Principles for Practice: 
The Four Reliances

Jam-yang-shay-pa’s 
Great Exposition of the 
Interpretatable and the Definitive: 1

William Magee
In collaboration with Lo-sang-gyal-tshan
Edited by Jeffrey Hopkins

UMA INSTITUTE
FOR TIBETAN STUDIES
Principles for Practice

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Principles for Practice: The Four Reliances
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Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive: 1

with
Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations

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Translating texts from the heritage of Tibetan and Inner Asian Buddhist systems. 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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Introduction

The two translations of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s texts presented here cover the topic of the four reliances and also represent this great scholar in two very different types of texts—a debate-oriented decisive analysis and an encyclopedic compendium of tenets. They are drawn from two of his seminal works:


2. *Great Exposition of Tenets / Explanation of “Tenets”: Sun of the Land of Samantabhadra Brilliantly Illuminating All of Our Own and Others’ Tenets and the Meaning of the Profound [Emptiness], Ocean of Scripture and Reasoning Fulfilling All Hopes of All Beings* (c. 1699).

The four reliances are employed to guide the process of differentiating between interpretable and definitive teachings and interpretable and definitive phenomena. They are indispensable advice for those in search of the final view of reality. Both of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s texts treat the topic of the four reliances, but from different approaches. The basic format of the *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive* is dialectical, whereas the style of the *Great Exposition of Tenets* is mostly expository. Taken together, these two avenues reveal the four reliances as capable of steering decisions about practice by identifying deficiencies of approach and character and rearranging goals.

Another way to illuminate complex material is to consult later commentaries, as represented here by Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotations*, which provide fourteen side-comments to the material on the four

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b Herein called *Interpretable and Definitive*.
c Herein called *Tenets*.
d Cross-references to Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive* and *Great Exposition of Tenets* are indicated in parentheses with “Interpretable and the Definitive” and “Tenets” and page reference; cross-references to other volumes are also given in footnotes.
reliances in Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of Tenets*, inset into his text here behind a three-point border.

**JAM-YANG-SHAY-PA**

According to Derek Maher, a Jam-yang-shay-pa was born in the Am-do Province of Tibet in the year of the Earth-Mouse, 1648. At the age of five he was blessed by the Fifth Dalai Lama, from whom he later received monastic vows. Engaged in his studies by the age of thirteen, Jam-yang-shay-pa excelled among his fellow students by his ability quickly to understand texts and disputations. In 1668, arriving in Lhasa, he offered a presentation scarf to an image of Mañjushri in the Jo-khang Temple. The statue reportedly favored the young scholar with a smile, due to which he became known as Jam-yang-shay-pa, “One Smiled Upon by Mañjushri.”

Jam-yang-shay-pa began studying Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence* at Dre-pung’s Go-mang Monastic College in 1670. At that time, the standard Go-mang textbook on *The Essence of Eloquence* was Gung-ru Chö-kyi-jung-nay’s *Garland of White Lotuses*, the very text that Jam-yang-shay-pa’s own textbook—the *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive*—would later supersede. Also on this topic, Jam-yang-shay-pa studied the Second Dalai Lama Gen-dün-gyatsho’s *Commentary on the Difficult Points of “Differentiating the Interpretable and the Definitive” from the Collected Works of the Foremost Holy Omnipotent [Tsong-ka-pa]: Lamp Thoroughly Illuminating the Meaning of his Thought.*

Following the conclusion of his formal studies, Jam-yang-shay-pa entered a period of spiritual practice, meditative retreat, and scholarly

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*a* 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 Gelukpa (dge lugs pa) Epistemology of Jamyang Shayba (*jam dbyangs bzhad pa*) In Its Historical Context” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2003), 169-196, which is the source for much of the material here.

*b* *tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*, 1357-1419.

*c* *gung ru chos kyi ’byung gnas.*

*d* *Decisive Analysis of (Tsong-ka-pa’s) “Differentiating the Interpretable and the Definitive, The Essence of Eloquence”: Garland of White Lotuses (drang ba dang nges pa’i rnam par ’byed pa legs bshad snying po zhes bya ba’i mtha’ dpyod padma dkar po’i phreng ba).* sku bum, Tibet: sku bum Monastery, n.d. [blockprint obtained by Jeffrey Hopkins in 1988].

*e* *dge ’dun rgya mtsho*, 1476-1542; *rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa’i gsung ’bum las drang nges rnam ’byed kyi dka’ ’grel dgongs pa’i don rab tu gsal bar byed pa’i sgron me.*
composition. At the age of thirty-eight he authored 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. During this same period he also wrote another of his great expositions, 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 wrote 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.

At the age of fifty-three Jam-yang-shay-pa was named abbot of Gomang by the Sixth Dalai Lama. In 1710, aged sixty-two, he returned to Am-do Province where he founded the influential monastery at Tra-shi-khyil. Seven years later he founded a tantric college there as well. Throughout his life he continued to write volumes on the full range of topics of a Ge-lug-pa scholar-adapt. He died in 1721, having received honors from the central Tibetan government and the Chinese Emperor.

NGAG-WANG-PAL-DAN

Ngag-wang-pal-dan, the author of the Annotations, was a Mongolian scholar of the early nineteenth century, born in Urga (present day Ulaanbaatar) in the Fire-Serpent year of 1797, and receiving his monastic training in Tra-shi-chö-pel Monastic College. At the age of forty Ngag-wang-pal-dan occupied the seat of Doctrine Master (chos rje) of Urga.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan wrote a number of works besides the Annotations; among these are Explanation of the Conventional and the Ultimate in the Four Systems of Tenets and Illumination of the Texts of Tantra, Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of the Four Great Secret

\[a\] bkra shis 'khyil.
\[b\] Or 1722; scholars question the date; see Maher, “Knowledge and Authority in Tibetan Middle Way Schools of Buddhism,” 164.
\[c\] Lokesh Chandra, Eminent Tibetan Polymaths of Mongolia (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1961), 24.
\[d\] bkra zhi chos 'phel.
\[e\] grub mtha'i bzhi'i lugs kyi kun rdzob dang don dam pa'i don rnam par bshad pa legs bshad dpyid kyi dpal mo'i glu dbyangs (New Delhi: Guru Deva, 1972).
Tantra Sets. Ngag-wang-pal-dan and other Mongolian scholars of his time were especially influenced by the works of Jam-yang-shay-pa. Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations provide an annotative commentary (mchan ’grel) for Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of Tenets; they are the type of scholarly apparatus called “side annotations” (zur mchan), since they are not interlinear notes but are published under separate cover, to be read alongside the text. The complete Annotations is extensive: four hundred and sixteen folios, presenting commentary on difficult points in all thirteen chapters of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of Tenets. Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s positions are on several occasions controversial for Go-mang scholars when he disagrees with Jam-yang-shay-pa over doctrinal points, but for the most part he applies his great scholarship to the tasks of clarification and supplementation. The portion of the Annotations that has been translated here includes fourteen alphabetically arranged notes, from wa (139) to kha (158).

**GREAT EXPOSITION OF TENETS**

Let us begin with Jam-yang-shay-pa’s later more expository presentation of the four reliances in the chapter on the Mind-Only School of the Great Exposition of Tenets (see page 137) under the heading of “From what Approaches the Interpretable and Definitive are Differentiated in the Mind-Only School.” The four reliances are the first of four topics discussed in the section, the other three being the four reasonings, the four thoughts, and the four indirect intentions. Jam-yang-shay-pa explains the four reliances not one by one but as a group by way of six approaches, citing as scriptural sources in order of appearance:

1. an unidentified sūtra
2. Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds*, also known as *Grounds of Yogic Practice*
3. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Yogic Practice*, also known as *Actuality of the Grounds*
4. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
5. Vasubandhu’s *Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras”*
6. Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras*
7. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Yogic Practice*, also known as *Actuality of the Grounds*
8. *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*
9. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
10. Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras*
11. *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*
12. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
13. *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*
14. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
15. [*Teachings of Akṣhayamati*] Sūtra
16. Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds*, also known as *Grounds of Yogic Practice*
17. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
18. Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras*

In sum, in this section of the *Great Exposition of Tenets* there are:

five citations from Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
four citations from Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds*, also known as *Grounds of Yogic Practice*
four citations from *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*
three citations from Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras*
one citation from an unidentified sūtra
one citation from Vasubandhu’s *Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras.”*

The prime source in both order of appearance and frequency of citation is Asaṅga; Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras* is next in centrality to the exposition even though the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* is cited more frequently than it. Despite the fact that the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* is the main sūtra source for the differentiation of the interpretable and definitive in the Middle Way School, it is the only sūtra-source cited here. This is likely because the exposition of the four reliances here contains nothing specific to the Mind-Only School and thus serves as a general exposition for all Great Vehicle schools of tenets.

**EXPLAINING THE FOUR RELIANCES**

The four reliances themselves are aphoristic:

Do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine.
With respect to the doctrine, do not rely on the words, but rely on the meaning.
With respect to the meaning, do not rely on interpretable meaning, but rely on definitive meaning. With respect to the definitive meaning, do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom.

Embedded with their implications, Indian and Tibetan texts weave them into a complex structure informing various levels of practice.a

**Four times of implementation.** The twelfth-century Tibetan commentary on Po-to-wa’s b Blue Teat for Calves associates the four with hearing, thinking, meditating, and ascertaining:c

1. *On the occasion of hearing,* rather than relying on the person one should rely on the doctrine.
2. With respect to the doctrine on which one is to rely, from between the two, words and meanings, one should rely on the meaning since *on the occasion of thinking* one should mainly think about the meaning.
3. With respect to the meaning on which one is to rely, from between the two, the interpretable and the definitive, one should rely on the definitive since *on the occasion of meditation* one needs to abandon the apprehension of self upon mainly meditating on the definitive.
4. *On the occasion of placing the mind on the definitive meaning,* one should not rely on sense consciousnesses but should rely on pristine wisdom.

Jam-yang-shay-pa (142) similarly speaks of the four as being relevant to four periods of time so as not to waste these opportunities for practice; he says:

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a The explanation below follows Jam-yang-shay-pa’s six approaches but in a slightly different order for the sake of easier access.
b po to ba rin chen gsal, 1027-1105. In TBRC W20519 and W1KG12964 it is listed as by dge shes shes rab rgya mtsha; see the next footnote.
c be’u bum gyi tik ka, as paraphrased in Ta-drin-rab-tan’s Annotations, 175.1; Pal-jor-lhun-drub’s Lamp for the Teaching (8.6), reversing the order of the third and the fourth, lists these as hearing, thinking, ascertaining (nges pa), and meditating. About the commentary, Dr. Amy Miller wrote in an email to Jeffrey Hopkins, “I am going to venture a guess that Be’u bum tik ka refers to Lha ’bri sgang pa’s commentary on the Be’u bum sngon po by Potowa—which Sherab Gyatsho was so instrumental to arranging that he is sometimes referred to it as the root text’s author.” About the title of the root text Be’u bum sngon po, Ngag-wang-dar-gyay’s translator renders it as “The Blue Cow’s Nipple (Pamphlet) for Calf-like (Disciples).” Based on this, Hopkins translates the title as Blue Teat for Calves.
d nges don la sems ’jog pa’i tshe; Ta-drin-rab-tan’s Annotations, 175.3.
The four reliances are posited respectively in order not to lose out at four times. One would not lose out,

1. if when understanding all doctrines, one relied on doctrine, but not on persons,
2. and if when holding all doctrines, one relied on meaning, but not on persons’ words,
3. and if when closely investigating or contemplating meaning, one relied on definitive meaning, but not on interpretable meaning,
4. and if when achieving doctrinal practices, one relied on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s commentary clarifies the problems associated with not following each of these dictums at the appropriate time:

1. When understanding—that is, hearing—all doctrines, if one takes as true all that is explained and does not analyze the meaning of words, one will not know how to distinguish the correct from the quasi. Therefore, in order not to lose out at that time, the first reliance [rely on doctrine, but do not rely on persons] is posited.
2. When holding all doctrines without forgetting, if one is intent only on words, one will fall from holding the meaning without forgetting it. Therefore, in order not to lose out at that time, the second reliance [rely on meaning, but do not rely on words] is posited.
3. When closely investigating meaning—at the time of [states] arisen from thinking doing proper mental application—if one merely takes conventionalities to mind, one will not gain ascertainment arisen from thinking with regard to the ultimate. Therefore, in order not to lose out at that time, the third reliance [rely on definitive meaning, but do not rely on interpretable meaning] is posited.
4. When achieving doctrine—the path of liberation—in accordance with doctrine, if one is satisfied with mere conceptual consciousnesses arisen from hearing, thinking, and meditation, one will not gain uncontaminated pristine wisdom in which clear perception of the meaning of reality has reached completion. Therefore, in order not to lose out at that time, the fourth reliance [rely on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness] is posited.
Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Indian source, Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Yogic Practice*, is cryptic in its brevity:

Concerning this, in brief, because of losing out and not losing out at four times—when understanding all doctrines, when holding all doctrines, when closely investigating or contemplating the meaning of all doctrines, and when achieving all doctrines in accordance with doctrine—four [types of] persons are presented, whereby the four reliances are presented.

**Four to be relied on.** About what is to be relied upon, the four reliances are associated with four factors:

1. scriptures, that is, Buddha’s high sayings;
2. the meaning of the thought that is not the meaning of the literal reading;
3. meaning ascertained correctly, not wrongly understood;
4. uncontaminated pristine wisdom realizing the meaning ascertained correctly.

As the coming Buddha Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:

> The doctrine taught [in the] scriptures,  
> That which possesses the thought of the meaning of those,  
> That which has the validity of definitive meaning,  
> And that which attains its inexpressibility.

**Four to be stopped.** Four opposite to those must be stopped, for they are not suitable to be valid since they are devoid of a corresponding correctness:

1. persons who have abandoned the doctrines of the scriptures;
2. the meaning of the literal reading when it is not confirmed by reasoning;
3. erroneously interpreted meanings due to wrong thought;
4. consciousness, except for pristine wisdom of individual self-knowledge.

Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:

> Abandoning, just what is set forth,  
> Wrong understanding, and  
> Attainment of the expressible—  
> Are indicated here as to be stopped.
**Four validities.** The four to be relied upon, under slightly different names, are also called the four validities, or four nondeceptives, because they are reliable. About these Jam-yang-shay-pa (see *Tenets*, 144) says:

1. the meaning in “rely on meaning, but not on words,”
2. the reasoning in “rely on reasoning [that is, doctrine], but not on persons,”
3. the teacher in “rely on definitive meaning, but not on interpretable meaning,”
4. the pristine wisdom in “rely on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness.”

It is easy to understand how, in the second, “reasoning” substitutes for “doctrine” since it is by reasoning that one examines doctrine, but how, in the third, “teacher” comes to substitute for “definitive meaning” is more convoluted. This is revealed by Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s citation of a variant reading of Vasubandhu’s *Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras”* which points to meanings having validation by teachers in that these meanings are “ascertained and differentiated by teachers who are taken as valid.” Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* says briefly:

> From these four reliances, in brief, four validities themselves are indicated: (1) the meanings of the teachings, (2) reasonings, (3) teachers, and (4) pristine wisdoms of realization arisen from meditation.

The four to be relied upon are called the four validities, or valid sources, in order to emphasize that all four are needed in the process of spiritual training; as Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* says:

> Understanding that what is to be known by the knowledge of meditation cannot be known only by knowing meanings through hearing and thinking, they do not abandon and do not deprecate the supremely profound doctrines spoken by the One-Gone-Thus even when hearing them. In that way, Bodhisattvas train in the four reliances, whereby they are oriented well.

**How to implement the four.** Ngag-wang-pal-dan gives a particularly vivid account of how to implement the four:

1. Although regarding “persons” in “do not rely on persons” there are a variety of the supreme and the low, mainly it is not reasonable to follow the pretentious who dissimulate so that the bad looks as if good.
2. It is not reasonable to be intent only on words of texts that solely do not separate from desire, do not bring about emergence, and never separate from misapprehension of things as inherently existent, like the texts of those called Diverged Afar\(^a\) in that they have gone apart from the correct view. These are mainly common sources of knowledge and so forth unrelated with any of the four seals testifying to a doctrine as being Buddha’s Word:

1. all compounded phenomena are impermanent
2. all contaminated things are miserable
3. all phenomena are selfless
4. nirvāṇa is peace.

3. It is not reasonable to hold one’s view to be supreme, that is, to hold how phenomena appear to one’s own sense consciousnesses to be the final reality, that is to say, to be the way things actually are.

4. It is not reasonable to be satisfied with mere wisdom arisen from hearing, like persons who are intent [only] on hearing.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan says that this is the thought of Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds*, also known as the *Grounds of Yogic Practice*,\(^b\) which says:

If you ask, “How are these presented?” [These four reliances are presented] by way of the distinctions of four kinds of persons: the first, by way of the distinctions of pretentious persons; the second, by way of the distinctions of the Worldly Diverged Afar; the third, by way of abiding in holding their own view to be supreme; and the fourth, by way of being intent on hearing.

**Benefits.** By implementing the four reliances there are benefits to be accrued; as Jam-yang-shay-pa (161) says:

1. By the first [relying on doctrine, but not relying on persons] one will not fall from the doctrine and thereby will not sever one’s lineage [of spiritual development].
2. By the second [relying on meaning, but not relying on words] one will not fall from partaking of the profound thought.
3. By the third [relying on definitive meaning, but not relying on interpretable meaning] one will not fall from hearing the meaning exactly as it is and thereby will not wrongly engage the meaning of scripture.

\(^a\) *rgyang phan pa, ayata.*

\(^b\) *rnal ’byor spyod pa'i sa, yogācārabhūmi.*
4. By the fourth [relying on pristine wisdom, but not relying on consciousness] one will not fall from wisdom having clear appearance and thereby will not fall from supramundane pristine wisdom.

For, Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:

The firm do not fall from
Being intent, partaking,
Hearing from others just as it is,
And inexpressible pristine wisdom.

**UNRAVELLING THE FOUR RELIANCES BY WAY OF PERSONS**

The details of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s presentation of the four reliances by way of persons (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 137) are particularly complicated. Let us attempt to unpack them along with Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotations*.

As cited above, Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds/ Grounds of Yogic Practice* speaks of the four reliances as required by all practitioners during four phases of practice “when holding all doctrines, when closely investigating or contemplating the meaning of all doctrines, and when achieving all doctrines in accordance with doctrine,” but also in another mode the same text assigns types of persons to the four reliances:

If you ask, “How are these presented?” [These four reliances are presented] by way of the distinctions of four kinds of persons: the first, by way of the distinctions of pretentious persons; the second, by way of the distinctions of the Worldly Diverged Afar; the third, by way of abiding in holding their own view to be supreme; and the fourth, by way of being intent on hearing.

Here Asaṅga presents the four reliances in terms of persons particularly in need of them due to having a faulty belief system or attitude. Jam-yang-shay-pa reframes these as:

1. the pretentious should rely on doctrine, but not on persons;
2. the likes of the Diverged Afar [Nihilists] should rely on meaning, but not on humans’ words;

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*a* For a discussion of types of the Diverged Afar (Nihilists) see 18 for Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotations*. 
3. those holding their own view to be supreme should rely on definitive meaning, but not on interpretable meaning;
4. those intent only on hearing should rely on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness.

Each type of person mentioned is assigned one of the reliances as an antidote to that belief or attitude.

The pretentious

For instance, pretentious persons are often thought of as insincere poseurs, eager for unearned status. Jam-yang-shay-pa feels such personality types are in danger of being misled by others, for he says:

the pretentious should rely on doctrine, but not on persons;

In their quest for status, the pretentious are easily misled by charismatic persons; thus, they are in need of the first reliance. This explanation fits the pattern of the topic, wherein the Worldly Diverged Afar need meaning, those holding their own view to be supreme need definitive meaning, and those intent on hearing need pristine wisdom.

Despite the clarity of this pattern, Ngag-wang-pal-dan posits a different explanation outside this format. He explains that the “pretentious” are those on whom one should not rely. Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations\(^a\) (for the entire note wa see 139) says:

Although regarding “persons” in “do not rely on persons” there are a variety of supreme and lower [persons], mainly it is not reasonable to follow the pretentious who dissimulate so that the bad looks as if good.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s explanation places the pretentious in the role of the person not to be relied on, breaking the pattern of the other three. According to Jam-yang-shay-pa’s explanation however, the pretentious are advised to rely not on persons but on doctrine.

The Worldly Diverged Afar

The second reliance is presented by way of the distinctions of the Worldly Diverged Afar, that is, Nihilists. The Diverged Afar in particular should not rely on words but should rely on meaning. Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s annotation wa says:

\(^a\) dngos wa, Taipei edition, 366.12.
It is not reasonable to be intent only on words like the Diverged Afar\(^a\) [Nihilists] who are intent only on reciting the Forders’ secret words—these being the Diverged Afar who are one of the divisions from within the threefold terminological division of the Diverged Afar.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan describes this threefold division of the Diverged Afar earlier in his *Annotations*:\(^b\)

1. Diverged Afars in terms of all coursing in conceptuality [that is, beings who are coursing in conceptuality] are taken as persons who have not realized emptiness.
2. Diverged Afars in terms of [those using] worldly secret words are taken as persons mainly using the common sources of knowledge and so forth unrelated with any of the four seals testifying [to a doctrine] as being [Buddha’s] Word.\(^c\)

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\(a\) “Diverged afar” = *rgyang phan pa, ayata*.

\(b\) *stod, ka*, 53a.5 (Delhi edition):

\(c\) The four seals are:
3. Diverged Afars in terms of a view of annihilation are taken as fully qualified nihilists who view any of these—karma and its effects and former and future births and so forth—as nonexistent.

The master Bodhibhadra, in his *Connected Explanation of (Āryadeva's) 'Compilation of the Essence of Wisdom'* as cited by Ngag-wang-pal-dan, gives more detail:

[Since they have gone apart from the correct view of the world, they are “Diverged Afar.” *Ayoti* means depart, separate, and go. Their tenets are texts.] Here, those Diverged Afar have three aspects:

1. Diverged Afar in terms of all coursing in conceptuality: “As long as the mind operates, they are called ‘those diverged afar from the world.’”

2. Diverged Afar in terms of [those using] worldly secret words:

   He said, “In the future, there will be monastics who, sitting on lion thrones in the midst of a retinue, will expound the texts of the Worldly Diverged Afar and will speak praises of them.” He refuted them by saying, “Shāriputra, whatever monastics are intent on the discourse of the Worldly Diverged Afar—secret word texts that solely do not separate from desire, do not bring about emergence, and never separate from apprehension of things—who, having abandoned the Buddha’s speech, propound the sayings of others, Forders, having gone amongst their circle, amuse that circle with sounds of [Forder] doctrine: such unholy beings are rotten monastics.”

3. The Worldly Diverged Afar in terms of a view of annihilation: those who are discussed here [in Āryadeva’s text] are just these.

According to Ngag-wang-pal-dan, it is the second of these divisions that is indicated on the occasion of the second of the four reliances: those intent

1. all compounded phenomena are impermanent
2. all contaminated things are miserable
3. all phenomena are selfless
4. nirvāṇa is peace.
on texts that “do not separate from desire, do not bring about emergence, and never separate from apprehension of things” should not rely on words but should rely on meaning. “Meaning” in this context refers to any doctrine related with the four seals testifying to a doctrine as being Buddha’s Word:

1. all compounded phenomena are impermanent
2. all contaminated things are miserable
3. all phenomena are selfless
4. nirvāṇa is peace.

Those holding their own view to be supreme

When the four reliances are posited by way of persons, those holding their own view to be supreme are not to rely on interpretable meanings but are to rely on definitive meanings. Ngag-wang-pal-dan makes it clear that this is a warning to worldly beings that the world is not valid with respect to suchness. He does so by quoting Chandrakīrti’s Supplement to Nāgārjuna’s “Treatise on the Middle Way” (VI.30):

If the world is valid,  
Since the world sees suchness what is the need for others,  
Superiors?  
What would the path of Superiors do?  
It is not reasonable for the stupid to be valid.

The message here is obvious: arrogant persons should renounce their incorrect views and adopt the view of the sages. In modern argot, they should stop being so stupid (blun po) as to think they were valid on the topic of suchness. This same use of Supplement stanza VI.30 is also evident in Tsong-kha-pa’s Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path, where the stanza appears as part of an argument that worldly valid cognition establishes forms and such but not suchness. (See the Four Interwoven Annotations, 139.)

Those intent on hearing

The fourth reliance directs the practitioner who is intent on hearing away from consciousness and toward reliance on pristine wisdom. Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s note wa says:

It is not reasonable to be satisfied with mere wisdom arisen from hearing like persons who are intent on hearing.
Persons who are intent on hearing are content with the consciousness that is wisdom arisen from hearing. Pristine wisdom, in the other hand, is a much more subtle wisdom arisen from meditation. The fourth reliance calls on persons who are intent on hearing to culminate their own thinking processes through reliance on non-conceptual direct perception of emptiness.

**GREAT EXPOSITION OF THE INTERPRETABLE AND THE DEFINITIVE**

In Jam-yang-shay-pa’s earlier more complicated work, the *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive* (see page 67), he begins by citing Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence* on the reasons why differentiation of the interpretable and the definitive is needed. This passage explains that Buddha spoke variously in relation to the thoughts of trainees and hence the correct view of reality must be settled by reasoning. Since not all of Buddha’s statements are definitive on the literal level, one must seek the thought behind them, following the two great prophesied treatise authors Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, openers of the chariot-ways. In this passage Tsong-kha-pa lays out the foundations of his system of approaching the scriptures:

1. due to his profound understanding of the needs of trainees, the Buddhas spoke in a variety of ways about emptiness;
2. therefore we must work at a means of differentiating his interpretable statements from those of definitive meaning;
3. such differentiation cannot be done only according to pronouncements in scripture;
4. instead, it is best to rely on one of the prophesied Indian commentators: Nāgārjuna (1st century C.E.), Chariot-way Opener of the Middle Way School or Asaṅga (4th century C.E.), Chariot-way Opener of the Mind-Only School;
5. within relying on these commentators, one must employ reasoning to determine the final correct view.

Even these philosophical guides are not the final arbiters of the view; with the assistance of these Chariot-way Openers, one must determine through one’s own logical processes which of Buddha’s pronouncements require interpretation and which are definitive.

Immediately after quoting Tsong-kha-pa on this, Jam-yang-shay-pa launches an investigation into the four reliances, called a Decisive
Analysis, which is divided into three subsections—Refuting Mistakes, Presenting Our System, and Dispelling Objections. In Refuting Mistakes (see page 73) he considers the meaning of “rely” and the literality of Buddha’s pronouncements.

**The Meaning of “rely”**

The first debate in Refuting Mistakes (see page 73) investigates a mistaken meaning of “rely.” In the Tibetan language, the spelling of “rely” (Ȧོན་, rton) and the spelling of “teach” (Ȫོན་, ston) are quite similar; the only difference being a single superscripted character. Here Jam-yang-shay-pa introduces an opponent who accepts such a misspelling as the correct text. This basic error leads the opponent to misunderstand “rely” as “teach:”

*Someone says:* Not mainly teaching (mi ston), just as it is, the mode of subsistence to trainees of low faculties but in the definitive scriptures mainly teaching (ston) the mode of subsistence in consideration of trainees of sharp faculties is the significance of “not relying (mi rton) on persons, but relying (rton) on the doctrine.” (73)

The opponent’s mistaken thesis—that not teaching and teaching the mode of subsistence is the meaning of not relying on persons but relying on the doctrine—is based on misreading “rely” as “teach.” Jam-yang-shay-pa flings an absurd consequence that shows the logical incorrectness of inserting “teach” when “rely” is called for in the context of four reliances:

Well then, it [absurdly] follows that it is reasonable to take the “relying” (rton) and “not relying” (mi rton) of the “four reliances” (rton pa bzhi) on this occasion as explaining [the mode of subsistence] and not explaining [to a person] because [according to you,] it is reasonable that (1) “not relying (mi rton) on a person” is taken as mainly not teaching (mi ston) the mode of subsistence to those [persons] and (2) the meaning of “relying (rton) on doctrine” is taken as teaching (ston) mainly the meaning of the mode of subsistence.

It would be absurd to accept that “rely” has the meaning of “teach” or “explain” on this occasion of the four reliances, since “rely” and “teach”

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a 'khrul ba dgag pa.
b rang lugs bzhag pa.
c rtsod pa spang ba.
have different spellings and incompatible meanings. “Teach” is merely a typographical error. Having refuted that “rely” means “teach” or “explain,” Jam-yang-shay-pa sets forth his own meanings of “rely” and “not rely:”

because the “rely” and “not rely” here is asserted by scholars to be taken as:
1. “assert” and “not assert,”
2. “reasonable to follow” and “not reasonable to follow,”
3. “nondeceptive” and “deceptive,”
4. “true” and “untrue,” and

because “rely” and “not rely”…is not explicable in the letters or meaning as “explain” and “not explain.” The meaning here is “mental reliance” (yid rton) because it must be posited as “reasonable to place mental trust and not reasonable to place mental trust” (yid gtod).

Here in the context of settling the meaning of the word “rely,” Jam-yang-shay-pa shows how highly he values the four reliances: they are the crucial sources of valid knowledge; nondeceptive objects in which to place trust.

**How They Were Spoken**

We have seen that the first debate in Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Interpretable and Definitive* establishes “reasonable to place mental trust” as the meaning of “rely.” This assertion serves to correct the mistaken impression (caused by a lexical error) that the meaning of “rely” is “teach.” In the process of doing so, Jam-yang-shay-pa also points out that “rely” denotes true, nondeceptive, suitable to follow, and to assert. He no doubt felt that it was necessary to clarify this in the beginning, and, indeed, he uses these interchangeably throughout the text.

The second debate (see page 75) is equally central to the meaning of the four reliances. He turns his attention to a mistaken notion about the meaning of “relying on doctrine” which, if correct, would negate the need for the differentiation of the interpretable and the definitive. Here the opponent presents a thesis that includes the assertion that “whatev er scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor as methods for attaining liberation are true as methods for attaining liberation in accordance with how they were spoken.” The phrase I have italicized—“in accordance with how they were spoken”—is the incorrect part of this assertion, since in accordance with how they were spoken refers to the
words of a scripture on the literal level. Scriptural passages are not always true on the literal level; if they were, all śūtras would be definitive. Hence, this incorrect assertion fails to inspect the validity of the words of scripture on the literal level and thus threatens the need to differentiate the interpretable and definitive:

Someone says: That trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation and that whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor as methods for attaining liberation are true as methods for attaining liberation in accordance with how they were spoken is the significance of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine.” (See Interpretable and Definitive, 75.)

It is correct that “whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor as methods for attaining liberation are true as methods for attaining liberation,” since it is said that everything the Victor taught was for the sake of attaining liberation (see Interpretable and Definitive, 87). However, those scriptural collections are not all true as methods for attaining liberation in accordance with how they were spoken, since only definitive śūtra statements are true in accordance with how they were spoken: interpretable śūtra statements are not reliable on the literal level. Jam-yang-shay-pa parries this assertion with an absurd consequence:

It absurdly follows that differentiating the interpretable and the definitive among the Victor’s high sayings is meaningless because [according to you] it is reasonable to assert [the high sayings of the Victor] in accordance with the measure set forth in the Victor’s high sayings.

If indeed one could assert the high sayings of the Victor in accordance with the measure set forth in those high sayings (that is to say, in accordance with the literal words set down in scripture), then there would be no sense in attempting to differentiate the interpretable and the definitive: all śūtras would be definitive. But that is not the case, for not only did Buddha set forth various presentations of reality in relation to the thoughts of trainees, but also the śūtras themselves relate numerous ways of positing the interpretable and the definitive. As Tsong-kha-pa points out (see Interpretable and Definitive, 71), the differentiation of the interpretable and the definitive cannot be done merely through scriptures.

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[a] This term (gsung rabs, pravacana) is often translated as “scriptures,” but “high sayings” conveys its literal connotation as speech (vacana), with rabs (pra-) as an intensifier.
that state, “This is a meaning to be interpreted; that is a meaning that is definitive.” Therefore, since differentiation of the interpretable and the definitive is necessary, one cannot accept that it is reasonable to assert the high sayings of the Victor in accordance with their literal words.

Jam-yang-shay-pa disproves the opponent’s meaning of “not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning” with this demonstration of why it is not reasonable to assert the scriptures in accordance with their literal words. He now puts forth his own system, which is that:

1. the unsuitability of asserting all phenomena in accordance with explicit readings of scriptures is the meaning of “not relying on the words,” and
2. asserting the final meaning of [Buddha’s] thought, upon its having been sought is the meaning of “relying on the meaning.”

He says:

Concerning high sayings of interpretable meaning from among the Victor’s pronouncements of a variety of interpretable and definitive high sayings: the unsuitability of asserting the two truths\(^a\) in accordance with the explicit reading due to the force of the [particular] context of this and that [trainee] and asserting the final meaning of [Buddha’s] thought, upon its having been sought, is the significance of “not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning.”

In this second debate, Jam-yang-shay-pa points out that it is unsuitable to rely on the explicit reading of the words because the explicit reading varies according to the needs of trainees. On the other hand, it is suitable to rely on the meaning behind the words, the final meaning of Buddha’s thought, emptiness, upon its having been sought. Upon its having been sought means upon having differentiated with reasoning the interpretable and the definitive.

These two debates show Jam-yang-shay-pa refuting incorrect assumptions about the four reliances: the first misrepresenting the meaning of “rely” and the second undermining the need for differentiating the interpretable and the definitive. The points made are summarized in the chart below.

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\(^a\) In this context, “two truths” (conventional truths and ultimate truths) is a general rubric for all phenomena.
Jam-yang-shay-pa’s 6 points in Refuting Mistakes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Debate (See <em>Interpretable and Definitive</em>, 73)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The “relying” (rtön) and “not relying” (mi rtön) of the “four reliances” (rtön pa bzhi) does not mean “explaining” and “not explaining.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2 | “Rely” and “not rely” here are to be taken as:  
1. “assert” and “not assert,”  
2. “reasonable to follow” and “not reasonable to follow,”  
3. “nondeceptive” and “deceptive,”  
4. “true” and “untrue.” |
| 3 | The meaning of “rely” here is “mental reliance” (yid rtön) because “rely and not rely” must be posited as “reasonable to place mental trust and not reasonable to place mental trust” (yid gtod). |
| 4 | Hence, the “relying” (rtön) and “not relying” (mi rtön) of the “four reliances” (rtön pa bzhi) are not to be confused with “teaching” (ston) and “not teaching” (mi ston), for then you might wrongly hold that “not relying (mi rtön) on persons, but relying (rtön) on the doctrine” would mean not mainly teaching (mi ston) emptiness, just as it is, to trainees of low faculties but in the definitive scriptures mainly teaching (ston) emptiness in consideration of trainees of sharp faculties. |
|   | Second Debate (See *Interpretable and Definitive*, 75) |
| 5 | Buddha spoke in the context of the trainees; therefore, with regard to “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine,” relying on doctrine does not mean that it is reasonable to assert whatsoever Buddha spoke for sentient beings in accordance with how these were spoken. Hence, it is necessary to differentiate with reasoning the interpretable and the definitive. |
| 6 | In the context of Buddha’s Word:  
1. **not asserting the two truths in accordance with the literal reading** of non-literal high sayings of interpretable meaning and definitive meaning is the significance of “not relying on the words” and |

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*a sgras zin.*
2. asserting the final meaning of Buddha’s thought upon its having been sought is the significance of “relying on the meaning.”

EXPANDING ON THE FOUR RELIANCES

In the Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive in the subsection called Presentation of Our System (see page 80), Jam-yang-shay-pa introduces the four reliances as a group and then treats each reliance one by one, citing as scriptural sources in order of appearance:

THE FOUR RELIANCES AS A GROUP
1. Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas
2. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra

DO NOT RELY ON PERSONS, BUT RELY ON DOCTRINE
3. Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas
4. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra
5. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra
6. Tsong-kha-pa’s The Lesser Essence of Eloquence/ Praise of the Supramundane Victor Buddha from the Approach of His Teaching the Profound Dependent-Arising
7. Vasubandhu’s Principles of Explanation
8. Superior Sūtra of the Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla from the Pile of Jewels Sūtra
9. Descent into Lāṅkā Sūtra
10. Tsong-kha-pa’s Illumination of the Thought
11. Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas
12. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra
13. Descent into Lāṅkā Sūtra
14. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra

DO NOT RELY ON THE WORDS, BUT RELY ON THE MEANING
15. Kālachakra Root Tantra
16. Mañjughoṣha Narendrakīrti’s Brief Explication of the Assertions of Our Own View
17. Khay-drub’s Great Commentary Illuminating the Principles
18. Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas
19. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra

DO NOT RELY ON INTERPRETABLE MEANING, BUT RELY ON DEFINITIVE MEANING
20. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra
21. Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence*
22. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
23. Khay-drub’s *Compilation on Emptiness*
24. Maitreya’s *Treatise on the Sublime Continuum*

**DO NOT RELY ON CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT RELY ON PRISTINE WISDOM**
25. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
26. Khay-drub’s *Great Commentary Illuminating the Principles*
27. *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*
28. Khay-drub’s *Compilation on Emptiness*

In sum, in the Presentation of Our System in the *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive* there are:

- eight citations of *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*
- six citations of Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
- two citations of the *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra*
- two citations of Khay-drub’s *Compilation on Emptiness*
- two citations of Khay-drub’s *Great Commentary Illuminating the Principles*
- one citation of the *Kālachakra Root Tantra*
- one citation of Maitreya’s *Treatise on the Sublime Continuum*
- one citation of Mañjughoṣha Narendrakīrti’s *Brief Explication of the Assertions of Our Own View*
- one citation of the *Superior Sūtra of the Questions of Rāṣṭapāla* from the *Pile of Jewels Sūtra*
- one citation of Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence*
- one citation of Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Lesser Essence of Eloquence/ Praise of the Supramundane Victor Buddha from the Approach of His Teaching the Profound Dependent-Arising*
- one citation of Vasubandhu’s *Principles of Explanation*.a

In the general section Jam-yang-shay-pa cites a long passage from Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 80) and then in the individual treatments of the four reliances makes five citations or references to parts of that same passage. He also cites a short passage from the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* that lists the four reliances, but as in the *Great Exposition of Tenets* Asaṅga is the central source. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* is the overarching rubric even though numerically it is not the most frequently cited text, this being the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*, which despite being the prime sūtra

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a See the footnote at the citation on 91.
source for the differentiation of the interpretable and definitive in the Middle Way School and not the Mind-Only School, is the predominant sūtra that is cited by far, showing that Jam-yang-shay-pa intends this presentation of the four reliances to be common for the Great Vehicle schools of tenets.

In the section of Our Own System he presents the “significances,” or meanings, of the four reliances, which function like definitions to provide memorizable statements of positions regarding them. Each significance is fashioned in two parts separated by a “but” to mirror the format of the reliances. Notice that the third reliance requires two slightly different significances reflecting the twofold division of interpretable meanings and definitive meanings (1) on the level of the words that are the means of expression and (2) on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed.

DO NOT RELY ON PERSONS, BUT RELY ON THE DOCTRINE

Not using as a reason merely the claims of those persons or the goodness of a person, but asserting the logically correct upon having investigated the words and meanings set out in accordance with this [person’s] assertions is the significance of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine.”
(See Interpretable and Definitive, 84.)

DO NOT RELY ON WORDS, BUT RELY ON THE MEANING

There being no definiteness of non-deception with respect to the mode of subsistence and so forth in accordance with the explicit reading of those high sayings, but making assertions in accordance with the specific object expressed that is the meaning of [Buddha’s] thought having pure proofs is the significance of “not relying on words, but relying on meaning.”
(See Interpretable and Definitive, 99.)

DO NOT RELY ON INTERPRETABLE MEANING, BUT RELY ON DEFINITIVE MEANING

That conventionalities are untrue as the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher’s sūtras but emptiness is asserted as the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher’s sūtras is the significance of

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a Jam-yang-shay-pa provides slightly different significances in the Dispelling Objections section (see Interpretable and Definitive, 116).
the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the words that are the means of expression and that conventionalities are untrue as the mode of subsistence in accordance with various appearances but that emptiness of truth in accordance with those appearances is asserted as the mode of subsistence is the significance of the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed. (See Interpretable and Definitive, 103.)

DO NOT RELY ON CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT RELY ON PRISTINE WISDOM

Not asserting as the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of those [conceptual] consciousnesses [realizing emptiness] and in accordance with the mode of apprehension of those that have not realized emptiness is the significance of “not relying on consciousness” but asserting as the mode of subsistence in accordance with perception by those pristine wisdoms and mainly by pristine wisdom directly realizing emptiness is the significance of “relying on pristine wisdom.” (See Interpretable and Definitive, 110.)

Jam-yang-shay-pa buttresses these encapsulations of the four reliances with considerable supporting detail that bring out their meaning. These are presented below in chart form. His basic mode of procedure is to provide the significance of the two-part aphorism, as given just above, and then to provide the significance of each of the two parts with provocatively different vocabulary; these sub-significances are then supported with logical evidence and with scriptural evidence. (The scriptural evidence is presented later in a separate table, 51.)

| Jam-yang-shay-pa’s 16 points in Our Own System |
## I. Do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine. (See Interpretable and Definitive, 84.)

Within “persons” here there are the two, the ordinary and the supreme through to and including Buddhas. Within “doctrine” there are the two, words and meanings. Thus:

**Not using as a reason merely the claims of those persons or the goodness of a person, but asserting the logically correct upon having investigated the words and meanings set out in accordance with this person’s assertions** is the significance to be understood in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine.” (84)

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| 1 | That trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue, not asserted, and deceptive as methods for attaining liberation is the significance of “not relying on persons in terms of ordinary persons” because since trainees in terms of their various modes of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation, they are also not asserted as methods for attaining liberation, and also are not nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation, whereby it is said, “do not rely on persons” because not relying on persons [means] it is not suitable mentally to rely on, that is to say, mentally to trust trainees in terms of the various modes of thought of those persons as methods for attaining liberation
|   | • because—if it were suitable mentally to rely on, that is to say, mentally to trust trainees in terms of the various modes of thought of those persons as methods for attaining liberation—it would [absurdly] follow that it would not be necessary for even any being to train in the path, and
|   | • because it would [absurdly] follow that there would be unmistakable valid cognitions with respect to the contradictory, and
|   | • because there also is a mode of not relying on persons but relying on doctrine relative to such persons who view self and relative to thoroughly knowing the basis in [Buddha’s] thought behind explanations in accordance with their thought. (86) |
That whatsoever scriptural collections spoken by the Victor are true, asserted, and nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation is the significance of “relying on doctrine” because since the Victor in the end spoke all statements in whatsoever scriptural collections only for the sake of setting trainees in the definite goodness of liberation, those statements are true as methods for attaining liberation, are nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation, and are asserted as methods for attaining liberation—whereby it is said, “rely on doctrine,” because all pronouncements of whatsoever scriptural collections of excellent doctrine taught by the Victor, although they teach a variety of topics, in the end only teach methods for setting trainees in definite goodness, they are also called “treatises intent on achievement,” and therefore one should mentally rely on excellent doctrines that are the Teacher’s sacred speech, that is to say, it is suitable to mentally trust these excellent doctrines that are the Teacher’s sacred speech as methods for attaining liberation. (86, 89)

Among the persons referred to in “not relying on persons” there are a variety of Outer [non-Buddhist] and Inner [Buddhist] persons. Thus: The significance of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” is that (1) since trainees in terms of their various modes of thought are untrue as methods of attaining liberation, they are also not asserted as methods of attaining liberation and also are not nondeceptive as methods of attaining liberation, whereby it is said, “do not rely on persons” and (2) since the Victor in the end spoke all statements in whatsoever scriptural collections only for the sake of setting [trainees] in the definite goodness of liberation, those (statements in whatsoever scriptural collections) are true as methods for attaining liberation, are nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation, and are asserted as methods for attaining liberation, whereby it is said, “rely on doctrine”. (92)

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a That is, they are intent on achieving religious practice.
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<td>To overcome the modes of conception propounding the self by the Forder proponents of an existent self and thereupon to enter the three doors of liberation (emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness) is the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching a permanent stable [matrix of a One-Gone-Thus] because (1) non-truth in accordance with the conceptions of an existent self by Forder Proponents of self but (2) assertion and nondeceptiveness of the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching a permanent stable [matrix of a One-Gone-Thus]—the three doors of liberation—as the mode of subsistence is the significance in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” relative to Forder proponents of self and to sūtras teaching a permanent stable [matrix of a One-Gone-Thus], because there is a significance [in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine”] relative to those two [that is, to Forder proponents of self and to sūtras teaching a permanent stable (matrix of a One-Gone-Thus)], (93)</td>
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<td>That the Diverged Afar [that is, Nihilists] who assert that there are no past and future lives may later enter into [an understanding of] actions and their effects and selflessness through the teaching that “there exists a self substantially existent in the sense of being self-sufficient” is the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching the existence of a self of persons because if [Buddha] had not taught a substantially existent self to the Diverged Afar who assert that past and future lives do not exist, they would not know how to posit a being who is the substratum experiencing the fruition of the effects of actions, due to which [Buddha] taught a substantially existent self because for those who assert self, from between the two, self of persons and self of phenomena, the teaching of a self of persons is supreme. (93, 95)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rather than taking as a reason [for reliance] merely an explanation by a special person, a Buddha or a Hearer and so forth, and holding whatever they set forth to be of definitive meaning—mental reliance on pure reasoning is the significance in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” relative to supreme persons. (97)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
II. With respect to the doctrine, do not rely on the words, but rely on the meaning. (See Interpretable and Definitive, 99.)

Within “words” here there are the two, treatises and Word of Buddha, and the two, the literal and the non-literal. Within “meanings” there are the two, interpretable meanings and definitive meaning. Thus:

There being no definiteness of non-deception with respect to the mode of subsistence and so forth in accordance with the explicit reading of those high sayings—but making assertions in accordance with this and that object expressed\(^a\) that is the meaning of the thought having pure proofs is the significance of “not relying on words, but relying on meaning.”

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\(^a\) Even though this is the meaning behind what is literally expressed in the run of the words, it is nevertheless an “object expressed” with the qualification that it is the meaning behind what is literally expressed.
### III. With respect to the meaning, do not rely on interpretable meaning, but rely on definitive meaning. (See *Interpretable and Definitive*, 103.)

Within interpretable meaning and definitive meaning here, there are (1) the two, the interpretable and the definitive on the level of [the passages that are] the means of expression and (2) the two, the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are expressed. Thus:

**That conventionalities are untrue as the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher’s sūtras but emptiness is asserted as the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher’s sūtras** is the significance of the interpretable and the definitive on the level of [the texts that are] the means of expression and **that conventionalities are untrue as the mode of subsistence in accordance with various appearances but that emptiness of truth in accordance with those appearances is asserted as the mode of subsistence** is the significance of the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed.

Within the two, the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed—**not asserting these interpretable meanings—appearances as various conventionalities—as the final mode of subsistence** is the significance of “not relying on interpretable meaning,” and **asserting the emptiness of true establishment in accordance with such appearances as the final mode of subsistence** is the significance of “relying on definitive meaning,”

because not only that, it is also reasonable to posit those two respectively as meaning “do not rely on the conventional, but rely on the ultimate,” because conventional substrata that exist variously are without the divisions of color, shape, and so forth in this way in the mode of subsistence but are the same taste as the non-affirming negative that is the mere elimination of the self that is the object of negation.
**IV. With respect to the definitive meaning, do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom.** (See *Interpretable and Definitive*, 110.)

Within consciousness here there are two, awarenesses that do and do not realize emptiness. Although pristine wisdom is mainly pristine wisdom directly realizing emptiness, wisdom awarenesses arisen from meditation on emptiness are also posited as pristine wisdom. Thus:

Not asserting the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of emptiness to those consciousnesses realizing emptiness and also not asserting the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of apprehension of those that have not realized emptiness is the significance of “not relying on consciousness” and asserting the mode of subsistence in accordance with perception by those pristine wisdoms and mainly by pristine wisdom directly realizing emptiness is the significance of “relying on pristine wisdom.”

**Within “definitive meaning” in “not relying on interpretable meaning, but relying on definitive meaning” there are the two, consciousness and pristine wisdom. Thus:**

Not asserting the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of a worldly consciousness that realizes emptiness by way of a meaning-generality is the significance of “not relying on consciousness,” and asserting the final mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of perception by a Superior’s non-conceptual pristine wisdom is the significance of “relying on pristine wisdom,”

because although the proliferations of dualistic appearance are eliminated in the perspective of the ascertainment factor of a worldly inferential consciousness realizing emptiness, they are not eliminated in the perspective of the appearance factor, whereby [emptiness] is not asserted as the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of that [worldly inferential consciousness realizing emptiness], and all proliferations of dualistic appearance are eliminated not only in the perspective of the ascertainment factor of a Superior’s pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise directly realizing the final mode of subsistence, but also in the perspective of the appearance factor.
**CONNECTING THE FOUR RELIANCES**

In the first debate of the Dispelling Objections section (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 116) the opponent asserts that it is reasonable to posit “doctrine” in “rely on doctrine” as verbal doctrine most likely because Jam-yang-shay-pa himself (see below, 86) earlier explained:

> that whatsoever scriptural collections spoken by the Victor are true, asserted, and nondeceptive as methods of attaining liberation is the meaning of “relying on doctrine.”

However, as Jam-yang-shay-pa indicates, this is the doctrine in the first reliance in the context of “not relying on persons in terms of ordinary persons, but relying on doctrine,” whereas just before this description he speaks about the general significance to be understood in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” in which he specifies that “within ‘doctrine’ there are the two, words and meanings,” and thus in the general context “doctrine” cannot be limited to verbal doctrine since it also includes meanings, that is, the objects expressed by those words. Thus, Jam-yang-shay-pa refutes this assertion by pointing out that doctrine is divided into verbal doctrines and the meanings expressed by them. He then goes on to say that since there are these two divisions of doctrine, **not asserting in accordance with the literal reading of the verbal doctrine but engaging [that is, understanding] the object expressed that is the meaning of [Buddha’s] thought** is the significance of the second reliance—not relying on words, but relying on meaning.

Since doctrine is divided into words and meanings, it is suitable that the next reliance is nonreliance on words but reliance on meanings. Jam-yang-shay-pa identifies this pattern again between the second and third reliances by taking the divisions of meaning and using them as the reason why **not asserting appearances of various conventionalities in this way as the mode of subsistence but asserting the nonaffirming negative that is the mere elimination of the self that is the object of negation of all the various substrata as the final mode of subsistence** is the significance of the third reliance. In other words, since meaning is divided into interpretable meanings and definitive meanings, it is suitable that the next reliance is nonreliance on interpretable meanings but reliance on definitive meanings.

The connection between the third reliance and the fourth reliance is established in a different way, but the pattern is recognizable. Definitive
meaning connects to the consciousness and pristine wisdom of the fourth reliance because definitive meanings require positing by an awareness. Such an awareness in the context of the fourth reliance will either be a consciousness or a pristine wisdom because positing the definitive meaning—emptiness—requires either a consciousness of inferential realization or a Superior’s pristine wisdom. In other words, since definitive meanings are realized by either consciousness or pristine wisdom and “positing as the final definitive meaning moreover must be a positing by a single awareness” and this could not be done “in accordance with its appearance to an inferential rational consciousness realizing emptiness” (see Interpretable and definitive, 119), it is suitable that the next reliance is nonreliance on consciousness but reliance on pristine wisdom.

Jam-yang-shay-pa’s treatment of this debate brings out a pattern in the four reliances. The pattern is that the divisions of each of the reliable elements of the first two reliances—doctrine and meaning—form the next reliance. In the case of the third reliance, it is the positors of definitive meaning—consciousness and pristine wisdom—that form the elements of the fourth reliance. In this way, each of the reliances is derived from the one preceding it, gradually tightening the focus of mental trust from doctrine, to meaning, to definitive meaning, to pristine wisdom.

**SCRIPTURE AND REASONING**

From within the threefold division of phenomena into manifest, slightly hidden, and very hidden, emptiness is classified as slightly hidden. For the practitioner seeking the correct view of emptiness, striving to differentiate high sayings into the interpretable and the definitive, that emptiness is slightly hidden is both good news and bad news. The bad news is that slightly hidden phenomena do not appear to the senses, and therefore one cannot find the view without appeal to an epistemological authority such as inferential reasoning or scripture. The good news is that slightly hidden phenomena (unlike very hidden phenomena) become

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*a* Ge-lug theorists assert that in dependence on a correct reasoning about emptiness, an inferential consciousness can realize emptiness through the route of a conceptual image of emptiness appearing to that consciousness. Repeated meditations on emptiness employing inferential images can evolve into direct realization of the ultimate. Such a non-conceptual ultimate consciousness is a meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness.

*b* mngon gyur.

c cung zad lkg gyur.

d shin tu lkg gyur.
perceivable through the route of conceptual images based on correct signs, that is, reasons. Therefore, reason is an epistemological authority with regard to emptiness. The issue raised here is that scripture and reasoning are often mentioned as means of arriving at the correct view, and since emptiness is hidden and the path of reasoning is difficult, shouldn’t the predominant course simply be to rely on scripture?

In the last debate in the section on Dispelling Objections Jam-yang-shay-pa presents such a challenge in which the opponent claims that the predominant means is to rely on scripture (see Interpretable and Definitive, 129):

It follows that, between scripture and reasoning, scripture is predominant for differentiating high sayings into the interpretable and the definitive because for common beings the mode of subsistence of phenomena is hidden.

Jam-yang-shay-pa disagrees on the grounds that not all statements in scripture can be trusted:

If in the high sayings [a sūtra] is said to be of interpretable meaning, it does not need to be of interpretable meaning, and if [a sūtra] is said to be of definitive meaning, it does not need to be of definitive meaning.

To prove that this statement is established, Jam-yang-shay-pa points out that if it were the case that a sūtra said to be of interpretable meaning needed to be of interpretable meaning, then the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras would be sūtras of interpretable meaning because of being described that way in the Sūtra Unravelling the Thought. If that were so, the opponent would also have to say that the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras are sūtras of definitive meaning because of being described that way in the Teachings of Akiṣhayamati Sūtra. The opponent is unable to disagree, since to do so would simply prove Jam-yang-shay-pa’s point.

Jam-yang-shay-pa, basing his argument on Tsong-kha-pa’s The Essence of Eloquence (see Interpretable and Definitive, 132), now moves to show why reasoning must be predominant in the case of two scriptures giving conflicting differentiations of the interpretable and definitive. He says:

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*a* Tsong-kha-pa Lo-sang-drag-pa’s The Essence of Eloquence sets forth how the Sūtra Unravelling the Thought presents the hermeneutical positions of Proponents of Mind-Only (sems tsam pa, cittamātra) and how the Teachings of Akiṣhayamati Sūtra presents the hermeneutical positions of Proponents of the Middle Way (dbu ma pa, mādhyamika). The Sūtra Unravelling the Thought pronounces the first and middle wheel of doctrine to be of
It follows [that between those two the differentiation must mainly be made by pure reasoning] because at that time [of differentiating the interpretable and definitive], since among the high sayings a variety of the discordant interpretable and definitive are set forth, that “Such-and-such is true” and “Such-and-such is untrue” must be differentiated through pure reasoning, [whereas] since scriptures are the bases of analyses concerning the interpretable and definitive, they are not suitable as proofs.

This argument consists of two parts. First, the scriptures contain numerous conflicting statements that such-and-such is true or untrue. For instance, the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* are sūtras of interpretable meaning according to the *Sūtra Unravelling the Thought* but are sūtras of definitive meaning according to the *Teachings of Akshayamati Sūtra*.

Second, scriptural statements themselves are the bases of analysis to be investigated with reasoning to determine whether they are interpretable or definitive. They are to be proven or disproven and hence are not themselves proofs about this.

Tsong-kha-pa’s *Stages of Secret Mantra* likewise explains why scriptures are not to be taken as proofs of the interpretable and definitive:

At that time since the two scriptures are the bases of analysis concerning possession or not of the meaning of the truth, the bases of dispute are not suitable as the means of proof; hence, differentiation as to possessing the meaning of the truth or not is done by way of just reasoning.

Tsong-kha-pa’s argument is reminiscent of similar arguments posed in a variety of political and legal contexts showing the necessity of having a neutral third party adjudicate a dispute. In this instance, competing scriptures claim to possess the truth, and since their claims are discordant, reason must be called upon to settle the issue. Reason is the third party called in to resolve the hermeneutical dispute posed by dissonant scriptures. Just as a legal dispute is placed before a judge, hermeneutical disputes are resolved by reasoning.

The five debates of the section on dispelling objections are summarized in the chart below:

interpretable meaning and the third wheel to be definitive. The *Teachings of Akshayamati Sūtra*, on the other hand, presents a system in which only the middle wheel is of definitive meaning. How to determine which is correct? Tsong-kha-pa states emphatically that reasoning must be used to differentiate which sūtra statements are interpretable and which are definitive.
<table>
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<th>Jam-yang-shay-pa’s 16 points in Dispelling Objections</th>
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| 1 | **Third Debate** (See *Interpretable and Definitive*, 116.)  
In the first reliance, “doctrine” in “Do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine,” is taken as doctrines spoken by the Teacher which are twofold: (1) the means of expression, verbal doctrines, and (2) the meanings expressed. Hence, even if “scriptural collections spoken by the Victor” is identified (see below, 86) as the doctrine in the first reliance in the limited context of “not relying on persons in terms of ordinary persons, but relying on doctrine,” it is not reasonable to posit “doctrine” in “rely on doctrine” in the general context as limited to verbal doctrine. |
| 2 | Based on the second import of “doctrine” in “Do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine,” the meanings expressed, **not asserting in accordance with the literal reading of the verbal doctrine but understanding the object expressed that is the meaning of Buddha’s thought** is the significance of the second reliance, “Do not rely on the words, but rely on the meaning.” |
| 3 | Based on the fact that even with respect to the object expressed that is the meaning of Buddha’s thought there are two imports, interpretable conventionalites and the definitive meaning of the mode of subsistence—**not asserting appearances of various conventionalities in this way as the mode of subsistence but asserting the nonaffirming negative that is the mere elimination of the self that is the object of negation of all the various substrata as the final mode of subsistence** is the significance of the third reliance “Do not rely on interpretable meaning, but rely on definitive meaning.” |
Positing as the final definitive meaning moreover must be a positing by a single awareness and:

- not only not asserting as the mode of subsistence in accordance with its appearance to a consciousness of a common being who has not realized emptiness
- but also not asserting as the final mode of subsistence in accordance with its appearance to an inferential rational consciousness realizing emptiness
- but asserting as the final mode of subsistence in accordance with appearance to a Superior’s pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness,

is the significance of the fourth reliance “Do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom.”

**Fourth Debate (121)**

In the second reliance, “words” in “Do not rely on words” include the interpretable meanings of the Word of the Teacher Buddha but also include the words of other beings, such as Bodhisattvas who set forth some of the 84,000 piles of doctrine. Therefore, “words” in “do not rely on the words” are not posited just as the words of the Teacher Buddha, since it is wider than that.

In the second reliance, “meaning” in “but rely on the meaning” is not just emptiness but includes objects as numerous as the phenomena of the two truths, that is, all phenomena.

**Fifth Debate (127)**

In the third reliance, “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning” is of two levels:

1. the definitive on the level of the passages that are the means of expression
2. the definitive on the level of the meanings that are expressed.

Although the latter is emptiness, “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning” cannot be said to be emptiness because “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning” has the above two levels.

“Ultimate” in “rely on the ultimate” is taken to be emptiness, but that is not a reason to take “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning” as emptiness since it has the above two levels.
<table>
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<th>Sixth Debate (128)</th>
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<td>9</td>
<td>In the fourth reliance, the meaning of “do not rely on consciousness” is “do not assert emptiness in accordance with the mode of appearance to an inferential consciousness realizing emptiness.”</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Emptiness appears to inherently exist to an inferential consciousness realizing emptiness even though such an inferential consciousness accurately realizes emptiness.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>An inferential consciousness realizes emptiness through the mode, or medium, of a meaning-generality (a conceptual image of emptiness), but this does not mean that it realizes a meaning-generality of emptiness; it realizes emptiness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hence, the meaning of “do not rely on consciousness” is not that whatever is a consciousness in “do not rely on consciousness” necessarily has not realized emptiness because among those consciousnesses there are inferential consciousnesses that realize emptiness.</td>
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<th>Seventh Debate (See Interpretable and Definitive, 129)</th>
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<td>13</td>
<td>It cannot be held that between scripture and reasoning, scripture is predominant for differentiating high sayings into the interpretable and the definitive because, for instance, the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought says that the extensive, middle-length, and brief Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras are sūtras of interpretable meaning whereas the Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra says that the extensive, middle-length, and brief Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras are sūtras of definitive meaning.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Hence, since among the high sayings a variety of the discordant interpretable and definitive are set forth, that “Such-and-such is true” and “Such-and-such is untrue” must be differentiated through pure reasoning.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Because scriptures are the bases of analyses concerning the interpretable and definitive, they are not suitable as proofs for what is interpretable and definitive.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Therefore, even though emptiness, the mode of subsistence, is not manifest like a sense object but is hidden for common beings, it can be approached by reasoning because among the hidden emptiness is only slightly hidden and not very hidden.</td>
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</table>
a About the classification of objects into the manifest and the hidden, Kön-chog-jig-may-wang-po’s Precious Garland of Tenets says:

The definition of a manifest object is: a phenomenon that can be known through the power of experience, without depending on a logical sign. Obvious object (mngon sum, pratyakṣa), manifest object (mngon gyur, abhimukhit), sense object (dbang po’i yul, indriyaviṣaya), and non-hidden phenomenon (lkog tu ma gyur pa’i chos, aparokṣadharma) are mutually inclusive and synonymous. Illustrations are forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tangible objects.

The definition of a hidden object is: a phenomenon that must be known through depending on a reason or sign. Hidden object (lkog gyur, parokṣa), non-obvious phenomenon (mngon sum ma yin pa’i chos), and object of inferential comprehension (rjes dpag gi gzhal bya, anumāṇāprameya) are mutually inclusive and synonymous. Illustrations are the impermanence of a sound and a sound’s selflessness of phenomena.

[Sopa and Hopkins add:] These definitions are taken from the point of view of ordinary beings because there are no hidden objects for a Buddha, who realizes everything directly. Also, although an ordinary being who has a yogic direct perception that directly realizes the subtle impermanence of, for instance, a sound must depend on inference before directly cognizing it, a Superior can directly perceive the impermanence of a sound without first depending on an inference. Thus the impermanence of sound is not always a hidden object; it can be perceived directly as under the above conditions. Consequently, the synonyms given are only roughly mutually inclusive because what is an object of inference for one person could be an object of direct perception even for another ordinary being. The point here is that a hidden object is something that an ordinary being can newly cognize only through inference. It can be understood from the illustrations that the author gives—the impermanence of a sound and a sound’s selflessness of phenomena—that hidden objects are not propositions about phenomena inaccessible to an ordinary being’s experience but are such phenomena themselves.

Therefore, in this system a manifest object and a hidden object are mutually exclusive [for ordinary beings]. Also, the three spheres of objects of comprehension [the manifest, the slightly hidden, and the very hidden] are asserted to be mutually exclusive.

Slightly hidden objects, such as an emptiness of inherent existence, are amenable to realization by the usual type of inference. The very hidden, such as the layout of the universe, are known through such means as inference based on valid scriptures.
IDENTIFYING THE RELIABLE

As a summation, using the above richly provocative descriptions of each of the four reliances let us identify the element on which practitioners are not to rely and the element on which practitioners are to rely.

IDENTIFYING “PERSONS” IN “DO NOT RELY ON PERSONS”
1. Ordinary persons, among whom there are a variety of Outer (Nonbuddhist) and Inner (Buddhist) persons, because trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue, not asserted, and deceptive as methods for attaining liberation (75, 87).
2. Supreme persons through to and including Buddhas, because the mere claims of those persons or the goodness of a person are not sufficient (84).
3. Mainly, the pretentious who dissimulate so that the bad looks as if good (139).
4. Doctrines composed within abiding in a view of the person (85).
5. Relative to Forder (Nonbuddhist) Proponents of Self: The self as conceived by the Forder (Nonbuddhist) Proponents of Self (93).
6. Relative to the Diverged Afar Nihilists: The nonexistence of past and future lives asserted by the Diverged Afar Nihilists (93).

IDENTIFYING “DOCTRINE” IN “RELY ON DOCTRINE”
1. Scriptural collections, because scriptural collections spoken by the Victor are true, asserted, and nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation (86) since the Victor in the end spoke all statements in whatsoever scriptural collections only for the sake of setting trainees in the definite goodness of liberation, those statements in whatsoever scriptural collections are true as methods for attaining liberation, are nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation, and are asserted as methods for attaining liberation (87).
2. Within “doctrine” there are the two, words and meanings (84).
3. Asserting the logically correct upon having investigated the words and meanings set out in accordance with this person’s assertion (84). Mental reliance on pure reasoning, rather than taking as a reason merely that something is an explanation by a special person, a Buddha or a Hearer and so forth, and holding whatever they set forth to be of definitive meaning (97). The reasoning validity, which means the same as reliance on doctrine (145). When understanding—that is, hearing—all doctrines, if one takes as true all that is explained and does not analyze the meaning of words, one will not know how to distinguish the correct from the quasi. (139).
4. Thorough knowledge of the composition of doctrines composed within abiding in a view of the person is called “doctrine” (85).

5. *Relative to Forder (Nonbuddhist) Proponents of Self*: Assertion and nondeceptiveness of the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching a permanent stable matrix of a One-Gone-Thus—the three doors of liberation (emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness)—as the mode of subsistence (94).

6. *Relative to the Diverged Afar Nihilists*: Entry into an understanding of actions and their effects and of selflessness through the teaching that “there exists a self substantially existent in the sense of being self-sufficient” (94).

**IDENTIFYING “WORDS” IN “DO NOT RELY ON THE WORDS”**

1. Within “words” here there are the two, treatises and Words of Buddha, and the two, the literal and the non-literal (99). Even within doctrines spoken by the Teacher, there are the two, (1) words that are the means of expression (*rjod byed kyi tshig*) and (2) the meanings expressed (*brjod bya’i don*) (102).

2. The explicit reading of the high sayings not definitely nondeceptive with respect to the mode of subsistence and so forth (99).

3. The terminology of treatises (academic language) when local terms convey the meaning (100).

4. Teachings of the collections of Bodhisattva qualities ranging from initial mind-generation through to the essence of enlightenments; teachings of whatsoever 84,000 piles of doctrine (101).

5. The certainty of non-deception about the mode of subsistence of things being lacking when the literal reading of the high sayings that are means of expression cannot be accepted as is (103).

6. The literality of the literal reading of sūtras when subject to damage by valid cognition (103).

**IDENTIFYING “MEANING” IN “RELY ON THE MEANING”**

1. Within “meanings” there are the two, interpretable meanings and definitive meaning (99).

2. Making assertions in accordance with the specific object expressed that is the meaning of the thought having pure proofs (99).

3. Meaning conveyed by local terms (100).

4. All-knowing pristine wisdom manifestly completely purified by wisdom endowed in a single moment of mind; the un languaged, unlettered, nonilluminable, and inexpressible of all sentient beings (99).
5. Establishing in fact the objects expressed that are the meanings of the speaker’s thought (103).
6. The objects expressed that are the meanings of Buddha’s thought understood through demonstrating the damage by valid cognition to the literality of sūtras whose literal reading is not acceptable (103).

IDENTIFYING “INTERPRETABLE MEANING” IN “DO NOT RELY ON INTERPRETABLE MEANING”
1. On the level of the texts that are the means of expression: conventionalities as the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher Buddha’s sūtras (103).
2. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: conventionalities as the mode of subsistence in accordance with various appearances (103).
3. On the level of the texts that are the means of expression: high sayings teaching conventionalites (107).
4. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: conventionalites (107).
5. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: appearances as various conventionalities as the final mode of subsistence (108)
6. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: conventional substrata existing variously (109)
7. On the level of the texts that are the means of expression: teachings of the various aspects of method like the various kernels of grains dwelling in the covering of various husks (110).

IDENTIFYING “DEFINITIVE MEANING” IN “RELY ON DEFINITIVE MEANING”
1. On the level of the texts that are the means of expression: emptiness as the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher’s sūtras (103).
2. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: emptiness of true existence in accordance with the appearances of conventionalites as the mode of subsistence (103).
3. On the level of the texts that are the means of expression: high sayings teaching the ultimate (107).
4. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: the ultimate (107).
5. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: emptiness of true establishment in accordance with such appearances as the final mode of subsistence (108).
6. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: the same
taste of the variously existing conventional substrata without the
divisions of color, shape, and so forth in the mode of subsistence as
the non-affirming negative that is the mere elimination of the self that
is the object of negation (109).

7. On the level of the texts that are the means of expression: teachings of
the mode of the subtle profundity of emptiness like the single sweet
and delicious taste of honeys (110).

IDENTIFYING “CONSCIOUSNESS” IN “DO NOT RELY ON CONSCIOUSNESS”
1. There are two, awarenesses that do and do not realize emptiness (110).
2. Consciousnesses realizing emptiness but not directly; these have a
mode of appearance in which emptiness appears in a dualistic aspect
(110). Consciousnesses of those that have not realized emptiness;
these are subject to faulty modes of appearance and modes of
apprehension of the nature of their objects (110).
3. In general, in terms of a common being, wisdoms of hearing and
thinking analyzing suchness (112).
4. Whatever approaches and abides in forms, approaches and abides in
feelings, approaches and abides in consciousness, approaches and
abides in compositional factors; consciousness of the earth
constituent, consciousness of the water constituent, consciousness of
the fire constituent, consciousness of the wind constituent; cognition
of forms which are known by the eye, cognition of sounds which are
known by the ear, cognition of odors which are known by the nose,
cognition of tastes which are known by the tongue, cognition of
objects of touch which are known by the body, and cognition of
phenomena which are known by the mind (112).
5. An inferential consciousness realizing emptiness by way of a
meaning-generality; although the proliferations of dualistic
appearance are eliminated in the perspective of its ascertainment
factor, they are not eliminated in the perspective of the appearance
factor (114).

IDENTIFYING “PRISTINE WISDOM” IN “RELY ON PRISTINE WISDOM”
1. Mainly pristine wisdom directly realizing emptiness, but also wisdom
awarenesses arisen from meditation on emptiness which include
conceptual realizations of emptiness (110).
2. Pristine wisdom directly realizing emptiness realizes emptiness totally
nondualistically, and thus there is no false appearance of inherent
existence or appearance of a meaning-generality (110).
3. A wisdom arisen from analytical meditation on suchness which is mainly a Superior’s pristine wisdom of direct realization (112).

4. Thorough knowledge of the aggregate of consciousness abiding in whichever of the four aggregates; regarding consciousnesses abiding in any of these four constituents, knowledge of the noumenon as undifferentiable; regarding consciousnesses abiding in any of these four constituents, knowledge of the noumenon as undifferentiable is pristine wisdom; this which is pacified internally and does not move to the external and does not conceive and conceptualize any phenomenon (112).

5. A Superior’s non-conceptual pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise directly realizing the final mode of subsistence; all proliferations of dualistic appearance are eliminated not only in the perspective of its ascertainment factor, but also in the perspective of its appearance factor (114).

Now let us put these sections together with the scriptural sources that Jamyang-shay-pa cites.

**TABLE OF QUOTATIONS IN THE GREAT EXPOSITION OF THE INTERPRETABLE AND DEFINITIVE ON THE FOUR RELIANCES**

**THE FOUR RELIANCES AS A GROUP**

1. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (sde dge 4037, sms tsam, vol. wi, 136a.6-136b.6)

   **[Do not rely on the words, but rely on the meaning.]** Regarding that, how do Bodhisattvas train in the four reliances? Concerning this, Bodhisattvas listen to doctrines from others because of wanting the meaning but not because of wanting well-crafted words. Since they listen to the doctrine because of wanting the meaning but not because of wanting the words, therefore even if doctrine is taught with common language, Bodhisattvas who rely on the meaning listen to it respectfully.

   **[Do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine.]** Moreover, Bodhisattvas thoroughly know unwholesome teachings and also great teachings correctly just as they are. Thorough knowledge also relies on reasonings, but does not rely on persons as in saying, “The elder or knowledgeable person or One-Gone-Thus or monastic has set forth these doctrines.”
[Do not rely on interpretable meaning, but rely on definitive meaning.] Moreover, Bodhisattvas adhere to faith and adhere to joy in the One-Gone-Thus and take manifest joy in solely ascertaining his speech, and they rely on the One-Gone-Thus’s sūtras of definitive meaning, but not on [sūtras of] interpretable meaning, for if one relies on sūtras of definitive meaning, one will not be lured from this disciplinary doctrine because it is due to not ascertaining that the divisions of sūtras of interpretable meaning are for the sake of entry through various doors that doubt is generated. If Bodhisattvas become without ascertainment concerning sūtras of definitive meaning, they will be lured from this disciplinary doctrine.

[Do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom.] Furthermore, Bodhisattvas view the pristine wisdom of realization as the essence, not just consciousness of doctrines and meanings through hearing and thinking.

[Four validities.] Understanding that what is to be known by the knowledge of meditation cannot be known only by knowing meanings through hearing and thinking, they do not abandon and do not deprecate the supremely profound doctrines spoken by the One-Gone-Thus even when hearing them. In that way, Bodhisattvas train in the four reliances, whereby they are oriented well. From these four reliances, in brief, four validities themselves are indicated: (1) the meanings of the teachings, (2) reasonings, (3) teachers, and (4) pristine wisdoms of realization arisen from meditation. Through all four reliances, the nonmistakenness that definitely yields entry into initiating Bodhisattvas’ correct training is manifestly clarified.

2. *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* (Iha sa 176, vol. 60, 228b.4)

The four reliances of Bodhisattvas also are an imperishable. What are the four? They are as follows: Rely on the meaning, but do not rely on the letters; rely on pristine wisdom, but do not rely on consciousness; rely on sūtra [passages] of definitive meaning, but do not rely on sūtra [passages] of interpretable meaning; rely on the doctrine itself, but do not rely on persons.

DO NOT RELY ON PERSONS, BUT RELY ON DOCTRINE

3. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (84) (*sde dge* 4037, *sems tsam*, vol. wi, 58b.4-5)
Moreover, Bodhisattvas thoroughly know unwholesome teachings and also great teachings correctly just as they are. Thorough knowledge also relies on reasonings, but does not rely on persons as in saying, “The elder or knowledgeable person or One-Gone-Thus or monastic has set forth these doctrines.”

4. *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* (85) (*lha sa* 176, vol. 60, 232a.5-232b.4)

Regarding this, what is the doctrine itself? What is a person? [Whatsoever doctrines composed within abiding in a view of the person are called “person.” This thorough knowledge of the composition of that view of the person is called “doctrine itself.”]a Moreover, persons who are ordinary beings, persons who are virtuous common beings, [persons who follow by faith, persons who are followers of doctrine, persons on the eighth (ground, that is, Approachers to Stream-Enterer), persons who are Stream-Enterers, persons who are Once-Returners, persons who are Non-Returners, persons who are Foe Destroyers, persons who are Solitary Realizers, persons who are Bodhisattvas, and one person who when arising in the world benefits many beings, comforts many beings, empathizes with the world, who arises in the world for the sake of masses of gods and humans, for their benefit, for their comfort, the teacher of gods and humans,] the Buddha Supramundane Victor, the unique person are called “persons.” [All of those terms for persons are taught by the Supramundane Victor for the sake of leading sentient beings by way of conventional words; those who adhere to them are said to be “without reliance”; in order for them to enter into reliance,] the Supramundane Victor also said, “Rely on the doctrine itself, but not for the sake of persons.”

5. *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* (89) (*lha sa* 176, vol. 60, 232a.5-6)

Whatsoever doctrines composed within abiding in a view of the person are called “person.” This thorough knowledge of the composition of that view of the person is called “doctrine itself.”b

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a See *Interpretable and Definitive*, 89.

b *chos nyid*; in other contexts this term refers to the final nature of phenomena, but here it merely means doctrine (*chos*).
6. Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Lesser Essence of Eloquence/* Praise of the Supramundane Victor Buddha from the Approach of His Teaching the Profound Dependent-Arising (90)

All statements whatsoever by you
Operate based on just dependent-arising.
Since they also are for the sake of nirvāṇa,
You have nothing that is not done to bring about pacification.

7. Vasubandhu’s *Principles of Explanation* (91) (Peking 5562, vol. 113, not found; most likely a spurious attribution)\(^a\)

Meaningless, wrong meaning, and meaningful;
Deceitful, bereft of empathy, and abandoning suffering;
 Intent on hearing, on debate, and on achievement;
Treates are asserted as lacking six and endowed with three.

8. Superior *Sūtra of the Questions of Rāṣṭapāla* from the Pile of Jewels *Sūtra* (91) (*lha sa 62, dkon brtsegs*, vol. 38, 499b.5-499b.6)

Due to being endowed with compassion,
Through hundreds of skillful means and reasonings
You cause transmigrating beings who wander due to not knowing
The modes of emptiness, quiescence, and no production to enter
[into understanding the three doors of liberation].

9. *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra* (94) (*sde dge* TBRC W22084 106b.2-106b.4 and *snar thang* TBRC W22703 252.7-253.3)

Mahāmati, for the sake of leading Forders who are attached to propounding a self, the Ones-Gone-Thus teach the matrix of a One-Gone-Thus through revealing the matrix of a One-Gone-Thus, [thinking,] “How [fine] it would be if those having thoughts that have fallen into the view of conceptualizing a real self [that is, the Forders] come to possess thoughts dwelling in the objects of activity of the three [doors of] liberation and quickly become fully purified in unsurpassed thoroughly complete enlightenment!”

10. Tsong-kha-pa’s *Illumination of the Thought* (96)

It is taught that even persons substantially exist because beings tamed by this [teaching of a substantially existent self] are cared

\(^a\) See the footnote at the citation on 91.
for by being taught that this exists. For, instance, it is said: “Monastics, the five aggregates are the burden; the carrier of the burden is the person.” In the face of inquiry by those holding that persons substantially exist in the sense of being self-sufficient, [Buddha] did not teach that such does not exist but stated that “the person that is the carrier of the burden exists,” and even though in the words of this statement “substantial existence” is not explicitly present, the meaning is that [persons] substantially exist.

11. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (81) (*sde dge* 4037, *sems tsam*, vol. *wi*, 58b.4-5)

   Thorough knowledge also relies on reasonings, but does not rely on persons as in saying, “The elder or knowledgeable person or One-Gone-Thus or monastic has set forth these doctrines.”

12. *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* (97) (This quote is not found in the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*; likely a spurious attribution.)

   Like gold [that is acquired] upon being scorched, cut, and rubbed,
   My word is to be adopted by monastics and scholars
   Upon analyzing it well,
   Not out of respect [for me].

13. *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra* (98) (reference without quote; the reference is likely to Peking 775, vol. 29, 39.5.2, chapter 2)

   Sūtras teaching in conformity with the thoughts of sentient beings have meaning that is mistaken; they are not discourse on suchness. Just as a deer is deceived by a waterless mirage into apprehending water, so doctrine which is taught [in conformity with the thoughts of sentient beings] also pleases children but is not discourse setting out the wisdom of Superiors. Therefore, you should follow the meaning and not be enamored of the expression.


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*a* See Hopkins, *Maps of the Profound* (221):

   Monastics, I will teach you about the burden. I will also teach you about the taker of the burden, the leaver of the burden, and the carrier of the burden. Regarding this, the burden is the five appropriated aggregates. The taker of the burden is attachment. The leaver of the burden is liberation. The carrier of the burden is the person...
All of those terms for persons are taught by the Supramundane Victor for the sake of leading sentient beings by way of conventional words; those who adhere to them are said to be “without reliance”; in order for them to enter into reliance[,] the Supramundane Victor also said, “Rely on the doctrine itself, but not for the sake of persons.”

DO NOT RELY ON THE WORDS, BUT RELY ON THE MEANING

15. Kālachakra Root Tantra (100)

For ultimate reality always the great ones
Do not rely on words in local areas.
If the meaning is known with local names,
What use are the terms of treatises?

16. Mañjughoṣha Narendrakīrti’s Brief Explication of the Assertions of Our Own View (100) (Peking 4610, vol. 81)

The term karṇā of Karṇāṭa [or Karṇāṭaka] expresses “stone” and “leg.” For some, it expresses “deaf.”a Tantras teach similarly.

17. Khay-drub’s Great Commentary Illuminating the Principles (100)

Through the force of different linguistic usages in diverse localities, there are usages of different names even for each meaning and various different meanings even for each name. Hence, given that the people of individual areas who use language for meaning are able to understand the meaning, what use are the delineations of Sanskrit terms renowned in treatises? That is to say, there is no purpose.

18. Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas (101) (sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136a.6)

Since they listen to the doctrine because of wanting the meaning but not because of wanting the words, therefore even if doctrine is taught with common language, Bodhisattvas who rely on the meaning listen to it respectfully.

19. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra (101) (lha sa 176, vol. 60, 228b.4-230b.1)

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a That is, an alternate meaning of karṇā in the parlance of one locality is “deaf.”
Concerning that, what are meanings? What are letters? [“Letters” teach the collections of Bodhisattva qualities ranging from initial mind-generation through to the essence of enlightenments. “Meaning” is an all-knowing pristine wisdom manifestly completely purified by wisdom endowed in a single moment of mind.] In brief, these teachings of whatsoever 84,000 piles of doctrine are called “letters.” That meaning which is the un languaged, unlettered, nonilluminable, and inexpressible of all sentient beings is called “meaning.” This is “rely on meaning, but do not rely on letters.”

DO NOT RELY ON INTERPRETABLE MEANING, BUT RELY ON DEFINITIVE MEANING

20. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra (104) (Peking 843, 150a.2-150b.4 and lha sa 176, vol. 60, 231a.6)

Which are sūtras of definitive meaning? Which are sūtras of interpretable meaning? [Whichever sūtras teach for the sake of entering the path are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach for the sake of entering into the fruit are called “definitive meaning.”]

Whichever sūtras teach establishing conventionalities are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach establishing ultimates are called “definitive meaning.”

[Whichever sūtras teach engaging in actions and agents are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach engaging in actions and exhausting afflictions are called “definitive meaning.”

Whichever sūtras teach for the sake of setting out the thoroughly afflicted are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach for the sake of purifying the thoroughly pure are called “definitive meaning.”

Whichever sūtras teach mental projections in cyclic existence are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach entry into the nonduality of cyclic existence and nirvana are called “definitive meaning.”

Whichever sūtras teach (various objects by way of) various words and letters are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach the profound (emptiness)—difficult to view and difficult to realize—are called “definitive meaning.”

a These two questions do not appear in lha sa 176, vol. 60, 228b.4.
Whichever sūtras teach (various objects by way of) many words and letters and in order to please the minds of sentient beings are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach (the profound emptiness) with few words and letters and cause the minds of sentient beings to become definite mind are called “definitive meaning.”

Whichever sūtras teach what are set out with various vocabulary—(such as) self, sentient being, living being, the nourished, creature, person, mind-progeny, pride-child, agent, andfeeler—like (teaching) an owner when there is no owner are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach the doors of liberation—things’ emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, no composition, no production, no produced, no sentient being, no living being, no person, and no owner—are called “definitive meaning.”

This is called “reliance on sūtras of definitive meaning and non-reliance on sūtras of interpretable meaning.”


When the interpretable and the definitive are posited in terms of the meaning of these [sūtras] needing or not needing to be interpreted otherwise, the high sayings themselves are held as illustrations of the interpretable and the definitive. However, when meanings [that is to say, objects] that need or do not need to be interpreted otherwise are posited as the interpretable and the definitive, conventionalities and ultimates are treated as the interpretable and the definitive.

22. Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (108)

They rely on the One-Gone-Thus’s sūtras of definitive meaning, but not on [sūtras of] interpretable meaning, for if one relies on sūtras of definitive meaning, one will not be lured from this disciplinary doctrine because it is due to not ascertaining that the divisions of sūtras of interpretable meaning are for the sake of entry through various doors that doubt is generated.

23. Khay-drub’s *Compilation on Emptiness* (110) (Madhyamika Text Series, vol. 1, 1972, 126.4-5)
[Not asserting these appearances] of the varieties of conventionalities [as the mode of subsistence but asserting the ultimate—the emptiness of true establishment in the manner of such appearance—as the mode of subsistence] is the significance of [“not relying on interpretable meaning but relying on definitive meaning” and “not relying on conventionalities but] relying on ultimates[].”

24. Maitreya’s Treatise on the Sublime Continuum (110) (I.148; sde dge 4024, vol. phi, 61b1-61b.2)

The teaching of the mode of the subtle profundity [of emptiness]
Is like the single [sweet and delicious] taste of honeys.
The teaching of the mode of the various aspects of [method]
Is to be known as like [the various] kernels [of grains dwelling] in the covering of various [husks].

DO NOT RELY ON CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT RELY ON PRISTINE WISDOM

25. Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas (111) (sde dge 4037, vol. wi, 136b.4)

Furthermore, Bodhisattvas view the pristine wisdom of realization as the essence, not just consciousness of doctrines and meanings through hearing and thinking.

26. Khay-drub’s Great Commentary Illuminating the Principles (112)

In general, on the occasion of the fourth reliance the consciousness in the likes of “do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom,” is wisomds of hearing and thinking analyzing suchness and is in terms of a common being, but pristine wisdom is a wisdom arisen from analytical meditation on suchness and moreover is mainly a Superior’s pristine wisdom of direct realization.

27. Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra (112) (lha sa 176, vol. 60, 230b.1-231a.1)

What is consciousness? What is pristine wisdom? “Consciousness” is the four stations of consciousness. [What are the four? Regarding consciousness, whatever approaches and abides in forms, approaches and abides in feelings, approaches and abides in consciousness, approaches and abides in compositional factors is called “consciousness.” Regarding that, what is pristine wisdom? Thorough knowledge of the aggregate of consciousness
abiding in whichever of the four aggregates is called “pristine wisdom.” Moreover, regarding consciousness, consciousness of the earth constituent, consciousness of the water constituent, consciousness of the fire constituent, consciousness of the wind constituent is called “consciousness.” Regarding consciousnesses abiding in any of these four constituents, knowledge of the noumenon as undifferentiable is pristine wisdom.]

Moreover, consciousness is cognition of forms which are known by the eye, cognition of sounds which are known by the ear, cognition of odors which are known by the nose, cognition of tastes which are known by the tongue, cognition of objects of touch which are known by the body, and cognition of phenomena which are known by the mind. These are called “consciousness.” This which is pacified internally and does not move to the external and through relying on pristine wisdom does not conceive and conceptualize any phenomenon is called “pristine wisdom.”


In our system, even the presentation of the four relliances has fundamental importance as follows. We propound that:

- **not asserting these appearances of the varieties of conventionalities as the mode of subsistence but asserting the ultimate—the emptiness of true establishment in the manner of such appearance—as the mode of subsistence** is the significance of “not relying on interpretable meaning but relying on definitive meaning” and “not relying on conventionalities but relying on ultimates;”

- **asserting that this mode of appearance to the consciousnesses of common beings is not the mode of subsistence but that very mode of perception by a Superior’s non-conceptual pristine wisdom is the mode of subsistence** is the significance of “not relying on consciousness but relying on pristine wisdom.”

**PROVOCATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOUR RELIANCES**

By analyzing these four aphorisms and putting them together with numerous Indian and Tibetan sources Jam-yang-shay-pa and Ngag-wang-
pal-dan provide richly evocative readings of these pithy directives. Let us assemble this material as multiple renderings of each directive:

I. Do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine.

The pith: When understanding—that is, hearing—all doctrines, if one takes as true all that is explained and does not analyze the meaning of words, one will not know how to distinguish the correct from the quasi (Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, 139).

1. Ordinary persons, among whom there are a variety of Outer (Nonbuddhist) and Inner (Buddhist) persons in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue, not to be asserted, and deceptive as methods for attaining liberation (75, 87) whereas scriptural collections spoken by the Victor are true, asserted, and nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation (86), since the Victor in the end spoke all statements in whatsoever scriptural collections only for the sake of setting trainees in the definite goodness of liberation (87).

2. Do not use as a reason the mere claims of the pretentious who dissimulate so that the bad looks as if good (139), and do not take as a reason the mere claims of supreme persons through to and including Buddhas or merely that something is an explanation by a special person, a Buddha or a Hearer and so forth, or use as a reason the goodness of a person, but assert the logically correct upon having investigated the words and meanings (84), using mental reliance on pure reasoning (97), the reasoning validity (145).

3. Do not adhere to doctrines composed within abiding in a view of the person; they are taught by the Supramundane Victor for the sake of leading sentient beings by way of conventional words, but rely on thorough knowledge of the composition of doctrines composed within abiding in a view of the person (85).

4. Relative to Forder (Nonbuddhist) Proponents of Self: The self as conceived by the Forder (Nonbuddhist) Proponents of an existent self is untrue, but the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching a permanent stable matrix of a One-Gone-Thus—the three doors of liberation (emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness)—is to be asserted and is nondeceptive as the mode of subsistence (93).

5. Relative to the Diverged Afar Nihilists: The nonexistence of past and future lives asserted by the Diverged Afar Nihilists is untrue, but the meaning of Buddha’s thought behind sūtras teaching them that “there exists a self substantially existent in the sense of being self-sufficient”
is that they may later enter into an understanding of actions and their effects and selflessness because if Buddha had not taught a substantially existent self to the Diverged Afar who assert that past and future lives do not exist, they would not know how to posit a being who is the substratum experiencing the fruition of the effects of actions (93).

II. With respect to the doctrine, do not rely on the words, but rely on the meaning.

The pith: When holding all doctrines without forgetting, if one is intent only on words, one will fall from holding without forgetting the meaning (Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, 139).

1. Do not assert the explicit—literal—reading of the high sayings as being definitely nondeceptive with respect to the mode of subsistence and so forth, but make assertions in accordance with this and that object expressed\(^a\) that is the meaning of the thought having pure proofs (99).

2. Do not use the terminology of treatises (academic language), but use local terms when they convey the meaning (100).

3. For the certainty of non-deception about the mode of subsistence of things, do not rely on teachings of the collections of Bodhisattva qualities ranging from initial mind-generation through to the essence of enlightenments, the teachings of whatsoever 84,000 piles of doctrine, but rely on the establishment in fact of the objects expressed that are the meanings of the thought—all-knowing pristine wisdom manifestly completely purified by wisdom endowed in a single moment of mind; the unlanguaged, unlettered, nonilluminable, and inexpressible of all sentient beings (101).

4. For the certainty of non-deception about the mode of subsistence of things, do not rely on the literal reading of the high sayings that are means of expression when they cannot be accepted as is due to being subject to damage by valid cognition, but establish in fact the objects expressed that are the meaning of the speaker’s thought through demonstrating the damage by valid cognition to the literality of those sūtras (103).

\(^a\) Even though this is the meaning behind what is literally expressed in the run of the words, it is nevertheless an “object expressed” with the qualification that it is the meaning behind what is literally expressed.
III. **With respect to the meaning, do not rely on interpretable meaning, but rely on definitive meaning.**

The pith: When closely investigating meaning—at the time of states arisen from thinking doing proper mental application—if one merely takes conventionalities to mind, one will not gain ascertainment arisen from thinking with regard to the ultimate (Ngag-wang-paldan’s *Annotations*, 139).

1. On the level of the texts that are the means of expression: Do not take conventionalities as true for the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher Buddha’s sūtras teaching conventionalites, but assert as the mode of subsistence emptiness in accordance with explanations in the Teacher’s sūtras teaching the ultimate (103, 107, 108).

2. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: Do not take conventionalities as true for the mode of subsistence in accordance with their various appearances, but assert as the mode of subsistence the emptiness of the true existence that conventionalites falsely appear to have (103).

3. On the level of the texts that are the means of expression: Do not rely on teachings of conventional substrata that exist variously with divisions of color, shape, and so forth—which are like the coverings of various husks—as if they were teachings on the mode of subsistence, but rely teachings on their same taste as the non-affirming negative—like grain—that is the mere elimination of the self that is the object of negation, the subtle profundity of emptiness, which is also like the single sweet and delicious taste of honeys (110).

4. On the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed: Do not rely on conventional substrata that exist variously with divisions of color, shape, and so forth—which are like the coverings of various husks—as if they were the mode of subsistence, but rely on their same taste as the non-affirming negative—like grain—that is the mere elimination of the self that is the object of negation, the subtle profundity of emptiness, which is also like the single sweet and delicious taste of honeys (110).
**IV. With respect to the definitive meaning, do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom.**

The pith: When achieving doctrine—the path of liberation—in accordance with doctrine, if one is satisfied with mere conceptual consciousnesses arisen from hearing, thinking, and meditation, one will not gain uncontaminated pristine wisdom in which clear perception of the meaning of reality has reached completion (Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotations*, 139).

1. Do not assert the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of emptiness to consciousnesses conceptually realizing emptiness such that emptiness appears in a dualistic aspect, but assert the mode of subsistence in accordance with perception by pristine wisdom and mainly by pristine wisdom directly realizing emptiness (110).

2. Do not view just consciousness of doctrines and meanings through hearing and thinking analyzing suchness in terms of a common being as the essence, but view the pristine wisdom of realization arisen from analytical meditation on suchness, which is mainly a Superior’s pristine wisdom of direct realization, as the essence (111).

3. For knowledge of the mode of subsistence, do not rely on:
   - whatever approaches and abides in forms, approaches and abides in feelings, approaches and abides in consciousness, approaches and abides in compositional factors;
   - consciousness of the earth constituent, consciousness of the water constituent, consciousness of the fire constituent, consciousness of the wind constituent;
   - cognition of forms which are known by the eye, cognition of sounds which are known by the ear, cognition of odors which are known by the nose, cognition of tastes which are known by the tongue, cognition of objects of touch which are known by the body, and cognition of phenomena which are known by the mind, but rely on:
     - thorough knowledge of the aggregate of consciousness abiding in whichever of the four aggregates;
     - regarding consciousnesses abiding in any of these four constituents, knowledge of the noumenon as undifferentiable;
• this which is pacified internally and does not move to the external and does not conceive and conceptualize any phenomenon (112).

4. Do not assert the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of a worldly consciousness that realizes emptiness by way of a meaning-generality since although the proliferations of dualistic appearance are eliminated in the perspective of its ascertainment factor, they are not eliminated in the perspective of the appearance factor, but assert the final mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of perception by a Superior’s non-conceptual pristine wisdom since all proliferations of dualistic appearance are eliminated not only in the perspective of its ascertainment factor but also in the perspective of its appearance factor (114).

The Indian and Tibetan commentaries indeed reveal the four aphorisms as replete with provocative meaning.

**Editions Consulted**

Two basic editions of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive* were consulted:

1. **drang ba dang nges pa’i don rnam par 'byed pa’i mtha’ dpyod 'khrul bral lung rigs bai dūr dkar po’i ngan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong**, TBRC W22186.10: 1-288, which is a PDF of: bla brang bkra shis ’khyil, bla brang brka shis ’khyil dgon, publishing date unknown. Abbreviated reference: “2011 TBRC bla brang.”

2. **drang ba dang nges pa’i don rnam par 'byed pa’i mtha’ dpyod 'khrul bral lung rigs bai dūr dkar po’i gan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong.**

Also a third edition based on the *bla brang* edition was used for convenience:

3. **drang ba dang nges pa’i don rnam par 'byed pa’i mtha’ dpyod 'khrul bral lung rigs bai dūr dkar po’i gan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong.**
   Taipei reprint (published by the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan, 2008) of the 1999 codex (Mundgod, India: Go-mang Library, 1999) based on the 1995 Mundgod revision (Mundgod, India: Go-mang College, 1995) of the

The digital Tibetan text of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive* provided in this book was supplied by the Dre-pung Gomang Library of Go-mang College in Mundgod, Karnataka State, India, which was likely based on the 1999 Mundgod codex. It has been edited in accordance with the “2011 TBRC *bla brang*” and the “1987 Go-mang Lhasa.”

Two basic editions of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of Tenets* were consulted:


The digital Tibetan text of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of Tenets* provided in this book was supplied by the Dre-pung Gomang Library of Go-mang College in Mundgod, Karnataka State, India. It was likely based on the 1999 Mundgod codex. It has been edited in accordance with the “1973 Ngawang Gelek *bla brang*.”
Jam-yang-shay-pa’s
GREAT EXPOSITION
OF THE INTERPRETABLE AND
THE DEFINITIVE
on the Four Reliances

The Tibetan text and the translation are highlighted in three colors: black, blue, and red. Blue colored statements present what Jam-yang-shay-pa considers to be right positions, while red colored statements represent what Jam-yang-shay-pa considers to be wrong positions. Black words are other information or function structurally. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight indicates material added in place of ellipses, and magenta highlight sets off the ellipsis indicator when it has been filled in.
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

Here by way of treating difficult points I will explain this great treatise—bestowing on those endowed with intelligence analysis, not reliant on the power of others, concerning the meaning of the thought of all the [Buddha’s] high sayings from the approach of differentiating among all of the Victor’s high sayings those which require interpretation and those which are definitive, the essence of all eloquence. This has two parts: (1) the reasons why differentiation of the interpretable and the definitive is needed and (2) how the interpretable and the definitive are differentiated.

The 2011 TBRC bla brang section on the four reliances, 3a.3-13.4; the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa, 2b.3-10a.3; the 2008 Taipei reprint, 2.15-17.10.

Tsong-kha-pa’s The Essence of Eloquence.

This term (gsung rab, pravacana) is often translated as “scriptures,” but “high sayings” conveys its literal connotation as speech (vacana), with rab (pra-) as an intensifier.

Here Jam-yang-shay-pa indicates that the meaning of Tsong-kha-pa’s title The Essence of Eloquence is that the essence of all of the Buddha’s speech, his eloquence, is the differentiation among those scriptures which require interpretation and which are definitive. However, Jam-yang-shay-pa’s follower, Gung-thang Kôn-chog-tan-pay-drön-me (gung thang dkon mchog bstan pa’i sgron me) a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century scholar of Mongolian descent whose works figure prominently in the syllabus at Go-mang College, at Tra-shi-khyil Monastery and Kum-bum Monastery in Am-do Province, and at many related monasteries, offers a particularly thorough explanation of the title of Tsong-kha-pa’s text that cogently explains that emptiness is the essence of Buddha’s teachings; see Jeffrey Hopkins, Absorption in No External World: 170 Issues in Mind-Only Buddhism (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 2005), 10-12.
I. THE REASONS WHY DIFFERENTIATION OF THE INTERPRETABLE AND THE DEFINITIVE IS NEEDED

[Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence*] says:

The *Superior Sūtra of the Questions of Rāṣṭapāla* [contained in the Pile of Jewels Sūtra (see Interpretable and Definitive, 91)] says:

Due to being endowed with compassion,
Through hundreds of skillful means and reasonings
You cause transmigrating beings who wander due to not knowing
The modes of emptiness, quiescence, and no production
To enter [into understanding these three doors of liberation].

Thus, it is said that the Compassionate Teacher—perceiving that the thusness of phenomena is very difficult to realize and that, if it is not realized, one [can] not be released from cyclic existence—brings about the thorough understanding of that [suchness] through many modes of skillful means and many approaches of

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*a* Jam-yang-shay-pa quotes the beginning and end of this passage from Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence*. I have supplied the rest, minus notes, from Jeffrey Hopkins, *Emptiness in the Mind-Only School of Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 69-71. The Tibetan is from *drang nges legs bshad snying po*, TBRC W1KG8902, 2a.3-2b.6.

*b* Cross-references to Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive* and *Great Exposition of Tenets* are indicated in parentheses with “Interpretable and the Definitive” and “Tenets” and page reference; references to other volumes are given in footnotes.
reasoning. Therefore, those having discrimination must work at a
technique for thoroughly understanding how suchness is.

Moreover, this depends upon differentiating those meanings
that require interpretation and those that are definitive within the
scriptures of the Victor. Furthermore, the differentiation of those
two cannot be done merely through scriptures that state, “This is
a meaning to be interpreted; that is a meaning that is definitive.”
For, [Buddha spoke variously in relation to the thoughts of
trainees and] (1) otherwise the composition of commentaries on
[Buddha’s] thought differentiating the interpretable and the
definitive by the great openers of the chariot-ways [Nāgārjuna and
Asanga] would have been senseless; (2) also, scriptures [such as
the Sūtra Unravelling the Thought and the Teachings of
Akṣhayamati Sūtra] set forth many conflicting modes of positing
the interpretable and the definitive; and (3) through scriptural
passages merely saying [about a topic], “This is so,” such cannot
be posited, and if, then, in general it is not necessarily [suitable to
accept whatever is indicated on the literal level in sūtras], mere
statements [in sūtra] of, “This is [interpretable, and that is
definitive],” also cannot establish about specifics, the
interpretable and the definitive, [that such is necessarily so].
Therefore, one must seek [Buddha’s] thought, following the [two] great openers of the chariot-ways [Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga], who were prophesied as differentiating the interpretable and the definitive in [Buddha’s] scriptures and who commented on the thought of the interpretable and the definitive and, moreover, settled it well through reasoning that damages the interpretation of the meaning of definitive scriptures as anything else and establishes that, within their being unfit to be interpreted otherwise, [the final mode of subsistence explained in them] is definite as [just] that meaning. Therefore, in the end, the differentiation [between the interpretable and the definitive] must be made just by stainless reasoning, because if a proponent asserts a tenet contradicting reason, [that person] is not suitable to be a valid being [with respect to that topic] and because the suchness of things also has reasoned proofs which are establishments by way of [logical] correctness.

It is from perceiving the import of this meaning [that differentiation of the interpretable and the definitive cannot be made by scripture alone and that reasoning is required, that Buddha] says [in the Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra]:

Like gold [that is acquired] upon being scorched, cut, and rubbed,

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\(^a\) For other Tibetan versions and a Sanskrit version from Shāntarakṣita’s \textit{tattvasaṃgraha} see \textit{Emptiness in the Mind-Only School}, 366, fn. \textit{a}.
My word is to be adopted by monastics and scholars
Upon analyzing it well,
Not out of respect [for me].

A. DECISIVE ANALYSIS [OF THE FOUR RELIANCES]

This has three parts: refuting [mistakes], presenting [our system], and dispelling [objections to our system].

1. Refuting [mistakes about the meaning of the four reliances]

1. Concerning the meaning of the four reliances mentioned in the high sayings, [the high sayings being] the bases of analysis by those endowed with intelligence, someone says: a Not mainly teaching (mi ston), just as it is, the mode of subsistence to trainees of low faculties but in the definitive scriptures mainly teaching (ston) the mode of subsistence in consideration of trainees of sharp faculties is the significance of “not relying (mi rton) on persons, but relying (rton) on the doctrine.” b

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 spang ba).

b Jam-yang-shay-pa dismisses this statement as an incorrect misreading based on a lexical error treating “rely” (rton) as “teach” (ston).
Our response: Well then, it [absurdly] follows that it is reasonable to take the “relying” (rton) and “not relying” (mi rton) of the “four reliances” (rton pa bzhi) on this occasion as explaining [the mode of subsistence] and not explaining [to a person] because [according to you] it is reasonable that (1) “not relying (mi rton) on a person” is taken as mainly not teaching (mi ston) the mode of subsistence to those [persons] and (2) the meaning of “relying (rton) on doctrine” is taken as teaching (ston) mainly the meaning of the mode of subsistence. You have asserted the reason [which is that it is reasonable that (1) “not relying (mi rton) on a person” is taken as mainly not teaching (mi ston) the mode of subsistence to those [persons] and (2) the meaning of “relying (rton) on doctrine” is taken as teaching (ston) mainly the meaning of the mode of subsistence].

If you accept [that it is reasonable to take the “relying” (rton) and “not relying” (mi rton) of the “four reliances” (rton pa bzhi) on this occasion as explaining (the mode of subsistence) and not explaining (to a person)], it follows that this is not logically feasible:

- because the “rely” and “not rely” here is asserted by scholars to be taken as:
  1. “assert” and “not assert,”
2. “reasonable to follow” and “not reasonable to follow,”
3. “nondeceptive” and “deceptive,”
4. “true” and “untrue,” and

because “rely” and “not rely” here is “rely” (rtön) with a ra superscript, [and not “explain” (ston) with a sa superscript as you incorrectly read it] due to which here such [that is, rely (rtön)] is not explicable in the letters or meaning as “explain” and “not explain.” The meaning here [of rely (rtön)] is “mental reliance” (yid rtön) because [“rely and not rely”] must be posited as “reasonable to place mental trust and not reasonable to place mental trust” (yid gtöd).

2. Someone says: That trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation and that whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor as methods for attaining liberation are true as methods for attaining liberation in accordance with how they were spoken is the significance of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine.”

a “That trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation”—appears to be acceptable to Jam-yang-shay-pa.
Our response: Well then, it [absurdly] follows that it is reasonable to assert whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor in accordance with how they were spoken because [according to you] such an assertion is the meaning of “relying on doctrine.” You have asserted the reason [which is that it is reasonable to assert whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor in accordance with how they were spoken is the meaning of “relying on doctrine”].

It [absurdly] follows that [such an assertion—that it is reasonable to assert whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor in accordance with how they were spoken—is the meaning of “relying on doctrine”] because [according to you scriptural collections being] true as methods for attaining liberation in accordance with how the Victor pronounced them that way is the meaning of “relying on doctrine.”

It [absurdly] follows that [[scriptural collections being) true as methods for attaining liberation in accordance with how the Victor pronounced them that way is the meaning of “relying on doctrine”] because [according to you] your thesis [that trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation and that whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor as methods for attaining liberation are true as methods for attaining liberation in...}
accordance with how they were spoken is the meaning of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine] is logically feasible.

If you accept the root consequence [that it is reasonable to assert in accordance with how they were spoken whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor], it [absurdly] follows that differentiating the interpretable and the definitive among the Victor’s high sayings is meaningless because [according to you] it is reasonable to assert [the high sayings of the Victor] in accordance with the measure set forth in the Victor’s high sayings.

It [absurdly] follows that [it is reasonable to assert the high sayings of the Victor in accordance with the measure set forth in the Victor’s high sayings] because [according to you] it is reasonable to assert [the high sayings of the Victor] in accordance with how they are set forth.

It [absurdly] follows that [it is reasonable to assert (the high sayings of the Victor) in accordance with how they are set forth] because [according to you] your thesis [that trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation and that whatsoever scriptural
collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor as methods for attaining liberation are true as methods for attaining liberation in accordance with how they were spoken, is the meaning of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” is logically feasible.

Furthermore, it follows that [your thesis that trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation and that whatsoever scriptural collections spoken for sentient beings by the Victor as methods for attaining liberation are true as methods for attaining liberation in accordance with how they were spoken is the meaning of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine”] is not correct because even if this is taken in the context of the [Buddha’s] Word, concerning high sayings of interpretable meaning from among the Victor’s pronouncements of a variety of interpretable and definitive high sayings: the unsuitability of asserting the two truthsa in accordance with the explicit reading due to the force of the [particular] context of this and that [trainee] and asserting the final meaning of [Buddha’s] thought, upon its having been sought, is the significance of “not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning.”

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a In this context, “two truths” is a general rubric for all phenomena.
It follows that [even if this is taken in the context of the (Buddha’s) Word, concerning high sayings of interpretable meaning from among the Victor’s pronouncements of a variety of interpretable and definitive high sayings (1) the unsuitability of asserting the two truths in accordance with the explicit reading due to the force of the (particular) context of this and that (trainee) and (2) asserting the final meaning of (Buddha’s) thought, upon its having been sought, is the significance of “not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning”] because in the context of [Buddha’s] Word:

1. not asserting as above [the two truths] in accordance with the literal reading\(^a\) of non-literal high sayings of interpretable meaning and so forth is the significance of “not relying on the words” and
2. asserting the final meaning of [Buddha’s] thought upon its having been sought is the significance of “relying on the meaning” because a significance of such\(^b\) “not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning” exists.

\(\text{sgras zin.}\)

\(\text{“A significance of such ‘not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning’” means “A significance of ‘not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning in the context of [Buddha’s] word’.”}\)
2. Presentation of our own system

There are four reliances because the four:

1. do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine;\(^a\)
2. do not rely on the words, but rely on the meaning;
3. do not rely on interpretable meaning, but rely on definitive meaning;
4. do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom

are set forth,

because Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 84, 101, and 123, and *Tenets*, 156) says: 8

\[ \text{[Do not rely on the words, but rely on the meaning.]} \]

Regarding that, how do Bodhisattvas train in the four reliances? Concerning this, Bodhisattvas listen to doctrines from others because of wanting the meaning but not because of wanting well-crafted words. Since they listen to the doctrine because of wanting the meaning but not because of wanting the words, therefore even if doctrine is taught with common language, Bodhisattvas who rely on the meaning listen to it respectfully.

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\(^a\) The *Teachings of Akshayamati Sūtra* speaks of relying on “doctrine itself” (*chos nyid*) instead of simply “doctrine” (*chos*), as found elsewhere. This usage of *chos nyid* is not to be taken as “reality” (*chos, dhammatā*).
[Do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine.] Moreover, Bodhisattvas thoroughly know unwholesome teachings and also great teachings correctly just as they are. Thorough knowledge also relies on reasonings, but does not rely on persons as in saying, “The elder or knowledgeable person or One-Gone-Thus or monastic has set forth these doctrines.”

[Do not rely on interpretable meaning, but rely on definitive meaning.] Moreover, Bodhisattvas adhere to faith and adhere to joy in the One-Gone-Thus and take manifest joy in solely ascertaining his speech, and they rely on the One-Gone-Thus’s sūtras of definitive meaning, but not on [sūtras of] interpretable meaning, for if one relies on sūtras of definitive
meaning, one will not be lured from this disciplinary doctrine because it is due to not ascertaining that the divisions of sūtras of interpretable meaning are for the sake of entry through various doors that doubt is generated. If Bodhisattvas become without ascertainment concerning sūtras of definitive meaning, they will be lured from this disciplinary doctrine.

[Do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom.] Furthermore, Bodhisattvas view the pristine wisdom of realization as the essence, not just consciousness of doctrines and meanings through hearing and thinking.

[Four validities.] Understanding that what is to be known by the knowledge of meditation cannot be known only by knowing meanings through hearing and thinking, they do not abandon and do not deprecate the supremely profound doctrines spoken by the One-Gone-Thus even when hearing them. In that way, Bodhisattvas train in the four reliances, whereby they are oriented
well. From these four reliances, in brief, four validities themselves are indicated: (1) the meanings of the teachings, (2) reasonings, (3) teachers, and (4) pristine wisdoms of realization arisen from meditation. Through all four reliances, the nonmistakenness that definitely yields entry into initiating Bodhisattvas' correct training is manifestly clarified.

and the *Teachings of Akṣayamati Sūtra* says:9

The four reliances of Bodhisattvas also are an imperishable. What are the four? They are as follows: Rely on the meaning, but do not rely on the letters; rely on pristine wisdom, but do not rely on consciousness; rely on sūtra [passages] of definitive meaning, but do not rely on sūtra [passages] of interpretable meaning; rely on the doctrine itself, but do not rely on persons.

[4b.1] *ཞེས་པ་ཐོག་པ་ ཞེས་པ་*
Do not rely on persons, but rely on doctrine

There is a significance to be understood in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” because—it being the case that within “persons” here there are the two, the ordinary and the supreme through to and including Buddhas, and within “doctrine” there are the two, words and meanings—

not using as a reason merely the claims of those persons or the goodness of a person, but asserting the logically correct upon having investigated the words and meanings set out in accordance with this [person’s assertions is this [significance to be understood in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine”],

because Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive, 80, and Tenets, 156*) says:

Moreover, Bodhisattvas thoroughly know unwholesome teachings and also great teachings correctly just as they are. Thorough knowledge also relies on reasonings, but does not rely on persons as in saying, “The elder or knowledgeable person or One-Gone-Thus or monastic has set forth these doctrines.”
The Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra (see Interpretable and Definitive, 89, and Tenets, 152) says:¹¹

Regarding this, what is the doctrine itself? What is a person? [Whatsoever doctrines composed within abiding in a view of the person are called “person.” This thorough knowledge of the composition of that view of the person is called “doctrine itself.”]¹

Moreover, persons who are ordinary beings, persons who are virtuous common beings, [persons who follow by faith, persons who are followers of doctrine, persons on the eighth (ground, that is, Approachers to Stream-Enterer), persons who are Stream-Enterers, persons who are Once-Returners, persons who are Non-Returners, persons who are Foe Destroyers, persons who are Solitary Realizers, persons who are Bodhisattvas, and one person who when arising in the world benefits many beings, comforts many beings, empathizes with the world, who arises in the world for the sake of masses of gods and humans, for their benefit, for their comfort, the teacher of gods and humans,] the Buddha Supramundane Victor, the unique person are called “persons.” [All of those terms for persons are taught by the Supramundane Victor for the sake of leading sentient beings by way of conventional words; those who adhere to them are said to be “without reliance”; in order for them to enter into reliance,] the Supramundane Victor also said, “Rely on the doctrine itself, but not for the sake of persons.”

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¹ See Interpretable and Definitive, 89.
Hence, there is a significance of “not relying on persons in terms of ordinary persons, but relying on doctrine” because that trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue, not asserted, and deceptive as methods for attaining liberation, and that whatsoever scriptural collections spoken by the Victor are true, asserted, and nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation are the significances respectively of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine,”
because (1) since trainees in terms of their various modes of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation, they are also not asserted as methods for attaining liberation, and also are not nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation, whereby it is said, “do not rely on persons” and

(2) since the Victor in the end spoke all statements in whatsoever scriptural collections only for the sake of setting [trainees] in the definite goodness of liberation, those [statements in whatsoever scriptural collections] are true as methods for attaining liberation, are nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation, and are asserted as methods for attaining liberation—whereby it is said, “rely on doctrine.”

The first [part of the reason which is that since trainees in terms of their various modes of thought are untrue as methods for attaining liberation, they are also not asserted as methods for attaining liberation, and also are not nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation, whereby it is said, “do not rely on persons”] follows because not relying on persons
[means] it is not suitable mentally to rely on, that is to say, mentally to
trust trainees in terms of the various modes of thought of those persons as
methods for attaining liberation.

It follows that [not relying on persons (means) it is not suitable mentally
to rely on, that is to say, mentally to trust trainees in terms of the various
modes of thought of those persons as methods for attaining liberation]:

• because—if it were not like that [that is, if it were suitable mentally to
rely on, that is to say, mentally to trust trainees in terms of the various
modes of thought of those persons as methods for attaining
liberation]—it would [absurdly] follow that it would not be necessary
for even any being to train in the path, and

• because it would [absurdly] follow that there would be unmistakable
valid cognitions with respect to the contradictory, and

• because there also is a mode of not relying on persons but relying on
document relative to such persons who view self and [relative] to
thoroughly knowing the basis in [Buddha’s] thought behind
explanations in accordance with their thought.
The second root reason [which is that since the Victor in the end spoke all statements in whatsoever sūtra collections only for the sake of setting (trainees) in the definite goodness of liberation, those (statements in whatsoever sūtra collections) are true as methods for attaining liberation, are nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation, and are asserted as methods for attaining liberation—whereby it is said, “rely on doctrine”] follows because all pronouncements of whatsoever scriptural collections of excellent doctrine taught by the Victor, although they teach a variety of topics, in the end only teach methods for setting [trainees] in definite goodness, they are also called “treatises intent on achievement,”b and therefore one should mentally rely on excellent doctrines that are the Teacher’s sacred speech, that is to say, it is suitable to mentally trust these [excellent doctrines that are the Teacher’s sacred speech] as methods for attaining liberation.

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a chos nyid; in other contexts this term refers to the final nature of phenomena, but here it merely means doctrine (chos).

b That is, they are intent on achieving religious practice.
It follows that [since all pronouncements of whatsoever scriptural
collections of excellent doctrine by the Victor, although they teach a
variety of topics, in the end only teach methods for setting (trainees) in
definite goodness, they are also called “treatises intent on achievement,”
and therefore one should mentally rely on excellent doctrines that are the
Teacher’s sacred speech, that is to say, it is suitable to mentally trust these
(excellent doctrines that are the Teacher’s sacred speech) as methods for
attaining liberation] because Tsong-kha-pa’s The Lesser Essence of
Eloquence [that is, Praise of the Supramundane Victor Buddha from the
Approach of His Teaching the Profound Dependent-Arising] says:\[a\]

All statements whatsoever by you
Operate based on just dependent-arising.
Since they also are for the sake of nirvāṇa,
You have nothing that is not done to bring about pacification.

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\[sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das la zab mo rtten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba gsung ba'i sgo nas
bstod pa legs par bshad pa'i snying po. For English translations see: Geshe Wangyal, in
The Door of Liberation (New York: Lotsawa, 1978), 117-25; and Robert Thurman, in Life
and Teachings of Tsong Khapa (Dharmsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives,
1982), 99-107.\]
and Vasubandhu’s *Principles of Explanation* says:  

Meaningless, wrong meaning, and meaningful;  
Deceitful, bereft of empathy, and abandoning suffering;  
Intent on hearing, on debate, and on achievement;  
Treatises are asserted as lacking six and endowed with three.

and the *Superior Sūtra of the Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla* [contained in the *Pile of Jewels Sūtra*] (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 70) says:  

Due to being endowed with compassion,  
Through hundreds of skillful means and reasonings

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*a rnam par bshad pa’i rigs pa, vyākyhayuki*: Peking 5562, vol. 113, where this passage is not found. Jam-yang-shay-pa cites the first three lines of same passage earlier in the Great Exposition of Tenets (TBRC bla brang, 18b.4) but from Asanga’s *Compendium of Ascertainments* (*rnam par gian la dbah pa bsdu ba, nirṇayasaṃgṛaha/viniścayaśaṃgṛaha*; Peking 5539, sde dge 4038) and makes reference to similar descriptions here and there in the *Principles of Explanation*. However, the passage also is not found in Asanga’s *Compendium of Ascertainments*.  

To summarize Ngag-wang-pal-dan explanation in another context (*Annotations* vol. 1, *mchan stod*, 18a.1, *nga*), the first two items in each of the first three lines are the six that treatises lack, namely, no meaning, wrong meaning, being deceitful, being bereft of empathy, being intent on hearing, and being intent on debate; the third item in each of the first three lines are the three that treatises possess, namely, meaningfulness, abandoning suffering, and being intent on achievement. He gives examples of the six that treatises lack; the meaningless is the examination of the teeth of a crow; that with wrong meaning is *se’u bcu pa’i ngag*, a type of disguised multivalent speech of rishis; the deceitful are the secret words of brahmans; the bereft of empathy are offerings of animal sacrifice; the intent on hearing are the secret words of brahmans; and the intent on debate are Outsiders’ texts on logic. Ngag-wang-pal-dan explains that “Intent on hearing, on debate, and on achievement” indicate purpose (*dgos pa*); “Meaningless, wrong meaning, and meaningful” indicate the content (*brjod bya*), and “Deceitful, bereft of empathy, and abandoning suffering” indicate motivation, each of them differentiating Outer (Nonbuddhist) and Inner (Buddhist) texts.
You cause transmigrating beings who wander due to not knowing
The modes of emptiness, quiescence, and no production to enter
[into understanding the three doors of liberation].

Therefore, among the persons referred to in “not relying on persons” there are a variety of Outer [non-Buddhist] and Inner [Buddhist] persons, and the significance of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” is as above,

\[\text{a The reference may be to the earlier statement (84):}\]

There is a significance of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” because—it being the case that within “persons” here there are the two, the ordinary and the supreme through to and including Buddhas, and within “doctrine” there are the two, words and meanings—**not using as a reason merely the claims of those persons or the goodness of a person, but asserting the logically correct upon having investigated the words and meanings set out in accordance with this [person’s] assertions** is this [significance to be understood in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine”],

\[\text{or to (86):}\]

Hence, there is a significance of “not relying on persons in terms of ordinary persons, but relying on doctrine” because **that trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are untrue, not asserted, and deceptive as methods for attaining liberation, and that whatsoever scriptural collections spoken by the Conqueror are true, asserted, and nondeceptive as methods for attaining liberation** are the significances respectively of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine,”
because (1) to overcome the modes of conception propounding the self by the Forder Proponents of Self and thereupon to enter the three doors of liberation is the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching a permanent stable [matrix of a One-Gone-Thus] and (2) that the Diverged Afar [that is, Nihilists] who assert that there are no past and future lives may later enter into [an understanding of] actions and their effects and selflessness through the teaching that “there exists a self substantially existent in the sense of being self-sufficient” is the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching the existence of a self of persons.
The first [part of the reason which is that to overcome the modes of conception propounding the self by the Forder proponents of self and thereupon to enter the three doors of liberation is the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching a permanent stable (matrix of a One-Gone-Thus)] follows because (1) non-truth in accordance with the conceptions of an existent self by Forder Proponents of self but (2) assertion and nondeceptiveness of the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching a permanent stable [matrix of a One-Gone-Thus]—the three doors of liberation (emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness)—as the mode of subsistence is the significance in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” relative to Forder proponents of self and to sūtras teaching a permanent stable [matrix of a One-Gone-Thus], because there is a significance [in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine”] relative to those two [that is, to Forder proponents of self and to sūtras teaching a permanent stable (matrix of a One-Gone-Thus)],

because the Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra says:15

Mahāmati, for the sake of leading Forders who are attached to propounding a self, the Ones-Gone-Thus teach the matrix of a One-Gone-Thus through revealing the matrix of a One-Gone-
Thus, [thinking,] “How [fine] it would be if those having thoughts that have fallen into the view of conceptualizing a real self [that is, the Forders] come to possess thoughts dwelling in the objects of activity of the three [doors of] liberation and quickly become fully purified in unsurpassed thoroughly complete enlightenment!”

The second [part of the reason which is that the Diverged Afar (that is, Nihilists) who assert that there are no past and future lives may later enter into (an understanding of) actions and their effects and selflessness through the teaching that “there exists a self substantially existent in the sense of being self-sufficient” is the meaning of the thought behind sūtras teaching the existence of a self of persons] follows because if [Buddha] had not taught a substantially existent self to the Diverged Afar who assert that past and future lives do not exist, they would not know how to posit a being who is the substratum experiencing the fruition of the effects of actions, due to which [Buddha] taught a substantially existent self.
It follows that [if (Buddha) had not taught a substantially existent self to the Diverged Afar who assert that past and future lives do not exist, they would not know how to posit a being who is the substratum experiencing the fruition of the effects of actions, due to which (Buddha) taught a substantially existent self] because for those who assert self, from between the two, self of persons and self of phenomena, the teaching of a self of persons is supreme, because Tsong-kha-pa’s *Illumination of the Thought* says:

It is taught that even persons substantially exist because beings tamed by this [teaching of a substantially existent self] are cared for by being taught that this exists. For, instance, it is said: “Monastics, the five aggregates are the burden; the carrier of the burden is the person.” In the face of inquiry by those holding that persons substantially exist in the sense of being self-sufficient, [Buddha] did not teach that such does not exist but stated that “the person that is the carrier of the burden exists,” and even though in the words of this statement “substantial existence” is not explicitly present, the meaning is that [persons] substantially exist.

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a See Hopkins, *Maps of the Profound* (221):

Monastics, I will teach you about the burden. I will also teach you about the taker of the burden, the leaver of the burden, and the carrier of the burden. Regarding this, the burden is the five appropriated aggregates. The taker of the burden is attachment. The leaver of the burden is liberation. The carrier of the burden is the person...
There is a significance in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” relative to supreme persons because—rather than taking as a reason [for reliance] merely an explanation by a special person, a Buddha or a Hearer and so forth and holding whatever they set forth to be of definitive meaning—mental reliance on pure reasoning is that [significance],

because it is explained this way in Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas\(^a\) and it is explained this way also in the Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra:\(^b\)

\(^a\) See above, 81, the statement:

Thorough knowledge also relies on reasonings, but does not rely on persons as in saying, “The elder or knowledgeable person or One-Gone-Thus or monastic has set forth these doctrines.”

\(^b\) Jam-yang-shay-pa’s citation of the Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra merely says, “‘monastics and’ and so forth” (dge slong dag gam). I have supplied the full quote using Jeffrey Hopkins’ translation from Emptiness in the Mind-Only School, 71. For other Tibetan versions and a Sanskrit version from Shāntarakṣitā’s tattvasamgraha see
Like gold [that is acquired] upon being scorched, cut, and rubbed,
My word is to be adopted by monastics and scholars
Upon analyzing it well,
Not out of respect [for me].

and also in the Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra,

and also because in one mode of explanation in the Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra it is explained as well that not adhering to true [existence] in dependence on the conventions of persons, but mental reliance on the lack of true existence is the meaning of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine.”

Emptiness in the Mind-Only School, 366, fn. a. This quote is not found in the Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra; it is likely a spurious attribution.

The reference is likely to:

Śūtras teaching in conformity with the thoughts of sentient beings have meaning that is mistaken; they are not discourse on suchness. Just as a deer is deceived by a waterless mirage into apprehending water, so doctrine which is taught [in conformity with the thoughts of sentient beings] also pleases children but is not discourse setting out the wisdom of Superiors. Therefore, you should follow the meaning and not be enamored of the expression.

Peking 775, vol. 29, 39.5.2, chapter 2. See Jñānashrībhadra’s commentary, Peking 5519, vol. 107, 112.3.7. For Suzuki’s translation see Daisetz T. Suzuki, The Lankavatara Sūtra (London: Routledge, 1932), 68. This passage is cited later in Tsong-kha-pa’s The Essence of Eloquence in the section on the Consequence School in a subsection titled “How the Consequentialists dispel [the notion that] their uncommon mode of commenting on the thought of the Superior Nāgārjuna contradicts sūtra” and within this “Dispelling contradiction with the Sūtra Unraveling The Thought.” It is also cited in Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of Tenets in the chapter on the Consequence School; see Hopkins, Maps of the Profound, 815.

b See above, 85:

All of those terms for persons are taught by the Supramundane Victor for the sake of leading sentient beings by way of conventional words; those who adhere to them are said to be “without reliance”; in order for them to enter into reliance[,] the Supramundane Victor also said, “Rely on the doctrine itself, but not for the sake of persons.”
a. Do not rely on the words, but rely on the meaning

There is a significance to be understood in “not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning” because—it being the case that within “words” here there are:

- the two, treatises and Word [of Buddha], and
- the two, the literal and the non-literal

and within “meanings” there are the two, interpretable meanings and definitive meaning—there being no definiteness of non-deception with respect to the mode of subsistence and so forth in accordance with the explicit reading of those high sayings—but making assertions in accordance with this and that object expressed\(^{a}\) that is the meaning of the thought having pure proofs is the significance of “not relying on words, but relying on meaning.”

\(^{a}\) Even though this is the meaning behind what is literally expressed in the run of the words, it is nevertheless an “object expressed” with the qualification that it is the meaning behind what is literally expressed.
because the *Kālachakra Root Tantra* says:

> For ultimate reality always the great ones
> Do not rely on words in local areas.
> If the meaning is known with local names,
> What use are the terms of treatises?

and Mañjughoṣha Narendraṅkīrti’s *Brief Explication of the Assertions of Our Own View* says:19

> The term *kāṇā* of *Kāṅṭa* [or *Kāṅṭaka*] expresses “stone” and “leg.” For some, it expresses “deaf.”a Tantras teach similarly.

and Khay-drub’s *Great Commentary Illuminating the Principles* says:22

> Through the force of different linguistic usages in diverse localities, there are usages of different names even for each meaning and various different meanings even for each name. Hence, given that the people of individual areas who use language for meaning are able to understand the meaning, what use are the delineations of Sanskrit terms renowned in treatises? That is to say, there is no purpose.

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a That is, an alternate meaning of *kāṇā* in the parlance of one locality is “deaf.”
and Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 80 and 123, and *Tenets*, 156) says: 23

Since they listen to the doctrine because of wanting the meaning but not because of wanting the words, therefore even if doctrine is taught with common language, Bodhisattvas who rely on the meaning listen to it respectfully.

and the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* (see *Tenets*, 154; also Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotations*, 155) says: 29

Concerning that, what are meanings? What are letters? [“Letters” teach the collections of Bodhisattva qualities ranging from initial mind-generation through to the essence of enlightenments. “Meaning” is an all-knowing pristine wisdom manifestly completely purified by wisdom endowed in a single moment of mind.] In brief, these teachings of whatsoever 84,000 piles of doctrine are called “letters.” That meaning which is the un languaged, unlettered, nonilluminable, and inexpressible of all sentient beings is called “meaning.” This is “rely on meaning, but do not rely on letters.”
Therefore, the earlier explanation is so because—it being the case that even with respect to the doctrine spoken by the Teacher, there are the two: (1) words that are the means of expression (rjod byed kyi tshig) and (2) the meanings expressed (brjod bya'i don)—that the literal reading of the high sayings that are means of expression lack, [when taken] literally, the certainty of non-deception about the mode of subsistence of things is the significance of “not relying on words,” and the establishment in fact of the objects expressed that are the meanings of [their] thought is the significance of “relying on meaning.”

It follows that [—it being the case that also with respect to the doctrine spoken by the Teacher, there are the two, (1) words that are the means of
expression (rjod byed kyi tshig) and (2) the meanings expressed (brjod bya’i don)—that the literal reading of the high sayings that are means of expression lack, [when taken] literally, the certainty of non-deception about the mode of subsistence of things is the significance of “not relying on words,” and the establishment in fact of the objects expressed that are the meanings of [Buddha’s] thought is the significance of “relying on meaning” because it is necessary to understand the objects expressed that are the meanings of [Buddha’s] thought through demonstrating the damage by valid cognition to the literality of the literal reading of sūtras whose literal reading is not literal because the Sūtra says, “One should follow the meaning but not be attached to the expression.”

b. Do not rely on interpretable meaning, but rely on definitive meaning

There is a significance in “not relying on interpretable meaning, but relying on definitive meaning” because—it being the case that within interpretable meaning and definitive meaning here, there are (1) the two, the interpretable and the definitive on the level of [the passages that are] the means of expression and (2) the two, the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are expresseda—that

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a See Hopkins, Emptiness in the Mind-Only School, 70 note a, for a discussion of the two levels of differentiating the interpretable and the definitive.
conventionalities are untrue as the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher’s sūtras but emptiness is asserted as the mode of subsistence in accordance with explanations in the Teacher’s sūtras is the significance of the interpretable and the definitive on the level of [the words that are] the means of expression and that conventionalities are untrue as the mode of subsistence in accordance with various appearances but that emptiness of truth in accordance with those appearances is asserted as the mode of subsistence is the significance of the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed

because the Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra⁴ says:³²

Which are sūtras of definitive meaning? Which are sūtras of interpretable meaning? [Whichever sūtras teach for the sake of entering the path are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach for the sake of entering into the fruit are called “definitive meaning.”]

⁴ See Hopkins, Emptiness in the Middle Way School, General Exposition, unpublished digital version, 19, and Napper, Dependent-Arising and Emptiness, 257.
Whichever sūtras teach establishing conventionalities are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach establishing ultimates are called “definitive meaning.”

[Whichever sūtras teach engaging in actions and agents are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach engaging in actions and exhausting afflictions are called “definitive meaning.”]

Whichever sūtras teach for the sake of setting out the thoroughly afflicted are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach for the sake of purifying the thoroughly pure are called “definitive meaning.”

Whichever sūtras teach mental projections in cyclic existence are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach entry into the nonduality of cyclic existence and nirvana are called “definitive meaning.”

Whichever sūtras teach (various objects by way of) various words and letters are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach the profound (emptiness)—difficult to view and difficult to realize—are called “definitive meaning.”
Whichever sūtras teach (various objects by way of) many words and letters and in order to please the minds of sentient beings are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach (the profound emptiness) with few words and letters and cause the minds of sentient beings to become definite mind are called “definitive meaning.”

Whichever sūtras teach what are set out with various vocabulary—(such as) self, sentient being, living being, the nourished, creature, person, mind-progeny, pride-child, agent, and feeler—like (teaching) an owner when there is no owner are called “interpretable meaning.” Whichever sūtras teach the doors of liberation—things’ emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, no composition, no production, no produced, no sentient being, no living being, no person, and no owner—are called “definitive meaning.”

This is called “reliance on sūtras of definitive meaning and non-reliance on sūtras of interpretable meaning.”

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As Jig-may-dam-chö-gya-tsho (Port of Entry, vol. 2, 6.6) says about these eight:

The interpretable and the definitive are posited by way of:

1. teaching for the sake of entering into the path and teaching for the sake of entering into the fruit
2. teaching so as to establish conventionalities and teaching so as to establish the ultimate
3. teaching for the sake of entering into actions and objects and teaching for the sake of entering into extinguishing actions and afflictive emotions
4. teaching for the sake of describing thorough afflictions and teaching for the sake of describing thoroughly purifying complete purification
5. teaching renunciation from cyclic existence and teaching entry into the nonduality of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa
6. teaching in the manner of various words and letters and teaching the profound
7. teaching with many words and letters pleasing sentient beings and teaching brief quintessential instructions for meditative stabilization with few words and letters
8. teaching according to the existence of self and teaching the emptiness of things and so forth.
and this very text [that is, Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence*] also says:34

When the interpretable and the definitive are posited in terms of the meaning of these [sūtras] needing or not needing to be interpreted otherwise, the high sayings themselves are held as illustrations of the interpretable and the definitive. However, when meanings [that is to say, objects] that need or do not need to be interpreted otherwise are posited as the interpretable and the definitive, conventionalities and ultimates are treated as the interpretable and the definitive.

Tsong-kha-pa, citing only the second, sixth, and eighth of these eight pairs, explains that the first pair treats the two truths (conventional and ultimate) as interpretable meanings and definitive meanings. The sixth pair explains that “the teaching of conventionalities is a teaching of various meanings through various different words” and “the teaching of the ultimate is a teaching of the single taste that is an elimination of proliferations,” that is to say, emptiness.
and Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 81, and *Tenets*, 157) says:35

They rely on the One-Gone-Thus’s sūtras of definitive meaning, but not on [sūtras of] interpretable meaning, for if one relies on sūtras of definitive meaning, one will not be lured from this disciplinary doctrine because it is due to not ascertaining that the divisions of sūtras of interpretable meaning are for the sake of entry through various doors that doubt is generated.

The significance of the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed exists because—within the two, the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed—not asserting these interpretable meanings—appearances as various conventionalities—as the final mode of subsistence is the significance of “not relying on interpretable meaning,” and asserting the emptiness of true establishment in accordance with such appearances as the final mode of subsistence is the significance of “relying on definitive meaning.”
It follows [that—within the two, the interpretable and the definitive on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed—**not asserting these interpretable meanings, appearances as various conventionalities, as the final mode of subsistence** is the significance of “not relying on interpretable meaning,” and **asserting the emptiness of true establishment in accordance with such appearances as the final mode of subsistence** is the significance of “relying on definitive meaning”] because not only that, it is also reasonable to posit those two respectively as meaning “do not rely on the conventional, but rely on the ultimate.” It follows that [not only that, it is also reasonable to posit those two respectively as meaning “do not rely on the conventional, but rely on the ultimate”] because conventional subjects that exist variously are without the divisions of color, shape, and so forth in this way in the mode of subsistence but are the same taste as the non-affirming negative that is the mere elimination of the self that is the object of negation.
because Khay-drub’s *Compilation on Emptiness* (for a longer citation see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 115) says:\[36\]

[Not asserting these appearances] of the varieties of conventionalities [as the mode of subsistence but asserting the ultimate—the emptiness of true establishment in the manner of such appearance—as the mode of subsistence] is the significance of [“not relying on interpretable meaning but relying on [definitive meaning” and “not relying on conventionalities but] relying on ultimates[.]”

and Maitreya’s *Treatise on the Sublime Continuum* says:\[37\]

The teaching of the mode of the subtle profundity [of emptiness] Is like the single [sweet and delicious] taste of honeys. The teaching of the mode of the various aspects of [method] Is to be known as like [the various] kernels [of grains dwelling] in the covering of various [husks].

c. Do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom

There is a significance in “not relying on consciousness, but relying on pristine wisdom” because—it being the case that with regard to consciousness here there are two, awarenesses that do and do not realize emptiness, and although pristine wisdom is mainly pristine wisdom directly realizing emptiness, wisdom awarenesses arisen from meditation on emptiness are also posited as pristine wisdom—\textbf{not asserting the}
mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of [emptiness to] those consciousnesses [realizing emptiness and] also not asserting the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of apprehension of those that have not realized emptiness is the significance of “not relying on consciousness” and asserting the mode of subsistence in accordance with perception by those pristine wisdoms and mainly by pristine wisdom directly realizing emptiness is the significance of “relying on pristine wisdom,”

because Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive, 82*) says:

Furthermore, Bodhisattvas view the pristine wisdom of realization as the essence, not just consciousness of doctrines and meanings through hearing and thinking.

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a Here Jam-yang-shay-pa breaks the previous pattern of giving a single significance for the aphorism and, instead of that, gives a significance for each of the two parts, and then below does the same with different significances.
and Khay-drub’s *Great Commentary Illuminating the Principles* says:

In general, on the occasion of the fourth reliance the consciousness in the likes of “do not rely on consciousness, but rely on pristine wisdom,” is wisdoms of hearing and thinking analyzing suchness and is in terms of a common being, but pristine wisdom is a wisdom arisen from analytical meditation on suchness and moreover is mainly a Superior’s pristine wisdom of direct realization.

and the *Teachings of Akshayamati Sūtra* says:

What is consciousness? What is pristine wisdom? “Consciousness” is the four stations of consciousness. [What are the four? Regarding consciousness, whatever approaches and abides in forms, approaches and abides in feelings, approaches and abides in consciousness, approaches and abides in compositional factors is called “consciousness.” Regarding that, what is pristine wisdom? Thorough knowledge of the aggregate of consciousness abiding in whichever of the four aggregates is called “pristine wisdom.” Moreover, regarding consciousness, consciousness of the earth constituent, consciousness of the water constituent, consciousness of the fire constituent, consciousness of the wind constituent is called “consciousness.” Regarding consciousnesses abiding in any of these four constituents, knowledge of the noumenon as undifferentiable is pristine wisdom.]
Moreover, consciousness is cognition of forms which are known by the eye, cognition of sounds which are known by the ear, cognition of odors which are known by the nose, cognition of tastes which are known by the tongue, cognition of objects of touch which are known by the body, and cognition of phenomena which are known by the mind. These are called “consciousness.” This which is pacified internally and does not move to the external and through relying on pristine wisdom does not conceive and conceptualize any phenomenon is called “pristine wisdom.”
It is moreover so because—it being the case that within “definitive meaning” in one part of the explanation of “not relying on interpretable meaning, but relying on definitive meaning” there are the two, consciousness and pristine wisdom—not asserting as the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of a worldly consciousness that realizes emptiness by way of a meaning-generality is the significance of “not relying on consciousness,” and asserting as the final mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of perception by a Superior’s non-conceptual pristine wisdom is the significance of “relying on pristine wisdom.”

It follows [that—it being the case that within “definitive meaning” in one part of the explanation of “not relying on interpretable meaning, but relying on definitive meaning” there are the two, consciousness and pristine wisdom—not asserting as the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of a worldly consciousness that realizes emptiness by way of a meaning-generality is the significance of “not relying on consciousness,” and asserting as the final mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of perception by a Superior’s non-conceptual pristine wisdom is the significance of “relying on pristine wisdom”) because although the proliferations of dualistic appearance are eliminated in the perspective of the ascertainment factor of a worldly inferential consciousness realizing emptiness, they are not eliminated in the perspective of the appearance factor, whereby [emptiness] is not asserted as the mode of subsistence in accordance with the mode of appearance of that [worldly inferential consciousness
realizing emptiness], and all proliferations of dualistic appearance are eliminated not only in the perspective of the ascertainment factor of a Superior's pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise directly realizing the final mode of subsistence, but also in the perspective of the appearance factor,

because Khay-drub’s *Compilation on Emptiness* says:

In our system, even the presentation of the four reliances has fundamental importance as follows. We propound that:

- **not asserting these appearances of the varieties of conventionalities as the mode of subsistence but asserting the ultimate—the emptiness of true establishment in the manner of such appearance—as the mode of subsistence** is the significance of “not relying on interpretable meaning but relying on definitive meaning” and “not relying on conventionalities but relying on ultimates;”

- **asserting that this mode of appearance to the consciousneses of common beings is not the mode of subsistence but that very mode of perception by a Superior’s non-conceptual pristine wisdom is the mode of**
**subsistence** is the significance of “not relying on consciousness but relying on pristine wisdom.”

3. **Dispelling objections [to the presentation of our own system]**

3. **Someone says:** It follows that it is reasonable to posit “doctrine” in “rely on doctrine” as verbal doctrine because the significance to be understood in the first reliance is logically feasible.

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The reference may be to the earlier statement (see above, 86) where the “scriptural collections spoken by the Victor” is identified as the doctrine in the first reliance and thus is limited to verbal doctrine:

That trainees in terms of their own mode of thought are **untrue, not asserted, and deceptive** as methods of attaining liberation, and that whatsoever scriptural collections spoken by the Victor are **true, asserted, and nondeceptive** as methods of attaining liberation are the significances respectively of “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine.”

However, as Jam-yang-shay-pa indicates, this is the doctrine in the first reliance in the context of “not relying on persons in terms of ordinary persons, but relying on doctrine,”
Our response: [That the significance to be understood in the first reliance is logically feasible] does not entail [that it is reasonable to posit doctrine in “rely on doctrine” as verbal doctrine].

You cannot accept [that it is reasonable to posit “doctrine” in “rely on doctrine” as verbal doctrine] because upon having taken that [doctrine in “rely on doctrine”] as doctrines spoken by the Teacher, among them there are two: (1) the means of expression, verbal doctrines, and (2) the meanings expressed.

It follows that [upon having taken doctrine in “rely on doctrine” as doctrines spoken by the Teacher, among them there are two: (1) the means of expression, verbal doctrines, and (2) the meanings expressed] because—it being the case that there are such [that is, that there are two: (1) the means of expression, verbal doctrines, and (2) the meanings expressed]—not asserting in accordance with the literal reading of the verbal doctrine but understanding the object expressed that is the meaning of [Buddha’s] thought is the significance of the second reliance [not relying on words, but relying on meaning].

whereas just before this description he speaks about the general significance to be understood in “not relying on persons, but relying on doctrine” in which he specifies that “within ‘doctrine’ there are the two, words and meanings,” and thus in the general context “doctrine” cannot be limited to verbal doctrine since it also includes meanings, that is, the objects expressed by those words.
It follows [that—it being the case that there are such (that is, that there are two: (1) the means of expression, verbal doctrines, and (2) the meanings expressed among the doctrines spoken by the Teacher in “rely on doctrine”)—not asserting in accordance with the literal reading of the verbal doctrine but understanding the object expressed that is the meaning of (Buddha’s) thought is the significance of the second reliance (not relying on words, but relying on meaning)] because—it being the case that even with respect to the object expressed that is the meaning of [Buddha’s] thought there are two meanings, interpretable conventionalites and the definitive meaning of the mode of subsistence—not asserting appearances of various conventionalities in this way as the mode of subsistence but asserting the nonaffirming negative that is the mere elimination of the self that is the object of negation of all the various substrata as the final mode of subsistence is the significance of the third reliance [not relying on interpretable meaning but relying on definitive meaning].
It follows that [—it being the case that even with respect to the object expressed that is the meaning of (Buddha’s) thought there are two meanings interpretable conventionalites and the definitive meaning of the mode of subsistence—*not asserting appearances of various conventionalities in this way as the mode of subsistence but asserting the nonaffirming negative that is the mere elimination of the self that is the object of negation of all the various substrata as the final mode of subsistence*] because positing as the final definitive meaning moreover must be a positing by a single awareness and:

- not only not asserting as the mode of subsistence in accordance with its appearance to a consciousness of a common being who has not realized emptiness
- but also not asserting as the final mode of subsistence in accordance with its appearance to an inferential rational consciousness realizing emptiness
- but asserting as the final mode of subsistence in accordance with appearance to a Superior’s pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness,

is the significance of the fourth reliance [“not relying on consciousness, but relying on pristine wisdom”],
because Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence* says:\(^{a}\)

Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds*,\(^{b}\) for instance, says that:

- with respect to the doctrine in “rely on the doctrine but do not rely on the person” there are two, words and meanings
- with respect to meanings there are two, the interpretable and the definitive
- and with respect to definitive meanings one should not rely on consciousness but should rely on pristine wisdom.

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\(^{a}\) Hopkins, *Emptiness in the Middle School General Exposition*, unpublished digital manuscript, 25

\(^{b}\) sa’i dngos gzhi, bhūmivastu; sde dge 4035, sems tsam, tshi, 130b.1; Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds* is also known as *Grounds of Yogic Practice* (yogācārabhūmi). Tsong-kha-pa gives a paraphrase, not a quotation. Jig-may-dam-chö-gya-tsho (*Port of Entry*, vol. 2, 15.2-15.5) cites this lengthy passage from the Ground of Equipoise (*mnyam par bzhag pa*’i *sa*) in Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds* that is Tsong-kha-pa’s source:

Rely only on doctrine, not on persons because explanations by country-folk are not to be adhered to. The doctrine also is twofold, words and meanings. Concerning those, rely on the meaning, not on the words: do not be devoted to hearing; rather, think about the meaning, comprehend it, analyze it. About this, in sūtras the Supramundane Victor set forth definitive meanings and also set forth interpretable meanings, but one who considers the meaning should rely on sūtras of definitive meaning and not on interpretable meaning. About this, the Supramundane Victor set forth meritorious consciousness and immovable consciousness for the sake of proceeding to happy transmigrations, and set forth consciousness of the four noble truths for the sake of passing beyond sorrow, concerning which one who practices doctrine concordant with the doctrine should rely on pristine wisdom and not on consciousness.
and Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 83) says:45

From these four reliances, in brief, four validities themselves are indicated: (1) the meanings of the teachings, (2) reasonings, (3) teachers, and (4) pristine wisdoms of realization arisen from meditation.

4. Someone says:47 It follows that “words” in the phrase “do not rely on the words” are not posited as the words of the Teacher because “meaning” in the phrase “rely on the meaning” is not the mode of subsistence, emptiness.

The reason [which is that “meaning” in the phrase “rely on meaning” is not the mode of subsistence, emptiness] is established because among those [meanings in the phrase “rely on meaning”] there are those as numerous as the phenomena of the two truths [that is, all phenomena] because a meaning of the second reliance [not relying on words, but relying on meaning] exists because this very text [Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence*] says [when paraphrasing Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds*, as cited above in debate 3]:

- with respect to the doctrine [in “rely on the doctrine but do not rely on the person”] there are two, words and meanings
- with respect to meanings there are two, the interpretable and the definitive.
You cannot accept [that “words” in the phrase “do not rely on the words” are not posited as the Words of the Teacher] because whatever is [“word” in “do not rely on the words”] is necessarily the Word [of Buddha]. It follows that [whatever is “word” in “do not rely on the words” is necessarily the Word of Buddha] because whatever is [“word” in “do not rely on the words”] must be a Word [of Buddha] that, within nonassertion of it in accordance with the literal reading, requires understanding the object of expression that is the meaning of [Buddha’s] thought because a meaning of “do not rely on the words” exists.

Our response: [That a meaning of “do not rely on words” exists] does not entail [that whatever is “word” in “do not rely on the words” must be a Word (of Buddha) that, within nonassertion of it in accordance with the literal reading, requires understanding the object of expression that is the meaning of [Buddha’s] thought]:

1. because although it is like that when done in terms of the interpretable meanings of the Word of the Teacher, in general among “words” in
“do not rely on words, but rely on meaning” there are also the words of other beings

2. and because if the meaning is profound, it is respected even though it is explained with ordinary words, due to which Asanga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* calls this even a “not relying on words, but relying on meaning”

3. and because since even though words are literal, they are not logically feasible as the mode of subsistence as such, asserting the mode of subsistence that is the meaning of their thought upon having sought it is described in the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* even with the convention of not relying on words or letters but relying on meaning,

because to cite these in order:

- Asanga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 80 and 101 and *Tenets*, 156) says: 48
Concerning this, Bodhisattvas listen to doctrines from others because of wanting the meaning but not because of wanting well-crafted words. Since they listen to the doctrine because of wanting the meaning, but not because of wanting the words, therefore even if doctrine is taught with common language, Bodhisattvas who rely on the meaning listen to it respectfully.

• and the Teachings of Akshayamati Sūtra says:49

“Letters” teach the collections of Bodhisattva qualities ranging from initial mind-generation through to the essence of enlightenments. “Meaning” is an all-knowing pristine wisdom manifestly completely purified by wisdom endowed with a single moment of mind. In brief, these teachings of whatsoever 84,000 piles of doctrine are called “letters.” That meaning which is the unlanguaged, unlettered, nonilluminable, and inexpressible of all sentient beings is called “meaning.” This is “rely on meaning, but do not rely on letters.”

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*a Generating the altruistic intention to become enlightened.*
[that these say such] entails [the three points] because:

1. that Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* says: ⁵⁰

   They listen to the doctrine because of wanting the meaning, but not because of wanting the words. Therefore, even if doctrine is taught with common language,

   and so forth, and that the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* says:

   ranging from initial mind-generation (see *Tenets*, 146)

   and so forth explain that words of common beings exist among “words” in “do not rely on words.”

2. that Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* says: ⁵¹

   They listen to the doctrine because of wanting the meaning, but not because of wanting the words. Therefore, even if doctrine is taught with common language, Bodhisattvas who rely on the meaning listen to it respectfully.

   describes a “not relying on words, but relying on meanings” in which if the meaning is profound, it is respected even though it is taught in common language;

3. that the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* says: ⁵²
In brief, these teachings of whatsoever 84,000 piles of doctrine are called “letters.” That meaning which is the un languaged, unlettered, nonilluminable, and inexpres sible of all sentient beings is called “meaning.” This is “rely on meaning, but do not rely on letters.”

describes those piles of doctrine as the “words and letters” which are part of the phrase “do not rely on words or letters,” and thereupon with “of all sentient beings” and so forth describes a mode of not relying on words or letters within taking as the element of attributes the meaning that is inexpressible to others by expressive terms in accordance with how it is directly experienced,
because modes of explaining the meaning of those exist and because there
are Bodhisattvas who set forth [some of] the 84,000 piles of doctrine [and
thus some of these words are words in “do not rely on words” and are not
the Words of a Buddha].

5. Someone says: It follows that it is not reasonable to assert that the
“definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning” is the final mode of
subsistence because of this with respect to “rely on meaning” [that is to
say, because it is not reasonable to assert that the “meaning” in “rely on
meaning” is the final mode of subsistence]. You cannot accept [that it is
not reasonable to assert that the “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive
meaning” is the final mode of subsistence] because that [“definitive
meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning”] is taken to be emptiness. It
follows [that the “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning” is
taken to be emptiness] because “ultimate” in “rely on the ultimate” is taken
to be emptiness.

a Lo-sang-gyal-tshan [005-8:50].
b It is only on the level of the meanings that are the objects expressed that the “definitive
meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning” is the final mode of subsistence (see above, 108);
for, in terms of the means of expression the high sayings themselves are taken as
illustrations of the definitive; hence, a general statement that the “definitive meaning” in
“rely on definitive meaning” is emptiness, or the final mode of subsistence, is unsuitable.
Our response: [That “ultimate” in “rely on the ultimate” is taken to be emptiness] does not entail [that the “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning” is taken to be emptiness]. The reason [which is that “ultimate” in “rely on the ultimate” is taken to be emptiness] is established because meanings of those two [that is, “ultimate” in “rely on the ultimate” and “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning”] exist.

6. Someone says: It follows that whatever is a consciousness in “do not rely on consciousness” necessarily has not realized emptiness because with respect to whatever is that [consciousness in “do not rely on consciousness”] it is necessarily not reasonable to assert the mode of subsistence in accordance with perception by it because a meaning of “do not rely on consciousness” exists.

Our response: [That a meaning of “do not rely on consciousness” exists] does not entail [that with respect to whatever is a consciousness in “do not rely on consciousness,” it is necessarily not reasonable to assert the mode of subsistence in accordance with perception by it] because not asserting as the final mode of subsistence in accordance with the appearance to an inferential consciousness realizing emptiness is the meaning [of “do not rely on consciousness”] because if it were otherwise, there would be

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a Or perhaps:

“ultimate” in “rely on the ultimate” and “definitive meaning” in “rely on definitive meaning.”
no proliferations of dualistic appearance in the perspective of the perception by an inference realizing emptiness.

You cannot accept the root [statement that whatever is a consciousness in “do not rely on consciousness” necessarily has not realized emptiness] because among them there are inferences realizing emptiness because an inference realizing emptiness through the mode of a meaning-generality exists because Khay-drub’s Great Commentary Illuminating the Principles says:

Consciousness is a wisdom of hearing and thinking differentiating suchness.

7. Someone says: It follows that, between scripture and reasoning, scripture is predominant for differentiating high sayings into the interpretable and the definitive because for common beings the mode of
subsistence of phenomena is hidden.

Our response: [That for common beings the mode of subsistence of phenomena is hidden] does not entail [that between scripture and reasoning scripture is predominant for differentiating high sayings into the interpretable and the definitive]. You cannot accept [that, between scripture and reasoning, scripture is predominant for differentiating high sayings into the interpretable and the definitive] because if in the high sayings [a sūtra] is said to be of interpretable meaning, it does not need to be of interpretable meaning, and if [a sūtra] is said to be of definitive meaning, it does not need to be of definitive meaning.

If [you say] the reason [which is that if in the high sayings a sūtra is said to be of interpretable meaning, it does not need to be of interpretable meaning, and if a sūtra is said to be of definitive meaning, it does not need to be of definitive meaning] is not established, it [absurdly] follows that the subjects, the three—the extensive, middle-length, and brief [Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras]—are sūtras of interpretable meaning because of being described that way [as of interpretable meaning] in the Sūtra Unravelling the Thought. You have asserted the entailment [that being described as sūtras of interpretable meaning in the Sūtra Unravelling the Thought entails being sūtras of interpretable meaning]. You cannot accept [that the three—the extensive, middle-length, and brief [Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras]—are sūtras of interpretable meaning] because of being described that way [as of definitive
meaning] in the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra*. You have asserted the entailment [that being described as sūtras of definitive meaning in the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* entails being sūtras of definitive meaning].\(^a\)

Moreover, it follows that [that between scripture and reasoning, scripture is predominant for differentiating high sayings into the interpretable and the definitive] is not logically feasible because when the interpretable and definitive are differentiated among the high sayings, between those two [that is, scripture and reasoning,] the differentiation must mainly be made by pure reasoning. It follows [that between those two the differentiation must mainly be made by pure reasoning] because at that time [of differentiating the interpretable and definitive], since among the high sayings a variety of the discordant interpretable and definitive are set forth, that “Such-and-such is true” and “Such-and-such is untrue” must be differentiated through pure reasoning, [whereas] since scriptures are the bases of analyses concerning the interpretable and definitive, they are not suitable as proofs,

\(^a\) These final three blue colorizations merely indicate that from the viewpoint of the Consequence School these are acceptable. The point being made, however, is that statements in sūtras are not sufficient to determine which sūtras are interpretable and which are definitive.

\(^b\) Correcting *gyi* in the digital Tibetan to *gyis* in accordance with both 2011 TBRC *bla brang* (12b.4) and 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (9b.5).
because this very text [Tsong-kha-pa’s The Essence of Eloquence] says:\textsuperscript{56}

In the end, the differentiation [between the interpretable and the definitive] must be made just by stainless reasoning.

and:\textsuperscript{57}

because many discordant modes of positing the interpretable and the definitive are set forth in the high sayings and because through scriptural passages merely saying [about a topic], “This is so,” such cannot be posited, and if, then, in general it is not necessarily [suitable to accept whatever is indicated on the literal level in sūtras], mere statements [in sūtra] of, “This is [interpretable, and that is definitive],” also cannot establish about specifics, the interpretable and the definitive, [that such is necessarily so].
and also because Tsong-kha-pa’s *Stages of Secret Mantra* says:

At that time since the two scriptures are the bases of analysis concerning possession or not of the meaning of the truth, the bases of dispute are not suitable as the means of proof; hence, differentiation as to possessing the meaning of the truth or not is done by way of just reasoning.

This approach is extensively explained in Dharmakīrti’s *Commentary on (Dignāga’s) “Compilation of Prime Cognition.”*\(^{a}\)

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\(^{a}\) The reference is likely to the explanation of extremely hidden phenomena near the end of the first chapter.
Jam-yang-shay-pa’s

**GREAT EXPOSITION OF TENETS**
on the Four Reliances

In the Tibetan, **turquoise highlight** indicates material added in place of
ellipses, and **magenta highlight** sets off the ellipsis indicator.\(^a\)

\(^a\) For Tibetan editions consulted see 65.
FROM WHAT APPROACHES THE INTERPRETABLE AND DEFINITIVE ARE DIFFERENTIATED

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Word Commentary on Root Text: By what are the interpretable and the definitive differentiated? The interpretable and the definitive are differentiated by the four reliances and the four reasonings with respect to the two, words and meanings, and the interpretable and the definitive are differentiated with respect to the high sayings by the four thoughts and the four indirect intentions.

Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of Tenets: The great chariots of the Middle Way School and the Mind-Only School differentiated the interpretable and the definitive with respect to both words and meanings by way of the four reliances and four reasonings and differentiated the interpretable and the definitive with respect to the Subduer’s Word by way of the four thoughts and four indirect intentions. Hence, if these are understood, it has the great purpose of penetratingly realizing the high sayings, and so forth; therefore, [I] will briefly clarify the essence.

Regarding this, the four reliances are indicated in sūtra; sūtra says: a

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a The Teachings of Akshayamati Sūtra (lha sa 176, vol. 60, 228b.4) is significantly different in vocabulary and order:
Rely on doctrine, but do not rely on persons; rely on meaning, but do not rely on words; rely on sūtras of definitive meaning, but do not rely on [sūtras of] interpretable meaning; rely on pristine wisdom, but do not rely on consciousness.

Concerning this, there are six topics—positing the four reliances by way of persons, by way of times, by way of four validities, identifying the four to be relied upon, identifying the four not to be relied upon, and benefits of the four reliances.
1. **Positing the Four Reliances by Way of Persons**

The four reliances are posited respectively by way of distinctions of four persons who are pretentious, diverged afar, holding their own view to be supreme, and intent only on hearing because:

1. the pretentious should rely on doctrine, but not on persons;\(^a\)
2. the likes of the Diverged Afar \(^b\) [Nihilists] should rely on meaning, but not on humans’ words;
3. those holding their own view to be supreme should rely on definitive meaning, but not on interpretable meaning;
4. those intent only on hearing should rely on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness.

\(^a\) Jam-yang-shay-pa seems to be saying that of all types of persons, it is especially the pretentious who should rely on doctrines, not persons. However, Ngag-wang-pal-dan explains that the “pretentious” are those on whom one should not rely. Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotations* (dngos wa, Taipei edition, 366.12):

> Although regarding “persons” in “do not rely on persons” there are a variety of supreme and lower [persons], mainly it is not reasonable to follow the pretentious who dissimulate so that the bad looks as if good.

Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds* says:58

If you ask, “How are these presented?” [These four reliances are presented] by way of the distinctions of four kinds of persons: the first, by way of the distinctions of pretentious persons; the second, by way of the distinctions of the Worldly Diverged Afar; the third, by way of abiding in holding their own view to be supreme; and the fourth, by way of being intent on hearing.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, *wa*:59

It is explained that:

1. Although regarding “persons” in “do not rely on persons” there are a variety of supreme and lower [persons], mainly it is not reasonable to follow the pretentious who dissimulate so that the bad looks as if good.

2. It is not reasonable to be intent only on words like the Diverged Afar [that is, Nihilists] who are intent only on reciting the Forders’ secret words—these being the Diverged Afar who are one of the divisions from within the threefold terminological division of the Diverged Afar.a

3. In accordance with the statement [in Chandrakīrti’s *Supplement to Nāgārjuna’s “Treatise on the Middle Way,”* VI.30]:60

   If the world is valid,
   Since the world sees suchness what is the need for others, Superiors?

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What would the path of Superiors do?
It is not reasonable for the stupid to be valid.a

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a Tsong-kha-pa’s commentary on this stanza together with the Four Interwoven Annotations on (Tsong-kha-pa’s) “Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path” / The Lam rim chen mo of the incomparable Tsong-kha-pa, with the interlinear notes of Ba-so Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, Sde-drug Mkhan-chen Ngag-dbang-rab-rtan, ‘Jam-dbyangs-bshad-pa’i-rdo-rje, and Bra-sti Dge-bshes Rin-chen-don-grub (lam rim mchan bzhi sbrags ma/mnyam med rje btsun tsong kha pa chen pos mdzad pa’i byang chub lam rim chen mo’i dka’ ba’i gnad rnam bsan bzhi’i sgo nas legs par bshad pa thug chen lam gyi gsal sgron), (New Delhi: Chos-’phel-legs-Idan, 1972, 298.6-2995) is:

The second, that the mode of refutation [that worldly consciousnesses such as an eye-consciousness] are valid with respect to suchness, is clear also in the root text:

If even worldly perceptions, eye-consciousnesses and so forth, were asserted as valid on the occasion of analyzing suchness in dependence on accepting that valid cognitions renowned in the world express discredit upon the refutation of reasoning analyzing the ultimate, such as reasonings analyzing production from other and so forth, then the world would be valid on the occasion of analyzing suchness but this is not asserted.

If perceptions by the world were valid with respect to suchness,
Then, since the world [that is,] all ordinary beings, would directly see—that is to say, realize—suchness, given that they would be seeing suchness directly, what need would there be to posit for direct realization of suchness, those others, Superiors who directly realize suchness, separately from the world?

And if there is no need to posit those Superiors, what would be the use of making great striving for the sake of seeking the path of Superiors? There is no need, because it would be senseless for an ordinary worldly being [to do so].

Moreover since the ordinary world does not analyze meanings, it is also not reasonable and not fitting that the stupid are valid on the occasion of analyzing the profound mode of subsistence of phenomena.
it is not reasonable to hold one’s view to be supreme, that is, to hold how [phenomena] appear to one’s own sense consciousnesses to be the final mode of subsistence.

4. It is not reasonable to be satisfied with mere wisdom arisen from hearing like persons who are intent on hearing.
2. **Positing the Four Reliances by Way of Times**

The four reliances are posited respectively in order not to lose out at four times. One would not lose out,

1. if, when understanding all doctrines, one relied on doctrine, but not on persons,
2. and if, when holding all doctrines, one relied on meaning, but not on persons’ words,
3. and if, when closely investigating or contemplating meaning, one relied on definitive meaning, but not on interpretable meaning,
4. and if, when achieving doctrinal practices, one relied on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness;

Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Yogic Practice* says:  

Concerning that, in brief, because of losing out and not losing out at four times—when understanding all doctrines, when holding all doctrines, when closely investigating or contemplating the meaning of all doctrines, and when achieving all doctrines in accordance with doctrine—four [types of] persons are presented, whereby the four reliances are presented.
1. When understanding—that is, hearing—all doctrines, if one takes as true all that is explained and does not analyze the meaning of words, one will not know how to distinguish the correct from the quasi. Therefore, in order not to lose out at that time, the first reliance [rely on doctrine, but do not rely on persons] is posited.

2. When holding all doctrines without forgetting, if one is intent only on words, one will fall from holding without forgetting the meaning. Therefore, in order not to lose out at that time, the second reliance [rely on meaning, but do not rely on words] is posited.

3. When closely investigating meaning—at the time of [states] arisen from thinking doing proper mental application—if one merely takes conventionalities to mind, one will not gain ascertainment arisen from thinking with regard to the ultimate. Therefore, in order not to lose out at that time, the third reliance [rely on definitive meaning, but do not rely on interpretable meaning] is posited.

4. When achieving doctrine—the path of liberation—in accordance with doctrine, if one is satisfied with mere conceptual consciousnesses arisen from hearing, thinking, and meditation, one will not gain uncontaminated pristine wisdom in which clear perception of the meaning of reality has reached completion. Therefore, in order not to lose out at that time, the fourth reliance [rely on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness] is posited.
3. **Positing the Four Reliances by Way of Four Validities**

The four reliances indicate four validities, or four nondeceptives, because:

1. the meaning in “rely on meaning, but not on words,” is indicated to be endowed with validity; similarly,
2. the reasoning in “rely on reasoning [that is, doctrine], but not on persons,” is indicated to be endowed with validity;
3. the teacher in “rely on definitive meaning, but not on interpretable meaning,” is indicated to be endowed with validity;
4. the pristine wisdom in “rely on pristine wisdom, but not on consciousness,” is indicated to be endowed with validity

because Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* says:63

From these four reliances, in brief, four validities themselves are indicated: (1) the meanings of the teachings, (2) reasonings, (3) teachers, and (4) pristine wisdoms of realization arisen from meditation.

*Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, za:*64

The reasoning validity has the same significance as reliance on doctrine; the meaning validity has the same significance as reliance on the meaning; the teacher validity has the same significance as reliance on the definitive meaning; the pristine-wisdom validity has the same significance as reliance on pristine wisdom, because “validity” means “nondeceptive.” “Nondeceptive,” moreover, must be understood individually in context; it is not to be taken only as concordance between mode of appearance and mode of abiding.65

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63 For instance, in the context of taking truth (*bden pa, satya*) in the two truths as meaning nondeceptive (*mi slu ba*), nondeceptive is explained as meaning concordance between mode of appearance and mode of abiding (*snang tshul dang gnas tshul mthun pa*); however, nondeceptive in the context of the four reliances is glossed here as “reliance” (*rton pa*),
and also Vasubandhu’s Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras” [says]:

This is the character of teachers; the meaning of their having validity is that they have become valid teachers, or it is what is ascertained and differentiated to be taken as valid by them.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, a

[The passage from Vasubandhu’s commentary] in the Narthang edition differs slightly from what is quoted here [in Jam-yang-shay-pa’s text]:

This describes the character of teachers; meanings having validation by them are those ascertained and differentiated by teachers who are taken as valid.

which in the Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive is explained to mean “mental reliance” (yid rton) or “to place mental trust” (yid gtol).

a Correcting rton in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (410.5) to ston in accordance with Maitreya’s Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras (sde dge 4020, sms tsam, vol. phi, 223b.6).
4. IDENTIFYING THE FOUR TO BE RELIED ON

On what should one have mental reliance? Four are described as to be relied upon:

1. rely on doctrine;
2. rely on the meaning;
3. rely on definitive meaning;
4. rely on pristine wisdom;

because it is considered that it is because they have nondeceptive validity; for, Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras* associates [the four reliances] with four lines respectively:68

The doctrine taught [in the] scriptures,
That which possesses the thought of the meaning of those,
That which has the validity of definitive meaning,
And that which attains its inexpressibility.

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a Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras*, sde dge 4020 (29b.4) reads: དེས་དོན་ཚད་མར་ཡོན་པའི་དོན་ནི་ཡིན་པའོ།

68 *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras* associates [the four reliances] with four lines respectively:
Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, ya: 70

Maitreya’s Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras explains that the four to be relied on are: 71

1. scriptures, that is, high sayings;
2. the meaning of the thought that is not the meaning of the literal reading;
3. meaning ascertained correctly, not wrongly understood;
4. uncontaminated pristine wisdom realizing the meaning ascertained correctly;

and that the four not to be relied on are:

1. persons who have abandoned the doctrines of the scriptures;
2. the meaning of the literal reading;
3. erroneously interpreted meanings due to wrong thought;
4. consciousness, except for pristine wisdom of individual self-knowledge.

In accordance with the statement by Asaṅga, 72 “Also this doctrine has two aspects: word and meaning,” doctrine is twofold, word and meaning; and word is twofold, interpretable and definitive sūtras [as well as] treatises; and meaning is twofold, doctrine itself and reasonings because the Teachings of Akshayamati Sūtra says: 73
Concerning this, rely on doctrine itself but do not rely on persons.

and Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* says:74

In that way, one who relies on reasoning but does not rely on persons does not fall from suchness.

Therefore, reasonings also are divided into the four reasonings. Also, the divisions of meanings are included in those.

Definitive meanings are [found in] both [Buddha’s] Word and treatises, and in justa this context [of the Mind-Only School] the literal are definitive

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, ra:75

Also, the divisions of meanings in “rely on the meaning” are included in the four reasonings.

Definitive meanings are [found in] both [Buddha’s] Word and treatises, and in justa this context [of the Mind-Only School] the literal are definitive

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a In accordance with Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotation la* immediately below, “in just this context” (*di ba’i skabs nyid du*) should read “in this context” (*di ba’i skabs nyid du*); his point is that Proponents of the Great Exposition, for instance, treat the literal as definitive. As Jam-yang-shay-pa himself says earlier in the same text:
meanings, whereas in the context of the Middle Way School there is the distinctive feature that the definitive has to mainly teach ultimate truth. Pristine wisdom is to be taken as the pristine wisdom of non-conceptual meditative equipoise of the three Superiors [that is, Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Great Vehicle Superiors].

Since the particle nyid [“just” in the phrase “just in this context” of བཀའ་བȪན་བཅོས་གཉིས་དེ་] is a lexical error, it should read བཀའ་བȪན་བཅོས་གཉིས་དེ་.

Certain Proponents of the Great Exposition assert, in accordance with the description in Bhāvaviveka’s Blaze of Reasoning, that all of [Buddha’s] word is just of definitive meaning [that is, literal] and do not assert that there are interpretable meanings. In addition, there are also [some Proponents of the Great Exposition] who assert that there are both definitive meanings and meanings requiring interpretation. Not only that, but also all later Proponents of the Great Exposition and even the Vatsīputrīyas assert that even Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras require interpretation, saying that:

- The statements of the absence of true existence and non-production refer to the type of truth and production imputed by Forders such as the Sāṃkhyas and so forth,
- Likewise, the statements of the non-existence of nature, the non-existence of attainment, abandonment, and so forth and the non-existence of things also are in consideration that the nature and so forth and permanent effective things as imputed by Forders do not exist.

See Hopkins, Maps of the Profound, 235. In all of these cases the definitive is the literal.
5. **IDENTIFYING THE FOUR NOT TO BE RELIED ON**

On what should one not rely?

1. Do not rely on persons exemplified by those who abandon the doctrine.
2. Do not rely on words, that is, just what is set forth.
3. Do not rely on interpretable meanings.
4. Do not rely on consciousness.

These must be stopped because they are not suitable to be valid since they are devoid of a relevant sort of logical correctness. Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:77

> Abandoning, just what is set forth,
> Wrong understanding, and
> Attainment of the expressible—

> Are indicated here as to be stopped.
With respect to persons here [that is to say, persons who are not to be relied on] there are many; the *Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 85 and 89) says:

Moreover, persons who are ordinary beings, persons who are virtuous common beings, [persons who follow by faith, persons who are followers of doctrine, persons on the eighth (ground, that is, Approachers to Stream-Enterer), persons who are Stream-Enterers, persons who are Once-Returners, persons who are Non-Returners,] persons who are Foe Destroyers, persons who are Solitary Realizers, persons who are Bodhisattvas, and [one person who when arising in the world benefits many beings, comforts many beings, empathizes with the world, who arises in the world for the sake of masses of gods and humans, for their benefit, for their comfort,] the teacher of gods and humans, the Buddha Supramundane Victor, the unique person are called “persons.”

and so forth,
Great Exposition of Tenets

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, sha.\textsuperscript{80}

[I] wonder if “persons who are virtuous ordinary beings” refers to Bodhisattvas who are common beings, since in [Buddha’s] Life Stories and so forth there are many usages of the term “virtuous” for “Bodhisattva.”

and Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas (see Interpretable and Definitive, 84) says:\textsuperscript{81}

Moreover, Bodhisattvas thoroughly know unwholesome teachings and also great teachings correctly just as they are. Thorough knowledge also relies on reasonings, but does not rely on persons as in saying, “The elder or knowledgeable person or One-Gone-Thus or monastic has set forth these doctrines.”

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, sa.\textsuperscript{82}

[I] wonder if knowledgeable person refers to knowledgeable person within the five fully-qualified persons described in the Discipline?

and Asaṅga’s Grounds of Bodhisattvas (see Interpretable and Definitive, 84) says:\textsuperscript{83}
Hence, there are many modes of non-reliance among these [four]: with respect to the words there are two—the factual and the nonfactual—and even with respect to the factual, they are to associated with hearing, thinking, and meditating, whereupon nonapprehension of just merely that as supreme, and so forth, are needed because “not relying on the letters but relying on the meaning” is set out on some occasions.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, ha:\(^{53}\)

Since [the particle] las [in de tsam las mchog tu ’dzin] is a lexical error, it should read “nonapprehension of just merely that as supreme” (de tsam la mchog tu ’dzin).

and the Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra (see Interpretable and Definitive, 101) says:\(^{84}\)

In brief, these teachings of whatsoever 84,000 piles of doctrine are called “letters.” That meaning which is the un languaged, unlettered, nonilluminable, and inexpressible of all sentient beings is called “meaning.” This is “rely on meaning, but do not rely on letters.”
Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, a\(^{85}\)

[1] wonder—according to the citation of the *Teachings of Akshayamati Sutra* in Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Decisive Analysis of Differentiating the Interpretable and the Definitive* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 101), which states:

“Letters” teach the collections of Bodhisattva qualities ranging from initial mind-generation through to the essence of enlightenments. “Meaning” is an all-knowing pristine wisdom manifestly completely purified by wisdom endowed with a single moment of mind. In brief, these teachings of whatsoever 84,000 piles of doctrine are called “letters.” That meaning which is the un languaged, unlettered, nonilluminable, and inexpressible of all sentient beings is called “meaning.”

—whether (1) the teaching, in the high sayings, of the collections of Bodhisattva qualities are to be taken as “letters,” and (2) the qualities of the Buddha ground are to be taken as “meanings;” or whether (1) Words spoken in accordance with trainees’ dispositions, thoughts, and dormancies are to be taken as “letters,” and (2) whether phenomena that are un languaged, unlettered, and inexpressible just as perceived by a knower-of-all-aspects are to be taken as “meanings.”
and Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 80 and 123) says:\(^86\)

Regarding that, how do Bodhisattvas train in the four reliances? Concerning this, Bodhisattvas listen to doctrines from others because of wanting the meaning but not because of wanting well-crafted words.

and so forth.

Here, regarding the interpretable and the definitive, divisions are very numerous as the *Teachings of Aśhāyamati* Sūtra (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 104) says:\(^87\)

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\(^{a}\) Here Jam-yang-shay-pa’s citation of Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* reads *rtön pa* which accords with the *snar thang* edition (152b.7). The *sde dge* version of the *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* misreads the text as *ston pa* at this point (136a.5) and on three other occasions in this passage when referring to the four reliances as a group.
Those teachings of various words and letters in whatsoever sūtras are called “interpretable meanings.”

and also as Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* (see *Interpretable and Definitive*, 108) says:88

because it is due to not ascertaining that the divisions of sūtras of interpretable meaning are for the sake of entry through various doors that doubt is generated.

(1) The way non-reliance on words or letters and on interpretable meanings in these [four reliances] are not redundant and (2) that contexts and so forth differ; and also (3) how in general they are non-contradictory should be known; I have explained only a portion.

*Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s Annotations, ka:*89

With regard to the mode of nonredundancy of the two, “non-reliance on words” and “non-reliance on interpretable meanings,” on this occasion [of the Mind-Only School] “nonredundancy” must be explained in this way:

1. “non-reliance on words” mainly refers to non-satisfaction with merely reciting words, these being occasions of holding [the mind] without forgetting
2. “non-reliance on interpretable meanings” refers to non-satisfaction with merely literal meanings, these being occasions of proper mental application.

However, this is formulated in terms the system of the Proponents of Mind-Only, since in this system it is predominantly said that whatever is an established base is necessarily a definitive meaning because there are no interpretable meanings. However, in some other monastic colleges’ textbooks it is explained that, even in the context of the Mind-Only School, interpretable meanings are conventionalities and definitive meanings are ultimates as with the Proponents of Naturelessness, in accordance with which there is no qualm [of redundancy].

[Let me add a little more about context and noncontradiction.] For, here [in the context of the four reliances] consciousness has even six: the [five] sense consciousnesses of the eye and so forth, and a conventionally aspected mental consciousness, but it is explained that when examining
the ultimate, without relying on these consciousnesses, rely on profound non-conceptual pristine wisdom; the [Teachings of Akṣhayamati] Sūtra (see Interpretable and Definitive, 113) says:

Moreover, consciousness is (1) cognition of forms which are known by the eye, (2) cognition of sounds which are known by the ear, (3) cognition of odors which are known by the nose, (4) cognition of tastes which are known by the tongue, (5) cognition of objects of touch which are known by the body, and (6) cognition of phenomena which are known by the mind. These are called “consciousness.” [This which is pacified internally and does not move to the external and through relying on pristine wisdom does not conceive and conceptualize any phenomenon is called “pristine wisdom.”]

and so forth.

Also, in terms of temporary and final aims, what need is there to mention hearing and thinking! Even consciousnesses arisen from meditation included within cyclic existence are posited as consciousness here [in the four reliances as not to be relied upon] because it is explained that no matter what dependent-arisings of consciousness—form, formless, and below—in taking rebirth in the three realms that one attains, they are
not to be mentally relied on; rather, one should rely on uncontaminated pristine wisdom knowing the four truths and so forth.

Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds* says:90

Regarding that, the One-Gone-Thus spoke of merit and unwavering consciousness for the sake of progressing to the happy migrations, and regarding statements that knowledge of the four truths for Superiors is for the sake of attaining nirvāṇa, rely on the pristine wisdom of the accomplishment of doctrine in accordance with reality, but not on consciousness.

Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotations, kha:*91

I wonder whether these refer to causal consciousness of the same round [of the twelve links of dependent-arising] as meritorious

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90 Asaṅga’s *Actuality of the Grounds* says.
91 Ngag-wang-pal-dan’s *Annotations,* kha.
impelling action and unmoving impelling action because consciousness at the time of the effect is neutral, due to which there are none arisen from meditation.

and Asaṅga’s *Grounds of Bodhisattvas* says:92

Bodhisattvas view the pristine wisdom of realization as the essence, not just consciousness of the meanings of hearing and thinking.

6. **BENEFITS OF THE FOUR RELIANCES**

The four reliances have benefits because:

1. By the first [relying on doctrine, but not relying on persons] one will not fall from the doctrine and thereby will not sever one’s lineage [of spiritual development].
2. By the second [relying on meaning, but not relying on words] one will not fall from partaking of the profound thought.
3. By the third [relying on definitive meaning, but not relying on interpretable meaning] one will not fall from hearing the meaning exactly as it is and thereby will not wrongly engage the meaning of scripture.
4. By the fourth [relying on pristine wisdom, but not relying on consciousness] one will not fall from wisdom having clear appearance and thereby will not fall from supramundane pristine wisdom.

For, Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:93
The firm do not fall from
Being intent, partaking,
Hearing from others just as it is,
And inexpressible pristine wisdom.

It explains that the firm, that is, Bodhisattvas, do not deteriorate from the four: being intent on scriptural doctrines, analysis of the meaning of the Subduer’s thought, hearing nonerroneous meanings from others, and supramundane pristine wisdom.

“Partake” (spyod pa) is a lexical error; hence it should read “not fall from analyzing the profound thought” (དགོངས་པ་ཟབ་མོ་དཔོད་པ་ལས་མི་ཉམས་པ་) and “Being intent, analysis” (མོས་དང་ȷམ་པར་དཔོད་པ་)
དགོངས་པ་ཟབ་མོ་དང་པའི་མི་སོགས་པ་དང་། བཞེག
དང་། མོ་སྡུག་མི་དོན་དགོས་སོ། །
Abbreviations


“1987 Go-mang Lhasa” = drang ba dang nges pa’i don rnam par ’byed pa’i mtha’ dpyod ’khrul bral lung rigs bai dūr dkar pa’i gan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong. Named “1987” because of being acquired in Lhasa, Tibet, at Go-mang College in 1987; published at Go-mang College, date unknown. (Complete edition, available at UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies, uma-tibet.org.)


“2011 TBRC bla brang” = drang ba dang nges pa’i don rnam par ’byed pa’i mtha’ dpyod ’khrul bral lung rigs bai dūr dkar pa’i gan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong, TBRC W22186.10: 1-288, which is a PDF of: bla brang bkra shis ’khyil, bla brang brka shis ’khyil dgon, publishing date unknown.

“lha sa” = lha sa bka’ ’gyur. TBRC W26071, which is a PDF of: Zhol bka’ ’gyur par khang, Lhasa, Tibet, 1934.


“TBRC” = Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (http://www.tbrc.org).

“Tenets” = Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of Tenets / Explanation of “Tenets”: Sun of the Land of Samantabhadra Brilliantly Illuminating All of Our Own and Others’ Tenets and the Meaning of the Profound [Emptiness], Ocean of Scripture and Reasoning Fulfilling All Hopes of All Beings (grub mtha’ chen mo / grub mtha’i rnam bshad rang gzhan grub mtha’ kun dang zab don mchog tu gsal ba kun bzang zhiṅ gi nyi ma lung rigs rgya mtsho skye dgu’i re ba kun skong).
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P735, vol. 21; Toh. 13, vol. ka (śes rab sna tshogs)

Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra
aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā
śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa
P734, vol. 21; TBRC W22084

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āryapañcaśatikāprajñāpāramitā
’phags pa sūs rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa lnga brgya pa
P0738, vol. 21.

One Hundred Fifty Modes of the Perfection of Wisdom
prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatikāsūtra
śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i tshul brgya lnga bcu pa’i mdo
P121, vol. 5

One Hundred Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra
śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā
śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrug brgya pa
P730, vols.12-18; Toh. 8, vols. ka-a (bum); TBRC W22084

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Commentary on the "Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra": Moonlight of Essential Points
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’phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu Inga pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi 'grel pa; abbr. nyi ’khri snang ba
P5185, vol. 88


Asaṅga (thogs med, fourth century)

**Five Treatises on the Grounds**

1. *Grounds of Yogic Practice*
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   nlāl ’byor spyod pa’i sa
   P5536-5538, vols. 109-110
   *Grounds of Bodhisattvas*
bodhisattvabhūmi
   byang chub sems pa’i sa
   P5538, vol. 110

2. *Compendium of Ascertainments*
inirñayasamgraha / viniścayasaṃgrahāṇī
   nlam par gtan la dbab pa bsdu ba
   P5539, vols. 110-111

3. *Compendium of Bases*
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   gzhi bsdu ba
   P5540, vol. 111

4. *Compendium of Enumerations*
paryāyasaṃgraha
   nlam grang bsdu ba
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5. *Compendium of Explanations*
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**Two Summaries**

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P5201, vol. 92; D3804, vol. tha

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bodhipathapradīpa

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nyi khrid nam ’grel / ’phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa’i

man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan gyi tshig le’ur byas pa’i rnam par ’grel pa
P5186, vol. 88

Bodhibhadra (byang chub bzang po)

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ye shes snying po kun las btsus pa shes bya ba’i bshad shyar, jñānasārasamuccayanāmanibandhana
P5252, vol. 95

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abhisamayālāṃkārābhagavatiprajñāpāramitopadeśasāstrāvṛttiprajñāpārādipāvāli

bcom ldan ’das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan gyi ’grel pa shes rab sgron ma’i phreng ba
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sañcayagāthāpañjikā

bsdus pa tshig su bcad pa’i dk’a ’grel
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madhayamakāvatārābhāsya

dbu ma la ’jug pa’i bshad pa / dbu ma la ’jug pa’i rang ’grel


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P5192, vol. 91; D3794, vol. ja

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Dharmsårī

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Tibetan editions:
Sarnath: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Printing Press, 1973
Illumination of the Path to Liberation / Explanation of (Dharmakīrti’s) Commentary on (Dignāga’s) “Compilation of Prime Cognition”: Unerring Illumination of the Path to Liberation
thar lam gsal byed / tshad ma rnam ‘grel gyi tshig le’ur byas pa’i rnam bshad thar lam phyin ci ma log par gsal bar byed pa
Tibetan editions:

Haribhadra (seng ge bzang po, late eighth century)
Clear Meaning Commentary / Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Treatise of Quintessential Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom: Ornament for the Clear Realizations”
spuṭhārtha / abhisamayālaṃkārāmaprajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstra
’grel pa don gsal / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan ces bya ba’i ’grel pa
Sanskrit editions:


*Commentary on the Difficult Points of the “Verse Summary of the Precious Qualities of the Supramundane Victorious [Mother]”*

bhagavatratanaguṇasamayagayādhaṃśajñāskusabhūhinīnāma
bcṃ ldan ‘das yon tan rin po che sdu s pa'i tshig su bcad pa'i dka’ ’grel
P5190; D3792

[Commentary on the] “Twenty-Five Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra”

pahcavimsatīsāhasrāprajñāpāramitā
shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa
P5188; D3790

Explanation of the “Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra”: Illumination of (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Clear Realizations”

aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāvākyābhīṣāsmināṃśaṃkārāloka
shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bgyad stong pa'i bshad pa mgon po rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi snang ba
In *bstan ‘gyur (sde dge).* TBRC W23703:85: 4-683, which is a PDF of: Delhi, India: Karmapae choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985.

Jam-yang-shay-pa Ngag-wang-tson-drü (’jam dbyangs bzhad pa’i rdo rje ngag dbang brtson grus, 1648-1721/1722)

Eloquent Presentation of the Eight Categories and Seventy Topics: Sacred Word of Guru Ajita
dngos po bgyad yon don bsdun cu'i ram bzhag legs par bshad pa mi pham bla ma'i zhal lung

Tibetan editions:

1999 Tōyō Bunko CD-ROM: “Tibetan texts of don bsdun bcu of ’jam dbyangs bzhad pa and rigs lam ’phral gyi lde mig of dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me.” In the Toyo Bunko Database CD Release II. Tokyo, Japan: Tōyō Bunko, 1999. CD-ROM. (This edition is based on the 1999 Mundgod.)
2011 TBRC bla brang: In kun mkhyen 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje mchog gi gsung 'bun, vol. 14. TBRC W22186.14: 115-178, which is a PDF of: bla brang bkra shis 'khyil: bla brang brka shis 'khyil dgon, publishing date unknown.


Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive / 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

drang ba dang nges pa'i don mam par 'byed pa'i mtha' dpyod 'khrul bral lung rigs bai dǔr dkar pa'i ngan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong

Edition cited: TBRC W22186.10: 1-288, which is a PDF of: bla brang bkra shis 'khyil, bla brang brka shis 'khyil dgon, publishing date unknown.

Great Exposition of Tenets / Explanation of “Tenets”: Sun of the Land of Samantabhadra Brilliantly Illuminating All of Our Own and Others’ Tenets and the Meaning of the Profound [Emptiness], Ocean of Scripture and Reasoning Fulfilling All Hopes of All Beings
grub mtha’ chen mo / grub mtha’i mam bshad rang gzhan grub mtha’ kun dang zab don mchog
tu gsal ba kun bzang zhung gi nyi ma lung rigs rgya mtnsho skye dgu’i re ba kun skong


Translation of the section of the distinctive tenets of the Consequence School: Daniel Cozort, Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1998).

Jay-tsun Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan (se ra rje btsun chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1469-1546)

Excellent Means Definitely Revealing the Eight Categories and Seventy Topics, the Topics of (Maitreya’s) “Treatise of Quintessential Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom: Ornament for the Clear Realizations,” the Stainless Oral Transmission of Jay-tsun-chö-kyi-gyal-tshan bstan bcos mngon par rtags pa’i rgyan gi brjod bya dngos bskyed don bdun cu nges par ‘byed pa’i thabs dam pa rje btsunchos kyi rgyal mtshan gi gsung rgyun dri ma med pa

Indian block-print, n.d.

dngos po bskyed don bdun cu ‘i rnam gzhag. In don bdun cu dang sa lam sogs nyer mkho’i skor phyogs bsgrigs bzhus so 1-44.

kan su’u, China: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005.

Rje btsun pa’i Don bdun cu: An Introduction to the Abhisamayālākāra

Edited with Introduction by Shunzō Onoda

Kyoto, Japan: The Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, Nagoya University, 1983.

Khay-drub-ge-leg-pal-sang (mkhas grub dge legs dpal bzang, 1385-1438)

Extensive Explanation of (Dharmakīrti’s) “Commentary on (Dignāga’s) ‘Compilation of Prime Cognition’”: Ocean of Reasoning
tshad ma rnam ’grel gi rgya cher bshad pa rigs pa’i rgya mtnsho

TBRC W1KG10279, vol. 10 (tha), 623-1006, which is a pdf of bla brang bkra shis 'khyil par khang edition, 1997.
Kön-chog-jig-may-wang-po (dkon mchog 'jigs med dbang po, 1728-1791)

*Condensed Presentation of the Eight Categories and Seventy Topics*
dngos brgyad don bdun cu’i mam bzhag bsdu pa

*Precious Garland of Tenets / Presentation of Tenets: A Precious Garland*
grub pa’i mtha’i mam par bzhag pa rin po che’i phreng ba


*Presentation of the Grounds and Paths: Beautiful Ornament of the Three Vehicles*
sa lam gyi mam bzhag thig gsum mdzes rgyan


*Thorough Expression of the Natures of the One Hundred Seventy-Three Aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers: White Lotus Vine of Eloquence*
mkhyen gsum gyi mam pa brgya dang don gsum gyi rang bzhin yang dag par brjod pa legs bshad padma dkar po’i khrim shing
Tibetan editions:

In *gsung ’bum/ dkon mchog ’jigs med dbang po (bla brang par ma)*. TBRC W2122.6: 627-646, which is a PDF of: bla brang bkra shis ’khyil, *Tibet: bla brang dgon pa*, 1999.


Kumārashrībhadra

*Summary of (Maitreya’s) “Perfection of Wisdom”*
prajñāpāramitāśāntīpāramitā
shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i don bsdu pa
P5195, vol. 91; D3797, vol. nya

Long-döl Ngag-wang-lo-sang (klong rdol ngag dbang blo bzang, 1719-1794)

*Vocabulary Occurring in the Perfection of Wisdom*
phar phyin las byung ba’i ming gi ram grangs
Lo-sang-chö-kyi-gyal-tshan (blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1570-1662)
Explanation of the First Category in the Ocean of Good Explanation Illuminating the Essence of the Essence of (Maitreya’s) “Treatise of Quintessential Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom: Ornament for the Clear Realizations”
shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan gyi snying po’i snying po gsal bar legs par bshad pa’i rgya mtsho las skabs dang po’i mam par bshad pa

Tibetan editions:

TBRC W87: 343-412, which is a PDF of: khreng tu’u, China: [s.n.], [199-].

Lo-sang-chö-kyi-gyal-tshan (blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1570-1662)

Maitreya (byams pa)

Ornament for the Clear Realizations
abhīṣama-yālaṁkāra/abhīṣama-yālaṁkāra-nāma-praṇjāpāramitopadeśaśāstra-kārikā
mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan/ shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan shes bya ba’i tshig le’ur byas pa

Sanskrit editions:


Tibetan editions:

cön: TBRC W1GS66030.80:5-30, which is a PDF of: Cö ne dgon chen: co ne, 1926.
snar thang: TBRC W22704.89:5-30, which is a PDF of: Narthang: s.n., 1800?.
sde dge: TBRC W23703.80:3-28, which is a PDF of: Delhi: Karmapa Choedhey, Gyalwae sunggrap partun khang, 1982-1985.

English translations:


The Precious Garland of Advice for the King rājaparikathāratnāvalī
go śpa ’i mdo sde rgyan gyi tshig le’ur byas pa
P5521, vol. 108; Dharma vol. 77


Nāgārjuna (klu sgrub, first to second century, C.E.)

Precious Garland of Advice for the King rājaparikathāratnāvalī
go śpa ’i mdo sde rgyan gyi tshig le’ur byas pa
P5521, vol. 108; Dharma vol. 77


Nāgārjuna (klu sgrub, first to second century, C.E.)


Ngag-wang-pal-dan (ngag dbang dpal ldan, b.1797), also known as Pal-dan-chö-jay (dpal ldan chos rje)
Annotations for (Jam-yang-shay-pa’s) “Great Exposition of Tenets”: Freeing the Knots of the Difficult Points, Precious Jewel of Clear Thought
grub mtha’ chen mo’i mchan ‘grel dka’ gnad mdud grbol gsal gces nor

Explanation of the Conventional and the Ultimate in the Four Systems of Tenets
grub mtha’ bzhi’i lugs kyi kun rdzob dang don dam pa’i don ram par bshad pa legs bshad dpyid kyi dpal mo’i glu dbyangs

Explanation of (Maitreya’s) Treatise “Ornament for the Clear Realizations” from the Approach of the Meaning of the Words: Sacred Word of Mañjushrī
byang chub lam gyi rim pa’i ’khrid yig ’jam pa’i dbyangs kyi zhal lung

Explanation of the Conventional and the Ultimate in the Four Systems of Tenets
grub mtha’ bzhi’i lugs kyi kun rdzob dang don dam pa’i don ram par bshad pa legs bshad dpyid kyi dpal mo’i glu dbyangs

Explanation of (Maitreya’s) Treatise “Ornament for the Clear Realizations” from the Approach of the Meaning of the Words: Sacred Word of Mañjushrī
byang chub lam gyi rim pa’i ’khrid yig ’jam pa’i dbyangs kyi zhal lung

Explanation of the Conventional and the Ultimate in the Four Systems of Tenets
grub mtha’ bzhi’i lugs kyi kun rdzob dang don dam pa’i don ram par bshad pa legs bshad dpyid kyi dpal mo’i glu dbyangs

Explanation of the Conventional and the Ultimate in the Four Systems of Tenets
grub mtha’ bzhi’i lugs kyi kun rdzob dang don dam pa’i don ram par bshad pa legs bshad dpyid kyi dpal mo’i glu dbyangs

Explanation of (Maitreya’s) Treatise “Ornament for the Clear Realizations” from the Approach of the Meaning of the Words: Sacred Word of Mañjushrī
byang chub lam gyi rim pa’i ’khrid yig ’jam pa’i dbyangs kyi zhal lung


Presentation of the Interpretable and the Definitive, Brief Notes on the Occasion of Receiving Profound [Instruction from Jo-ne Paṇḍita Lo-sang-gyatsho in 1927] on (Tsong-kha-pa’s) “The Essence of Eloquence”
drang ba dang nges pa’i don ram par bzhag pa legs par bshad pa’i snying po’i zab nos skabs kyi zin bris mdo tsam du bkod pa

Summary of (Haribhadra’s) “Commentary on (Maitreya’s) ‘Ornament for the Clear Realizations’”
abhisamayālāṃkārākārikāvṛittiśuddhamatīnāma
phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phrin las byas pa’i ’grel pa’i tshig le’ur byas pa’i ’grel dag ldan
P5193, vol. 91; D3795, vol. ja

Commentary on the Difficult Points of the “Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra”: The Supreme Essence
ārya-aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāpañjikāsārottamā
P5200, vol. 92; D3803, vol. tha

Pure Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Clear Realizations”
abhisamayālāṃkārākārikāvṛittiśuddhamatīnāma
phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phrin las byas pa’i ’grel pa’i tshig le’ur byas pa’i ’grel pa dag ldan
Quintessential Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom
prajñāpāramitopadeśa
shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag
P5579, vol. 114; D4079, vol. 114

Ratnakīrti
Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for the Clear Realizations”: A Portion of Glory
abhisamayālaṃkāravṛittikīrtikalānāma
mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan gyi ’grel pa grags pa’i cha
P5197, vol. 91; D3799, vol. 91

Shāntideva (zhi ba lha, eighth century)
Compendium of Instructions
śikṣāsamuccaya
bslab pa kun las btsus pa
P5272, vol. 102; Toh. 3940, vol. 102


Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds
bodhi[sattva]caryāvatāra
byang chub sems dpal’i spyod pa la ’jug pa
Toh. 3871, dbyu ma, vol. 114


English translations:


Contemporary commentary:

Tshe-chog-ling Ye-shay-gyal-tshan (tshe mchog gling ye shes rgyal mtshan, 1713-1793)

Quintessential Instructions Clearly Teaching the Essentials of (Tsong-kha-pa’s) “Stages of the Path to Enlightenment,” Correlating the “Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sûtra” with (Maitreya’s) “Ornament for Clear Realization”: Lamp Illuminating the Perfection of Wisdom sher phyin stong phrag bryad pa dang mngon rtogs rgyan shyar te byang chub lam gyi rim pa’i gnad mams gsal bar ston pa’i man ngag sher phyin gsal ba’i sgron me

Tibetan editions:
TBRC W1022.7: 8-174, which is a PDF of: New Delhi, India: Tibet House, 1975.

Tsong-kha-pa Lo-sang-drag-pa (tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 1357-1419)

Extensive Explanation of (Chandrakirti’s) “Supplement to (Nâgârjuna’s) Treatise on the Middle” -- Illumination of the Thought dbu ma la ’jug pa’i rgya cher bshad pa dgongs pa rab gsal

Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1980; the portion of the book that is Tsong-kha-pa’s Illumination of the Thought (chapters 1-5) is downloadable at:


Golden Garland of Eloquence / Extensive Explanation of (Maitreya’s) “Treatise of Quintessential Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom: Ornament for the Clear Realizations” as Well As Its Commentaries: Golden Garland of Eloquence legs bshad gser ’phreng / shes rab kyi pho rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan ’grel pa dang bcas pa’i rgya cher bshad pa legs bshad gser gyi phreng ba

Tibetan editions:
TBRC W22109.3219, which is a PDF of: gedan sungrab minyam gyunphel series (Ngawang Gelek Demo), 1977.


Great Exposition of Secret Mantra / The Stages of the Path to a Conqueror and Pervasive Master, a Great Vajradhara: Revealing All Secret Topics sngags rim chen mo / rgyal ba khyab bdag rdo rje ’chang chen po’i lam gyi rim pa gsong ba kun gyi gnad mams par phyed ba


Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path / Stages of the Path to Enlightenment Thoroughly Teaching All the Stages of Practice of the Three Types of Beings


Medium-Length Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment to be Practiced by Beings of the Three Capacities / Medium-Length Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment to be Practiced by Beings of the Three Capacities together with an Outline / Short Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment

Edited Tibetan: Tsultrim Kelsang Khangkar and Takada Yorihito.


Vasubandhu (dbyig guyen, fl. 360)

Treasury of Manifest Knowledge
abhidharmakośa
chos mgon pa’i mdzod
P5590, vol. 115

3. OTHER WORKS


———. The Gilgit manuscript of the Asāṃkṣaśāstra: Prajñāpāramitā: Chapters 55 to 70 corresponding to the 5th Abhisamaya. Roma, Italy: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1954.


Endnotes

1 sde dge 3852, 40a.1.
2 Chandrakīrti’s Autocommentary on the “Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) ‘Treatise on the Middle’” (madhaymakāvatārabhāṣya, dbu ma la ’jug pa’i bshad pa / dbu ma la ’jug pa’i rang ’grel). Peking 5263, vol. 98; sde dge 3862, VI.30, 256a.7-256b.1.
3 Brackets from Jig-may-dam-chö-gya-tsho’s Port of Entry, 56.1.
4 2011 TBRC bla brang, 3a.4; 1987 Go-mang, 2b.6; 2008 Taipei reprint, 3.3.
5 Correcting skabs ’di’i ston pa bzhi in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (3a.6) to skabs ’di’i rton pa bzhi in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (3a.1). Here the 2011 TBRC bla brang appears to be incorrect.
6 Correcting gnas lugs mi rton pa la byed in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (3a.6) to gnas lugs mi ston pa la byed in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (3a.2). Here the TBRC Mundgod appears to be incorrect.
7 2011 TBRC bla brang, 3b.3; 1987 Go-mang, 3a.4; 2008 Taipei reprint, 3.13.
8 sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136a.6-136b.6.
9 lha sa 176, vol. 60, 228b.4.
10 2011 TBRC bla brang, 3a.4; 1987 Go-mang, 2b.6; 2008 Taipei reprint, 3.3.
11 I have supplied in brackets material omitted from the citation by Jam-yang-shay-pa from: lha sa 176, vol. 60, 232a.5-232b.4.
12 Correcting rig to rigs in accordance with the Peking title, rnam par bshad pa’i rigs pa.
13 ’phags pa yul ’khor skyon gi zhus pa zhes bya ba thug pa chen po’i mdo, āryarāṣtrapālaperipṛcchānāmamahāyānasūtra, lha sa 62, dkon brtsegd, vol. 38, 499b.5-499b.6.
14 Brackets from Jig-may-dam-chö-gya-tsho’s Port of Entry, 56.1.
15 Jam-yang-shay-pa’s citation of the Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra is in accordance with the sde dge (TBRC W22084 106b.2-106b.4) and the snar thang (TBRC W22703 252.7-253.3) editions of the Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra:

    de ltar de’i phyir blo gros chen po de bzhin gshegs pa’i snying por bstan pas mu stegs byed kyi bdag tu smra ba’i bstan pa dang mi’dra’o blo gros chen po de ltar de bzhin gshegs pa rnaams kyi mu stegs byed bdag tu smra ba la mngon par zhen pa rnaams drang ba’i phyir de bzhin gshegs pa’i snying po ston te yang dag pa ma yin pa’i bdag tu rnaam par rtag pa’i lta bar lhung ba’i bsam pa can dag rnaam par thar pa gsbam gi spyod yul la gnas pa’i bsam pa dang ldan ching myur du bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa’i byang chub tu mngon par ‘tshang rgya bar ji ltar ’gyur zhe na

Tsong-kha-pa’s citation in The Essence of Eloquence of the same passage (TBRC W1KG8902 93a.2-93a.4.) is:
16 Correcting *mi* in the 2008 Taipei reprint (7.12) to *mu* in accordance with the 2011 TBRC bla brang edition (6a.6).

17 See Jeffrey Hopkins’ *Reflections on Reality*, chap. 6.

18 Correcting *ngos zin* in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (7a.4) to *dngos zin* in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (5b.4).

19 Mañjughoṣha Narendrakīrti (*jam pa'i dbyangs mi'i dbang po grags pa*) (also known as Mañjushṛṅkīrti (*jam dpal grags pa*) and Kālachakrapāda), *rang gi lta ba'i 'dod pa mdor bstan pa yongs su brtag pa, pradarśanānumatoddeśaparīkṣā*, Peking 4610, vol. 81.

20 Correcting *ba* in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (7a.6) to *pa* in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (5b.6).

21 Correcting *par* in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (7a.7) to *pa* in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (5b.7).

22 Khay-drub-ge-leg-pal-sang (*mkhas grub dge legs dpal bzang*, 1385-1438) *Extensive Explanation of (Kalkī Pūṇḍarīka’s) ‘Great Commentary on the Glorious Kālachakra Tantra, The Stainless Light’*: Illumination of the Principles (*dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel chen dri ma med pa'i 'od kyi rgya cher bshad pa de kho na nyid snang bar byed pa*)


24 Correcting *ba'i* in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (7b.2) to *pa'i* in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (6a.2).

25 The 1987 Go-mang Lhasa reads *kyi* (6a.2) rather than the more likely *kyis* in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (7b.2).

26 Correcting *dpa'i* in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (7b.3) to *dpa' in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (6a.2).

27 Correcting *ston* in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (7a.3) to *rton* in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (6a.2).

28 Correcting *zhes* in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (7a.3) to *zhes pa* in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa *zhes pa* (6a.2).

29 *lha sa* 176, vol. 60, 228b.4-230b.1.

30 Correcting *yod pa'i* in the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (6a.7) to *yod pa las* in accordance with the 2011 TBRC bla brang (8a.3). This is an emendation for the sake of consistency by the 2011 TBRC bla brang. See the use of *yod pa las* in the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (7b.4).

31 Correcting *mi bden* in the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (6a.7) to *mi bden par* in accordance with the 2011 TBRC bla brang (8a.3).
32 Peking 843, 150a.2-150b.4 and lha sa 176, vol. 60, 231a.6. Jam-yang-shay-pa’s citation has been filled out.
33 Correcting dga’ (lha sa 176, vol. 60, 231b.6) twice in this line of text to dka’ in accordance with Peking 843, 150a.6.
36 mkhas grub dge legs dpal bzang, stong thun chen mo (Madhyamika Text Series, vol. 1, 1972), 126.4-5.
37 I.148; sde dge 4024, vol. phi, 61b1-61b.2.
38 Correcting ba in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (9a.2) to pa in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (7a.2).
39 sde dge 4037, vol. wi, 136b.4.
41 Correcting rigs in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (9b.2) to rig in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (7a.7).
42 The 2008 Taipei reprint (13.1) misreads rig; both 2011 TBRC bla brang (9b.3) and 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (7b.1) correctly read reg.
43 mkhas grub dge legs dpal bzang, stong thun chen mo (Madhyamika Text Series, vol. 1, 1972), 126.3-5.
44 2011 TBRC bla brang, 10a.5; 1987 Go-mang, 7a.1; 2008 Taipei reprint, 13.2.
45 sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136b.6.
46 Correcting rton in the 2011 TBRC bla brang (10b.6) to ston in accordance with the 1987 Go-mang Lhasa (8a.7).
47 2011 TBRC bla brang, 11a.1; 1987 Go-mang, 8a.7; 2008 Taipei reprint, 13.20.
48 sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136a.6-136a.7.
49 lha sa 176, vol. 60, 228b.4-230b.1.
50 sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136a.6.
51 Jam-yang-shay-pa cites only the beginning and “and so forth,” which has been filled out.
52 Jam-yang-shay-pa cites only the beginning and “and so forth,” which has been filled out.
54 2011 TBRC bla brang, 12a.5; 1987 Go-mang, 9a.7; 2008 Taipei reprint, 15.17.
55 2011 TBRC bla brang, 12b.2; 1987 Go-mang, 9b.3; 2008 Taipei reprint, 16.5.
57 Adapted from Hopkins, *Emptiness in the Mind-Only School*, 70.
58 sde dge 4035, sems tsam, vol. tshi, 130a.6-7.
59 Annotations, dgnos, wa, 97a.5.
Chandrakīrti’s Autocommentary on the “Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) ‘Treatise on the Middle’” (madhaymakāvatārabhāṣya, dbu ma la ’jug pa’i bshad pa / dbu ma la ’jug pa’i rang ’grel). Peking 5263, vol. 98; sde dge 3862, VI.30, 256a.7-256b.1.

Annotations, dgnos, zha, 97b.3.

sde dge 4035, 259.4-6 130b.5-6.

Annotations, dgnos, zha, 97b.3.

sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136b.6.

Annotations, dgnos, za, 98a.1.

Maitreya’s Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras, sde dge 4020, sems tsam, vol. phi, 223b.6-7.

Annotations, dgnos, ’a, 98a.3.

snar thang edition of Asvabhāva’s text, TBRC W2270.

Maitreya’s Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras, sde dge 4020 sems tsam vol. phi., 29b.3.

Maitreya’s Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras, sde dge 4020, sems tsam, vol. phi, 29b.3.

Annotations, dgnos, ya, 98a.4.

Maitreya’s “Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras, sde dge 4020; 29b.3-5.

Asaṅga’s Grounds of Yogic Practice; sde dge 4035, 130b.2.

lha sa 176, vol. 60, 228b.3.

sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136b.1. ACIP text reads: ཆེ་རུ་ིས་ལ་ཉེ་ཚུ་དཔེར་ལས་ཉེ་ཅེ་གོང་ཆུ་དེ་དེ་ཐོག་ལ་མི་ལོ་མེད་པ་དེ་ནི་དེ་ཁོ་ནི་དོན་ལས་མི་གཡོ་ཞིང་.

Annotations, dgnos, ra, 98a.7.

Annotations, dgnos, la, 98a.7.

Maitreya’s Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras, sde dge 4020; 29b.3-5.

Correcting yin pa’i in the Labrang edition (190a.6) to yin pas in accordance with the sense of the passage.

I have supplied in brackets material omitted from the citation: sde dge 89, 232a.5-232b.4.

Annotations, dgnos, sha, 98b.1.

sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 58b.4-5.

Annotations, dgnos, sa, 98b.3.

Annotations, dgnos, ha, 98b.3.

lha sa 176, vol. 60, 228b.4-230b.1.

Annotations, dgnos, a, 98b.3.

sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136a.5-6.

lha sa 176, vol. 60, 231b.5.

sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136b.3.

Annotations, dgnos, ka, 99a.1.

sde dge, 4035; 130b.3-4.
91 Annotations, dgnos, kha, 99a.5.
92 sde dge 4037, sems tsam, vol. wi, 136b.4.
93 sde dge 4020; 29b.4.
94 Annotations, dgnos, ga, 99a.6.
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