attained the path of
seeing.

**THUG NYI-ME-KYI LHAMÖ
KYAB TU SOL**

**Mother of non-dual wisdom,
please protect us.**

**The Entrance to the Bodhisattva's
Way of Life (Bodhicharya Avatara)
reads:**

*At the time when the material and
the immaterial
Do not abide before the mind,
At that time,
since there is no other object,
All is completely pacified into the
non-referential state.*

**As expressed above,
we are invoking that very
inconceivable non-dual wisdom in
the form of Mother Tara**

and praying to her to protect us
by destroying every single seed of
dualistic perception without
exception.

2.2.5 Knowing to Distinguish Between the Two Truths

The fifth subsection teaches that we must know how to distinguish between the two truths.

As the first line of the sixth verse reads:

**YANG DAG GI DON LA
NE-JE KYANG**

Even though the true nature is like
that, . . .

“True” here refers to the ultimate truth,
or the absolute nature of reality.

When we are speaking from the
context of ultimate truth,
even Milarepa said:

“My Lama Marpa appears but is not inherently real.

I know all appearances are mind.

This mind that appears also is not inherently real.

I know mind to be emptiness.

*This luminous mind, not
inherently real,
is introduced as emptiness,*

*and this emptiness –
not nothingness,
not a void –
is introduced as spontaneous
presence.*

Recognizing the spontaneously present awakened qualities, there are said to be four natural liberations.

In the Sutra Alamkara, it is stated:

*Seeing that there is nothing
outside of the mind,*

*And then realizing that even mind
does not exist,*

*And with that understanding
seeing that both are not real,*

Nor neither,

*is to abide in the basic space of
phenomena - the Dharmadhātu.*

Also, Illustrious Milarepa said,

*No meditator,
nothing to meditate on.*

*No grounds
and no path on which to journey.*

*No resultant kayas or wisdom,
Therefore no nirvana.*

Thus it was spoken,
but who is at that level where there
is no meditation,
no path, no result, and so forth?

Milarepa is speaking of a person who has already actualized the absolute nature, beyond any reference point,

beyond all subject-object
phenomena
and beyond grasping at realness.

In the Heart Sutra,
where it states there are no eyes
and so forth,
this is the view from the context of
ultimate truth.

If one does not understand the law
of cause and effect **that functions**
on the relative plane,
it is a great mistake.

That is why the second line of this sixth verse reads:

**GYU-DRE-KYI TEN-DREL
MI SHE PE**

. . .but they do not understand interdependence of cause and effect on the relative level.

From the point of view of relative
truth,
the Mahasiddha Tilopa said:

*These dependently arising
appearances,*

*Until you realize them to be
unborn,*

*Naropa, do not divorce yourself
from the chariot of the two
accumulations.*

As expressed above,
if we realize the unborn ultimate
truth,
then we will have transcended
karma - the law of cause and
effect.

However,
until we realize this ultimate
nature,
we must continue to apply
ourselves diligently to gathering
the **two accumulations.**

We absolutely must understand the law of cause and effect – what to accept and what to abstain from.

If we do not understand this,
it is said that we will continue to
suffer ceaselessly in samsara.

To understand cause and effect,
we must understand what causes
happiness and what causes
suffering.

In short,
this is summarized in the four lines
taken from the sutra of
instructions given to Angulimala:

Do no negative actions whatsoever.

Engage wholeheartedly in virtuous actions.

Completely tame your own mind.

This is the Buddha's Teaching.

The meaning of these words is expressed by the master Arya Nagarjuna,

who explains what is meant by the line **“Do no negative actions”**:

*Anything coming from the three
poisons –
desire, aversion, and ignorance,
is non-virtue.*

Thus,
non-virtuous mind is understood
to be a mind that is untamed
and non-pacified
and is under the influence of
desire and anger.

**To engage wholeheartedly in
virtue, on the other hand,
is also explained in the same text:**

*Anything coming from a state free
of attachment,
free of anger,
and free of ignorance,
is virtue.*

Thus,
virtuous mind refers to a mind that
is pacified and subdued,
a mind that has been rendered “fit
for action”

a mind that is free from
attachment, aversion, and
ignorance.

**A mind like this is a mind that is
completely tamed.**

The fault of not recognizing this,
not recognizing the
interdependence of cause and
effect on the relative plane,
is emphasized in the third line of
the sixth verse:

SHE-JYAI DON LA MONG PA LA

Those who are ignorant about the
true reality of phenomena . . .

There are **two kinds of omniscience** –
the wisdom that knows the **true nature just as it is**
and the wisdom that sees the **multiplicity of appearances.**

Since we have not yet awakened the wisdom that sees the multiplicity of all appearances,
we are ignorant about the subtle interplay of karma, the law of cause and effect.

Since we have not yet awakened the wisdom that knows the true nature just as it is,

we are ignorant about the absolute nature of ultimate truth.

For the sentient beings who have
wandered astray from the meaning
of the two truths,
the prayer reads:

**YUM KUN-KHYEN GYI LHAMÖ
KYAB-TU SOL**

**... O, Omniscient Mother, please
protect them.**

Apart from the two kinds of
omniscient wisdom,
there is no separate ultimate or
relative truth to speak of.

For the sentient beings in samsara
who do not understand the
teachings on the two truths
and who are lost in ignorance about
the meaning of karma,

we are invoking the wisdom of the
two truths in the relative truth form
of Mother Tara,

and we are praying for protection
to destroy all the seeds of ignorance
regarding the true reality of
phenomena.

3. PART THREE: VIRTUE AT THE CONCLUSION

Thank You Very Much!