Introduction

An introduction to the treatise, its sources, authorship, transmission, subject matter, and method of explanation.

Setting · Sources · Lineage

SECTION I

Identifying What Is to Be Explained

bshad bya'i ngo bo ngos bzung

The commentary begins by asking what kind of text is being explained. It answers at three levels, moving from ultimate reality to the words on the page:

1. The ultimate text: the nondual **wisdom-speech** of the buddhas' own appearance, one in essence with *dharmakāya*.
2. The Mahāyāna sūtras as **name, word and letter** appearing to the minds of āryas and ordinary beings. These are verbal approximations of the first.
3. The **spoken words:** the definitive-meaning Mahāyāna sūtras and tantras. Layers (2) and (3) *differ in essence from the first but are its natural outflow*. They arise from the aspirations of the buddhas and can clear away the two veils.

Ultimate

gsung dbyangs gnyis med kyi ye shes

The buddhas' own nondual wisdom-speech.

Appearing

sgra spyi'i rnam par shar ba

Name, word and letter in the minds of hearers.

Spoken

nges don gyi mdo rgyud

The definitive-meaning sūtras and tantras.

How, then, should the Uttaratantra itself be classified: as buddha-word or as a treatise? It may be understood as **authorized and blessed buddha-word:** the Victor set his own crown on Maitreya's head and enthroned him as regent, and the Sañcayagāthā says that all the teaching of the Victor's disciples is the power of the Tathāgata. Yet Maitreya himself accepts it as a *śāstra*, "the body of all the treatises, in brief." A treatise has the two qualities of correcting faults and protecting from lower states (*'chos skyob*). Since regents like Maitreya are not otherwise present in this world, their words are indistinguishable from the Buddha's own speech.

SECTION II

Sources the Treatise Relies Upon

de nyid gang la brten pa'i khungs

The Buddha saw that all beings possess the buddha-element but fail to recognize it because of four obstacles, the first being hostility to the dharma. They therefore continue to circle in saṃsāra. Of the countless teachings he gave as remedies, two sets of sūtras are especially important for this treatise:

1. **The definitive-meaning sūtras** taught for bodhisattvas of the sharpest faculties — the Saṃdhinirmocana, Laṅkāvatāra, Ghanavyūha and Avataṃsaka, known as the four mind-only sūtras, which teach with common reasoning that dharmatā is the ultimate.
2. **The buddha-nature sūtras** (about ten are listed — the Tathāgatagarbha, Mahābherī, Aṅgulimālīya, Śrīmālādevī, Dhāraṇiśvararāja, Mahāparinirvāṇa and so on), teaching as intimate discourse the uncommon system: the qualities primordially present, the domain of the omniscient alone.

Because even āryas do not see that secret as it is, the entire subject matter of these profound sūtras was condensed into the seven vajra points and explained clearly. This protects people of duller faculties from the harm of either failing to understand it or understanding it wrongly. That is why it was composed as a treatise.

> **On its reliance:** *Rangjung Dorje and Dolpopa hold that the treatise relies chiefly on the definitive-meaning essence sūtras of the final turning. Rongtön holds it is not a commentary on the final turning alone but a general commentary on the definitive-meaning sūtras, and counts some fifteen — the Mahākaruṇānirdeśa, the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka and others among them.*

SECTION III

The Master Who Composed It

gang gis mdzad pa'i slob dpon

Maitreya attained perfect buddhahood countless eons ago. For the sake of demonstration, he remains a 10th-level bodhisattva, one birth from coming as the fifth guide of this fortunate eon.

Among Maitreya's Five Dharmas, his revelation of the great Madhyamaka of definitive meaning is graded by depth:

1. **Abhisamayālaṃkāra** — teaches it coarsely and only in brief.
2. **Sūtrālaṃkāra, Madhyāntavibhāga, and Dharmadharmatāvibhāga** — teach it clearly and extensively.
3. **Uttaratantra** — alone settles the subtle, uncommon system of the essence sūtras.

- Composed for Asaṅga (according to Haribhadra), or at the time of the councils (according to Abhayākaragupta).
- Asaṅga, after twelve years of practice, was taken to Tuṣita and received the Mahāyāna piṭaka from Maitreya; his commentary on the Uttaratantra opened the way of a great chariot. Vasubandhu too was a great illuminator of the definitive meaning, but no lineage from him remains today.

SECTION IV

The Sequence of Transmission

gang las brgyud pa'i rim pa

Two streams of transmission reached Tibet, distinguished by what each carried. Of the Five Dharmas of Maitreya, the first three were transmitted continuously; the last two — the Uttaratantra and the Dharmadharmatāvibhāga — were whispered to supreme disciples, their texts hidden as treasure, and revived by Maitrīpa.

1. **Asaṅga's stream:** Maitreya → Asaṅga, spread widely by Dignāga, Sthiramati and other fine disciples, carrying the first three of the Five Dharmas; these were translated already in the early spread of the teaching.
2. **Maitrīpa's revival:** seeing light from a crack in a stūpa, Maitrīpa recovered the last two; on his supplication Maitreya appeared amid the clouds and bestowed the reading transmission. They pass Maitrīpa → Ānandakīrti → Sajjana of Kashmir, from whom Ngok Lotsāwa heard and translated them; the exposition lineage in Tibet flows from Ngok.
3. **The exposition line:** earlier, Atiśa had translated the Uttaratantra with Nagtso; Sharawa taught on both that version and Ngok's, but it was Ngok's that spread. Ngok wrote a brief commentary, and after Drolungpa, Zhang Tsepongwa and Nyangbrenpa came Chapa and his students, whose commentaries multiplied. They were followed by Lodrö Tsungme, Pagdru Gyaltsen Sangpo, Rongtön and many more, all in the wake of Ngok.

4 **Tsen Khawoche (the meditative tradition):** asked Sajjana for the Maitreya dharmas as "a dharma for dying", with Zu Gawai Dorje as translator — hence the "meditative tradition of the Maitreya dharmas", distinguished in both exposition and practice. From these traditions: Rangjung Dorje, Karma Könshön, Karma Thinleypa, Go Lotsāwa (whose great commentary accords with this tradition), Dolpopa and, through Tāranātha's line, on to Situ Paṇchen — who heard it from Chökyi Döndrub — and Karma Tenphel, whose annotated commentary passed the exposition on to this one.

The commentary says which lineage it follows: **"here I follow chiefly the Victor Rangjung [Dorje]"** *('dir ni gtso bor rgyal ba rang byung zhabs kyi rjes su 'brang ba yin no).*

SECTION V

The Subject Matter to Be Explained

gang zhig bshad bya'i don

The definitive meaning of all three turnings consists in the two kinds of selflessness — emptiness of perceived and perceiver with respect to persons and phenomena. The commentary quotes the *Madhyāntavibhāga*:

> **madhyāntavibhāga**
> གང་ཟག་དང་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཀྱི།
> དངོས་པོ་མེད་འདི་རྟོང་པ་ཉིད།
> དེ་དངོས་མེད་པའི་དངོས་པོ་དང་།
> དེཉིད་དེ་ལ་རྟོང་པ་ཉིད།
>
> The non-existence of persons and phenomena is emptiness;
> the existence of that non-existence is itself emptiness.

The second line rules out a purely negative reading. The mode of emptiness here is not a **non-affirming negation** (*med dgag*) but an **affirming negation** (*ma yin dgag*): the self-aware, self-luminous essence, taught here as the tathāgatagarbha. This definitive meaning is one vajra, though it takes three names according to its phase (I.47).

Impure
ma dag pa
Called "sentient being".

Partly pure
ma dag dag pa
Called "bodhisattva".

Utterly pure
shin tu rnam dag
Called "tathāgata".

Four Ways the Scriptures Identify the Essence

1 **Emptiness free of elaboration** — the definitive meaning of the first two turnings, clarified by Nāgārjuna and his followers. Most Indian masters, and all Tibetan rangtongpas, take it as the non-affirming negation reached by the reasonings of Nāgārjuna's Collection of Reasonings; Bhāvaviveka, Candrakīrti, Vimuktisena, Haribhadra and Jñānagarbha each explained that very emptiness as the essence, the disposition or the kāyas. *Yet an emptiness found by inference is called "the great sickness of bodhisattvas" — a bond of concepts.*
2 **Luminosity of mind** — taught in the middle and final turnings and in the mantra tantras; that it is the essence is shown in the Uttaratantra and the Sūtrālaṃkāra, and in Nāgārjuna's two praises (the Dharmadhātustava and Cittavajrastava) and his Bodhicittavivaraṇa.
3 **Ālayavijñāna** — taught in the Laṅkāvatāra, Ghanavyūha and Śrīmālādevī sūtras and the Vajrapañjara tantra; the Cittamātra masters take this literally.
4 **Bodhisattvas or sentient beings** — the *Pradīpoddyotana* ("all sentient beings are the tathāgatagarbha"), and this treatise itself, where all beings "possess" the essence (I.28).

Four Characteristics

Dharmakāya
chos sku
Buddha-wisdom present in all beings.

Suchness
de bzhin nyid
The same suchness in buddhas and sentient beings.

Disposition
rigs
The resemblance of sentient beings to buddhas.

Nonconceptuality
rnam par mi rtog pa
The general characteristic, common to all four.

What the Words Say

garbha
snying po
Enclosed within, as a kernel within its husk: suchness dwelling amid, and obscured by, adventitious stains.

hṛdaya
bcud dam mchog
The quintessence — the supreme essence of all dharmas.

sāra
sra zhing brtan pa
Firm and unchanging — suchness never becomes otherwise.

"Element" (*khams*) does not mean a cause. As in the nine similes, such as a buddha within a faded lotus, the essence is fully present but unmanifest. The disposition is the fruit not yet apparent, not a seed that ripens into something else.

SECTION VI

The Manner in Which It Is Explained

ji ltar 'chad pa'i tshul

In the general tradition of Maitreya — the Abhisamayālaṃkāra — the basis of purification is the **dharmadhātu**, the purifiers are the four practices (the trainings in all aspects, at the peak, serial, and instantaneous — *sbyor ba bzhi*), what is purified are the abandonments of seeing and meditation, and the fruit is dharmakāya.

In this treatise the basis is the **element** (*khams*), the tathāgatagarbha; the purifiers are the **4 causes** — aspiration for the dharma and the rest — together with the sixty factors of purification; what is purified is the **9 stains, 3 veils and 4 obstacles** beginning with hostility to the dharma; the freed fruit is dharmakāya with its qualities and activities. The difference between the two frames, the commentary says, is one of terminology only.

Basis
gzhi
The ālaya is the framework — the support in which the imprints of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are deposited.

Path
lam
The adventitious stains are what is abandoned; the naturally pure aspect is experienced by self-aware wisdom.

Fruition
'bras bu
The ultimate wisdom of transformation — dharmakāya with its qualities and activities.

Inferential
rjes su dpag pa
Explanation by the path of inference.

Direct
mngon sum
Explanation by the path of direct perception.

Explanation by the inferential path
rjes su dpag pa'i lam gyis bshad pa

The tradition of Ngok Lotsāwa and his followers, who establish the essence by reasoning. For them the tathāgatagarbha is the ultimate truth: emptiness as a non-affirming negation (*med dgag*) — the sheer absence of true existence that Madhyamaka analysis arrives at. Within that shared ground they differ:

- **Can words and thought reach it?** Ngok and Tsangnagpa hold that they cannot — the ultimate is no object of words or concepts, not even of conceptual attachment. Chapa holds that they can — it is the emptiness of true existence, and concepts can engage it.
- **"Possessing the qualities by nature"** then means: take that emptiness as one's object, and all qualities naturally gather.
- **"Pervaded by dharmakāya"** then means: every being is fit to attain it.

Explanation by the path of direct perception

mngon sum gyi lam gyis bshad pa

The meditative tradition approaches the essence through experience rather than establishing it by argument. It has two streams:

1. **The meditative tradition of the Maitreya dharmas** — descending from Zu and Tsen, whose lineage was traced above, in The Sequence of Transmission.
2. **Maitrīpa's line** — carrying the instructions of the great brahmin Saraha: the pith of the pāramitās in accord with mantra. From it Marpa sang of the essence "pointed out as dharma-mahāmudrā", and Gampopa said: "The text of this Mahāmudrā of ours is the Uttaratantra." In the same line stand Phakmo Drupa, Drigungpa, Rangjung Dorje, and Dolpopa with his "fourth council" of the definitive meaning; Vajrapāṇi taught it as spoken Mahāmudrā, and Dampa Sangye's Pacification accords.

What all of these mean by the essence is the luminous nature of mind. The account proceeds in four stages.

1. Beginningless, adventitious stains obscure the essence like tarnish covering gold. Because it goes unrecognized, beings continue to circle in saṃsāra.
2. Through the four causes beginning with aspiration for the supreme vehicle, the stains are uprooted and the essence made manifest: dharmakāya.
3. There is nothing to remove from luminosity itself, because the stains never touch it, and nothing to add, because its qualities are intrinsic.
4. So the element is empty of the adventitious but not empty of itself — as a conch seen yellow through bile-sickness is empty of yellow, not of white.

In Tibet this way of speaking began with the siddha Yumo; its full development came with Dolpopa and his heirs. The masters who hold it are called Madhyamikas of other-emptiness (*gzhan stong*).

Both modes of explanation are rooted in the same two verses: "There is nothing to be removed from this and not the slightest to be added... The element is empty of what is adventitious... not empty of the unsurpassable qualities" (I.154–155).

SECTION VII

Condensed Meaning of the Opening and Closing

dbu zhabs kyi bsdus pa'i don

i. The condensed meaning proper

bsdus don dngos

A synopsis of the whole treatise, beginning with the Three Jewels.

Buddha

sangs rgyas

The one unfailing reality — the chief of all subject matter.

Dharma

chos

What he saw, taught to others out of love as a path.

Saṅgha

dge 'dun

Those who enter that path and train — "from where you have gone, the disciple follows."

Each Jewel is presented through eight qualities, and the ultimate refuge is the Buddha alone.

Then the four remaining points — the stained suchness, the stainless suchness, the qualities and the activity — are taken up chapter by chapter. The element is treated in four parts, which give Chapter I of the root text its shape:

The ten points

rnam gzhag bcu (ngo bo rgyu 'bras sogs)

Essence, cause, result and the rest — the framework of the Element chapter.

The nine similes

dpe dgu (sangs rgyas pad ngan sogs)

The buddha in a faded lotus and so on.

Who realizes it

gnas lugs ji bzhin rtogs mi rtogs kyi tshul

How the true nature is realized just as it is — and how it is missed: ordinary beings do not see it, and even the noble approach it not by analysis but through faith (I.153).

Why teach it

so skye la bstan pa'i dgos pa dang 'gal ba spang ba

The purpose of teaching the essence to ordinary beings, and the dispelling of the contradiction with emptiness.

Each vajra point is carried on the two truths:

Jewels

Ultimate — the Buddha
conventional — Dharma and Saṅgha.

Element

Ultimate — luminous emptiness
conventional — the disposition.

Awakening

Ultimate — the svābhāvikakāya
conventional — the form kāyas.

Qualities

Ultimate — of freedom
conventional — of maturation.

Activity

Ultimate — the dharmakāya's
conventional — the form kāyas'.

ii. Incidental commentary on the path

zhar byung lam gyi 'grel bshad

The seven points follow the order in which bodhicitta is generated:

- Refuge comes first: bodhicitta arises from hearing the Buddha's qualities and taking refuge in the Three Jewels.
- Because its focus is beings, the stained element comes next.
- Its aims close the sequence: others' welfare is the activity, the cause of that welfare is awakening, and its limbs are the qualities.

SECTION VIII

The Four Preliminary Limbs

bstan bcos 'di'i brjod bya sogs yan lag bzhi

In a Tibetan commentary, four things come before a treatise is opened, so the reader knows the undertaking and its purpose.

Subject matter

brjod bya

What the treatise is about — the seven vajra points, and the element above all.

Purpose

dgos pa

Certainty born of study and reflection — like obtaining the inventory of a treasure buried under a poor man's house — so that one can enter the definitive-meaning sūtras with ease.

Ultimate purpose

nying dgos

What that certainty is finally for — to realize buddha-nature directly, so that dharmakāya, free of adventitious stains, is actualized: the treasure in hand.

Connection

'brel ba

How the three are connected: each is the means to the one after it — as smoke depends on fire, or light on the sun.

The Three Jewels

Seven Vajra Points · Buddha · Dharma · Saṅgha

The seven vajra points that are the body of the treatise, then each Jewel with its eight qualities, and the three refuges.

SECTION A

Title and Homage

don dang mthun pa'i mtshan dang phyag

The commentary first takes up the title and the translators' homage. Neither division comments on a root verse.

i. The title in the two languages

skad gnyis shan sbyar te bkod pa

In the language of India: Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra. **In Tibetan:** *theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos*.

Sanskrit is described here as the "well-formed" language of the gods and one of the four great languages of the noble land. The Tibetan is set beside it word for word.

SANSKRIT	TIBETAN
mahā	*chen po*
yāna	*theg pa*
uttara	*bla ma*
tantra	*rgyud*
śāstra	*bstan bcos*

ii. The meaning of the title

theg pa sogs bod skad kyi don bshad pa

Vehicle
theg pa
What carries: the cause vehicle carries one by means of it; the fruition vehicle carries one to the goal.

Great
chen po
Possessing the seven greatnesses — focus, accomplishment, wisdom, diligence, skill in means, attainment, and activity.

Continuum
rgyud
The sugata-essence, one continuum through the three phases of ground, path and fruition.

Unsurpassed
bla ma
As a word, the later syllable *ma* is the profound intent condensed to its essence. In meaning, the higher syllable *bla* is that above which there is nothing: it teaches the unsurpassed vehicle.

Treatise
bstan bcos
What corrects and protects: it corrects the enemies, the afflictions, and protects from the lower realms and from existence. The Vyākhyāyukti says these two qualities are found in no other tradition's texts.

Titles may be drawn from a simile, a number, a length, the requester, the place or the time; this one is designated from its subject matter and its function.

iii. The translators' homage

'gyur phyag

"Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas."

Buddha
sangs rgyas
Awakened from the sleep of ignorance; the mind blossomed over all knowables, like a lotus opening.

Bodhisattva
byang chub sems dpa'
The courageous one whose prajñā is set on awakening and whose compassion is set on beings.

The Tibetan for buddha is two syllables: *sangs*, awakened, and *rgyas*, blossomed.

The great translators paid homage before translating. We too should pay homage to our chosen deity before composing, explaining, or listening.

SECTION B

The Body of the Treatise

lus rnam par bzhag pa

I.1–3

The treatise proper opens by naming its seven vajra points. Everything that follows belongs to one of them.

i. The body as the seven vajra points

bstan bcos kyi lus rdo rje'i gnas bdun du bstan pa

I.1

> I.1
> སངས་རྒྱས་ཆོས་ཚོགས་བཞས་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་དང་།
> ཡོན་ཏན་སངས་རྒྱས་ཕྲིན་ལས་ཐ་མ་སྟེ།
> བསྟན་བཅོས་ཀུན་གྱི་ལུས་ནི་མདོ་རྣམ་པར་བཞུག
> རྡོ་རྗེ་ཡི་ནི་གནས་བདུན་འདིར་ནག་གོ།
>
> Buddha, dharma, assembly, basic element,
> Awakening, qualities, and finally buddha activity—
> The body of the entire treatise
> Is summarized in these seven vajra points.

i. Buddha
sangs rgyas
I.4–8

ii. Dharma
chos
I.9–12

iii. Saṅgha
dge 'dun
I.13–18

iv. Element
khams
I.27–167

v. Awakening
byang chub
II.1–73

vi. Qualities
yon tan
III.1–39

vii. Activity
phrin las
IV.1–98

ii. Their scriptural sources

de'i khungs mdo dang sbyar ba

I.2

All seven points are drawn, in this very order, from the Dhāraṇīśvararāja sūtra — the first three from its introduction, the remaining four from the body of the sūtra. Some explain, the commentary adds, that each point also has a sūtra of its own: the element and the qualities from the Anūnatvāpūrṇatva, awakening from the Śrīmālādevī, and so on.

iii. Their sequential connection

go rim gyis 'brel bstan pa

I.3

They come in this order because each gives rise to the next.

- From the Buddha, the dharma.
- From the dharma, the noble assembly.
- From the assembly, the attainment of the element.
- From that: awakening, the qualities, activity.

The Introduction also reads this as the order in which bodhicitta is generated.

SECTION C

The Three Jewels — What Is to Be Attained

thob bya dkon mchog gsum

I.4–22

This section has four divisions: the three Jewels in turn (I.4–18), followed by the refuges they constitute (I.19–22). Each Jewel is introduced *by way of praise* in a homage verse and then explained. Each is given **eight qualities**. The commentary uses three divisions for the Buddha and Saṅgha, and four for the Dharma.

I · BUDDHA

The Buddha

sangs rgyas · awakened

Praise I.4 · Meaning I.5 · Applied I.6–8

Eight qualities (I.5). *Unconditioned, effortless, and realized by oneself rather than through other conditions: these concern the benefit of self. Wisdom, compassion, and power concern the benefit of others. Counting the two benefits themselves gives eight.*

II · DHARMA

The Dharma

chos · the teaching

Praise I.9 · Meaning I.10 · Two truths I.11 · Applied I.12

Six qualities (I.10). *Inconceivable, free from duality, and nonconceptual describe the truth of cessation ('gog bden). Pure, manifest, and remedial describe the truth of the path (lam bden). With the two truths themselves, the count is eight.*

III · SAṄGHA

The Saṅgha

dge 'dun · noble community

Praise I.13 · Two or six I.14 · Applied I.15–18

Inner wisdom vision (I.14). *Knowing suchness (ji lta ba, I.15) and knowing its extent (ji snyed pa, I.16); then the distinctive feature of complete purity (I.17), and why this is the supreme source of refuge (I.18).*

Two, or eight. *Two with the Indian commentary — awareness and liberation (rig grol). Eight with the early Tibetan tradition: three of awareness (suchness, extent, the inner wisdom vision), three of liberation (pure of the attachment veil, pure of the obstruction veil, unsurpassable), and the two bases themselves.*

The two veils. *Attachment (chags sgrib), the afflictive veil (nyon sgrib), and obstruction (thogs sgrib), the cognitive veil (shes sgrib). The Saṅgha's twofold vision is pure of them in turn: knowing suchness is vision purified of attachment, and knowing its extent is vision purified of obstruction.*

iv. The Divisions of the Three Refuges

skyabs gsum gyi rnam dbye bstan pa

I.19–22

a. Why three refuges are posited

skyabs gsum du bzhag pa'i dgos pa

I.19

For the sake of the teacher, the teaching, and the disciples — taught with regard to those in the three yānas and those who have faith in the three kinds of activity.

b. Whether they are the ultimate refuge

mthar thug gi skyabs yin min

I.20–21

None of the three is the ultimate refuge. The verses consider and rule out each one in turn.

Dharma of scripture
lung gi chos
To be abandoned, like the raft once the river is crossed.

Dharma of realization — the path
lam
Deceptive: realization moves ever higher, so it is a changing phenomenon.

Dharma of realization — cessation
'gog pa
The cessations of learners — people still on the path (*śaikṣa* / *slob pa*: stream-enterers and so on, training unfinished, as opposed to non-learners, *aśaikṣa* / *mi slob pa*, whose training is done) — and of the lesser vehicle are not ultimate qualities.

The noble saṅgha
dge 'dun
Still fearful of the veils, it goes for refuge to the Buddha itself.

Ultimately the single refuge of the world is buddhahood alone (I.21) — because the sage possesses the body of the dharma, and because he is the consummation of the assembly. The three therefore come together in a single ultimate refuge.

c. The meaning of the word 'jewel'

dkon mchog gi sgra don

I.22

Rare
dkon
Their appearance is difficult to encounter.

Stainless
dri med
Free of every defilement.

Powerful
mthu ldan
Endowed with the power to benefit others.

Ornament
'jig rten gyi rgyan
The ornament of the world.

Supreme
mchog
Best of all.

Changeless
'gyur ba med
Unconditioned by karma and afflictions — like the gem, unaltered by praise or blame.

The Last Four Vajra Points

Element · Enlightenment · Qualities · Activities

Introduces the last four vajra points together, then outlines how each will be treated in the chapters that follow.

SECTION A

The Four Points Together

thun mong spyir bstan pa

I.23–26

They are four (I.23), seen by those who perceive the ultimate, and the three Jewels arise from them.

The four (I.23)

Suchness with stains · suchness without stains · the stainless qualities · the activity of the victors.

Inconceivable (I.24)

The source of the three Jewels is known by those who see everything. It is fourfold and inconceivable for four reasons.

The four reasons (I.25)

Pure and yet with afflictions · unafflicted and yet becoming pure · qualities inseparable · activity effortless and nonconceptual.

Cause and conditions (I.26)

What is to be awakened, awakening, its branches, and what causes it: one point is the cause, three are the conditions for its purity.

SECTION B

The Four Points Separately

gnas bzhi so so'i ngo bo bshad pa

The commentary next explains each of the last four points separately (Element · Enlightenment · Qualities · Activities). The headings below follow its divisions and provide the outline for the chapters that follow:

1. The Element

khams kyi ngo bo bshad pa

I.27–167

- **a.** Brief statement of the element
  khams kyi don mdor bstan pa
  I.27–29
- **b.** Extensive explanation of the intended meaning
  dgongs don rgyas par bshad pa
  I.30–95
  - **i.** Brief statement by the summarizing verse
    sdom tshig gis mdor bstan pa
  - **ii.** Extensive division of the meaning — the ten points under eight headings
    de'i don rgyas par dbye ba
    I.30–94
  - **iii.** Summary of the explanation
    bshad pa'i don bsdu ba
    I.95
- **c.** Examples showing the stains are purified though the essence is unchanging
  ngo bo mi 'gyur yang dri ma sbyong ba'i dpe bstan pa
  I.96–155
  1. Connecting transition
     mtshams sbyar ba
  2. The nine examples showing the stains and the buddha-nature
     dpe dgus dri ma dang rgyal ba'i snying po bstan pa
     I.96–129
  3. The manner of purifying the stains
     dri ma sbyong tshul
     I.130–143
  4. The stages of how it is realized
     ji ltar rtogs pa'i rim pa
     I.144–153
  5. Teaching the essence itself
     snying po nyid bstan pa
     I.154–155
- **d.** Showing the purpose of teaching the element
  khams bstan pa'i dgos pa bstan pa
  I.156–167

2. Enlightenment

spyi don gnyis pa rtogs pa byang chub bstan pa

II.1–73

- **a.** Brief statement of the nature of the subject matter
  bshad bya don gyi ngo bo mdor bstan
  II.1
- **b.** Summary of the mode of explanation — the eight topics
  'chad tshul sdom du bsdu
  II.2
- **c.** Extensive explanation applying those
  de dag sbyar te rgyas par bshad pa
  II.3–73

3. Qualities

de'i yan lag yon tan bshad pa

III.1–39

- **a.** Brief presentation of the enumeration, correlated with the two kāyas
  gnyis dang sbyar te grangs kyi dbye ba mdor bstan pa
  III.1–3
- **b.** Extensive explanation of the qualities
  yon tan rgyas par bshad pa
  III.4–39

4. Activities

spyi don bzhi pa byed pa phrin las bshad pa

IV.1–98

- **a.** Brief presentation — spontaneity, then uninterruptedness
  mdor bstan pa
  IV.1–3
- **b.** Detailed explanation
  rgyas bshad
  IV.4–12
- **c.** Very extensive explanation by way of the similes
  dpe dang sbyar te shin tu rgyas par bshad pa
  IV.13–98

The Element — Tathāgatagarbha

Buddha-nature · 9 Examples

Explains buddha-nature through ten points and nine examples, linking each example to a defilement and an aspect of the element.

SECTION I

Brief Statement of the Element

khams kyi don mdor bstan pa

I.27–29

The three 'reasons' below are **elaborations** rather than logical proofs. This treatise does not proceed by inference.

i. The three 'reasons'

I.27–28

Buddhakāya radiates
rdzogs sangs sku ni 'phro phyir
Buddha wisdom enters into all beings.

Suchness undifferentiable
de bzhin nyid dbyer med phyir
Its stainlessness is nondual by nature.

The disposition
rigs yod phyir
So called by way of its fruition.

All beings therefore always possess the buddha heart. The nine examples later take up its three natures: dharmakāya, suchness, and the disposition.

ii. The ten points

I.29

The element is explained under ten points (I.29). **The commentary treats them under eight headings**, pairing nature with cause and fruition with function.

1 **Essence** *ngo bo* — What is to be purified.	2 **Cause** *rgyu* — What purifies it.	3 **Fruition** *'bras bu* — The four pāramitās attained.	4 **Function** *las* — Weariness, striving, aspiration.	5 **Endowment** *ldan pa* — Causal and resultant qualities.
6 **Engagement** *'jug pa* — One nature, three kinds of being.	7 **Phases** *gnas skabs* — Three names for three phases.	8 **All-pervasiveness** *kun tu 'gro ba* — Like space, everywhere alike.	9 **Immutability** *mi 'gyur ba* — Unchanged in all three phases.	10 **Inseparability** *dbyer med* — Qualities indivisible from it.

SECTION II

Extensive Explanation of the Intended Meaning

dgongs don rgyas par bshad pa

I.30–95

The eight headings below follow the order of the ten points in I.29. The first two headings each combine a pair and discuss what the two share before treating them separately. Each remaining heading covers one point.

i. Essence & Cause

ngo bo dang rgyu'i don

I.30–34

Essence — three natures, each with its simile in I.31. It is always unafflicted by nature.

Dharmakāya
chos sku
Jewel — power.

Suchness
de bzhin nyid
Space — unchanging.

Disposition
rigs
Water — moist, compassionate.

Cause — four dharmas (I.30). Each of the four leads a row below: the obscuration it clears, those held by that obscuration, and the pāramitā it perfects.

CAUSE THAT PURIFIES (I.30)	OBSCURATION (I.32)	HELD BY (I.33)	PĀRAMITĀ ATTAINED (I.35)
Faith in the dharma *mos pa*	Hostility toward the dharma	Those of great desire *'dod chen pa*	Purity *gtsang ba*
Supreme prajñā *shes rab*	Views about a self	Tīrthikas *mu stegs pa*	Supreme self *bdag*
Samādhi *ting nge 'dzin*	Fear of saṃsāra's suffering	Śrāvakas *nyan thos*	Bliss *bde ba*
Compassion *snying rje*	Indifference to beings	Pratyekabuddhas *rang sangs rgyas*	Permanence *rtag pa*

I.34 — those in whom the four causes are complete are **born as heirs of the victors:** faith is the seed, prajñā the mother who gives birth to the buddha qualities, blissful samādhi the womb, compassion the nurse.

ii. Fruition & Function

'bras bu dang las kyi don

I.35–41

Fruition: the four pāramitās of purity, self, bliss and permanence — the remedies for four mistakennesses about the dharmakāya (I.36–38).

Ordinary beings ("children") take the conditioned to be permanent, blissful, a self and pure. Śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas reverse these four ideas. When applied to the dharmakāya, however, the śrāvakas' four become mistaken in turn. The four pāramitās remedy that mistake and are perfected by the four purifying causes described above.

The commentary quotes Dolpopa: nothing to remove (no nihilism), nothing to add (no eternalism). I.39 — with prajñā they cut through self-cherishing, so they do not remain in saṃsāra; out of compassion they do not rest in peace for themselves alone.

Function (I.40–41): weariness of suffering, and the wish, striving and aspiration for nirvāṇa. The commentary first asks what would be absent without the element, then what follows when it is present. (The commentary notes that buddha-nature itself is never absent; only its activity may be absent.)

iii. Endowment
ldan pa'i don
I.42–44

Causal qualities
rgyu'i ldan pa
An ocean — the vessel that holds (devotion), its gems (prajñā and samādhi), its water (compassion).

Resultant qualities
'bras bu'i ldan pa
A lamp — its light (clairvoyances), its heat (wisdom), its colour (abandonment).

iv. Engagement
'jug pa'i don
I.45–46

The same nature is approached by three kinds of being: ordinary beings, noble ones, and perfect buddhas — the reason in brief (I.45), then at length (I.46).

v. Phases
gnas skabs kyi don
I.47–48

Three names are given to the three phases, though the division is only nominal (I.47). The six meanings taught above sit under those names (I.48).

Impure
ma dag pa · sems can
Sentient being.

Partly pure
ma dag la dag pa · byang sems
Bodhisattva.

Utterly pure
shin tu rnam dag · sangs rgyas
Buddha.

vi. All-pervasiveness
kun tu 'gro ba'i don
I.49–50

Its essence (I.49): all three phases are pervaded by *dharmadhātu*, as space pervades vessels of every kind while remaining unchanged. The divisions are in I.50.

vii. Immutability
mi 'gyur ba'i don
I.51–83

This is the most extensive of the eight topics. After a brief statement of the essence in I.51, the text considers its immutability in each of the three phases.

a. The impure phase
ma dag pa'i gnas skabs su mi 'gyur ba
I.52–65

Phenomena arise, persist and cease; the nature of reality does not, and destruction does not harm it. Dependent origination is taught at length through a four-element simile:

Earth
sa
Skandhas, dhātus, āyatanas.

Water
chu
Karma and the afflictions.

Wind
rlung
Impure conceptualisation.

Space
nam mkha'
The nature of mind.

I.62–63: the essence is free of arising and ceasing, and pure of stains. I.64–65 sum up simile and meaning together.

b. The partly pure phase
ma dag la dag pa'i gnas skabs su mi 'gyur ba'i don
I.66–79

Change appears though there is none (I.66): suffering works no change in it (I.67), yet out of compassion the noble ones display birth, death, ageing and sickness (I.68). The bodhisattva takes birth voluntarily — this is not the ripening of karma.

The qualities of the bodhisattvas on the ten grounds:

First ground
dang po sems bskyed skyes pa
Bodhicitta has arisen. I.69–70.

Supreme conduct
spyod pa mchog la zhugs pa
Engaging in it. I.71–72.

Irreversibility
phyir mi ldog pa thob pa
Attaining it. The commentary takes its title, The Lion's Roar of Irreversibility, from this phrase. I.73.

Final birth
skye ba tha mar gyur pa
The last one. I.74–76.

The two aims
don gnyis 'grub pa'i khyad par
The distinction in accomplishing them. I.77–79.

c. The utterly pure phase
shin tu rnam dag gi gnas skabs na'ang 'gyur ba med pa'i tshul
I.80–83

Four qualities (I.80). Even the subtlest counterpart of each is denied (I.81–82):

Permanent
rtag
Not born — not even as a body of mental nature.

Stable
brtan
Does not die — not even by the inconceivable transformation.

Peaceful
zhi ba
Not sick — not even with the subtle ills of the latent tendencies.

Everlasting
g.yung drung
Does not age — not even through uncontaminated formations.

Each of the four terms (I.83). **The dharmakāya is inexhaustible in its qualities.**

viii. Inseparability of the Qualities
yon tan dbyer med pa'i don bstan pa
I.84–94

I.84–86 name and explain inseparability. I.87 turns to nonduality and liberation, after which two examples clarify the point.

The painters (I.88–92) — an *indefinite* example. The six perfections, inseparable from emptiness endowed with all aspects (**realization**), are no other than nirvāṇa/liberation (**abandonment**). Liberation is indivisible from the qualities of a tathāgata.

The sun (I.93–94) — a *definite* example: buddhahood alone is final nirvāṇa. Buddha (*dharmakāya*) and nirvāṇa are not two — *shes rab, ye shes, rnam grol* all inseparable from dharmakāya, tathāgata, nirvāṇa, liberation.

ix. Summary of the explanation
bshad pa'i don bsdu ba
I.95

A single verse closes the ten points; the examples come next.

SECTION III

Examples — The Stains Purified, the Essence Unchanging

ngo bo mi 'gyur yang dri ma sbyong ba'i dpe bstan pa
I.96–155

This section has five divisions. After introducing the nine examples, it explains which defilement each one concerns, the order in which the defilements are cleared, and the aspect of the element shown by each example.

i. Connecting transition

mtshams sbyar ba

The last two lines of I.95 connect the ten points with the examples that follow.

ii. The Nine Examples

dpe dgus dri ma dang rgyal ba'i snying po bstan pa
I.96–129

I.96–98 introduce the examples. Each is then presented together with its meaning and their correspondence, usually in three verses, though the gold receives four. I.127–129 summarize the set. The defilements below follow the order of the ninefold list in I.130, while the last column follows the three-one-five division in I.144.

ILLUSTRATES THE DHARMAKĀYA		
i Buddha in a faded lotus *pad+ma dang sangs rgyas* I.99–101 *Latent tendency of desire.*	ii Honey among bees *sbrang ma dang sbrang rtsi* I.102–104 *Latent tendency of hatred.*	iii Grain in the husk *sbun pa dang 'bras* I.105–107 *Latent tendency of ignorance.*
ILLUSTRATES SUCHNESS		
iv Gold in filth *mi gtsang ba dang gser* I.108–111 *Their intense outburst.*		
ILLUSTRATES THE DISPOSITION		
v Treasure under the ground *sa dang gter* I.112–114 *The ground of latent ignorance.*	vi Sprout in the seed-husk *shun pa dang myu gu* I.115–117 *What the path of seeing abandons.*	vii Statue in rags *gos hrul dang sku* I.118–120 *What the path of meditation abandons.*
viii Cakravartin in a poor woman's womb *mi mo dang 'khor bsgyur* I.121–123 *Stains of the impure bhūmis.*	ix Golden image in the clay mould *'dam dang gser gyi sku* I.124–126 *Stains of the pure bhūmis.*	

iii. The Manner of Purifying the Stains

dri ma sbyong tshul
I.130–143

The nine stains (I.130–132). Each example above corresponds to one of these stains. The more immediate afflictions included within them are said to number "infinite millions".

1–3 · Lotus, bees, husk
'dod chags · zhe sdang · gti mug gi bag la nyal
Latent tendencies of desire, hatred, ignorance.

4 · Filth
kun ldang drag po
Their violent manifestation.

5 · Earth
ma rig bag chags kyi sa
The ground of latent ignorance.

6–7 · Seed-husk, rags
mthong spang · sgom spang
What is abandoned by seeing, and by meditation.

8–9 · Womb, clay mould
ma dag sa dang dag pa'i sa'i dri ma
The stains of the impure and of the pure bhūmis.

a. In whose mind-streams they are present

gang zag gang gi rgyud la yod pa
I.133

Naive beings
byis pa
The first four.

Arhats
dgra bcom pa
The fifth — the ground of latent ignorance.

Learners
slob pa
People still on the path (*śaikṣa*) — the sixth and seventh, seeing and meditation.

The intelligent
blo ldan
The eighth and ninth — impure and pure bhūmis.

b. How the stains are purified

dri ma sbyong ba'i tshul bstan pa
I.134–143

I.134–136
The three latent tendencies.

I.137
The fault of the violently manifest afflictions.

I.138
The flaw of the ground of latent ignorance.

I.139–140
The abandonments of seeing and meditation in the common vehicle.

I.141
The special stains of the seven impure grounds.

I.142
What the vajra-like samādhi destroys.

I.143
Summary.

iv. The Stages of How It Is Realized
ji ltar rtogs pa'i rim pa
I.144–153

The nine examples fall to the three natures (I.144): three illustrations, one, and five, respectively.

Dharmakāya
chos sku
Examples 1–3. I.145–147.

Suchness
de bzhin nyid
Example 4. I.148.

Disposition
rigs
Examples 5–9. I.149–152.

The detailed explanation considers the three separately and closes by asking how they are realized.

a. Simile and meaning of the dharmakāya
chos sku'i dpe don
I.145–147

Its divisions
chos sku'i rnam dbye bstan pa
Twofold: the utterly stainless dharmadhātu, and its natural outflow — the teaching of the profound and of the diverse. I.145.

Applied to the similes
de dag dpe dang sbyar ba
The dharmadhātu is beyond the world, so no worldly example reaches it: the element is shown to resemble the Tathāgata himself — the buddha in the faded lotus (I.146). The profound is honey of a single taste; the diverse, a kernel in its husks (I.147).

b. Simile and meaning of suchness
de bzhin nyid kyi dpe don bstan pa
I.148

Changeless by nature, excellent, and pure — illustrated by a piece of gold, the fourth of the nine.

c. Simile and meaning of the disposition
rigs kyi dpe don
I.149–152

The disposition is twofold (I.149): the naturally abiding one, without beginning, like a treasure; and the accomplished one, like a fruit tree. The three kāyas are attained from these two — the first from the first, the latter two from the second (I.150) — and I.151–152 name their similes, taken from the nine.

Svābhāvikakāya
ngo bo nyid sku
From the naturally abiding disposition. Like the precious image — example 7.

Sambhogakāya
longs sku
From the accomplished disposition. Like a cakravartin — example 8.

Nirmāṇakāya
sprul sku
From the accomplished disposition. Like a golden image — example 9.

> **At I.149–150** *The commentary weighs whether the accomplished disposition is conditioned — newly produced by the path. It cites Rangjung Dorje's Zab mo nang don — some think it newly arises; it is not so — and holds that it too exists from beginningless time: the roots of virtue adopted on the path expand its capacity, they do not create it.*

d. How these are realized through faith
de dag dad pas rtogs tshul
I.153

The ultimate of the self-arisen ones is realized through confidence alone. Just as those without eyes do not see the disk of the sun, it cannot be seen by ordinary means and is known by trusting the Buddha's word.

v. Teaching the Essence Itself
snying po nyid bstan pa
I.154–155

a. Its nature
ngo bo
I.154

Essence
ngo bo
Nothing to add or remove; seeing truth.

> **I.154**
> འདི་ལ་བསལ་བྱ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད།
> གཞན་པར་བྱ་བ་ཙྪད་ཟད་མེད།
> ཡང་དག་ཉིད་ལ་ཡང་དག་གྱུ།
> ཡང་དག་མཐོང་ནས་རྣམ་པར་གྲོལ།
>
> There is nothing to be removed from this
> And not the slightest to be added.
> Actual reality is to be seen as it really is—
> Whoever sees actual reality is liberated.

b. The manner of being empty and not empty
stong mi stong gi tshul
I.155

> **I.155**
> རྣམ་དབྱེར་བཅས་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཅན།
> གློ་བུར་དག་གིས་ཁམས་སྟོང་གི།
> རྣམ་དབྱེར་མེད་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཅན།
> བླ་མེད་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་སྟོང་མ་ཡིན།
>
> The basic element is empty of what is adventitious,
> Which has the characteristic of being separable.
> It is not empty of the unsurpassable attributes,
> Which have the characteristic of being inseparable.

SECTION IV
The Purpose of Teaching the Element
khams bstan pa'i dgos pa bstan pa
I.156–167

> *Q (I.156). It is taught everywhere that all the knowable is empty — like a cloud, a dream, an illusion. So why teach that the buddha element is present in every being?*
>
> A (I.157–158). To overcome the five faults that arise in those who have not heard it.

i. The intent of the middle turning
bka' bar par ji ltar bstan pa'i dgongs pa
I.159–160

What the second turning meant by teaching that all is empty, and why the final turning then teaches the element (I.160).

ii. The five faults and the qualities gained
nyes pa lnga ji ltar 'byung tshul · skyon lnga spangs pas yon tan thob tshul
I.161–167

Faults (I.161–165): faint-heartedness, contempt for inferior beings, clinging to what is unreal (overstatement — the stains taken as real), denying the real (understatement — that the qualities are not there), and excessive self-love in place of love for others.

The commentary cites Mikyö Dorje against those who call the buddha-nature teaching provisional only because it removes the five faults: if the element were not really present, the five faults would not be faults at all: contempt for beings would be no error, and abandoning the five would be groundless.

Qualities (I.166–167): five dharmas, one for each fault — ardor, respect for beings as for the Teacher, prajñā, wisdom, and great love. Through them buddhahood is swiftly attained.

Enlightenment

Eight Topics · Three Kāyas

Covers the eight topics of II.2 under seven headings and explains the three kāyas.

SECTION I

The Eight Topics

bshad bya don gyi ngo bo mdor bstan

II.1

The nature of the subject matter (II.1); the **eight topics** under which the buddhabhūmi is determined (II.2). The commentary then treats them under **seven headings**, combining essence and cause as it did in the Element chapter.

SECTION II

Summary of the Mode of Explanation

'chad tshul sdom du bsdu

II.2

1 Essence *ngo bo* Twofold purity — natural, and from adventitious defilement.	2 Cause *rgyu* The two wisdoms: nonconceptual, and discriminating.
3 Fruition *'bras bu* Freedom from the two veils, shown by the stainless similes.	4 Function *las* Accomplishing the two aims — own welfare and that of others.
5 Endowment *ldan pa* The vimuktikāya and the dharmakāya, and the synonyms of buddhahood.	6 Engagement *'jug pa* Its manifestation as the three kāyas.
7 Permanence *rtag pa* Ten reasons — seven for the rūpakāyas, three for the dharmakāya.	8 Inconceivability *bsam mi khyab* Six reasons; inconceivable even for the noble ones.

SECTION III

Extensive Explanation

de dag sbyar te rgyas par bshad pa

II.3–73

i. Essence and cause

ngo bo dang rgyu rgyas par bshad pa

II.3–7

II.3 — buddhahood is luminous by nature but covered by the adventitious afflictive and cognitive obscurations, as clouds cover the sun. It is attained on the basis of the wisdom that is nonconceptual about phenomena and the wisdom that discriminates them.

Wisdom

ye shes

What is realized.

Relinquishment

spangs pa

What is left behind. II.4 — the two are inseparable, like the sun and the sky.

ii. The result

'bras bu rgyas par bshad pa

II.8–17

The result is first presented through similes for what is stainless. Each shows a purity that has been covered but never lost; the only change is the removal of what concealed it.

Freedom from the afflictive veil *nyon sgrib* — one simile to each poison (II.8).

Desire

'dod chags

A pond of clear water, abundant with lotuses.

Hatred

zhe sdang

The full moon released from the mouth of Rāhu.

Ignorance

gti mug

The sun freed of clouds.

Freedom from the cognitive veil *shes sgrib* — the nine examples of the Element chapter (II.9), the buddha in the lotus and the rest, applied here in II.15–17.

iii. Enlightened activity

las rgyas par bshad pa

II.18–28

Eleven verses explain how the two aims are accomplished through a single comparison. Space does not actively produce anything, yet without it nothing could be seen or heard. Enlightened activity is a cause in this sense.

a. The two aims, stated briefly

don gnyis 'grub tshul mdor bstan

II.18–20

The activity of the essential nature *ngo bo nyid kyi las* — II.18. Tathāgatahood, complete in relinquishment and realization and so unconditioned, is that cause, for the six faculties of the wise.

The activity that is purity through all dharmas *chos thams cad kyis dag pa'i las* — II.19–20 take the six one faculty at a time.

Seen

gzugs

The form kāya, and the objects it commands.

Heard

sgra

The perfect and unsullied discourses of the great vehicle.

Smelled

dri

The clean scent of the discipline of the sugatas.

Tasted
ro
The supreme flavour of the genuine dharma the great noble ones enjoy.

Touched
reg bya
The pleasure of the pliancy won in samādhi.

Realized
chos
The principle that is profound by its own nature.

When examined by reasoning that seeks the ultimate, the Tathāgata is as free as space from anything by which a cause produces a result. Nevertheless, every excellence arises in those he trains (II.20).

b. The extensive explanation
rgyas bshad
II.21–28

The function of the two wisdoms (II.21): equipoise on things as they are perfects the vimuktikāya, post-attainment on things as far as they extend purifies the dharmakāya. What belongs to each kāya, and what they share, is in II.22.

Uncontaminated
zag pa med pa
The vimuktikāya's own. The afflictions have ceased from the root, latent tendencies and all. II.23.

All-pervasive
khyab pa
The dharmakāya's own. Wisdom without attachment, knowing things as they are, and without obstruction, knowing them as far as they extend. II.23.

The unconditioned matrix
'dus ma byas
Held in common. Neither is made by causes and conditions. II.24.

"Indestructible" is a concise description of the unconditioned (II.24), set against the four ways a conditioned thing perishes (II.25). Since the two kāyas lack all four, the following terms apply (II.26).

Everlasting
brtan pa
No putridity: the formations do not ripen, grow old and rot.

Peaceful
zhi ba
No sickness: the constituents do not alter into suffering.

Eternal
rtag pa
No extinction: no existence breaks off as the next is taken up.

Imperishable
'pho ba med pa
No death — not even the transference that is inconceivable.

The benefit of self *rang don phun tshogs* — this stainless wisdom is the matrix, because it is the foundation of every pure attribute (II.26).

The benefit of others *gzhan don phun tshogs* — the six faculties restored through the simile (II.27). Unobscured, the two kāyas are the cause of uncontaminated qualities arising in the objects of the wise — the marks and signs as the rūpakāya is seen, the powers and fearlessnesses as the dharmakāya is (II.28).

iv. Endowment
ldan pa'i don
II.29–37

a. The synonyms, stated briefly
ming gi rnam grangs mdor bstan
II.29

The fifteen names in II.29 run from "inconceivable" to "stainless." The commentary treats them as synonyms for the ultimate quality: to possess all fifteen is to have attained great enlightenment. II.31–37 explain the reason for each name, in the order followed below.

b. The extensive explanation
rgyas par bshad pa
II.30–37

II.30 — what possesses them is the pair of kāyas, which is also the foundation of both aims.

Vimuktikāya
rnam grol sku
The body of freedom — one's own welfare. Every bond that was to be relinquished is untied.

Dharmakāya
chos sku
The body of dharma — the welfare of others, accomplished by the activity that rests on its qualities of realization.

Why it is profound *zab pa'i rgyu mtshan*. The first synonym is taken separately (II.31–33) because inconceivability governs how the other fourteen are understood. Buddhahood is known only by omniscient wisdom (II.31), and the three kinds of prajñā are ruled out in turn (II.32).

Study
thos byung
Hearing cannot reach buddhahood because it is subtle.

Reflection
bsam byung
Thinking cannot reach it because it is the ultimate.

Meditation
sgom byung
Worldly meditation cannot reach the depth of the nature of phenomena.

II.33 illustrates the limits of other forms of knowing: ordinary beings have never seen it, as the blind from birth have never seen form; the noble ones glimpse it as an infant glimpses the sun from the lying-in house.

Immutability *mi 'gyur ba'i yon tan* — II.34.

Permanent
rtag pa
It does not arise from causes and conditions.

Everlasting
brtan pa
Where there is no arising there is nothing to cease.

Quiescent
zhi ba
Without the duality of arising and ceasing, nothing is left to disturb it.

Eternal
g.yung drung
The nature of phenomena, nirvāṇa by nature, abides from the first and does not alter.

Abandonment and realization *spang rtogs kyi yon tan* — II.35–36.

Peaceful
rab tu zhi ba
The great bliss in which all suffering is stilled: the ultimate truth of cessation, made manifest.

All-pervasive
khyab pa
Every aspect of the knowable is directly realized — knowing all that there is.

Free from conception
rtog pa med pa
It abides in no referent and no characteristic — knowing things as they are.

Without attachment
chags pa med pa
The afflictive obscuration, which blocks liberation, is relinquished with its latent tendencies.

Without obstruction
thogs pa med pa
The cognitive obscuration, which blocks omniscience, is wholly purified.

Free from harsh sensations
rtsub pa'i reg bya dang bral ba
Neither dullness nor agitation remains: body and mind are supple, and samādhi workable.

Purity *dag pa'i yon tan* — II.37.

Invisible
bltar med pa
It has no form built of particles and stands outside conditioned things, so an ordinary faculty cannot look at it.

Ungraspable
gzung du med pa
It carries no elaborated mark of evidence or reason, so an ordinary mind cannot take hold of it.

Splendid
dge ba
The dharmadhātu is pure by its own nature.

Stainless
dri ma med pa
The adventitious stains are relinquished without remainder, latent tendencies and all.

v. Engagement
'jug pa'i don
II.38–61
This is the longest of the seven topics.

a. The three kāyas
mtshan nyid kyi rnam grangs mdor bstan pa
II.38–41
Before the division, their nature under seven marks (II.38): the dharmadhātu as seen in meditative equipoise by yogins who strive for it. One verse on each kāya.

The individual presentations *so so'i rnam gzhag* — II.44–59, a run of verses to each kāya.

Svābhāvikakāya · II.44–48 — five characteristics. *mtshan nyid lnga*

Dharmakāya	Sambhogakāya	Nirmāṇakāya
chos sku	*longs sku*	*sprul sku*
The body of truth — the basis.	*The body of enjoyment — qualities manifesting.*	*The body of emanation — activity in the world.*

b. The three kāyas unfolded
don rgyas par bshad pa
II.42–61
The subject of the division is buddhahood (II.42), for which The commentary counts seven synonyms. Each kāya has one of three reasons (II.43).

Profundity
zab pa
Hard to realize: the svābhāvikakāya.

Vastness
rgya che ba
Commanding power: the sambhogakāya.

Magnanimity
bdag nyid chen po
Meeting disciples according to their fortune: the nirmāṇakāya.

The first kāya is named twice over. From II.43 through II.48 it is the svābhāvikakāya, *ngo bo nyid sku*; at II.39 and again at II.61 it is the dharmakāya, *chos sku*. The two names refer to the same kāya.

1. Unconditioned — *'dus ma byas*
2. Undifferentiable — *rnam par dbyer med pa*
3. Free from the two extremes — *mtha' gnyis rnam par spangs pa*
4. Liberated from the three obscurations — afflictive, cognitive, and those of meditative absorption — *sgrib pa gsum las nges par grol*
5. Naturally pure and luminous — *rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba*

Five further qualities (II.47), explained in II.48. *yon tan lnga*

1. Immeasurable — vast as space — *gzhal du med pa*
2. Innumerable — never brought to a final count — *bgrang du med pa*
3. Inconceivable — in no respect the sphere of dialecticians — *bsam du med pa*
4. Unequalled — a quality the buddhas alone command — *mnyam pa med pa*

5 Ultimately pure — the two obscurations gone with their latent tendencies
rnam par dag pa mthar thug

Sambhogakāya · II.49–52 — five attributes. *chos lnga*

1 Speech that instructs
gsung brjod pa rgyun mi 'chad pa
2 A display of form
sku ston pa rgyun mi 'chad pa
3 Uninterrupted activity
thugs kyi mdzad pa rgyun mi 'chad pa
4 Effortless spontaneity
rtog pa med cing lhun gyis grub pa
5 Appearing variously without being of that nature — a wish-fulfilling jewel taking on colours by the power of conditions
sna tshogs su snang yang de'i rang bzhin min pa

The five attributes stand together (II.51). The jewel comparison is reversed (II.52): just as a jewel does not reveal its own state through the changing colours around it, the lord does not reveal his own state through the varying conditions of those who see him.

Supreme nirmāṇakāya · II.53–56 — the twelve deeds, displayed without ever moving from the dharmakāya, in impure realms, for as long as existence lasts.

1 Descent from Tuṣita
dga' ldan gyi gnas nas 'pho ba
2 Entering the womb
yum gyi lhums su 'jug pa
3 Birth
lhums nas bltams pa
4 Skill in the arts
bzo yi gnas la mkhas pa
5 Enjoyment among the queens
btsun mo'i 'khor gyi nang na dgyes par rol ba
6 Renunciation
khab nas nges par 'byung ba
7 Asceticism
dka' ba spyod pa
8 Going to the seat of awakening
byang chub kyi snying por gshegs pa
9 Vanquishing Māra
bdud kyi sde dpung 'joms pa
10 Complete awakening
mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa
11 Turning the wheel of dharma
chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba
12 Parinirvāṇa
yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa

II.57–59 give its activity, which guides disciples in stages — the three distinctive features II.41 named in brief.

Weariness
skyo ba
With the three realms — through "impermanence, suffering, no-self, peace". II.57.

The turn
theg mchog tu bskul
Those who take that peace as final are turned toward the supreme yāna by teachings such as the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka. II.58.

The prophecy
lung bstan pa
Held with prajñā and means, they are ripened in that yāna and their highest awakening is prophesied. II.59.

The summary *don bsdu ba*. The reasons for distinguishing the three (II.60): subtlety, the perfection of power, and the guidance of naive beings.

The three fall into two (II.61): the first of the three is the dharmakāya, the latter two are the two rūpakāyas — "just as form abides in space, the latter dwell in the first." So the sambhogakāya falls on the rūpakāya side, not with the dharmakāya.

vi. Permanence
rtag pa'i don bshad pa
II.62–68

Ten reasons the Buddha is permanent (II.62).

1 Infinite causes
rgyu mtha' yas pa
2 Inexhaustible beings
gdul bya zad mtha' med pa
3 Compassion
brtse ba chen po rgyun mi 'chad pa
4 Miraculous powers
rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa la dbang 'byor ba
5 Wisdom
'khor 'das mnyam pa nyid du mkhyen pa
6 Fulfilment
zag med kyi bde ba phun sum tshogs pa
7 Mastery of dharmas
yon tan gyi chos thams cad kyi dbang phyug
8 Having vanquished the māra of death
'chi bdag gi bdud bcom pa
9 Lacking any conditioned nature
'dus byas kyi ngo bo med pa
10 Being the refuge and protector of the world
'jig rten gyi skyabs dang mgon por gyur pa

The first seven show the permanence of the teacher in terms of the rūpakāyas, the latter three in terms of the dharmakāya (II.68).

vii. Inconceivability
bsam mi khyab pa'i don bshad pa
II.69–73

Six reasons for its inconceivability (II.69):

1 Unutterable
ngag gis brjod du med pa
2 Consisting of the ultimate
don dam gyis bsdus pa
3 Not examinable
rtog pas brtag par bya ba min pa
4 Beyond example
dpe las 'das pa
5 Unsurpassable
bla na med pa
6 Included in neither existence nor peace
srid zhis ma bsdus pa

The sphere of the Buddha is inconceivable even for the noble ones. II.70–71 link the six in sequence: inconceivable because unutterable; unutterable because ultimate; ultimate because it cannot be examined by reason; and so on, down to abiding in neither existence nor peace.

By the first five (II.72)
chos sku
Buddhahood is subtle, so the dharmakāya is inconceivable.

By the sixth
gzugs sku
Its true state is not seen, so the rūpakāya is inconceivable.

The 64 Qualities

32 of Freedom · 32 of Maturation

Presents the thirty-two qualities of freedom and the thirty-two qualities of maturation through the four similes of III.4.

SECTION I

The Enumeration, Correlated with the Two Kāyas

gnyis dang sbyar te grangs kyi dbye ba mdor bstan pa
III.1–3

The qualities of the Buddha are sixty-four: thirty-two of **freedom** (*bral 'bras* — the fruit of separation) and thirty-two of **maturation** (*smin 'bras* — the fruit of ripening). In III.1, the ultimate kāya carries the qualities of freedom, while the seeming kāya that rests on it carries the qualities of maturation.

The role of each body (III.2); the two sets rest on them (III.3).

Ultimate kāya
don dam sku · bral 'bras

The fruit of separation supports one's own welfare and bears the qualities of freedom, including the powers.

Seeming kāya
kun rdzob sku · smin 'bras

The fruit of maturation supports the welfare of others and bears the qualities of maturation, including the marks of a great being.

SECTION II

Extensive Explanation of the Qualities

yon tan rgyas par bshad pa
III.4–39

i. The four similes
dpe don sbyar te sdom gyis mdor bstan
III.4

Vajra
rdo rje

The powers, against the obscurations of ignorance.

Lion
seng ge

The fearlessnesses, amid the retinue.

Space
nam mkha'

The unique qualities of the Tathāgata.

Moon in water
chu zla

The sage's two kinds of display.

ii. 32 of Freedom — Dharmakāya
bral 'bras · III.5–16
III.5–16

Ten powers, four fearlessnesses, and eighteen unshared qualities, illustrated by the vajra, lion, and space similes of III.4.

Ten powers
stobs bcu
III.5–6.

1. **What is and is not the case**
   gnas dang gnas min
   The possible and the impossible.
2. **Maturation of karma**
   las rnams kyi rnam smin
   How actions ripen.
3. **Faculties**
   dbang po
   The strengths and weaknesses of beings.
4. **Constitutions**
   khams rnams
   The elements that make up a person.
5. **Inclinations**
   mos pa
   The various dispositions of beings.
6. **The all-going path**
   kun 'gro'i lam
   The path that leads everywhere.
7. **Dhyānas, afflicted and stainless**
   nyon mongs dang dri ma med pa
   Meditative attainments, with and without affliction.
8. **Former birthplaces**
   gnas rjes su dran pa
   Recollection of where one has lived.
9. **The divine eye**
   lha yi mig
   The pure vision of a buddha.
10. **Peace**
    zhi ba
    The mode of the termination of outflows.

Four fearlessnesses
mi 'jigs pa bzhi
III.8–10.

11. **Complete awakening**
    chos sku rdzogs par byang chub
    The full realisation of all phenomena.
12. **Halting obstacles**
    gegs 'gog par byed pa
    The termination of every obstacle.
13. **Teaching the path**
    lam ston pa
    Showing the path to be relied on.
14. **Teaching cessation**
    'gog ston pa
    Attaining and showing cessation.

Eighteen unshared
ma 'dres pa bco brgyad
III.11–16.

Six in conduct
spyod pa

15. **No mistakenness**
    'khrul pa med pa
    Bodily conduct without error.
16. **No chatter**
    ca co med pa
    Speech without idle talk.
17. **No loss of mindfulness**
    dran pa nyams pa med pa
    Mindfulness that never fails.
18. **Mind in equipoise**
    mnyam par ma bzhag pa'i thugs med pa
    No mind outside meditative equipoise.
19. **No notions of diversity**
    'du shes sna tshogs med pa
    No perception of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as different.
20. **No unexamined equanimity**
    ma brtags pa'i btang snyoms med pa
    No indifference without prior examination.

Six in realisation
rtogs pa

21. **Aspiration**
    'dun pa nyams pa med pa
    Aspiration that never wanes.
22. **Vigour**
    brtson 'grus nyams pa med pa
    Vigour that never weakens.
23. **Mindfulness**
    dran pa nyams pa med pa
    Mindfulness that never lapses.
24. **Prajñā**
    shes rab nyams pa med pa
    Prajñā that never declines.

The 64 Qualities

25 Liberation
rnam par grol ba nyams pa med pa
Liberation that never deteriorates.

26 Vision of liberative wisdom
ye shes gzigs pa nyams pa med pa
The vision of liberative wisdom never fails.

Three in activity
phrin las

27 Bodily activity
sku'i las ye shes sngon 'gro
Preceded by wisdom; followed by wisdom.

28 Speech
gsung gi las ye shes sngon 'gro
Preceded by wisdom; followed by wisdom.

29 Mental activity
thugs kyi las ye shes sngon 'gro
Preceded by wisdom; followed by wisdom.

Three in wisdom
ye shes

30 The past
'das pa'i dus la ye shes sgrib pa med pa
Unobscured knowledge of what has passed.

31 The present
da ltar byung ba'i dus la ye shes sgrib pa med pa
Unobscured knowledge of what is now.

32 The future
ma 'ongs pa'i dus la ye shes sgrib pa med pa
Unobscured knowledge of what is yet to come.

iii. 32 of Maturation — Rūpakāya

smin 'bras · III.17–26

III.17–26

The thirty-two major marks of a great being, taught from III.17.

1 Feet firmly placed *legs gnas*	**2** Soles marked with wheels *'khor lo'i mtshan pa*	**3** Broad heels *yangs shing zhabs*	**4** Nonprotruding ankles *zhabs long mi mngon*
5 Long fingers and toes *sor mo ring ba*	**6** Webs joining hands and feet *dra ba yis 'brel ba*	**7** Soft, youthfully tender skin *pags 'jam gzhon sha can*	**8** Seven convex surfaces *sku bdun dag mtho ba*
9 Antelope-like calves *byin pa e na ya 'dra*	**10** Concealed private parts *glang po bzhin du sbubs su nub*	**11** Lionlike upper body *ro stod seng ge 'dra ba*	**12** Broad, compact flesh between the shoulders *thal gong bar med rgyas pa*
13 Evenly rounded shoulders *dpung mgo legs zlum*	**14** Rounded, soft, even arms *phyag 'jam zhing zlum zhing mtho dman med pa*	**15** Arms reaching the knees *phyag ring po*	**16** Pure halo of light *'od kyi dkyil 'khor*
17 Neck like a conch *mgrin pa dri med dung 'dra*	**18** Jaws like the king of animals *'gram pa ri dgas rgyal po 'dra*	**19** Forty teeth, equally distributed *tshems bzhi bcu mnyam pa*	**20** Bright, well-arranged teeth *rab dag tshems thags bzang ba*
21 Pure, equal teeth *rnam dag tshems mnyam nyid*	**22** Very white eyeteeth *mche ba rab mchog dkar ba nyid*	**23** Large tongue; supreme, inconceivable taste *ljags ring mtha' med bsam med pa*	**24** Voice like a kalaviṅka *ka la ping ka yi sgra*
25 Brahmā's melodious tone *tshangs pa'i dbyangs nyid*	**26** Eyes like blue lotuses; lashes like a bull *spyan bzang ut+pal khyu mchog rdzi 'dra*	**27** Handsome face with the white immaculate ūrṇā *zhal mdzes dri med mdzod spu dkar ldan*	**28** Head crowned by an uṣṇīṣa *gtsug tor dbu ldan*
29 Golden, delicate skin *pags pa gser gyi mdog 'dra*	**30** Body hairs soft, upward, curling to the right *sku yi gyen du g.yas phyogs 'khyil pa*	**31** Hair like a stainless blue sapphire *dbu skra dri med rin chen mthon mthing bzhin*	**32** Well proportioned like the maṇḍala of a perfect nyagrodha tree *n+ya gro rdzogs pa'i ljon shing dkyil 'khor 'dra*

iv. How it is known from scripture

lung las rtogs tshul

III.27

These sixty-four qualities and their causes are in the Ratnadārikāsūtra; the commentary keeps that order. It does not derive them by reasoning but points to where they are taught.

v. Restating simile and meaning

slar yang dpe don bsdus te bstan pa

III.28–39

The similes correspond to their meanings in general (III.28–30), and each of the four from III.4 is worked out in detail.

Activities

Spontaneous · Uninterrupted

Explains buddha-activity as spontaneous and uninterrupted, using nine similes to show how it benefits beings.

SECTION I

Brief Presentation

mdor bstan pa

IV.1–3

Buddha-activity has two characteristics: it is **spontaneous** and it is **uninterrupted**.

Spontaneous

lhun grub

Without effort, deliberation or agent. IV.1.

Uninterrupted

rgyun mi 'chad pa

Without pause, for as long as saṃsāra lasts. IV.2–3.

SECTION II

Detailed Explanation

rgyas bshad

IV.4–12

i. The meaning of spontaneity

lhun grub kyi don bsdus te bstan

IV.4

No conceptuality

rnam par mi rtog pa

Nothing is thought, intended or decided.

No conflict of place or time

yul dus mi 'gal ba

Activity reaches the disciple at the right place and time, though nothing has been arranged.

ii. The meaning of uninterruptedness

rgyun mi 'chad pa'i don bshad pa

IV.5–12

Five steps, in verse order.

1. The synonyms, briefly. IV.5
2. The divisions of the meaning, at length. IV.6–7
3. Similes that illustrate them. IV.8
4. Each simile matched to its meaning. IV.9–11
5. How activity is uninterrupted, summarized. IV.12

SECTION III

The Nine Similes

dpe dang sbyar te shin tu rgyas par bshad pa

IV.13–98

Nine similes (IV.13), each then worked out at length. The short description under each name is the commentary's interpretation.

1 Śakra *brgya byin* IV.14–30 Śakra's unintentional reflection in the lapis ground stands for the body displaying emanations.	**2 Drum of the gods** *lha'i rnga* IV.31–41 A drum sounds though no one beats it, like speech proclaiming instruction.	**3 Clouds** *sprin* IV.42–52 Clouds rain impartially, as the wisdom and compassion of mind pervade.
4 Brahmā *tshangs pa* IV.53–57 Brahmā's manifestations appear while he remains in his abode.	**5 Sun** *nyi ma* IV.58–66 Sunlight reaches everywhere at once, like the engagement of wisdom.	**6 Wish-fulfilling jewel** *nor bu rin chen* IV.67–70 A jewel grants wishes without thought, like the secret of mind.
7 Echo *sgra brnyan* IV.71–72 An echo sounds without a speaker, like the secret of speech.	**8 Space** *nam mkha'* IV.73–74 Space pervades without coming or going, like the secret of body.	**9 Earth** *sa* IV.75–76 The earth supports growth impartially, like compassionate engagement.

i. The purpose, and the summary of the topic

dgos pa brjod de skabs don bsdu ba

IV.77–88

These verses explain why the similes are needed and summarize what they establish about activity.

ii. Summarised again, with the distinction shown

slar yang bsdus te khyad par du bstan pa

IV.89–98

Appears, yet neither arises nor ceases

skye 'gag med pa

As the beryl ground is made pure by the faculty of irreversible confidence, activity appears from the dharmakāya, free of arising and ceasing, for as long as existence remains. IV.89–91

Surpasses whatever shares his qualities

khyad par du 'phags pa

The similes are ordered so each later one remedies the deficiency of the one before: the reflection has no voice, so the drum follows; the drum does not benefit in every way, so the clouds follow. No worldly example fully suffices. IV.92–98

All nine similes show buddha-activity occurring without an agent or effort. They describe how the dharmakāya reaches beings according to their dispositions. The first five similes concern body, speech, mind, emanation and wisdom; the next three concern the secrets of mind, speech and body; the last concerns compassion.

Benefits & Colophon

Merit · Dedication

The merit of composing and studying the treatise, how Maitreya composed it, and the dedication verses that close the root text.

SECTION A

The Benefits

phan yon
V.1–15

The treatise is needed because the element, awakening, the attributes and activity belong to the guides alone and are inconceivable even for pure beings (V.1). Devoted interest in them brings qualities, in brief (V.2).

i. Superiority over three pāramitās

khyad par bshad pa
V.3–5

The same comparison, for three more pāramitās (V.3–5).

Generosity
sbyin pa
Offering jewel-adorned golden realms day after day yields less merit than hearing one word of this dharma with faith. V.3.

Discipline
tshul khrims
Keeping immaculate discipline of body, speech and mind for many aeons yields less merit than hearing one word with faith. V.4.

Meditation
bsam gtan
Even the dhyānas that extinguish the fire of the afflictions throughout the three realms, up to the divine and Brahmā abodes, yield less merit than one word heard with faith. V.5.

ii. The reason for that superiority

de'i rgyu mtshan
V.6

Generosity
sbyin pa
Yields only wealth. V.6.

Discipline
tshul khrims
Yields only rebirth in the higher realms, still within saṃsāra. V.6.

Meditation
bsam gtan
Relinquishes only the afflictions, not the cognitive obscurations. V.6.

Prajñā clears both the afflictive and the cognitive obscurations; studying this dharma is how one cultivates it.

iii. The benefits at length

phan yon shin tu rgyas bshad pa
V.7–15

Enlightenment attained
V.7–8

Stability of the mind of enlightenment
V.9–10

The pāramitās completed and purified
V.11–12

Incidental: the certainty of the accumulations
V.13

The obscurations abandoned
V.14–15

Why study matters (V.15): without prajñā the other pāramitās cannot remove the obscurations. Prajñā stands above them, and study is its root.

SECTION B

How the Treatise Was Composed

bstan bcos ji ltar mdzad pa
V.16–24

Speaking in the first person (V.16): the treatise was expounded from trustworthy scripture and reasoning. Its purposes are to purify the author and to support those endowed with intelligence, faith and virtue. It relies on the sources in V.17.

i. Identifying the word of the Victor

rgyal ba'i bka' ngos bzung ba
V.18

Four marks by which the seer's speech is known.

1. It is meaningful.
   don dang ldan pa
2. It is connected with the words of the dharma.
   chos dang nye bar 'brel ba
3. It relinquishes the afflictions of the three realms.
   kun nas nyon mongs pa spong bar byed pa
4. It teaches the benefit of peace.
   zhi ba'i phan yon ston pa

Whatever lacks these marks is not his word.

ii. All that accords with it is to be accepted

de dang mthun pa thams cad blang byar bstan pa
V.19

Other teachings may be accepted when they come from those of undistracted mind who take the victor alone as their teacher and when they accord with the path of the accumulations. Such teachings are to be respected like the seer's own word.

iii. One must not contradict the Victor's word

rgyal ba'i bka' dang ma 'gal bar bstan pa

V.20

No one in this world exceeds the victor in wisdom. One must not depart from the sūtras he taught as definitive; to do so undermines the sage's guidance and harms the genuine dharma.

iv. The fault of contradicting it

'gal ba'i nyes pa bstan pa

V.21–24

The indirect cause (V.21). Views that entail clinging, which stain the mind as grease stains a garment — only a clean cloth will take the dye.

Ten causes for rejecting the dharma (V.22).

1. Weak intelligence
   blo gros shin tu dman pa
2. Lack of faith in what is pure
   dkar po dge ba'i chos la mos pa dang bral ba
3. False pride
   log pa'i nga rgyal la brten pa
4. Obscuration from destroying the genuine dharma
   dam pa'i chos kyis phongs par 'gyur ba'i las kyi sgrib pa
5. Grasping the expedient meaning as true reality
   drang ba'i don la nges don du 'dzin pa
6. Coveting gain
   rnyed pa la lhag par chags shing brkam pa
7. Being under the sway of views
   lta ba ngan pa la mngon par zhen pa
8. Relying on those who hate the dharma
   sdig pa'i grogs po bsten pa
9. Keeping at a distance from those who maintain it
   dge ba'i bshes gnyen las yun ring du bsrings pa
10. Desiring what is inferior
    mos pa dman pa

V.23

The certainty of not rejecting the profound Dharma.

V.24

Rejecting Dharma is graver than the deeds of immediate retribution.

SECTION C

Dedication and Summary of the Meaning

bsngo ba don bsdu dang bcas pa

V.25–28

i. The dedication with aspiration

bsngo ba smon lam dang bcas pa

V.25–27

V.25

དཀོན་མཆོག་རྣམ་པར་བྱང་ཞས་དེ་མེད་བྱང་ཆུབ་
ཡོན་ཏན་ཟིན་ལས་ཏེ།
དོན་གསུམ་རྣམ་བདུན་ཚུལ་བཞིན་བཤད་ལས་བདག་
གིས་དགེ་བ་གང་ཐོབ་པ།
དེས་ནི་འགྲོ་འདི་མཐའ་ཡས་འོད་མངའ་དང་སྲོང་ཆེ་
དཔག་མེད་མཐོང་ཞིང་།
མཐོང་ནས་ཀུང་ནི་ཆོས་མི་དྲི་མེད་སྐྱེས་ཏེ་བྱང་ཆུབ་
མཆོག་ཐོབ་ཤོག །

Having properly expounded the seven topical points (the [three] jewels, the pure basic element, Stainless awakening, the qualities, and activity), through the merit I obtained by that,
May [all] beings behold the seer Amitāyus endowed with infinite light
And, having seen him, attain supreme awakening by virtue of the stainless eye of dharma arising [in them].

V.26–27 review the closing verses and state the function of each.

V.16–19

The basis, cause, manner and content of the exposition, and what flows from the dharma by nature.

V.20–21

The means of protecting oneself.

V.22

The causes for the loss of the dharma.

V.23–24

The result of that loss.

ii. Summary statement of the benefits

phan yon gyi don bsdu bstan pa

V.28

Teaching the dharma brings two results: readiness to enter the maṇḍala of the retinue, and the attainment of awakening.

iii. The manner of conclusion

rdzogs pa'i tshul

The translators' colophon, which comments on no root verse: the treatise was rendered from Sanskrit into Tibetan in Kashmir's Peerless City by the great paṇḍita Sajjana, nephew of the brahmin Ratnavajra, together with the Tibetan lotsāwa, the Śākya monk Ngok Loden Sherab. The commentary closes with its colophon: completed at Kunzang Dechen Ösal Ling, the retreat of Palpung.