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TIBET HOUSE

Cultural Centre of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

FOUR HUNDRED ON THE MIDDLE WAY



ARYADEVA

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*From Aryadeva's Four Hundred Stanzas on the Middle Way: With
Commentary by Gyel-tsap, available from Shambhala Publications*

THE FOUR HUNDRED VERSES

CHAPTER 1

1. If those whose lord is Death himself,
Ruler of the three worlds, without a master,
Sleep soundly like true [vanquishers],
What could be more improper?
2. Those who are born only to die
And whose nature is to be driven,
Appear to be in the act of dying
And not in the act of living.
3. You see the past as brief
Yet see the future differently.
To think both equal or unequal
Is clearly like a cry of fear.
4. Since death is common to others too,
You have no fear of it.
Does jealousy cause suffering
When only one is harmed?
5. Sickness can be cured and aging treated,
Therefore you do not fear them.
Yet there is no cure for the last ordeal;
Thus obviously you fear it.
6. Like cattle intended for slaughter,
Death is common to all.
Moreover when you see others die
Why do you not fear the Lord of Death?
7. If because the time is uncertain
You think you are eternal,
One day the Lord of Death
Will do you injury.
8. If you consider future goals
But not your waning life,
Who would call intelligent
Such selling of yourself?
9. Why do you do ill deeds,
Pledging yourself as security?
Of course, like the wise, you must be
Free of attachment to yourself.

10. No matter whose life, it does not
Differ from the moments of mind.
This people certainly do not perceive.
Thus it is rare to know the self.
11. You would like to live long
But dislike old age;
Amazing! Your behaviour
Seems right to people like you.
12. Why do you grieve at death
On account of your son and others?
When the one that laments is a victim,
How is that not reprehensible?
13. If, unrequested, someone has
Become your son, it is not
Unreasonable if he leaves
Without having asked.
14. Only because of your confusion
You did not notice your son's [indications].
His enthusiasm to go
Is shown by his growing old.
15. A son does not love [his father]
As much as his father loves him.
People in the world go down;
Thus, a high rebirth is hard to find.
16. When he is disobedient
No one will call him lovable.
In that case attachment is
Nothing but a transaction.
17. Suffering caused by separation
Is quickly gone from human hearts.
See, too, attachment's instability,
Indicated by suffering's end.
18. Knowing it is of no benefit,
Still you have injured yourself.
You make yourself a hypocrite,
Which also is improper.
19. People in this world wander,
Full, as it were, of suffering.
Why fill with suffering
People who already suffer?

20. If meeting is a joy to you
Why is parting not also a joy?
Do not meeting and parting
Both seem to go together?
21. When the past is beginningless
And the future endless,
Why do you notice being together
But not, though long, the separations?
22. Time, [consisting of] instants and so forth,
Is certainly like an enemy.
Therefore never be attached
To that which is your enemy.
23. Fool, because you fear separation,
You do not leave home.
Who that is wise does under punishment
What must certainly be done?
24. You may think you must obviously
Go to the forest once this has been done.
Whatever you do must be left behind.
What is the value of having done it?
25. Whoever with certainty has
The thought, "I am going to die,"
Having completely relinquished attachment,
Why would they fear even the Lord of Death?

CHAPTER 2

26. Although the body is seen like a foe,
Nevertheless it should be protected.
By long sustaining a disciplined one
Great merit is created.
27. When human suffering is produced
By the body, and pleasure by other [factors],
Why are you devoted to
This hull, a container of suffering?
28. When humans do not have
As much pleasure as pain,
Should so much pain
Be considered negligible?
29. Ordinary people are bent on pleasure;
Those who have pleasure are hard to find.
Thus it is as if transitory
Beings are pursued by suffering.
30. Suffering is found at will,
But what pleasure is there at will?
Why do you value the rare
But do not fear the plentiful?
31. A comfortable body
Is a container of suffering.
Thus valuing the body and
Valuing a foe both seem alike.
32. The body, however long one spends,
Will not in itself become pleasurable.
To say its nature can be overruled
By other factors is improper.
33. The high have mental suffering;
For the common it comes from the body.
Day by day, both kinds of suffering
Overwhelm people in the world.
34. Pleasure is governed by thoughts;
Thoughts are governed by pain.
Thus there is nothing anywhere
More powerful than pain.

35. With the passage of time
Pain increases.
Pleasure, therefore, seems as if
Alien to this body.
36. There seem to be many causes
Of suffering, like sickness and others,
But humans do not seem to have
As many causes of pleasure.
37. With the intensification of pleasure
Its opposite is seen to occur.
With the intensification of pain
There will not likewise be its opposite.
38. With the conditions for pleasure
Its opposite is seen.
With the conditions for pain
There is not its opposite.
39. When you have spent, are spending
And will spend time dying,
It is not at all proper to call
The process of dying pleasurable.
40. When beings with bodies are constantly
Afflicted by hunger and so forth,
It is not at all proper to call
Being afflicted pleasurable.
41. Though powerless, the combining of
All the elements produces [the body];
Thus it is not at all proper to call
What is incompatible pleasurable.
42. When there is never that
Which will relieve cold and so forth,
It is not at all proper to call
Being destroyed pleasurable.
43. When on earth no action is
Done without exertion,
It is not at all proper to call
Performing actions pleasurable.

44. In this [life] and in others, always
One should guard against ill deeds.
Calling them pleasurable is not at all
Proper when there are bad transmigrations
45. There is never any pleasure
For humans in riding and so forth.
How can that which at the start
Does not begin, in the end increase?
46. Thinking the alleviation
Of pain is pleasure
Is like someone who feels delight
Vomiting into a gold pot.
47. By beginning it stops the produced --
How can pain that begins be pleasure?
It seems the Subduer therefore said
Both birth and cessation are suffering.
48. If common beings do not see suffering
Because pleasure disguises it,
Why is there no pleasure
Which obscures suffering?
49. Common beings must be told, "You are not
Free from attachment to suffering."
Certainly Tathagatas therefore have said
This is the worst confusion of all.
50. The impermanent is definitely harmed.
What is harmed is not pleasurable.
Therefore all that is impermanent
Is said to be suffering.

CHAPTER 3

51. Regardless of the amount of time,
Concerning objects there is no limit.
Your exertion for the body's sake
Is useless like a bad physician's.
52. Just as the craving for earth
Does not stop in those that subsist on it,
Similarly, longing for sensual pleasure
Grows in people as they indulge.
53. Among all women there is not the least
Difference in sexual intercourse.
When others, too, enjoy her appearance,
What use is this perfect woman to you?
54. Whoever sees her as appealing
Thinks himself satisfied with her.
Since even dogs and the like share this,
Why, fool, are you attracted?
55. This woman, every part of whom is
Lovely to you, was common to all before.
Finding her is not as
Astonishing as it is for you.
56. If those with good qualities seem attractive And their opposite
the reverse,
Which is true, former or latter?
For neither alone persists.
57. A fool's desire does not arise
Only for those with good qualities.
How can reason prevent
Those involved in it without reason?
58. As long as she knows no other
She will remain with you.
As with disease, women should always be
Kept from opportunity.
59. In old age one dislikes
What one did during youth.
Why would the liberated not
Be extremely saddened by it?

60. Those without desire have no pleasure,
Nor do those not foolish have it.
How can there be pleasure for one
Whose mind constantly strays?
61. You cannot have intercourse constantly
With a woman to match your attentiveness to her.
Why keep her possessively with the thought,
"She is mine and no one else's."
62. If desire were pleasurable
There would be no need for women.
Pleasure is not regarded as
Something of which to get rid.
63. Even in intercourse with a woman
Pleasure arises from other [factors].
What sensible person would say
It is caused just by his lover?
64. Blinded by desire they do not see
Sensuality's faults, like a leper scratching. Those free from
desire see the infatuated
As suffering like the leper.
65. During a famine the destitute,
Tormented by hunger, [bear] what occurs.
This is how all the infatuated
Behave when they are with women.
66. Through arrogance one may be
Attached even to one's privy.
Anyone infatuated with
A woman will be jealous of others
67. It is reasonable for confusion
And anger about the unclean to occur;
It is not at all reasonable
For desire to occur.
68. If, except to some people,
A pot of filth is objectionable,
Why would one not think objectionable
That from which the filth comes?
69. Clean things are looked upon
As the most worthless of all.
What intelligent person
Would say that it is clean?

70. Whoever has lived in a privy
And without it would not have survived,
In such a dung-worm, arrogance
Arises only through stupidity.
71. No means whatsoever will purify
The inside of the body.
The efforts you make towards the outside
Do not match those towards the inside.
72. If, like leprosy, being full of
Urine were not common to all,
Those full of urine, just like lepers,
Would be shunned by everyone.
73. Just as someone lacking a part
Is delighted with a substitute nose,
Desire holds that impurity is
Remedied by flowers and so forth.
74. It is inappropriate to call clean that
Towards which freedom from desire arises.
Nor is there anything which is
A definitive cause of desire.
75. In summary, all four, that is
Impermanence, uncleanness, suffering
And selflessness are possible
With regard to a single [thing].

CHAPTER 4

76. Who that is wise about worldly existence
Would be arrogant, thinking "I" and mine",
For all things belong equally
To all embodied beings.
77. Society's servant, paid with a sixth part,
Why are you so arrogant?
Your becoming the agent of actions
Depends on being placed in control.
78. When those in his care receive their due,
They think of their master as the giver.
When the master gives what is to be given,
He thinks with conceit, "I am the giver."
79. That which you wrongly regard,
Others [consider] a source of suffering.
Living by working for others,
What causes you pleasure?
80. When a ruler seems to be the protector
Of his people, as well as protected,
Why be proud because of the one?
Why not free from pride because of the other?
81. Those in each caste prefer their own work;
Thus a living is hard to find.
If you become non-virtuous
Good transmigrations will be scarce for you.
82. Those who act at others' insistence
Are called fools on this earth.
There is no one else at all
So dependent on others as you.
83. Claiming: "Protection depends on me,"
You take payment from the people,
But if you perform ill deeds,
Who is equally merciless?
84. If people who do ill deeds
Should not be treated with mercy,
All ordinary childish people
Would also not need to be protected.

85. There is nothing that will not serve
As a reason for happiness.
Reasons such as scriptural statements
Will not destroy demerit.
86. If giving proper protection is
A ruler's religious practice,
Why would the toil of artisans too
Not be religious practice?
87. This example shows the ruler on whom
The people rely as reprehensible.
The excellent see attachment to existence
As mother of all those in the world.
88. The sensible do not acquire kingship.
Since fools have no compassion,
These merciless rulers of men,
Although protectors, are irreligious.
89. Sages' activities are not all
[Actions] that the wise perform,
For there are inferior,
Mediocre and superior ones.
90. Virtuous rulers of the past
Protected the people like their children.
Through the practices of this time of strife
It is now like a waste without wildlife.
91. If a king who seizes the occasion
To harm is not doing wrong,
Then others, too, such as thieves
Have not done so in the first place.
92. If giving all one has for liquor
And so on is not an offering,
Why consider it an offering
To give oneself in battle?
93. You, the king, guardian of the people,
Have no guardian yourself.
Since your guardianship does not
Release you, who would be happy?
94. Though a king is famous after his death
It will bring no benefit.
Do you, being worthless, and those who
Cook dogs not have notoriety?

95. When all power and wealth
Are produced by merit,
It cannot be said that this one
Will not be a basis for power and wealth.
96. In the world caste is determined
With regard to the main means of livelihood.
There is no division among
All sentient beings by way of caste.
97. Since it was very long ago
And women's minds are fickle,
There is no one from the caste
Known as the royal caste.
98. If even one of common caste
Through his work could become royal caste,
One might wonder why even a commoner
Should not become Brahmin through his work.
99. A king's ill deeds cannot be
Distributed like his wealth.
What wise person ever destroys
Their future for another's sake?
100. Pride caused by power and wealth,
Once one has looked at others
With equal or superior power,
Does not remain in the hearts of the wise.

CHAPTER 5

101. Not a single movement of Buddhas
Is without reason; even their breathing
Is exclusively for
The benefit of sentient beings.
102. Just as ordinary people are
Terrified by the words "Lord of Death",
So the words "Omniscient One"
Terrify the Lord of Death.
103. A Subduer has [perception of] that
Which should or should not be done or said.
What reason is there to say
That the Omniscient One is not all-knowing?
104. Without intention, actions like going
Are not seen to have merit and so forth.
In all actions, therefore, the mind
Should be understood as paramount.
105. In Bodhisattvas, through their intention,
All actions, virtuous and non-virtuous,
Become perfect virtue because
They are in control of their minds.
106. The merit of Bodhisattvas with
The first intention far exceeds
That which would make all beings on earth
Become universal monarchs.
107. Someone may build a precious
Reliquary, as high as the world;
It is said training others to generate
The altruistic intention is more excellent.
108. A spiritual guide who wishes to help
Must be attentive towards students.
They are called students because
Of not knowing what will benefit.
109. Just as a physician is not upset with
Someone who rages while possessed by a demon, Subduers see
disturbing attitudes as
The enemy, not the person who has them.

110. That for which someone has
Liking should first be assessed.
Those who are disinclined will not
Be vessels for the excellent doctrine.
111. Just as a mother is especially
Anxious about a sick child,
Bodhisattvas are especially
Compassionate towards the unwise.
112. They become students of some
And become teachers of others,
Making beings who do not understand,
Understand through skillful means and knowledge.
113. Just as for an experienced physician
A sickness that cannot be cured is rare,
Once Bodhisattvas have found their strength, Those they
cannot train are extremely few.
114. If some within a Bodhisattva's sphere,
Lacking encouragement go
To bad rebirths, that one will be
Criticized by others with intelligence.
115. How can one unwilling to say
That compassion for the oppressed is good,
Later out of compassion
Give to the protectorless?
116. When those indifferent towards one
Who stays in the world while it lasts
To help transmigrators, suffer loss,
What doubt about those who are hostile?
117. One who in all lives has the five
Super-knowledges [appears] as inferior
With a nature like the inferior --
This is extremely hard to do.
118. The Tathagata said that the merit
Gathered constantly through skilful means
For a very long time is immeasurable
Even for the omniscient.
119. The word "giving" indicates
Death, practice and other existences.
That is why the word "giving" always
Is of interest to Bodhisattvas.

120. When one thinks that by giving gifts now
There will be a great result,
Receiving and giving are like trade
For profit, which will be criticized.
121. For one who before even did
Ill deeds, they will have no [effect].
There is nothing one with virtue
Considers should not be accomplished.
122. Even here nothing harms
One with a powerful mind, and thus
For such a one, worldly existence
And nirvana are no different.
123. Why should anyone who takes birth
Through constant control of the mind
Not become a ruler
Of the entire world?
124. Even in this world among excellent things Some are seen to be
most excellent.
Thus realize that certainly also
Inconceivable power exists.
125. Just as the ignorant feel afraid
Of the extremely profound doctrine,
So the weak feel afraid
Of the marvellous doctrine.

CHAPTER 6

126. If desire increases through pleasure
And anger increases through pain,
Why are those with pleasure not ascetics?
Why are the ascetics those with pain?
127. Desire's activity is acquisition;
Anger's activity is conflict.
As wind is to all the elements,
Confusion's activity is nurture.
128. Desire is painful because of not getting;
Anger is painful through lack of might,
And confusion through not understanding.
Because of this, these are not recognized.
129. Just as it is seen that bile
Does not occur with phlegm,
One sees that desire, too,
Does not occur with anger.
130. Desire should be driven like a slave
Because severity is its cure,
And anger looked upon as a lord
Because indulgence is its cure.
131. First there is confusion,
In the middle there is anger,
And later there is desire,
In three stages during the day.
132. Desire is no friend, but seems like one,
Which is why you do not fear it.
But shouldn't people particularly
Rid themselves of a harmful friend?
133. Desire arises from causes and
Also arises through circumstance.
Desire arising through circumstance
Is easy to deal with; not the other.
134. Anger is lasting and certainly
Makes one do grave non-virtue.
Thus constant awareness of their distinctions
Will bring to an end disturbing attitudes.

135. As the tactile sense [pervades] the body
Confusion is present in them all.
By overcoming confusion one will also
Overcome all disturbing attitudes.
136. When dependent arising is seen
Confusion will not occur.
Thus every effort has been made here
To explain precisely this subject.
137. They always like "Claiming the Earth",
Are extravagant, greedy and fastidious.
Characteristics such as these
Are seen in people with desire.
138. Buddhas told those with desire
That food, clothes and dwellings are all
To be avoided and to remain
Close to their spiritual guides.
139. Through anger, those who are powerless
Only make themselves look ugly;
But one who has power and is merciless
Is said to be the worst.
140. It is said unpleasant words
End previously done ill deeds.
The ignorant and unwise do not
Want to purify themselves.
141. Though unpleasant to hear
They are not intrinsically harmful.
Thus thinking what comes from preconception
Comes from elsewhere is fantasy.
142. Just as it plainly says
The abuser should be punished,
Likewise why should one who speaks
Pleasantly not be rewarded?
143. If that for which you are reviled
Is known to others though they are not told,
And anger at the speaker is unreasonable,
How much more so towards those who lie.

144. Abuse from inferiors
Does not ensure escape.
Abuse from inferiors thus should be
Seen as isolated and trivial.
145. If harming others is not even
Of the slightest use to you,
Your approval of useless aggressiveness
Is just an addiction.
146. If through patience enormous merit
Is acquired effortlessly,
Who is as foolish as
One who obstructs this?
147. Aggressiveness especially
Does not arise towards the powerful.
Why then do you approve of
Aggressiveness which defeats the weak?
148. Whoever is patient with the source
Of anger develops meditation.
Saying you fear the source of
Good qualities is just foolish of you.
149. Who has gone to the next world
Having ended all disparagement?
Therefore consider contempt
Preferable to ill deeds.
150. Disturbing attitudes will never
Remain in the mind of one
Who understands the reality of
The abiding and so forth of consciousness.

CHAPTER 7

151. When there is no end at all
To this ocean of suffering,
Why are you childish people
Not afraid of drowning in it?
152. Youth lies behind and then
Once more it is ahead.
Though [one imagines] it will last,
In this world it is like a race.
153. In worldly existence there is never
Rebirth of one's own free will.
Being under others' control,
Who with intelligence would be fearless?
154. The future is endless and
You were always a common being.
Act so that it will never again
Be as it was in the past.
155. The conjunction of a listener,
What is to be heard and an exponent
Is very rare; thus, in brief, the cycle of
Rebirths neither has nor has not an end.
156. Most people cling to
An unwholesome direction.
Thus certainly most common beings
Go to bad transmigrations.
157. On earth the maturation of ill deeds
Is seen to be only deleterious.
Thus to the wise the world appears
Similar to a slaughterhouse.
158. If one is insane because
One's mind is unstable,
What wise person would say that those
In worldly existence are not insane?
159. The pain of walking, one sees,
Decreases when doing the opposite.
Thus the intelligent generate
The intention to end all action.

160. When a single effect's original cause
Is not seen, and one sees the extensiveness
With regard to even a single effect,
Who would not be afraid?
161. Since all results will not definitely
Be achieved, and those that are
Will certainly come to an end,
Why exhaust [yourself] for their sake?
162. Work done with effort, effortlessly
Disintegrates once it is done.
Though this is so, still you are not
At all free from attachment to actions.
163. There is no pleasure in relation to
Either the past or the future.
That which occurs now, too, is passing.
Why do you weary yourself?
164. The wise feel the same fear even for
A high rebirth as for the hells.
It is rare indeed for a worldly state
Not to produce fear in them.
165. If childish people ever perceived
The suffering of cyclic existence,
At that moment both their mind
[And body] would completely fail.
166. People without pride are rare,
And the proud have no compassion.
Thus it is said to be very rare
To go from light to light.
167. Whoever renounces them now
Will, it is said, obtain sense objects.
For what reason would such perverse
Practice be considered correct?
168. Wealth, the result of merit,
Must be thoroughly protected from others.
How can that which must be constantly
Protected from others be one's own?
169. Different social customs
Are termed "religious practices".
Thus it seems as if society has
More influence than religious practices.

170. Through virtue there are attractive objects;
Such objects, too, are considered bad.
By giving them up, one will be happy.
What need is there to acquire them?
171. For one not in need of authority,
Practices for that [end] are meaningless.
Whoever strives for authority
Is called a fool among men.
172. With a view to future effects
You grasp at practices out of greed.
When you see the future outcome
Why are you not afraid?
173. As for a wage-earner, merit is
In every way just like a wage.
How could those who do not want
Virtue do what is non-virtuous?
174. Whoever sees phenomena as like
A collection of mechanical devices
And like illusory beings,
Most clearly reaches the excellent state.
175. For those who do not enjoy
Any objects in cyclic existence
It is altogether impossible
To take pleasure in this [world].

CHAPTER 8

176. Just as friendship between people
Who disagree does not last long,
Desire does not last long
When all things' faults are recognized.
177. Some are attracted to it,
Some have aversion to it,
Some feel confused by it:
Thus desire has no object.
178. Apart from conceptuality,
Desire and so forth have no existence.
Who with intelligence would hold [there are]
Real things [imputed by] conceptuality?
179. None is, as it were,
Bound to another.
It is unfeasible to separate
That which is bound together.
180. Those with little merit
Do not even doubt this doctrine.
Entertaining just a doubt
Tears to tatters worldly existence.
181. The Subduer said of this doctrine
There will be increase until liberation.
Anyone who lacks interest in it
Clearly has no sense.
182. What is not empty is not regarded
As empty, thinking one will attain nirvana.
Tathagatas say that nirvana
Will not be attained through wrong views.
183. Whatever contains teaching
About the world speaks of engagement.
Whatever contains elucidation
Of the ultimate speaks of disengagement.
184. Thinking, "Nothing exists, what is the use?"
You may be afraid,
But if actions did exist,
This doctrine would not be a prevention.

185. While attached to your own position
And disliking others' positions
You will not approach nirvana;
Both [kinds of] conduct will not bring peace.
186. Not acting brings about nirvana;
Acting again brings worldly existence.
Thus, without complication, nirvana
Is easy to attain, but not the latter.
187. How can anyone who has no aversion
To this take an interest in pacification?
Like [leaving] home, it is also hard
To leave worldly existence behind.
188. One sees that some who are overwhelmed
By suffering long for death,
Yet entirely due to their confusion
They will not reach the excellent state.
189. Giving is taught to the lowest
And ethics to the middling.
Pacification is taught to the best;
Therefore, always do the best!
190. First prevent the demeritorious,
Next prevent [ideas of a coarse] self;
Later prevent views of all kinds.
Whoever knows of this is wise.
191. Whoever sees one thing
Is said to see all.
That which is the emptiness of one
Is the emptiness of all.
192. Tathagatas speak of attachment to practices
To those who want a high rebirth.
That is disparaged for those who want freedom --
What need to mention other [attachments]?
193. Those who want merit should not
Always speak of emptiness.
Doesn't a medicinal compound
Turn to poison in the wrong case?

194. Just as a barbarian cannot be
Guided in a foreign language,
Ordinary people cannot be guided
Except by way of the ordinary.
195. Teaching existence, non-existence,
Both existence and non-existence, and neither
Surely are medicines for all
That are influenced by the sickness.
196. Correct perception [leads to] the supreme state,
Some perception to good transmigrations.
The wise thus always expand their intelligence
To think about the inner nature.
197. Through knowing reality, even if now
One does not attain nirvana,
One will certainly gain it effortlessly
In a later life, as it is with actions.
198. Accomplishment of all intended
Actions is extremely uncommon.
It is not that nirvana is absent here
But conjunction and the released are rare.
199. On hearing the body lacks good qualities,
Attachment does not last long.
Will not all disturbing attitudes
End by means of this very path?
200. Just as the end of a seed is seen
Though it has no beginning,
When the causes are incomplete
Birth, too, will not occur.

CHAPTER 9

201. All are produced for their effect,
Thus none are permanent.
There are no Tathagatas other than
Subduers [who cognize] things as they are.
202. There is not anywhere anything
That ever exists without depending.
Thus never is there anywhere
Anything that is permanent.
203. There is no functional thing without a cause,
Nor anything permanent which has a cause.
Thus the one who knows suchness said what has
Come about causelessly does not exist.
204. If the unproduced is permanent
Because impermanent [things] are seen to be products,
Seeing that the produced exists
Would make the permanent non-existent.
205. That space and so forth are permanent
Is a conception of common beings.
For the wise they are not objects perceived
Even by conventional [valid cognition].
206. A single direction is not present
Wherever there is that which has directions.
That with directions therefore clearly
Also has other directional parts.
207. Since it exists, functional things
Are seen to start and stop.
It is governed by other factors;
Thus it is also an effect.
208. Any cause without an effect
Has no existence as a cause.
Therefore it follows that
Causes must be effects.
209. When a cause undergoes change
It becomes the cause of something else.
Anything that undergoes change
Should not be called permanent.

210. A thing with a permanent cause is produced
By that which has not come into being.
Whatever happens by itself
Cannot have a cause.
211. How can that which is produced
By a permanent thing be impermanent?
Never are the two, cause and effect,
Seen to have incompatible characteristics.
212. That of which some sides are causes
While other sides are not is thereby
Multifarious. How can that
Which is multifarious be permanent?
213. The cause which is spherical
Is not present in the effect.
Thus complete interpenetration
Of particles is not feasible.
214. One particle's position is not
Asserted as also that of another.
Thus it is not asserted that
Cause and effect are the same size.
215. Whatever has an eastern side
Also has an eastern part.
Those whose particles have sides admit
That they are not [partless] particles.
216. The front takes up, the back relinquishes -
Whatever does not have
Both of these [motions]
Is not something which moves.
217. That which does not have a front,
Nor any middle,
And which does not have a rear,
Being invisible, who will see it?
218. The effect destroys the cause;
Therefore the cause is not permanent.
Alternatively, where the cause
Exists the effect does not.
219. A permanent thing that is obstructive
Is not seen anywhere.
Therefore Buddhas never say
That particles are permanent.

220. If liberation which is other than
What binds, is bound and the means existed,
It should not be called liberation
Since nothing is produced from it.
221. In nirvana there are no aggregates
And there cannot be a person.
What nirvana is there for one
Who is not seen in nirvana?
222. When free from attachment at liberation
What good is the existence of consciousness?
Also to exist without consciousness
Is clearly the same as not existing.
223. If at liberation a self existed
There could be a seed of consciousness.
Without it there is no speculation
With regard to worldly existence.
224. It is certain that those liberated
From suffering have no other [self].
Therefore the end of the self
Should always be affirmed as good.
225. The conventional is preferable
But the ultimate never is.
Ordinary people have some [belief in this]
But none in the ultimate.

CHAPTER 10

226. When the inner self is not
Female, male or neuter,
It is only out of ignorance
That you think your own self male.
227. When all the elements are not
Male, female or neuter,
How is that which depends on them
Male, female or neuter?
228. Your self is not my self; thus there is
No such self, since it is not ascertained.
Does the conception not arise
In relation to impermanent things?
229. From one rebirth to another
The person changes like the body.
It is illogical for yours to be
Separate from the body and permanent.
230. Intangible things do not
Produce so-called motivity.
Thus the life force is not
Agent of the body's movements.
231. Why [teach] non-violence and wonder about
Conditions for a permanent self?
A diamond never has to be
Protected against woodworm.
232. If your self is permanent
Because of remembering other lives,
How can your body be impermanent
When you see a scar previously formed?
233. If the self when possessing that
Which has mind is a knower,
By that [same argument] that which has mind would be
Mindless and the person permanent.
234. A life force which has pleasure and so forth
Appears as varied as pleasure and so forth.
Thus like pleasure it is not
Suitable as something permanent.

235. If consciousness is permanent
An agent is superfluous.
If fire is permanent
Fuel is unnecessary.
236. A substantial entity, unlike an action,
Does not alter until it disintegrates.
Thus it is improper to claim
The person exists but consciousness does not.
237. At times one sees potential consciousness,
At others consciousness itself.
Because of being like molten iron
The person undergoes change.
238. Merely [a small part with] mind is conscious
But the person is as vast as space.
Therefore it would seem as though
Its nature is not to be conscious.
239. If the self is in everyone then why
Does another not think of this one as "I"?
It is unacceptable to say that
It is obscured by itself.
240. There is no difference between
The insane and those for whom
The attributes are the creator
But are never conscious.
241. What is more illogical
Than that the attributes should always
Know how to construct homes and so forth
But not know how to experience them.
242. The active is not permanent.
The ubiquitous is actionless.
The actionless is like the non-existent.
Why do you not prefer selflessness?
243. Some see it as ubiquitous and for some
The person is the mere [size of the] body.
Some see it as a mere particle.
The wise see it as non-existent.

244. How can what is permanent be harmed,
Or the unharmed be liberated?
Liberation is irrelevant
For one whose self is permanent.
245. If the self exists it is inappropriate
To think there is no self
And false to claim one attains nirvana
Through certain knowledge of reality.
246. If it exists at liberation
It should not be non-existent before.
It is explained that what is seen
Without anything is its nature.
247. If the impermanent discontinues
How could there be grass at present?
If, indeed, this were true,
No one would have ignorance either.
248. Even if the self exists
Form is seen to arise from other [causes],
To continue by virtue of others
And to disintegrate through others.
249. Just as the sprout which is a product
Is produced from a product, the seed,
Similarly all that is impermanent
Comes from the impermanent.
250. Since functional things arise
There is no discontinuation
And because they cease
There is no permanence.

CHAPTER 11

251. The present pot and the past one
Do not exist in the future pot.
Since both would be future,
The future would not exist.
252. If a disintegrated thing exists as
A future entity in the future,
How can what is future in nature
Become that which is past?
253. Because of being future in nature
A future functional thing
Is thus present
And cannot be future.
254. If the future, past and present exist,
What does not exist?
How can there be impermanence
For one for whom all times exist?
255. If it has passed beyond the past
Why is it the past?
If it has not passed beyond the past
Why is it the past?
255. If it has passed beyond the past
Why is it the past?
If it has not passed beyond the past
Why is it the past?
257. If the future is impermanent because
Though not produced it disintegrates,
Since the past does not disintegrate
Why not consider it permanent?
258. If the past and present
Are not impermanent,
The third which is different
From these is also not.
259. If a thing which will be produced
Later, exists beforehand,
The contention of Niyativadins
Is not erroneous.

260. To say something which will be made to occur
Already exists is unreasonable.
If that which exists is produced,
What has been produced will arise again.
261. If future things are seen,
Why is the non-existent not seen?
For one for whom the future exists
There can be no distant [time].
262. If virtue exists though nothing is done,
Resolute restraint is meaningless.
If even a little is done
The effect cannot exist.
263. If they are impermanent
How can it be said effects exist?
That which has a beginning and end
Is called impermanent in the world.
264. Liberation will occur without exertion;
For the liberated there is no future;
Or otherwise, if this were so,
Desire would arise without attachment.
265. For those who assert effects exist,
And for those who assert effects do not exist,
Adornments like pillars and so forth
For a home are purposeless.
266. The transformation of things also
Is not perceived even by the mind.
Those who lack wisdom nevertheless
Think that the present exists.
267. How can there be things with no duration?
Being impermanent, how can they endure?
If they had duration first,
They would not grow old in the end.
268. Just as a single consciousness
Cannot apprehend two objects,
Similarly two consciousnesses
Cannot apprehend one object.
269. If time has duration
Duration is not time.
If it has not, without duration
There will also be no end.

270. If impermanence and things are separate
Things are not impermanent.
If one, since things are precisely that which is
Impermanent, how can they have duration?
270. If impermanence and things are separate
Things are not impermanent.
If one, since things are precisely that which is
Impermanent, how can they have duration?
272. If impermanence is not weaker
And is present in all things,
None of them will have duration
Or not all are impermanent.
273. If there is always impermanence,
There cannot always be duration;
Or else that which was permanent
Later becomes impermanent.
274. If things have duration
And impermanence together,
Either it is wrong that things are impermanent,
Or duration is a fallacy.
275. Things seen do not reappear,
Nor does awareness arise again.
Thus memory is in fact deceived
With regard to a deceptive object.

CHAPTER 12

276. An unprejudiced, intelligent and interested
Listener is called a vessel.
Neither the teacher's nor the student's
Good qualities will be taken as faults.
277. He explained existence and its causes,
The means to peace and peace itself.
What people do not understand
Is seen as the Subduer's [fault].
278. These strange people all agree that by
Giving up everything one attains nirvana.
For what reason do they dislike
That which puts an end to all?
279. How will one who does not know
The means to give it up, do so?
Certainly, therefore, the Subduer has said
There is no peace in any other [teaching].
280. Whoever doubts what the Buddha said
About that which is hidden
Should rely on emptiness
And gain conviction in him alone.
281. Those who find it hard to see
This world are ignorant of others.
Those who follow them will be
Misled for a very long time.
282. The unwise take no delight in letting
Their mind follow a guide
Who has done that which is
Most difficult - attaining nirvana.
283. When it is not seen, fear does not begin.
When seen, it stops completely.
Thus one can say with certainty:
Those who know a little are afraid.
284. Childish beings are certainly only
Familiar with that which involves them.
Because of unfamiliarity
They fear that which extricates them.

285. If someone who is shrouded in
Complete ignorance and impedes suchness
Will not even attain good fortune,
What need to mention liberation?
286. Lapsing from ethics is preferable
To lapsing from the view.
Through ethics one gains a high rebirth;
The supreme state is reached by means of the view.
287. For the unreceptive, conceptions of a self are best;
To teach them selflessness is not.
They would go to bad rebirths,
While the extraordinary attain peace.
288. There is no other door to peace,
And it destroys wrong views.
That which is the object of
All Buddhas is called selflessness.
289. The unreceptive are terrified
Just by its very name.
What so-called strong man is seen
Who does not frighten the weak?
290. This principle is not taught
By Tathagatas for the sake of debate,
Yet it burns up others' contentions
As fire does its fuel.
291. Whoever knows this teaching
Will not relish others.
Thus to me this teaching seems
Like the door to destruction.
292. For those who think there is
In reality no self and abide in this thought,
How will existence cause pleasure
Or non-existence cause fear?
293. Seeing the many Forders
Who are seeds of futility,
Who would not feel pity
For people who long for a teaching?

294. The teaching of the Shakyas,
Nigranthas and Brahmins are perceived
By the mind, the eye and the ears.
Thus the Subduer's teaching is subtle.
295. Brahmin practices are said
Mainly to be an outward show.
The practices of Nigranthas
Are said to be mainly stultifying.
296. Brahmins are revered
Because they adopt the orthodox.
Nigranthas are pitied
Because they adopt the deluded.
297. Suffering is a maturation
And thus is not virtuous.
Similarly, birth too is not virtuous,
Being a maturation of actions.
298. In brief Tathagatas explain
Virtue as non-violence
And emptiness as nirvana -
Here there are only these two.
299. To ordinary people their own position,
Like their birthplace, is attractive.
Why would you find attractive
That which precludes it?
300. The intelligent who seek what is good
Adopt what is worthwhile even from others.
Does the sun not belong to all
On earth who have sight?

CHAPTER 13

301. When seeing its form the whole pot
Is not in fact seen. Who that knows
Reality would claim that the pot
Is directly perceptible also?
302. By means of this very analysis
Those with superior intelligence
Should refute individually
All that is fragrant, sweet and soft.
303. If because the form is seen
Everything is seen,
Why because of what is not seen
Would the form not be unseen?
304. There is no direct perception
Of just the form alone,
Because it has a close and distant
As well as a central part.
305. This also applies when one examines
Whether particles have parts or not.
Thus to prove a thesis by that
Which must be proved is not feasible.
306. Everything too is a component
As well as being a composite;
Thus even a spoken syllable
Does not have existence here.
307. If shape is distinct from colour
How is shape apprehended?
If not distinct, why would the body
Not also apprehend colour?
308. Only the form is visible
But the form's causes are not seen.
If indeed it is thus, why are both
Not also perceived by just the eyes.
309. Earth is seen as firm and stable
And is apprehended by the body.
Only that which is tangible
Is referred to as earth.

310. Since it was produced as something visible,
It is of no use at all to the pot.
As with the production of visibility,
It lacks even the entity of existence.
311. The eye, like the ear, is an outcome of
The elements. The eye sees while the others do not.
Certainly therefore the Subduer said
The fruition of actions is inconceivable.
312. Because the conditions are incomplete
There is no awareness before looking,
While afterwards awareness is of no use;
The instrument is of no use in the third case.
313. If the eye travels, that which is
Distant would take long to see.
Why are extremely close
And very distant forms not clear?
314. If the eye travels when the form is seen
Its movement is of no benefit.
Alternatively it is false to say
What it intends to view is ascertained.
315. If the eye perceives without travelling
It would see all these phenomena.
For that which does not travel there is
Neither distance nor obscuration.
316. If the nature of all things
First appears in themselves,
Why would the eye not
Be perceived by the eye itself?
317. The eye does not have consciousness
And consciousness lacks that which looks.
If form has neither of these,
How can they see form?
318. If sound makes a noise as it travels
Why should it not be a speaker?
Yet if it travels noiselessly, how could
Awareness arise in relation to it?
319. If sound is apprehended through contact,
What apprehends the beginning of sound?
If sound does not come alone,
How can it be apprehended in isolation?

320. While sound is not heard, it is not sound.
It is impossible
For that which is not sound
Finally to turn into sound.
321. Without the sense organs what will mind
Do after it has gone?
If it were so, why would that which lives
Not always be without mind?
322. An object already seen
Is perceived by mind like a mirage.
That which posits all phenomena
Is called the aggregate of recognition.
323. In dependence upon the eye and form
Mind arises like an illusion.
It is not reasonable to call
Illusory that which has existence.
324. When there is nothing on earth
That does not amaze the wise,
Why think cognition by the senses
And suchlike are amazing.
325. The firebrand's ring and magical creations,
Dreams, illusions, and the moon in water,
Mists, echoes, mirages, clouds
And worldly existence are alike.

CHAPTER 14

326. If a thing did not depend
On anything else at all
It would be self-established,
But such a thing exists nowhere.
327. "The form is a pot" -- they are not one.
The pot that has form is not separate.
The pot does not have form,
Nor does the form have a pot.
328. Since the two are seen to have dissimilar
Characteristics, if the pot is separate
From existence, why would existence
Not also be separate from the pot?
329. If one is not accepted as the pot
The pot also is not one.
Moreover possession is not reciprocal,
Therefore also it is not one.
330. If the form is the size of the substance,
Why is the form not large?
If the opponent were not different
Scriptural sources could be cited.
331. By virtue of its characteristic
The characterized does not exist.
Such a thing has no existence
As something different from number and so forth.
332. Because the pot is not separate
From its characteristics, it is not one.
If there is not a pot for each,
Plurality is not feasible.
333. The tangible and the intangible
Cannot be said to coalesce.
Thus it is in no way feasible
For these forms to coalesce.
334. Form is a component of the pot
And thus, for a start, is not the pot.
Since the compound does not exist,
Neither do the components.

335. If the definition of form
Applies without incongruity
To all forms, for what reason
Is one a pot and not all others?
336. If you assert form is distinct from
Taste and so forth but not from the pot,
How can that which does not exist
Without these not be distinct from form?
337. The pot has no causes
And is itself not an effect.
Thus there is no pot at all
Apart from form and so forth.
338. If the pot exists by virtue of its causes
And those causes by virtue of others,
How can that which does not exist
By virtue of itself produce something disparate?
339. Though they meet and come together
Form cannot be smell.
Therefore like the pot
The composite cannot be one.
340. Just as the pot does not exist
Apart from form and so forth,
Likewise form does not exist
Apart from air and so forth.
341. That which is hot is fire but how
Can that burn which is not hot?
Thus so-called fuel does not exist
And without it fire too does not.
342. Even if it is hot only when
Overpowered, why is it not fire?
Yet if not hot, to say fire contains
Something else is not plausible.
343. If the particle has no fuel
Fire without fuel exists.
If even it has fuel, a single-natured
Particle does not exist.

344. When different things are examined
None of them have singleness.
Because there is no singleness
There is no plurality either.
345. Though they assert that where there are none
Of those things there is singleness,
Singleness does not exist
Since everything is threefold.
346. The approach of existence, non-existence,
Both existence and non-existence, and neither,
Should always be applied by those
With mastery to oneness and so forth.
347. When the continuum is misapprehended,
Things are said to be permanent.
Similarly when composites are
Misapprehended, things are said to exist.
348. Anything that has dependent arising
Is not independent.
All these are not independent,
Therefore there is no self.
349. Things do not assemble
Unless there is an effect.
Aggregation for an effect
Is not included for the Exalted.
350. The awareness that is the seed of existence
Has objects as its sphere of activity.
When selflessness is seen in objects,
The seed of existence is destroyed.

CHAPTER 15

351. If what does not exist at the last is produced
How can the non-existent be produced?
If what exists from the outset is produced
How can that which exists be produced?
352. Since the effect destroys the cause,
That which does not exist will not be produced.
Nor will that which exists be produced
Since what is established needs no establisher.
353. There is no production at that time,
Nor is there production at another.
If not produced at that time nor another,
When will there ever be production?
354. Just as there is no production
Of that as the thing it is,
Neither is it produced
As something else.
355. The first, intermediate and last
Are not possible prior to production.
How can each begin
Without the other two?
356. The thing itself does not occur
Without other things.
Thus there is no coming into existence
Either from self or from other.
357. It cannot be said to exist
Before, after or simultaneously;
Therefore production does not occur
Simultaneously with the pot.
358. That which was previously produced
Was not old when first produced.
Also that which afterwards has been
Constantly produced is not old.
359. A present thing does not
Come into existence from itself,
Nor come into existence from the future,
And also not from the past.

360. There is no coming of the produced,
Likewise no going of that which has ceased.
Since it is thus, why should existence
Not be like a magician's illusions?
361. Production, duration and disintegration
Do not occur simultaneously.
If they are not consecutive either,
When can they ever occur?
362. If for production and all the others,
All of these occurred again,
Disintegration would seem like production
And duration like disintegration.
363. If that which is characterized is said to be
Different from its characteristics,
How can the characterized be impermanent?
Alternatively, existence of all four is unclear.
364. A thing is not produced from a thing
Nor is a thing produced from a non-thing.
A non-thing is not produced from a non-thing
Nor is a thing produced from a non-thing.
365. A thing does not become a thing,
Nor does a non-thing become a thing.
A non-thing does not become a non-thing,
Nor does a thing become a non-thing.
366. A thing in the process of production
Since half-produced, is not being produced.
Alternatively it follows that everything
Is in the process of being produced.
367. That which has the nature of presently being produced
Is not in the process of production,
Nor is that in the process of production
Which lacks the nature of presently being produced.
368. For anyone to whom the two are
Impossible without an intermediate,
There is nothing in the process of production,
For it too would have an intermediate.
369. Since the process of production is the arising
Of the produced through cessation,
That which is presently being produced
Appears to be a different entity.

370. When a thing is produced there cannot be
Anything in the process of production.
If the produced is in the process
Of production, why is it being produced?
371. A thing in the process of production is said
To be the entirely unproduced arising.
Since there is no difference, why should the pot
Not be considered as non-existent?
372. That which is presently being produced,
Though incomplete, is other than unproduced.
Yet also since other than produced,
The unproduced is being produced.
373. That which is presently being produced,
Though not yet existent, is later said to exist.
The unproduced is thus being produced --
But the non-existent does not arise.
374. The completed is called existent.
The uncompleted is called non-existent.
When there is nothing in the process of production
What is being referred to as such?
375. Since without a cause
There is no effect,
Both starting and stopping
Are not feasible.

CHAPTER 16

376. For various reasons, that which is empty
Appears nonetheless as if not empty.
These are refuted individually
By all the chapters.
377. When the author and subject also exist
It is incorrect to call them empty.
Also with regard to these three, whatever
Arises in dependence does not exist.
378. If through flaws concerning emptiness
[Things] were established as not empty,
Why would emptiness not be established
Through flaws concerning lack of emptiness?
379. In refuting the thesis of others
And in proving your own thesis,
If on the one hand you like to disprove,
Why do you not like to prove?
380. When thoroughly investigated,
The non-existent is not a thesis.
Then all three, such as oneness,
Are also not theses.
381. Where a pot is directly perceptible,
The argument of emptiness is meaningless.
Here reasons appearing in textual systems
Are not [acceptable]; elsewhere they are.
382. When there is nothing that is not empty,
How can emptiness be so?
When the one does not exist,
Why should the antidote exist?
383. If there were a thesis, absence of the thesis
Would in entity be a thesis,
But where there is no thesis
What can be the counter-thesis?
384. How can fire be hot,
When things do not exist?
This was refuted above: it was said
That even hot fire does not exist.

385. If through seeing things one could refute
The statement that things do not exist,
Who then sees the elimination
Of fallacies regarding all four theses.
386. When there is nowhere, even in particles,
A truly existent entity, how can it occur?
Even for Buddhas it does not exist.
Thus it is irrelevant.
387. If they are not twofold, how can
Anything have an existent entity?
If that is reasonable to you also,
Why raise further arguments?
388. Regarding the non-functional [aspect] of all things,
Differentiations are inappropriate.
That which is seen in all substantial entities
Is not differentiable.
389. If owing to non-existence you claim
No reply is made the other's thesis,
Why should you not also prove
Your own thesis which is refuted by reasons?
390. Though the world says it is easy
To find reasons with which to refute,
Why can the errors regarding
The others' thesis not be stated?
391. If just by saying "They exist"
Things really did exist,

Why should they not also be non-existent
Just by saying "They do not exist"?
392. If a thing is not non-existent
Because the term "existent" is ascribed,
Neither is it existent
Because the term "existent" is applied.
393. If everything is a convention
Because expressed by ordinary people,
How can anything which exists
As [its own] suchness be a convention?

394. If things are non-existent because
Things all do not exist,
In that case it is incorrect that all theses
Concern the non-existence of things.
395. Since a thing does not exist
A non-thing cannot exist.
Without a thing's existence,
How can a non-thing be established?
396. If things are not empty because
They are empty by virtue of reasons,
The thesis would not be distinct from the reasons,
And thus the reasons would not exist.
397. If things are not empty because
There are analogies for emptiness,
Can one say, "Just like the crow,
So too the self is black"?
398. If things exist inherently
What good is it to perceive emptiness?
Perception by way of conceptions binds.
This is refuted here.
399. To say one exists and the other does not
Is neither reality nor the conventional.
Therefore it cannot be said
That this exists and that does not.
400. Against one who holds no thesis that [things]
Exist, do not, or do and do not exist,
Counter-arguments cannot be raised
No matter how long [one tries].

Translated by Ruth Sonam, Dharamsala, India, 1994