What Kind of Body and Mind is Needed for Meditative Absorption?

Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Concentrative and Formless Absorptions: Our own Positions, 1

Leah Zahler and Daniel Cozort
Edited by Jeffrey Hopkins
Dual language edition by William Magee

UMA INSTITUTE FOR TIBETAN STUDIES
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Translating texts from the heritage of Tibetan and Inner Asian Buddhist system, the project focuses on Great Indian Books and Tibetan commentaries from the Go-mang College syllabus as well as a related theme on the fundamental innate mind of clear light in Tantric traditions. A feature of the Project is the usage of consistent vocabulary and format throughout the translations.

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UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies
7330 Harris Mountain Lane
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USA

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Preface

**JAM-YANG-SHAY-PA**

Jam-yang-shay-pa Ngag-wang-tsön-dруľ was born in the northeastern Amdo Province of Tibet in the Earth-Mouse year of 1648 east of the Blue Lake. At the age of five he was blessed by the Fifth Dalai Lama, from whom he later received monastic vows. Having studied the alphabet at age seven with his uncle, who was a monk, he mastered reading and writing and six years later became a novice monk, excelling among his fellow students by his ability quickly to understand texts and disputation. He went to Lhasa at age twenty-one to further his studies at the Gomang College of Dre-pung Monastic University. Arriving in Lhasa in 1668, he offered a presentation scarf to an image of Mañjushrī in the Jo-khang Temple, where the statue reportedly favored the young scholar with a smile, due to which he became known as Jam-yang-shay-pa, “Smiled Upon by Mañjushrī.” Six years later he received full ordination and at twenty-nine entered Gyu-may Tantric College. From age thirty-three he spent two years in meditative retreat in a cave near Dre-pung.

At the age of thirty-eight in 1685 he published the first of his major works, *Decisive Analysis of (Tsong-kha-pa’s) “Differentiating the Interpretable and the Definitive”: Storehouse of White Lapis-Lazuli of Scripture and Reasoning Free from Mistake, Fulfilling the Hopes of the Fortunate*, commonly called *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive*. In 1688 he published another of his great expositions, the focus of the present book, the *Treatise on the Presentations of the Concentrative and Formless Absorptions: Adornment Beautifying the Subduer’s Teaching, Ocean of Scripture and Reasoning, Delighting the Fortunate*, commonly called *Great Exposition of the Concentrative and Formless Absorptions*. He published the *Root Text of Tenets: Lion’s Roar* in 1689, and published the *Great Exposition of Tenets*—its prose auto-commentary—ten years later in 1699, and between those two, in 1695, he published the De-

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\[ \text{jam dbyangs bzhad pa ngag dbang brtson grus, 1648-1722. For a longer biography of Jam-yang-shay-pa see Derek F. Maher, “Knowledge and Authority in Tibetan Middle Way Schools of Buddhism: A Study of the Gelukha (dge lugs pa) Epistemology of Jamyang Shayba (jam dbyangs bzhad pa) In Its Historical Context” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2003), 169-196.} \]

\[ \text{For an account of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s life see:} \]

cursive Analysis of (Chandrakīrti’s) “Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) ‘Treatise on the Middle’”: Treasury of Scripture and Reasoning, Thoroughly Illuminating the Profound Meaning [of Emptiness], Entrance for the Fortunate also called the Great Exposition of the Middle.

At age fifty-three in 1700 he became abbot of Go-mang College and in 1709 at sixty-two returned to Am-do Province where he founded a highly influential monastery at Tra-shi-khyil\(^a\) in 1710. Seven years later he founded a tantric college at the same place. He wrote prolifically on the full range of topics of a typical Tibetan polymath and, having received honors from the central Tibetan government and from the Chinese Emperor, died at the age of seventy-three or -four in 1721/2.\(^b\)

Partly because of the close connection between Go-mang College and the Mongolian peoples stretching from the Caspian Sea through Siberia, who were predominantly Ge-lug-pa by this time, Jam-yang-shay-pa’s influence on the Ge-lug-pa order has been considerable. His life manifests a pattern typical of many influential Tibetan religious figures—child prodigy, learned scholar, disseminator of the religion, politician, priest to political personages, monastery leader, yogi, magician, popular teacher, and prolific writer.

**Editions Consulted**

Two main editions of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Treatise on the Presentations of the Concentrative and Formless Absorptions: Adornment Beautifying the Subduer’s Teaching, Ocean of Scripture and Reasoning, Delighting the Fortunate, commonly called Great Exposition of the Concentrative and Formless Absorptions, were consulted:

1. **bsam gzugs kyi snyoms ’jug rnams kyi rnam par bzhag pa’i bstan bcos thub bstan mdzes rgyan lung dang rigs pa’i rgya mtsho skal bzang dga’ byed.** TBRC W22186.11:1-531 (PDF of bla brang bkra shis ’khyil: bla brang bkra shis ’khyil dgon, [n.d.]). Abbreviated reference “2011 TBRC bla brang.” This edition was printed in La-brang-tra-shi-khyil monastery founded by Jam-yang-shay-pa after his return to Am-do. We have not as yet procured the Old Go-mang College edition published while Jam-yang-shay-pa was in residence there.

2. **bsam gzugs kyi snyoms ’jug rnams kyi rnam par bzhag pa’i bstan bcos thub bstan mdzes rgyan lung dang rigs pa’i rgya mtsho skal bzang**

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\(^a\) bkra shis ’khyil.

\(^b\) See Maher, “Knowledge and Authority in Tibetan Middle Way Schools of Buddhism,” 164.
*dga’ byed*. Fixed type edition published in India, used for this translation, no publication data.
Jam-yang-shay-pa’s GREAT EXPOSITION OF THE CONCENTRATIVE AND FORMLESS ABSORPTIONS: Our Own Positions on the Physical and Mental Bases for Achieving Meditative Absorption

Key to the colorization: In situations of debate the Tibetan text and the translation are highlighted in three colors: black, blue, and red. Blue print presents what Jam-yang-shay-pa considers to be right positions, while red print represents what Jam-yang-shay-pa considers to be wrong positions. Words in black are other information or function structurally. In the Tibetan, a turquoise background indicates material added in place of ellipses, and a magenta highlight sets off ellipsis indicators when the elided part has been filled in.
Jam-yang-shay-pa’s

*Treatise on the Presentations of the Concentrative and Formless Absorptions, Adornment Beautifying the Subduer’s Teaching, Ocean of Scripture and Reasoning, Delighting the Fortunate*

This has three parts: explaining (1) the bases of meditative cultivation, (2) the meditative stabilizations of the concentrations and formless absorptions that are to be meditatively cultivated, and (3) the enumeration of the meditative stabilizations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in dependence upon that.
EXPLAINING THE BASES OF MEDITATIVE CULTIVATION (L3b.3)

This has two parts: explaining the physical basis and explaining the mental basis.

Explaining the physical basis (L3b.4)

As before, this has three parts: (1) refuting [mistakes], a (2) presenting [our own system], and (3) dispelling [objections to our system].

Explaining our own system on the physical basis (L13b.1)

[21.2] With respect to the subject, that which is to be known, those who have amassed the powerful actions of abandoning the doctrine and the [five] actions of immediate retribution [upon death], have until they purify them, no new generation of absorption in that life-support [that is, during that life] because (1) they have very strong karmic obstructions [of abandoning the doctrine and the five actions of immediate retribution] and (2) those karmic obstructions obstruct the Superior paths and the special faith, and so forth, that are virtuous roots for training in them.

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a Jam-yang-shay-pa divides the decisive analysis section into “refuting” (dgag), “presenting” (bzhag), and “dispelling” (spang). Refuting” is the short form of “refuting mistakes” (khrul ba dgag pa) or “refuting others’ systems” (gzhan lugs dgag pa). “Presenting” is the short form of “presenting our system” (rang lugs bzhag pa), and “dispelling” is the short form of “dispelling objections” (rtsod pa spong ba). Only the sections on presenting our own section are translated in this book.
The first [part of the reason which is that such beings have very strong karmic obstructions] is established because, on the one hand, these are actions (las, karma), and they obstruct the virtuous roots of Superior paths, and so forth, and therefore, they are called karmic obstructions because Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* says, “The actions of immediate retribution [upon death],” and Vasubandhu’s *Auto-commentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”* says, “The actions of immediate retribution [upon death] are karmic obstructions; they are as follows: killing one’s mother” and so forth.

The second [part of the reason which is that those karmic obstructions obstruct the Superior paths and the special faith, and so forth, that are virtuous roots for training in them] is established because Vasubandhu’s *Auto-commentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”* says, “What do these obstruct? They obstruct Superior paths and the virtuous roots that make connection to Superior paths.”
Great Exposition of the Concentrative and Formless Absorptions

With respect to the subject, that which is to be known, those who have the bases of androgy nous beings, and so forth, neuter beings, and eunuchs have no new generation [of absorption] because (1) they possess great afflictive obstructions and (2) those who possess such have no generation [of absorption].

The first [part of the reason which is that such beings possess great afflictive obstructions] is established because (1) Vasubandhu’s Treasury of Manifest Knowledge says, “When afflictions predominate”; (2) Vasubandhu’s Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says, “In that, ‘predominate’ is that which arises continually,” and, “That which is predominate is an obstruction; for example, the case of neuter beings, and so forth”; (3) the same text says, “Because of having the predominate afflictions of both bases [male and female],” [22] and “Because they are unable to analyze,” and “They do not have strong shame and embarrassment”; and (4) Gyal-tshab’s Commentary on (Asaṅga’s) “Compendium of Manifest Knowledge” says, “Those with genital abnormalities mostly have very strong afflictions of both men and women.”
The second [part of the reason which is that such bases have no generation of absorption] is established because powerful virtuous roots do not arise in those whose mental continuums are grasped by continuous manifest afflictions, because middling [desire] arises for even small objects of desire and great desire arises for even middling [objects of desire]; accordingly, afflictions increase, and it works the same way for other afflictions as well, because Vasubandhu’s Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says:

Even though afflictions that arise occasionally are strong, they can be overcome; however, that is not the case for those that arise continually. For afflictions that arise continually, one does not find a time to exert oneself in order to overcome them. That [person, one with continuous afflictions,] generates middling [desire] even for small [objects of desire and] great [desire] even for middling [objects of desire].
With respect to the subject, that which is to be known, those who have physical bases of (1) the three bad migrations [of hell beings, hungry ghosts, or animals], (2) sentient beings without discrimination, or (3) [inhabitants of the northern continent] Unpleasant Sound do not have new generation [of absorption] because (1) they have very powerful fruitional obstructions and (2) new generation [of absorption] is not feasible for them.

The first [part of the reason which is that those who have physical bases of (1) the three bad migrations, (2) sentient beings without discrimination, or (3) Unpleasant Sound have very powerful fruitional obstructions] is established because Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* says, “Sentient beings of the bad migrations and without discrimination and those of Unpleasant Sound are obstructed,” and Vasubandhu’s *Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”* says:

The three bad migrations and, within happy migrations, sentient
beings of the northern [continent] Unpleasant Sound, and those
without discrimination, have frutional obstructions.

The second [part of the reason which is that new generation of absorption
is not feasible for them] is established because Vasubandhu’s Autocom-
mentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says, “Whom do these
obstruct?” and so forth and because [23] it is also by reason ofa [the fact
that] beings in the bad migrations are strongly troubled by suffering and
beings in Unpleasant Sound and without discrimination cannot do much
investigation and analysis. Beings in Unpleasant Sound have neither new
generation [of absorption] nor possession of absorptions already generated
because (1) these [beings] do not have vows of individual liberation (so
mthar gyi sdom pa), concentrative restraints (bsam gtan gyi sdom pa), or
bad vows (sdom min) and (2) those who have the meditative stabilizations
included within the levels of concentration, ranging from contaminated
preparations for the concentrations on up, have concentrative restraints.

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a 23.1, correcting mi nus pa’i rgyu mtshan for mi nus pas rgyu mtshan; emendation by
Jeffrey Hopkins.
The first [part of the reason which is that these beings do not have vows of individual liberation, vows of concentration, or bad vows] is established because since they [can]not take something supreme [that is, a vow] from another [person, who is giving it], they do not have [vows of] individual liberation, and since there are no cultivators of meditative stabilization [among them], there are also no concentrative restraints, because they do not have either those two vows or bad vows, because Vasubandhu’s Auto-commentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says:

Because beings of the northern [continent], Unpleasant Sound, do not have correct assumption [of vows] and meditative stabilization and because they do not have the thought of committing sins, they do not have vows or bad vows.
The second [part of the reason which is that those who possess the meditative stabilizations included within the levels of concentration, ranging from contaminated preparations for the concentrations on up, possess concentrative restraints] is established [because of] the statement in Vasubandhu’s *Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”:*

> Those who possess concentration unquestionably possess concentrative restraints. Here the preparations are also indicated within the mention of concentrations.

There are a great many [such sources].

Those who have the physical bases of neuter beings, eunuchs, androgynes, and beings of the three bad migrations have neither new generation of the preparations for the concentrations on up nor possession [of previous attainments] because (1) persons who possess the meditative stabilizations included within the levels of concentration, which are the preparations for the concentrations on up, must have concentrative restraints and (2) in those physical bases, there is no generation of either vows/restraints or bad vows.

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* 23.2, correcting ldan pa for ldan ba in accordance with *Collected Works*, vol. 12, 22.7.
The first [part of the reason which is that persons who possess the meditative stabilizations included within the levels of concentration, which are the preparations for the concentrations on up, must have concentrative restraints] has already been established. The second [part of the reason which is that in those physical bases, there is no generation of either vows/restraints or bad vows] is established because the physical bases of those [beings] are, for example, like a field of earth infused with salt, which produces neither fruit nor grass. [24] because Yashomitra’s Commentary on (Vasubandhu’s) “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says:

Moreover, that just [those having] the physical [bases] of neuter beings, eunuchs, androgynes, and beings of the bad migrations both do not generate any vow/restraint and also have no generation of a bad vow, is like a field of earth infused with salt.

and so forth.
For this reason, since it is established that there is also no generation of the heat path of preparation, and above [levels], of the three vehicles, it is also very unreasonable to take the meaning of statements about hungry ghosts’ being set in seeing the truth as the path of seeing of the Lesser Vehicle. It is obvious that in a physical basis of demigods, as well, there is no new generation [of absorptions] because (1) they have obstructions of jealousy, or very great obstructions of [being that type of] migrator and (2) because the bases of concentrative restraint are definite as only gods and humans, and here in Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* demigods are not described as gods.

The first [part of the reason which is that they have obstructions of jealousy or very great obstructions of being that type of migrator] is established because Nāgārjuna’s *Friendly Letter* says:

> Also among demigods, they naturally hate the glory\(^a\) of the gods. Therefore, their mental suffering is great. Though they possess intelligence, they have the obstruction Of their transmigration, whereby they do not see the truth.

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\(^a\) That is, prosperity.
The second [part of the reason which is that the bases of concentrative restraint are definite as only gods and humans, and here in Vasubandhu’s Treasury of Manifest Knowledge demigods are not described as gods] is established because Yashomitra’s Commentary on (Vasubandhu’s) “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says, “Similarly, therefore, with respect to vows/restraints, only gods and humans have them.”

Therefore, in a physical basis of humans of the three continents [other than Unpleasant Sound] there is new generation [of absorption] because (1) in the physical bases of [humans of the three continents] there is new generation of the three—concentrative restraints, vows of individual liberation, and uncontaminated restraints—and (2) the absorptions of the concentrations and of the [concentrative] restraints are parallel in terms of their bases.
The first [part of the reason which is that in the physical bases of humans of the three continents there is new generation of the three—concentrative restraints, vows of individual liberation, and uncontaminated restraints] is established because Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* says, “Vows/restraints are also similar; in gods and also in humans, [there are] the three,” and Vasubandhu’s *Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”* says, “In humans, there are all [the vows/restraints]—vows of individual liberation, and so forth.”

The second [part of the reason which is that the absorptions of the concentrations and of the concentrative restraints are parallel in terms of their bases] is established because [concerning the passage from] Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge*—“Generation of the concentrations and possession of those [concentrative restraints]”—the meaning of the passages in the root text and commentary is established. [25] Those who have the physical bases of the six types of gods of the Desire Realm and migrants of the Form Realm have new generation [of absorption] because in the physical bases of those migrants there is the new attainment of concentrative restraints because Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* says, “Gods born in the Desire and Form Realms have generation of concentration,” and Vasubandhu’s *Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”* says, “Gods born in the Desire and Form Realms have these concentrative restraints, but the higher ones do not.”

\[\text{\textsuperscript{a}}\text{25.1, correcting yod pa’i phyir for yod pa’i phyid in accordance with Collected Works, vol. 12, 24.4.}\]
Great Exposition of the Concentrative and Formless Absorptions

With respect to the subject, that which is to be known, there are bases of the absorptions of the concentrations and formless absorptions because, in general, the actualization of the eight absorptions of the concentrations and formless absorptions and the bases of meditative cultivation of them have, individually, bases of both one’s own level and a lower level because Vasubandhu’s Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says:

How many concentrations and formless absorptions are actualized by [persons having] what bases? “Each of the concentrations and formless absorptions,/ Having a basis of a lower level.”

With respect to the subject, that which is to be known, in terms of including exceptions, [the bases] are not limited to only [those of] the two, one’s own level and a lower level, because even in a basis of an upper level there
is cultivation of [an absorption] of a lower level because Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* says, “In the Peak of Cyclic Existence” and so forth and because there is a final [fourth] concentration in the continuum of a Hearer Superior who has a basis of the Fourth Concentration and because there are leapover absorptions in the continuum of a Bodhisattva Superior who has a basis of [the Fourth Concentration], and so forth.

It is also the case that there is cultivation of the eight concentrations and formless absorptions by those who have bases of their own and lower levels because (1) there is actualization of the absorption of the peak of cyclic existence, for instance, in the eight, ranging from [those having the basis of] its own level, the Peak of Cyclic Existence, down to [those having the basis of] a lower level, the Desire Realm, and (2) similarly, with respect to the actual absorption of nothingness, there is actualization in the seven ranging from [those having the basis of] its own level, Nothingness, down to [those having the basis of] a lower level, the Desire Realm and, to extend the reasoning [with respect to the remaining levels], there is actualization of [an actual absorption of] the first concentration in the two—[those having the basis of] its own level, the First Concentration, and [26] [those having] the basis of the lower level, the Desire Realm.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{a} 25.2, correcting dngos gzhi'\textquoteright i for dngos zhi'\textquoteright i in accordance with Collected Works, vol. 12, 25.2.}\]
The first [part of the reason which is that there is actualization of the absorption of the peak of cyclic existence, for instance, in the eight, ranging from those having the basis of its own level, the Peak of Cyclic Existence, down to those having the basis of a lower level, the Desire Realm] is established because Vasubandhu’s *Auto-commentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”* says:

The Peak of Cyclic Existence is actualized also in the Peak of Cyclic Existence and is actualized also in the lower levels down to the Desire Realm.

The second [part of the reason which is that similarly, with respect to the actual absorption of nothingness, there is actualization in the seven ranging from those having the basis of its own level, Nothingness, down to those having the basis of a lower level, the Desire Realm and, to extend the reasoning with respect to the remaining levels, there is actualization of an actual absorption of the first concentration in the two—those having the basis of its own level, the First Concentration, and those having the basis of the lower level, the Desire Realm] is established because Vasubandhu’s
Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says:

Similarly, the remaining ones also are actualized on their own levels and their lower levels.

With respect to the subject, those absorptions, there is cultivation by those who have a basis of both its own level and the lower levels because beings who have those bases have all four meditations—(1) meditation for the sake of attaining [what has not yet been attained], meditation in order that the attainment not degenerate but increase, and so forth, because for [beings who have] those [bases] there is meditation for the sake of attaining [what has not yet been attained], (2) maintenance meditation, (3) meditation that clears away [obstructions], and also (4) cultivation of antidotal meditation.

The first [part of the reason which is that beings who have those bases have meditation for the sake of attaining what has not yet been attained] is established because [those who have the same basis as what they are cultivating or a lower basis] meditate in order to attain qualities which have
not [yet] been attained or to deposit predispositions.

[That (those who have the same basis as what they are cultivating or a lower basis) meditate in order to attain qualities which have not yet been attained or to deposit predispositions] entails [that beings who have those bases necessarily have meditation for the sake of attaining what has not yet been attained] because such meditation is the meaning of “meditation for the sake of attaining” because Asaṅga’s *Compendium of Manifest Knowledge* says:

What is meditation for the sake of attaining? Meditation for the sake of generating virtuous qualities not yet generated.

At the juncture of the [hypothetical] statement of no entailment [that is, that (those who have the same basis as what they are cultivating or a lower basis) meditate in order to attain qualities which have not yet been attained or to deposit predispositions does not entail that beings who have those bases necessarily have meditation for the sake of attaining what has not yet been attained], the reason [which is that beings who have those bases have meditation for the sake of attaining what has not yet been attained or to deposit predispositions] is established because in dependence upon one’s own absorption—except for the peak of cyclic existence—there is an abandoner of any of the types of obstruction, because there is a mode of meditation by Never Returners for migrating at death to all states [within cyclic existence], and so forth.
The second [part of the] root reason [which is that beings who have those bases have maintenance meditation] is established because among those [beings who have those bases] there are those who meditate for the sake of the non-degeneration, and so forth, of the absorption in one’s own continuum and to make manifest to oneself the meaning of selflessness, and because such meditation is the meaning of “maintenance meditation,” and because there is cultivation of an absorption of one’s own level having the aspect of selflessness, [27] because Asaṅga’s *Compendium of Manifest Knowledge* says:

What is maintenance meditation? It is meditation for the sake of maintaining virtuous phenomena already produced, for the sake of their not degenerating, for the sake of their arising in the future, for the sake of their increasing, and for the sake of their becoming lighter.

and also the same text says, “Meditation having actualized suchness is maintenance meditation.”
The third [part of the] root reason [which is that beings who have those bases have meditation that clears away obstructions] is established because there is cultivation of an absorption of one’s own level having the aspect of selflessness in order to abandon the obstructions of one’s own level because that is meditation clearing away [obstructions] and because Asaṅga’s Compendium of Manifest Knowledge says:

What is meditation clearing away [obstructions]? That which is meditation for the sake of abandoning sinful, nonvirtuous qualities already generated, and, “Abandoning one’s own obstructions is meditation clearing away [obstructions].”

The fourth [part of the] root reason [which is that beings who have those bases have cultivation of antidotal meditation] is established because (1) there is cultivation of an absorption of one’s own level for the sake of not generating in one’s continuum sinful, nonvirtuous qualities that have not
been generated, and (2) because that is antidotal meditation, and (3) because one’s own level’s antidotal branches of the absorptions of the concentrations, and so forth, have an import, because Asaṅga’s *Compendium of Manifest Knowledge* says:

What is antidotal meditation? That which is meditation for the sake of not generating sinful, nonvirtuous qualities that have not been generated.

and, “The antidotes are of four aspects,” and so forth.

1. About this formulation someone says: It follows that whoever is a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration having the aspect of selflessness must be a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration because your proofs [that for (beings who have) those (bases) there is meditation for the sake of attaining (what has not yet been attained), (2) maintenance meditation, (3) meditation that clears away (obstructions), and also (4) cultivation of antidotal meditation] are logically feasible. If you accept [that whoever is a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration having the aspect of selflessness must be a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration], it follows that whoever must newly attain [an actual absorption of a concentration] having the aspect of selflessness must newly attain [an actual absorption] of a concentration because you accept [that whoever is a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration having the aspect of selflessness must be a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration].

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a 2011 TBRC *bla brang*, 3a.1; 1987 Old Go-mang Lhasa, 2b.5.
concentration having the aspect of selflessness must be a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration].

Our response: [That it is accepted that whoever is a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration having the aspect of selflessness must be a cultivator of an actual absorption of a concentration] does not entail [that whoever must newly attain an actual absorption of a concentration having the aspect of selflessness must necessarily newly attain an actual absorption of a concentration]. It cannot be accepted [28] [that whoever must newly attain an actual absorption of a concentration having the aspect of selflessness must necessarily newly attain an actual absorption of a concentration] because although [non-Buddhist] Outsiders who have attained [an actual absorption] of a concentration must attain the former [that is, an actual absorption of a concentration having the aspect of selflessness], they do not have to attain the latter [that is, an actual absorption of a concentration] because such persons possess in their continuums [an actual absorption of a concentration] that has already been attained.
To him, well then, It [absurdly] follows that whatever is meditation must be meditation in order to attain what has not been attained because [according to you] there is no meditation again of what has already been attained. You have asserted the reason [which is that there is no meditation again of what has already been attained]. If you [incorrectly] accept [that whatever is meditation must be meditation in order to attain what has not been attained], it [absurdly] follows that whoever having meditatively cultivated a path, has already attained it, necessarily need not meditatively cultivate it again because you have accepted [that whatever is meditation must be meditation in order to attain what has not been attained]. You cannot accept [that whoever having meditatively cultivated a path, has already attained it, necessarily need not meditatively cultivate it again] because Asaṅga’s Compendium of Manifest Knowledge and so forth say that when meditation is divided, there are four, and also identify them individually.
Furthermore, it [absurdly] follows that meditative cultivation of complete training in all aspects does not exist from the path of accumulation to the end of the continuum because [complete training in all aspects] has already been attained from the path of accumulation.

You have [incorrectly] asserted the entailment [that if complete training in all aspects has already been attained with the path of accumulation, meditative cultivation of complete training in all aspects does not exist from the path of accumulation to the end of the continuum]. If you [incorrectly] accept [that meditative cultivation of complete training in all aspects does not exist from the path of accumulation to the end of the continuum], it [absurdly] follows that meditative cultivation of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers does not exist from the path of accumulation to the end of the continuum because you have [incorrectly] accepted [that meditative cultivation of complete training in all aspects does not exist from the path of accumulation to the end of the continuum].

If you [incorrectly] accept [that meditative cultivation of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers does not exist from the path of accumulation to the end of the continuum], it [absurdly] follows that those are not practiced from the path of accumulation to the end of the continuum because you have [incorrectly] accepted [that meditative cultivation of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers does not exist from the path of accumulation to the end of the continuum].

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*a* 170 is shorthand for 173.
Furthermore, fling [consequences] individually for each fault with respect to the practice of achievings through armor, achievings through engagement, and so forth. Similarly, fling [consequences] such as, “It [absurdly] follows that there is no need to cultivate the view realizing emptiness from this point to that point,” and similarly, “It [absurdly] follows that there is no need to meditatively cultivate compassion from the beginning through [the end of the continuum],” for each [fault]. Therefore, to take the two, the need to meditatively cultivate something and the need to attain it, as identical forms is a stupid generalization. The assertion that whatever is a meditation necessarily is only one style of meditation—made without looking at the many explanations of styles of meditation—is a wailing of devils that contradicts treatises such as Asaṅga’s *Compendium of Manifest Knowledge*, *Grounds of Hearers*, and *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*, and the Five Treatises of Maitreya’s Doctrine and sūtras such as the three mothers [the brief, medium, and extensive Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras], the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*, and the *Sūtra on the Ten Grounds*. Look at those, and you will understand; I fear that here it would take too many letters.

\[28.6, \text{correcting } cho\,nge\,’o \text{ for } cho\,de\,’o \text{ in accordance with } Collected\,Works,\,vol.\,12,\,27.6.\]
With respect to the subject, that which is to be known: in terms of the general treatment or most cases, [29] there is no meditative cultivation and new generation of an absorption of a lower level by one having a basis of an upper level because while one has on a higher level an absorption of one’s own level that is qualified by purification of defilements, stability, and so forth, there is no need for meditatively cultivating and newly achieving an absorption of a lower level, because Vasubandhu’s Treasury of Manifest Knowledge says, “There is no need for the lower,” and Vasubandhu’s Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge” says:

Concerning that, there is not even the slightest need for the substantial entity of a lower absorption because it is inferior.

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a 29.1, correcting snyoms 'jug for soms 'jug in accordance with Collected Works, vol. 12, 27.7.
With respect to the subject, that which is to be known: in terms of the general treatment there is such [that is, there is no meditative cultivation or new generation of an absorption of a lower level by one having a basis of an upper level], but there is no strict entailment because it is the case that there are some Superiors of the Peak of Cyclic Existence who, in order to generate an uninterrupted path, actualize an actual absorption of the sphere of nothingness and thereupon making this their mental basis, actualize the state of Foe Destroyer, extinguishing contamination by means of the diamond-like meditative stabilization of the path of meditation because the meaning of the following passage in the root text and [auto]commentary of Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* is established:

Superiors at the Peak of Cyclic Existence,
Having actualized nothingness, extinguish contamination.

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\[29.3\] and *Collected Works*, vol. 12, 28.2, correcting *skye mched kyi* for *skye mched kyis*. 
Therefore, with respect to the subject, that which is to be known: [Vasubandhu’s statement,] “Each of the concentrations and formless absorptions” and so forth are his explanations from the viewpoint of both the general treatment and the exception with respect to both the basis and that which is based on it, that is, the eight concentrations and formless absorptions because:

• [his saying (above, 26),] “Each of the concentrations and formless absorptions,/ Having a basis of a lower level” indicates the general treatment with respect to the basis;
• [his saying (above, 38),] “there is no need for the lower” indicates the general treatment with respect to the absorptions, that which is supported;
• [his saying (above, 39),] “Superior at the Peak of Cyclic Existence” indicates the exception with respect to the basis;
• and [his saying (above, 39),] “having actualized nothingness” indicates the exception with respect to the absorption that is based on it because such has already been established above.
There is actualization of [the absorptions of the concentrations and formless absorptions] in a basis of someone who has not entered a path because there are [non-Buddhist] Outsiders who have attained the eight concentrations and formless absorptions, because there are no migrants who have not experienced migrating up to the Peak of Cyclic Existence, [30] because Ashvaghosha’s *Praise of the Praiseworthy* says:

Though beings blinded by obscuration  
Who have turned from your teaching  
Reach the Peak of Cyclic Existence,  
They again undergo suffering in cyclic existence.

There is attainment of the actual absorptions of the concentrations and formless absorptions in the basis of a Hearer because although whoever is either a Stream Enterer or a Once Returner has necessarily not attained [the actual absorptions of the concentrations and formless absorptions], whoever is either a Non-Returner or a Foe Destroyer has necessarily attained those [actual absorptions of the concentrations and formless absorptions], because the mental contemplations [that are] the fruits of final training are actual absorptions of [their respective levels], because Yashomitra’s *Commentary on (Asanga’s) “Compendium of Manifest Knowledge”* says, “After that, that which has become an actual first concentration is called the fruit of final training,” and Asanga’s *Levels of Hearers* says:

Right after that, one enters into absorption in an actual first concentration through such causes and such conditions, and the mental contemplation thus generated, which is endowed with an actual

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a 30.2, correcting nyan thos for nyon thos in accordance with *Collected Works*, vol. 12, 28.6.
concentration, is called the mental contemplation that is the fruit of final training.

For, Gyal-tshab’s *Explanation of (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Clear Realizations”* also says, “The fruit of final training is an attainment of an actual first concentration,” and Gyal-tshab’s *Commentary on (Asaṅga’s) “Compendium of Manifest Knowledge”* says:

Then, there is a mental contemplation that abandons the three small [cycles of] afflictions, and a mental contemplation that has attained an actual [absorption] of that respective [level].

This latter passage [from Gyal-tshab’s *Commentary on (Asaṅga’s) “Compendium of Manifest Knowledge”*] indicates the two—the mental contemplation of final training and the mental contemplation that is the fruit of final training.
With respect to the subject, that which is to be known: there is a boundary for the attainment of the actual absorptions of the concentrations in a basis of someone who has entered the Great Vehicle path because, indeed, in terms of those who are definite in the Great Vehicle lineage, most attain them even on the path of accumulation, but they have necessarily attained them at some time during the path of preparation, because Gyal-tshab’s Explanation of (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Clear Realizations” says: [31]

Bodhisattvas definitely attain an actual fourth concentration having the aspects of grossness and peacefulness during the path of preparation.
Explaining the mental basis (L22b.1)

Our own position on the mental basis (L24b.4)

[39.1] With respect to the subject, that which is to be known: although we generally use the mere verbal convention of “based on” for a consciousness’s acting as a substantial cause of a mind and acting as a cause of a mind, and so forth, this is not posited as the meaning of mental basis in this context of paths because if it were posited this way, there would be the fault that one would have to assert many [positions] that are explained as unsuitable to be mental bases, such as that there are nonvirtuous consciousnesses for which virtuous consciousnesses act as the mental basis. Therefore, the meaning of mental basis does not at all occur as earlier and later cause and effect.a

With respect to the subject, that which is to be known, the meaning of “mental basis” in this context is not, even with respect to the simultaneous, like that of a virtuous mind’s depending upon virtuous predispositions, like a juniper supported in a tub [that supports it], nor is it the mere support and supported which are cause and effect, as in the generation of a later mind in dependence upon an earlier mental constituent, just as sprouts are generated in dependence upon seeds, because it does not occur that a non-

a This paragraph is used with only small changes by Kön-chog-jig-may-wang-po, 546.3-5; see Zahler, Study and Practice of Meditation, 363.
associated compositional factor acts as the mental basis of a consciousness, and mere cause and effect have already been explained as not being the mental support [and supported in this context], because Tsong-kha-pa’s *Golden Garland of Eloquence* says:\(^a\)

What are support and supported like? They are also not like a juniper supported in a tub [that supports it], or the supported [in the case of] a sprout that is generated from a seed. With regard to those that are explained as “supported,” the convention “supported” is used for something that has been produced as an entity of whatsoever level. One should understand this mode for all mental bases of paths; it is a unique term of the Proponents of Manifest Knowledge.

With respect to the subject, that which is to be known, there are many

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\(^a\) Quintessential Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom as well as (Haribhadra’s) Commentary: *Golden Garland of Eloquence* (shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mgon par rtogs pa’i rgyan ’grel pa dang beas pa’i rgya cher bshad pa legs bshad gser gyi phreng ba).
modes of acting as a mental basis in this context of paths because there are two—(1) the ways in which attained absorptions, on up, act as the mental bases of paths and (2) the ways in which states of one who has not attained an absorption act as mental bases of paths. With respect to the subject, the absorptions of the ninth mental abiding and those ranging from the first concentration to the peak of cyclic existence, there is a mode of their acting as the mental bases of paths that depend on them because just as when iron is melted, the iron becomes of the entity of the fire, these paths [that is, absorptions] act as the mental bases of those minds by way of paths’ becoming of their entities, [40] because Tsong-kha-pa’s *Golden Garland of Eloquence* says:

With regard to those that are explained as “supported,” one uses the convention “supported” for something that has been produced as an entity of whatsoever level.

This mode of a given path’s becoming of the entity of a given mental basis is similar in all the paths for which a mental basis is explained, Great Vehicle [altruistic] mind generation, and so forth, because with respect to statements in Manifest Knowledge—Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* and so forth—that the five paths, the four immeasurables, meditative stabilization on ugliness, counting the exhalation and inhalation of the breath, the thirty-seven harmonies with enlightenment, the eight liberations, and so forth, need certain mental bases, there is a purpose in analyzing whether or not it is suitable, when it is generated as the entity of this respective [basis], for it to be of the nature of that particular path.

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a 40.3, correcting *skyped pa’i tshe* for *skyped pa’i che*. 
[If there is a purpose in analyzing whether or not it is suitable, when a path is generated as the entity of this respective (basis), for it to be of the nature of that particular path] it is entailed [that this mode of a given path’s becoming of the entity of a given mental basis is similar in all the paths for which a mental basis is explained] because the explanation of the mere the mere cause or substantial cause of something does not encompass an explanation of the mental basis, because Tsong-kha-pa’s *Golden Garland of Eloquence* says, “One should understand" this mode for all mental bases of paths; it is a unique term of the Proponents of Manifest Knowledge.” Although [statements] concerning mental bases appear very extensively in Manifest Knowledge, I have not written much here; I will set forth whatever is appropriate on those occasions.

\[\text{\footnote{40.4, correcting } rig par bya \text{ for } rigs par bya, as in the earlier citation of this passage, 37.7.}\]
Therefore, although here calm abiding and those ranging from the mental contemplation of individual knowledge of the character through the mental contemplation that is the fruit of final training do not act as mental bases—with the earlier ones acting as mental bases of the later ones—they act as bases that are the similar immediately preceding condition because although those earlier minds do not act as mental bases of the later ones, they act as their similar immediately preceding conditions because Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* says:

Generated minds and mental factors, except for the final [ones of a Foe Destroyer],
Are similar immediately preceding [conditions].

and Vasubandhu’s *Autocommentary on the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”* says:

Except for the final [minds and mental factors] of a Foe Destroyer, minds and mental factors are similar immediately preceding conditions.

and Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* says [41]:

So that the basis of the sixth [mind] may be thoroughly established,
The constituents are asserted as eighteen.
Therefore, although the preparations do not act as the mental bases of actual [absorptions], they act as mere bases because although the mental contemplation of final training does not act as the mental basis of the mental contemplation that is the fruit of final training, it acts as a basis that is its similar immediately preceding condition. [41.2]

གྲོས་ཏེ་ཟོས་ལེགས་གཉིས་དེ་དག་པར་བོད་པའི་[བྱབས་འཐད་པ་]སེམས་ཅིག་མི་གྱིས་དགོངས་་སེམས་དང་སེམས་ལས་ལྡན་བ་བོད་པ་དེ་མ་ཐག་པའི་དེ་དེའི་མབོགས་པ་དེ་མ་ཐག་པའི་སེམས་ི་འིས་ལེགས་ཀྱི་དངོས་གཞིར་[སེམས་པོ་བཞིན་གི་སེམས་པོ་བཞིན་གི་]དེས་ན་ཉེར་བོད་ཀྱི་དངོས་གཞིར་[མོར་མི་ཡིད་ི་འིས་ལེགས་ཀྱི་སེམས་ི་འིས་ལེགས་ཀྱི་]གྲོས་གྲོས་དང་། རང་འགྲེལ་ལས།
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Explanation of the “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”

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Explanation of (Vasubandhu’s) “Treasury of Manifest Knowledge”

abhidharmakośaṭīkā

chos mngon pa’i mdzod ’grel bshad pa


Peking 5591, vol. 115; Peking 5593, vol. 116

2 Other Works


