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TWENTY VARIETIES OF THE SAMGHA:  
A TYPOLOGY OF NOBLE BEINGS (ĀRYA) IN  
INDO-TIBETAN SCHOLASTICISM (PART I)

INTRODUCTION

The Twenty Varieties of the Saṃgha is a special topic within the Tibetan monastic curriculum and is considered by Indo-Tibetan<sup>1</sup> commentators of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (AA) tradition to be one of most difficult topics to comprehend. Its importance as a system reveals not only a soteriological world-view, but also relates the hermeneutical and exegetical strategies that native authors utilize to bring coherence to cryptic, terse verses found in Indian *sāstras* such as the AA. The Twenty *Samghas* in the AA represents an extension of terminology and doctrinal principals found in the *śrāvaka* vehicle employed as a skilful heuristic device to generate awareness of the *Mahāyāna Saṃgha*. As a typology of ideal figures, the Tibetan exegesis of the Twenty Saṃghas, particularly as exhibited by the savant Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), demonstrates a unity in diversity between the vehicles of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *bodhisattvas* in regards to the abstract ideal of the *saṃgha*. In this essay we wish to introduce the topic of the Twenty Saṃghas, analyze its traditional exegesis, and provide the necessary background that will demonstrate (in Part II) how Tsong kha pa constructs a structural system of *Mahāyāna* scholasticism that presents the Twenty *Samghas* coherently from various perspectives.

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<sup>1</sup> We follow Ruegg (2000: vi) concerning the epithet “Indo-Tibetan” as referring to cultural and intellectual developments marked by continuities and what he describes as “family resemblances.” While it may not be prudent to apply this term in all instances of studying the relationship between Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, in this instance our usage is justified in that there is a high degree of continuity between India and Tibet because a root text, the AA, and its commentarial cycle of literature were directly transmitted from Indian scholars to Tibetan scholars.



THE TOPIC OF THE TWENTY *SAMGHAS*

The “Twenty *Saṃghas*” refers to an exhaustive list of the stages through which Noble Beings (*ārya*) may pass in their progress toward enlightenment through various lifetimes in various cosmological realms. This typological list of twenty<sup>2</sup> does not provide a description of any one individual’s path to enlightenment; rather, it enumerates all of the *possible* stages through which any given individual might pass, depending upon factors such as that individual’s cosmological circumstances and the acuity of his faculties. As such, the Twenty *Saṃghas*, by presenting the defining characteristics of these individuals, provides a complete picture of all possible states on the path to enlightenment. *Mahāyāna* Buddhist exegetes regard this topic as crucially important, and its importance is reflected in the inclusion of the Twenty *Saṃghas* in the ten topics of special instruction (*avavāda*) mentioned in the corpus of literature surrounding the AA.

In approaching the subject matter related to this type of *saṃgha*, as Rahula (1978: 55) has noted, it is important to clearly understand a presumed distinction between what is termed the “spiritual” *saṃgha* and the “institutional” *saṃgha*. The “institutional” *saṃgha* is considered to be the Buddhist spiritual community which consists of monks (*bhikṣu*), nuns (*bhikṣuṇī*), and lay followers (*upāsaka*) who follow a code of behavior given in the Vinaya. They are the organized, visible, representative body of the *Saṃgha* Jewel and are responsible, as custodians of the Dharma, for its transmission and perpetuation. The “spiritual” *saṃgha* is that aspect of the *saṃgha* that to be understood, requires an awareness of twenty types of individuals who are considered to be Noble Beings (*ārya*). Noble Beings are those who have developed a cognitive and meditative understanding of reality (*tattva*) through following the practices of the Buddhist path. The insight gained in this understanding has soteriological<sup>3</sup> value and advances

<sup>2</sup> Although the Twenty *Saṃghas* always consists of a list of twenty, various interpretations can lead to various lists of twenty, as is detailed in Apple (2001). While one can point to other scholastic lists with fixed numbers but varying contents, the Twenty *Saṃghas* differs from many of these lists, inasmuch as one cannot provide any easy formula to compute its possible contents. As we shall see, this lack of regularity reflects the complexity of the topic.

<sup>3</sup> Our usage of “soteriology” is in a Buddhist sense and conforms to that found in Buswell and Gimello (1992: 2–3): “the theory according to which certain methods of practice, certain prescribed patterns of religious behavior, have transformative power and will lead, somehow necessarily, to specific religious goals.” The term “soteriology” is a theological term brought into early Christianity from the Greek medical tradition. The etymology is derived from the Greek *sōtērion* “salvation,” which as Buswell and Gimello (1992: 310) note, the root “*sōtēr*” can mean “to heal” – a point that can be compared to the Buddha’s traditional role as doctor and his teachings of the Dharma as medicine.

an individual toward Enlightenment. As the Tibetan scholar Geshe Sopa (1985: 156) has mentioned, when an individual attains this level of insight into reality, a stage known as the Noble path (*āryamārga*), that individual begins to perform all the functions of the *saṃgha* within his or her own person.

The *saṃgha* in this sense refers to the twenty types of Noble Beings who are making progress toward spiritual emancipation. Therefore, in this instance, the *saṃgha* is not conceived of as only an outer object of reliance, or as only a community of people who conform to and follow the values taught by the Buddha. Here, within the rubric of the Twenty Saṃghas, the *saṃgha* represents “ideal figures as the embodiment and proof of the path” (Buswell & Gimello, 1992: 10). The *saṃgha* in this sense represents those qualities of an ideal figure that provide the structure and worldview in which soteriological results of the path take place.

Along these lines, while soteriologically significant, the objectified, codified, and detailed scholastic descriptions of these ideal figures do not serve as practical guides to Buddhist practice, nor do they provide details of actual spiritual experience. Rather, the topic of the Twenty Saṃghas serves as an archetypal model of the worldview in which spiritual liberation is possible for the individual practitioner. What Dreyfus (1997: 62) expresses for the AA in general, can also be applied to the AA’s special topic of the Twenty Saṃghas, namely, that it “provides the Tibetan tradition with the framework that makes a narrative of spiritual progress possible and introduces an element of closure without which the commitment required by Buddhist practices cannot be sustained.”

#### METHODOLOGICAL AND HERMENEUTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Certainly we could try to interpret the earliest material concerning the Twenty Saṃghas – i.e., the root verses of the AA and the prose of the *Pañcaviṃśatisahāsrīkāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, without recourse to any of the Indian commentaries or later Tibetan subcommentaries. However, this type of investigation has already been undertaken in the previous works of Edward Conze (1954a, 1957). The results of such a study appear, in the light of what the Indo-Tibetan commentarial tradition has to offer, to be superficial and even misleading. Even if Conze’s readings of the verses related to the Twenty Saṃghas are historically correct and represent the author of the AA’s true intention, we do not gain any insight into the meaning these verses had for the Buddhist scholars of this textual tradition nor the soteriological purpose in understanding them. We wish to present

a detailed discussion of the subject matter that addresses these issues by following the interpretation of the AA in the later Tibetan commentaries, specifically the works of Tsong kha pa. We have in mind what Richard Gombrich speaks of when he comments that it “is not . . . that we have to accept the Buddhist tradition uncritically, but that if it interprets texts as coherent, that interpretation deserves the most serious consideration” (Gombrich, 1990: 11). Our approach to the AA by means of the Tibetan commentaries, specifically the work of Tsong kha pa, is similar in manner to the way R.M.L. Gethin has utilized subsequent Pāli commentarial literature in interpreting the material from the Nikāyas.<sup>4</sup> As Gethin states:

... we are concerned . . . to come to grips with what actually interested the minds of those who compiled the literature . . . in the light of what is really known with any certainty about the history of early Buddhist literature, I suggest the burden of proof lies with those who might wish to say that the subsequent tradition has got it fundamentally wrong. However, in order to do so they would first have to demonstrate that they had properly appreciated what the subsequent tradition . . . has to say, and this, the world of Buddhist scholarship is not . . . in a position to do. (Gethin, 1992: 16)

We should clarify here that our approach to understanding and analyzing this material is characterized as “emic” rather than “etic.” That is, in our exegesis, we have utilized categories, terms, and structures within the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist intellectual milieu in an effort to “think along”<sup>5</sup> with this tradition of scholarship.

If we were to engage in an “etic” analysis and approach the material utilizing appropriated conceptual or linguistic apparatuses, our analysis may indeed yield interesting results. For instance, we could appropriate theoretical models from psychology, and analyze the ideal figures within the Twenty Saṃghas in terms of psychological types or “case histories.”<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, amplifying upon Dreyfus’s thematic notion that the world-view we are reconstructing is a “narrative of spiritual progress,” we could approach the Twenty Saṃghas in the light of an appropriation of structuralist literary theory, particularly through the work of Roland Barthes’ structural analysis of narratives. Through this appropriation of structuralist theory, our approach to the study of the Twenty Saṃghas could be seen

<sup>4</sup> We should note that our utilization of the Tibetan sources to approach the AA is in a *similar* manner to the method employed by Gethin in approaching the Nikāyas but not the *same* exact procedure. In the following citation, the Tibetans did not compile the AA commentaries in the same manner that the Pāli commentators compiled their literature.

<sup>5</sup> See Ruegg (1995: 156–157). For similar viewpoints, cf. Griffiths (1994: 19); Cabezón (1994: 3ff).

<sup>6</sup> See for instance Manné, “Case Histories from the Pāli Canon II: Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmin, Anāgāmin, Arahat – The Four Stages Case History or Spiritual Materialism and the Need for Tangible Results”, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXI (1995), 35–128).

as a descriptive structural analysis of a multilayered narrative of Buddhist soteriology.<sup>7</sup>

However, I think that it is imperative to come to terms with the tradition's exegesis on its own terms as a system. That as Ruegg (1995: 157) has suggested, an emic analysis "provides as good a foundation as any for generalizing and comparative study, one that will not superimpose from the outside extraneous modes of thinking and interpretative grids . . ." Once we are able to come to terms with a tradition's conceptual system, in this instance the typological analysis of ideal figures found in the Twenty Saṁghas, we can then proceed to reflect upon the implications that such a system may have in our understanding of that culture.

In terms of tradition, first and foremost the Twenty *Saṁghas* is a specialized topic of extended doctrinal discourse located within Tibetan Buddhist scholastic traditions. We do have Indian Buddhist textual sources, the well-known twenty-one Indian commentaries<sup>8</sup> on the AA, which discuss the Twenty *Saṁghas*. However, most of the Indian AA commentators give only fragmentary discussions of the topic, and their remarks are usually given in response to, or to briefly comment upon, what other Indian commentators have stated. The works of Ārya Vimuktisena and Haribhadra are our earliest textual sources and the most fundamental of the Indian AA commentaries. They serve as the basis for subsequent Indian commentaries and present the most extended discussion of the Twenty *Saṁghas*. However, both of these commentaries end their discussions of the Twenty *Saṁghas* with a rather curious statement:

Here we will not give an extensive discussion; why grind down what is already ground?  
(*atra tv asmābhir nopanyastaṃ kiṃ piṣṭaṃ piṣṣma*; Pensa, 46.5-6, W: 10-11).

In other words, the subject matter had already been thoroughly "hashed-out" within the cultural arena of Indian scholasticism. None of the early Indian AA commentators felt obligated to thoroughly discuss a "soteriological narrative" that was already well-known in their scholastic arena. Because of this attitude of the early Indian sources and the lack of other early Indian AA source material, a full analysis of the Twenty *Saṁghas* from just the Indian Sanskrit AA sources alone may not appear as a coherent and complete system.

However, as Ruegg (1981: viii) has commented, "... Tibetan scholars developed remarkable philological and interpretative methods that could

<sup>7</sup> See Apple (2001: 20-27) for an understanding of the Twenty Saṁghas through Barthes structural analysis of narratives.

<sup>8</sup> A listing of these twenty-one Indian commentaries may be found in Obermiller (1932: 9-11), Conze (1978: 111-117), and Makransky (1997: 395-396).

well justify us in regarding them as Indologists *avant la lettre*.” Therefore, it is our contention that an investigation from the Tibetan scholastic tradition will clearly explain the meaning and significance of the Twenty *Samghas* in the context of Tibetan Buddhism and what a leading representative of the Tibetan tradition, i.e., Tsong kha pa, sees as the true Indian Buddhist context.

The topic of the Twenty *Samghas* in the Tibetan Buddhist scholastic tradition developed in a different manner from that of India. After the AA’s reintroduction into Tibet in the 11th century, each successive generation of Tibetan commentators progressively expanded upon the commentaries of the previous generation. In regards to the Twenty *Samghas*, the Tibetan scholastic tradition of commentarial expansion eventually resulted in subcommentaries that became independent treatises. Among other outcomes, this led to a genre of scholastic literature that focused exclusively on the topic of the Twenty *Samghas*. Our discussion of the Twenty *Samghas* will be derived from the pioneer of this unique genre of scholastic literature found in the Tibetan tradition, Tsong kha pa.

#### *Tsong kha pa’s hermeneutical strategy*

As we have stated, we are primarily interested in an attempt at a reconstruction of Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa’s (1357–1419) own intended standpoint with regard to the Twenty *Samghas*. The recovery of any author’s “intent” is a problematic notion, particularly in relation to subtle nuances of philosophical speculation. The intentions seen in any given author’s composition may be shaped by a range of unapparent forces, such as sociopolitical or economic concerns, which allow for an author’s intent to be polysemous in nature. In this essay, I have chosen to bracket such unapparent forces and focus rather on the ostensible intention found through a bare bones reading of the texts. Reading Tsong kha pa’s texts in a manner which constructs an ostensible intention may be artificial or fictional in that the actual reality of his alleged intentions may be more complex and comprised of unapparent intentions which may contradict the ostensible. Nevertheless, a reading of the ostensible intention of Tsong kha pa’s understanding of the Twenty *Samghas* is justifiable in that it serves as a useful heuristic device that allows us to construct a plausible surface intent of what Tsong kha pa believes himself to be doing. This ostensible intent may not be the one and only real intent of Tsong kha pa’s endeavor, but such a reading allows us to bracket a range of potential interpretations that are indefinite as to their plausibility.

Along these lines, the construction of an ostensible intent in regard to our Indian authors is problematic. Most notably, the author of the AA’s

ostensible intent in regard to the Twenty *Samghas* is not clear. As we will see, the AA's verses on the Twenty *Samghas* are cryptic and grammatically vague enough to support, outside the context of any commentarial input, almost any interpretative stance that one wishes to posit. Likewise, the recovery of the principal Indian commentators, Ārya Vimuktisena and Haribhadra, interpretative stance on the Twenty *Samghas* is also problematic. Their commentaries do provide sufficient evidence to calculate how they arrive at enumerating the Twenty *Samghas*, but there are insufficient details to allow us to understand the underlying assumptions of how they arrive at their conclusions. In our approach to the Twenty *Samghas*, I have therefore been sympathetic to Tsong kha pa's interpretive stance in that I see him offering a viable commentarial exegesis of the Twenty *Samghas*, which may not be *the* objectively correct interpretation (if there can be one), but certainly appears to be an interpretation which is coherent, refined, and well-informed. One could say that what I am doing is eliminating certain interpretations, and namely Tsong kha pa's interpretation, from being an unreasonable one based on the evidence we currently have.

In this regard, as Ruegg (1967: 44) has eloquently spoken of scholars within Tibetan culture as representing the "leading forerunners" of those practicing Indology, we can perhaps extend this notion of Tibetan scholarship, in this instance the Buddhist scholarship of Tsong kha pa, as representative of a leading forerunner in Buddhist Theology. Due to the developments in late 20th century North America Buddhist scholarship of a "Buddhist Theology" (see Jackson & Makransky, 2000), I would like to suggest the possibility that Tibetan scholars like Tsong kha pa are "Buddhist theologians" who, while being innovative in their interpretation and systemization, see themselves as rationally reconstructing the logical consequences of how Indian *Mahāyāna* Buddhist systems of thought might be expected to evolve. In this context, we should view scholars like Tsong kha pa as specialists in internal history (Tillemans, 1990: 16, 1983: 312). That is, we should see Tsong kha pa as drawing logical conclusions of what could have been said, given the key ideas of a Indian Buddhist author or text, as opposed to the concern of external history, with its emphasis on what was actually said, or what actually took place.

Tsong kha pa appears to be engaged in two exegetical exercises while interpreting the Twenty *Samghas*. First, Tsong kha pa sees himself as properly recovering and presenting the intentions (*dgongs pa*) of the two principal Indian AA commentators, Ārya Vimuktisena and Haribhadra. For Tsong kha pa (*Golden Garland*, 1970: 253), although "most Indian and Tibetan scholars have searched out this intention," they have not developed a clear interpretation of these commentator's exegesis. Second, Tsong kha

pa sees himself as establishing “his own system” (*rang lugs*) of interpreting the Twenty *Samghas* by means of textual Buddhist hermeneutics. This is especially clear in Tsong kha pa’s *Stairway*, where he engages in exegesis and analysis of “textual systems” (*gzhung lugs*) in order to arrive at the proper understanding of the defining characteristics (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*, Tib. *mtshan nyid*) of ideal figures.

Tsong kha pa’s analysis and exegesis is shaped by traditional Buddhist hermeneutical strategies such as the “Four Reliances”<sup>9</sup> (*rton pa bzhi, catuḥpratisaraṇa*): “rely on the doctrine (*dharma*) and not on the person (*pudgala*); rely on the meaning (*artha*) and not on the word (*vyañjana*); rely on the definitive meaning (*nītārtha*) and not on the interpretable meaning (*neyārtha*); rely on direct realization (*jñāna*) and not on discursive consciousness (*viñāna*).” For Tsong kha pa, the scope of this hermeneutical strategy is in conjunction with an explanation through the proof of scripture (*āgama*) and reasoning (*yukti*).<sup>10</sup> Traditionally, adherence to the doctrine is not dependent on human authority but based on personal reasoning (*yukti*), on what one has oneself known (*jñāta*), seen (*dṛṣṭa*), and grasped (*vidita*).<sup>11</sup> Tsong kha pa utilizes reasoning to distinguish the proper analysis of the Buddha’s scriptures (*rgyal ba’i gsung rab dpyad pa*) along with the citation of Indian *śāstras* to verify his conclusions. Tsong kha pa’s exegetical procedure therefore involves a close reading of the texts, bringing out what he sees as the correct understanding of a word’s meaning to substantiate an Indian *śāstra*’s intention (*bstan bcos kyi dgongs pa*).<sup>12</sup>

In this instance, Tsong kha pa walks a fine line between utilizing reasoning in determining proper textual exegesis and paying his respects to Indian Buddhist lineage figures such as Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Haribhadra, and so on. One of the principal aims on Tsong kha pa’s exegetical agenda is to establish a single unified intention between the scholastic systems of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu in constructing a coherent structure to the Twenty *Samghas*. At the same time, Tsong kha pa aims to develop a system of interpreting the Twenty *Samghas* that can be understood through multiple purviews. In other words, Tsong kha pa’s exegesis is such that it produces an awareness of the Twenty *Samghas* that is coherent from the perspective

<sup>9</sup> These are set forth in the *Sūtra on the Four Reliances* (*catuḥpratisaraṇasūtra*). For more detail and a full discussion of these see AK: ix, LVP: 246; Traité, 1949: 536, n. 1; Thurman, 1978: 19–39; Napper, 1989: 658, 733–734.

<sup>10</sup> See Scherrer-Schaub, 1981: 193–197.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Lamotte, 1988a: 12, MN I.265: *nanu bhikkhave yad eva tumhākaṃ sāmāṃ ñātaṃ sāmāṃ diṭṭhaṃ sāmāṃ viditaṃ tad eva tumhe vadethā ti*.

<sup>12</sup> See Ruegg (1985, 1988) for more on Tibetan hermeneuticians’ own interpretation regarding “thought/intention” (Tib. *dgongs pa*, Skt. *abhiprāya*).



of either a *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, or *bodhisattva* (Stairway: 270: *theḡ pa gsum gyi gang zag rnams kyi mngon rtogs rgyud la bskyes pa'i tshul la sogs pa'i rnam gzhaḡ*).

The aforementioned hermeneutical strategies are present throughout the texts in which Tsong kha pa gives an exegesis on the Twenty *Samghas*. In utilizing these strategies, Tsong kha pa sees himself as recovering the authorial intentions of Haribhadra and Ārya Vimuktisena and in the process recovering the intention of the AA.

In relation to the topic of the Twenty *Samghas*, we do believe that there is enough textual evidence to support Tsong kha pa's presentation as being reasonable, but not necessarily *the* one and only correct interpretation of the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verse of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*'s first chapter. Our approach primarily intends to demonstrate the doctrinal importance of the Twenty *Samghas* and their soteriological significance for Tsong kha pa and the Tibetan tradition that follows after him.

With the above mentioned factors in mind we will examine the topic of the Twenty *Samghas* from textual sources of Tsong kha pa. This includes his *Stairway taken by those of Lucid Intelligence* (*blo gsal bgrod pa'i them skas* (=Stairway)),<sup>13</sup> and sections from his *Golden Garland of Eloquent Sayings* (*legs bshad gser phreng* (=Golden Garland)).<sup>14</sup> The *Dge 'dun nyi shu bsduḡ pa rjes gnaḡ* (=rjes gnaḡ),<sup>15</sup> "The Abbreviated Bestowal of the Twenty Varieties of the *Samgha*," will be used sparingly since it repeats

<sup>13</sup> The full title of this text is *Zhugs pa dang gnas pa'i skyes bu chen po rnams kyi rnam par bzhaḡ pa blo gsal bgrod pa'i them skas zhes bya ba*. Tohoku Catalogue 5413. Volume Tsha 1-42. The edition I will be using is in volume 27, folios 265–309 of the collected works of Tsong kha pa, the *Khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po tsonḡ kha pa chen po'i gsung bum*. Delhi: dGe ldan gsung rab mi nyams rgyun phel series 79–105, published by Nga dbang dge legs bde mo, 1975–1979. This text is also referred to as the *Dge 'dun nyi shu chen mo* by Ngag dbang bkra shis in his *Dge 'dun nyi shu'i mtha' dpyod*, folio side 215, an instructional manual (*yig cha*) of Sgo-mang college.

<sup>14</sup> This is Tsong kha pa's first major work and grand detailed exegesis of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* along with its *Sphuṭārthā* subcommentary by Haribhadra. The full title of the edition I will be using is *Bstan bcos mngon rtogs rgyan 'grel pa dang bcas pa'i rgya cher bsad pa legs bsad gser phreng zhes bya ba bzhuḡs so*. Sarnath: Lama Thuptan Jungnes, 1970, Volume 1. There is also an edition in the The Collected Works Volume 26 and 27 called *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan 'grel pa dang bcas pa'i rgya cher bshad pa'i legs bshad gser gyi phreng ba*, which is the title used by Tsong kha pa (1970: 13).

<sup>15</sup> The Tibetan title: *Dge 'dun nyi shu bsduḡ pa rjes gnaḡ ba dang zhugs gnas bshuḡs so*, Tohoku Catalogue 5420, Volume Tsha 1-7. Collected works volume 27, folios 593–606, 1977. The title refers to the work as an "oral permission or bestowal" (*rjes gnaḡ*). Conze in his *Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (1978: 114) cites this text as *Bzhugs gnas skyes bu chen po' dka 'gnad*, being an "oral (discourse on the) essential points of the individual enterers and abiders (of the *Blo gsal grod pa'i them skas*)". Therefore, this text may be

material from the *Stairway*. The texts of Tsong kha pa that we will employ here explain the twenty varieties of the *Samgha* Jewel based on two verses from the first chapter of the AA.

We have chosen to focus on the works of Tsong kha pa because not only is he famous as an erudite and innovative scholar, but the *Stairway* and *Rjes gnang* appear to be the earliest extant Tibetan texts that deal directly with the topic of the Twenty *Samghas*.<sup>16</sup> Tsong kha pa occupied a pivotal period in the classical scholastic period of Tibetan Buddhism. That is, a period of time that has been described as “the high point of philosophical penetration, exegesis, and systematic hermeneutics, accompanied by the final constitution of the Tibetan religious schools” (Ruegg, 1980: 278). In relation to this period of intense debate and systemization, the scholarship of Tsong kha pa represents a culmination of a long commentarial tradition of the AA. Secondly, although Tsong kha pa’s compilation and synthesis of the Indo-Tibetan tradition before him may be said to mark a culmination in the history of AA commentarial analysis, his works concerning the Twenty *Samghas* marks the beginning of an innovative and new Tibetan systematization of Indian Buddhist doctrine. Therefore, the work of Tsong kha pa concerning the Twenty *Samghas* marks a threshold in Tibetan scholarship between the full assimilation of doctrine concerning the AA and its later definitive systematization.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE TWENTY SAMGHAS<sup>17</sup>

In order to analyze the Twenty *Samghas* as understood through the works of Tsong kha pa, I will first introduce the topic from the root text of the AA and the *Prajñāpāramitā* (PP) *sūtras*. In addition, I will provide a comparison of the list of Twenty *Samghas* with other Indian Buddhist sources. Finally, I will present a detailed discussion and exposition of the Twenty *Samghas* utilizing Tibetan exegetical and heuristic devices. Here in Part I this will involve presenting a description of the *śrāvaka samgha* as a model

considered to be an oral discourse given by Tsong kha pa and written down by one of his disciples.

<sup>16</sup> See section 2.2.6 of Apple (2001) for earlier Tibetan writings specifically on the Twenty *Samghas* which are no longer extant.

<sup>17</sup> Twenty varieties of the *saṃgha* Jewel (Skt. *viṃśatiprabhedasaṃgharatna*, Tib. *dge 'dun nyi shu dkon chog*) refers to categories of the “*saṃgha* in the highest sense.” The *Samgha* in the highest sense signifies “Noble Beings” (Skt. *ārya*, Tib. *'phags pa*), those who have achieved the sixteenth moment of the Path of Seeing (*darśanamārga*, *mthong lam*) and who are actualizing the Truth of Cessation (*satyanirodha*, *'gogs bden*) and the Truth of the Path (*mārgasatya*, *lam bden pa*).

that serves as a metaphor to the *bodhisattva saṁgha*, the actual *saṁgha* that is represented in the AA and PP sūtras. This presentation will demonstrate how the Tibetan scholastic tradition and Tsong kha pa understood the AA and its earliest commentators to be influenced by various Abhidharma traditions. This type of presentation will also allow certain confusing doctrinal issues to become clear, and it will document how Tsong kha pa came to certain conclusions in his interpretation of the Twenty *Samghas*. We will discuss in Part II how Tsong kha pa interprets the relationship between the model of the *śrāvaka saṁgha* and the *bodhisattva saṁgha* and the understanding that he has for the definite meaning of the Twenty *Samghas* in the AA.

Our exegesis of the *allegorical saṁgha* consists of three main parts: an introduction to the topic from the foundational text of the AA and the PP sūtras, a detailed discussion and exposition of the Twenty *Samghas* based on the works of Tsong kha pa, and the conclusions and summary of part one of our study.

## THE FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS

As we have mentioned, within the AA system the Twenty *Samghas* is an instruction (Skt. *avavāda*, Tib. *gdams ngag*), and within the context of the *saṁgha* jewel, it is the instruction giving a detailed articulation of twenty types of Noble Individuals (*āryapudgala*). The topic is mentioned in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verse of the AA's first chapter. These verses are as follows:

23a–b. *mṛdutīkṣṇendriyau śraddhādr̥ṣṭiprāptau kulamkulau /*  
 c–d. *ekavīcyantarotpadya kārākārākaṇiṣṭhagāḥ //*  
 24a–b. *plutās trayo bhavasyāgraparamo rūparāgahā /*  
 c–d. *dṛṣṭadharmasramāḥ kāyasākṣī khaḍgaś ca viṃśatiḥ*<sup>18</sup> //

If we were to give a literal translation outside the contextual understanding of our Indo-Tibetan commentarial tradition, these stanzas might be translated as follows:<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The Sanskrit is from Amano (2000: 15). See also Dutt, 1934: xxvii; Conze, 1957: 31.

<sup>19</sup> Literal translation according to Conze (1957); Naughton (1991: 35). The literal translation falls outside the scope of the traditional enumerations given by the Indo-Tibetan commentaries, particularly the traditions that follow either Ārya Vimuktisena or Haribhadra. There are several Indians who do follow a literal interpretation and the resulting translation. According to Tsong kha pa (*Golden Garland*: 247.14): “*Buddhaśrī-jñāna* and *Śāntipa* draw out twenty [*Samghas*] literally from the root text [*Abhisamayā-lamkāra*].” (*bud dha shr'i dang sh'anti pa ste rtza ba'i sgra ji bzhin du nyi shu 'dren pas so*).

There are Twenty [categories]: those with dull and sharp faculties, those who have attained faith and vision, those who are born from family to family, those born with one interval, those who are born in the intermediate state, those who are born, with effort and effortlessly, those who go to Akaniṣṭha, three who leap, those who go to the upper limit of the world, those who destroy attachment to the form [realm], those who pacify visual phenomena, the bodily witness, and the rhinoceros.

Conze (1957: 31) mentions that leading experts on the Sanskrit language note that, from a grammatical point of view, these cryptic verses do not give sufficient hints to allow us to sort out the twenty types of Noble Beings. The difficulty lies in the fact that these twenty types are really a subdivision of the eight *āryapudgalas*, which are not explicitly mentioned in the verses. Within the text of the *Pañcaviṃśati* (Dutt, 1934: 60–71; Conze, 1979: 66–73) there are twenty-four topic headings, mostly likely inserted into the *sūtra* by Haribhadra, of which four do not represent any of the Twenty *Samghas* mentioned in the AA. These four are (in Conze's listing): (A) *bodhisattvāṣṭamakaḥ* (= i. Candidate to the first result), (B) *sakṛdāgāmī* (= iv.), (C) *anāgāmī* (vi), and (D) *arhattvapratipannaka* (= vii). Likewise the fifth variety of the Non-returner, the *ūrdhvamṣrotas*, is not mentioned in either the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* or the AA.

The *Pañcaviṃśati* lists the various types of *bodhisattvas*, from which the AA derives the Twenty *Samghas*, according to the circumstances of their rebirth, beginning with the section that states:

The *bodhisattva*, the great being who dwells through dwelling in perfect wisdom, having left from which state, is he reborn here, or deceased here, where will he be reborn?<sup>20</sup>

We will see how the various Indian and Tibetan commentators deal with the discrepancies between the AA and *Pañcaviṃśati* in Part II where we will also translate AA 1.23–24 according to Indo-Tibetan exegesis. Here, having briefly introduced the topic from the foundational texts, we wish to chart a comparison of the denaturalized terminology<sup>21</sup> found in the AA with other Indian Buddhist texts.

The paradigm of soteriological typologies listed in AA, i.23–24 that represent the Twenty *Samghas* most likely embodies a category of Abhidharmic scholasticism carried into the PP literature. With this hypothesis in

<sup>20</sup> *Pañcaviṃśati*: 60: . . . *bodhisattvo mahāsattvo 'nena prajñāpāramitāvihāreṇa viharati sa kutaś cyuta ihopapadyate / ito vā cyutaḥ kutropapadyate /* (Conze, 1975: 66)

<sup>21</sup> I use “denaturalized terminology” to refer to scholastic language that is elliptical, abstract, and what Paul Griffiths has termed “denaturalized discourse.” The denaturalized style of language found in scholastic literature leads away from the ambiguity of everyday language and into abstract technical jargon. Scholastic jargon is developed and expanded into an unambiguous artificial lexicon of technical terminology designed to communicate in a highly efficient manner that which everyday language cannot (see Griffiths, 1994: 28).

mind, we have tabulated a comparison of the denaturalized terminology found in the AA with other Indian Buddhist sources to demonstrate that, at least from a terminological standpoint, the Twenty *Samghas* represents a classification of Noble Beings fairly well established by the 6th century in India.

The charts on the following pages demonstrate the comparison of nomenclature<sup>22</sup> used by various Indian Buddhist texts. The numbers occurring within each column represent the order of the terminology as it occurs in each text. The first chart (Figure 1), beginning from the left column, lists the nomenclature of the Twenty *Samghas* as it is found from a literal reading of the AA verses. Then the terminology as is found in the topic headings of the revised *Pañcaviṃśati* is listed as representative of the terminology used in the PP *sūtras*. The third column represents terminology from the *NikāyaĀgama* traditions. The *Nikāya* tradition knows of eight Noble Beings (*aṣṭāryapudgala*) grouped into four pairs (AN, II: 56, IV: 373): the candidates for and those who abide in the four main results. In particular, the *Aṅguttaranikāya* (I: 220–221) enumerates nine different classes of Noble Beings according to their removal of fetters (*saṃyojana*). Another *sutta* of the *Aṅguttara* (IV: 379) enumerates nine individuals (*puggala*) worthy of worship (*dakkhiṇeya*). The individuals who are worthy of worship represent the Community of disciples (*śrāvakasamgha*), which is similar to the allegorical aspect of the Twenty *Samghas* presented in this essay. This Community may be divided in two classes: those still in training (*śaikṣa*) and those who have no more to train in (*aśaikṣa*). The terminology we list here is from the *Madhyamāgama* (T26, ch. 40, 616a) which distinguishes eighteen kinds of *śaikṣas*. The fourth column lists the nomenclature used by the *Puggalapaññatti*, a Pāli *Abhidhamma* work that comprises the fourth work of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

The second chart (Figure 2) gives the nomenclature as listed from the verses of the *Abhidharmakośa* and sections of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. Tsong kha pa will rely predominately on these two texts to define the distinguishing characteristics of the Twenty *Samghas*. Finally, the last column represents the listing of terminology for the stages of *śrāvaka* individuals (*śrāvakapudgalakramāḥ*, *nyan thos kyi gang zag gyi rim pa'i*

<sup>22</sup> We should note here that although the Twenty *Samghas* tradition that we are presenting is Indian and Tibetan, we will employ throughout this work Sanskrit terminology to express the denaturalized technical jargon which describe ideal figures. In brief, our reasoning for utilizing Sanskrit throughout our work is that Sanskrit serves as a *lingua franca* of Mahāyāna Buddhist scholasticism and therefore can be utilized as a unitary medium of communication in the transposition between Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, and even non-Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions.

AA	Pañca	Madhyamāgama-Śaikṣas	Puggala
mṛdu-indriya	bodhisattvāṣṭamaka śraddhānusārin	1. śraddhānusārin	10. gotrabhū 36. saddhānusārin
tīkṣṇa-indriya	dharmānusārin	2. dharmānusārin	35. dhammānusārin
śraddhāprāpta	śraddhādhimukta	3. śraddhādhimukta	No term
dṛṣṭiprāpta	dṛṣṭiprāpta sakṛdāgāmin anāgāmin	4. dṛṣṭiprāpta 11. sakadāgāmin 13. anāgāmin	33. diṭṭipatto 48. sakadāgāmin 49. anāgāmin
manuṣyakulamkula	manuṣyakulamkula	6. kulamkula	38. kolankolo
devatākulamkula	devatākulamkula	No terms	No terms
ekavīcya	ekavīcika	7. ekavīcika	39. ekabījīn
antara	antarāparinirvāyin	14. antarāparinirvāyin	42. antarāparinibbāyin
utpadya	upapadyaparinirvāyin	15. upapadyaparinirvāyin	43. upahacca-parinibbāyin
kāra	abhisamkāraparinirvāyin	16. sābhisamkāraparinirvāyin	45. sasankhāra-parinibbāyin
ākara	anabhisamkāra	17. anabhisamkāraparinirvāyin	44. asaṅkhāra-parinibbāyin
akaniṣṭha	akaniṣṭhapaṇama	18. ūrdhvasrotas-rūpopaga	46. uddhamsota akaniṭṭhaga
plutas-traya #1	pluta	No terms	No terms
#2 (implied)	ardhapluta		
#3 (implied)	sarvasthānacyuta		
bhavaśyāgrapaṇama	bhavaśyāgrapaṇama		
rūparāgahā	rūpavītarāga		
dṛṣṭadharmaśrama	dṛṣṭadharmaśrama	No terms	No terms
kāyasākṣin	kāyasākṣin		
khadga	arhattvapratipannaka pratyekabuddha	5. kāyasākṣin	32. kāyasakkīn
		No Terms	29. paccakasambuddho

Figure 1. Terminology comparison with other Indian Buddhist texts. (AA = *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*; Pañca = the topic headings of *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*; Madhyamāgama-Śaikṣa = śaikṣa listed from the Madhyamāgama; Puggala = the number heading in the first listing of puggalas in *Puggalapaññatti*).

*ming la*) found in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*, a lexicon of Sanskrit and Tibetan formulated during the 9th century in Tibet.

A brief comparison of the nomenclature from these charts reveals that the system of terminology employed by the AA is related to the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣika school, as the terms are most similar to the list from the *Abhidharmakośa*. However, the Tibetan tradition classifies the interpretation of the AA verses on the Twenty *Samghas* into two separate systems: Ārya Vimuktisena and Haribhadra. Ārya Vimuktisena is understood to follow his interpretation of the AA verses in correlation with the *Abhidharmakośa*, and Haribhadra is understood to construe these categories in correlation with the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. We will investigate the doctrinal foundations of the Twenty *Samghas* in the next section to demonstrate how these various interpretations are possible.

### EXEGESIS OF THE TWENTY SAṂGHAS

Tsong kha pa begins his presentation of the Twenty *Samghas* in his *Golden Garland* (1970: 224) based on a distinction between the *saṃgha* that serves as an example (*mtshon par byed pa'i dpe'i dge 'dun*), or *allegorical saṃgha*, and the *actual saṃgha* to be indicated (*mtshon par bya ba'i don gyi dge 'dun*). This distinction represents a standardized hermeneutical device used by the Tibetan tradition that can only be traced back textually to Bu ston rin po che's *Lung gyi snye ma* (1978: 349). This heuristic distinction allows the Tibetan tradition to articulate the types of Noble Beings in all three vehicles – i.e., *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *bodhisattvas*. It also is a skilful exegetical technique that provides the background material necessary to understand the commentaries on the Twenty *Samghas* by Ārya Vimuktisena and Haribhadra, and ultimately to understand the meaning of the Twenty *Samghas* in the AA itself.

The *saṃgha* that serves as an example (*mtshon par byed pa'i dpe'i dge 'dun*) represents an articulation of the Twenty *Samghas* by means of the classic Abhidharma categories of the *śrāvaka saṃgha* as enumerated in the sixth chapter of the *Abhidharmakośa* and the first part of the *prāptiviniścaya* section (*pudgalavyavasthāna*) of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. The enumeration of this type of *saṃgha* serves as a model to illustrate the *actual saṃgha* of *bodhisattvas* mentioned in the AA.

The *actual saṃgha* indicated (*mtshon bya don gyi dge 'dun*) represents the “real” *saṃgha* that is presented in the AA, i.e. – the *mahāyāna* spiritual community in its definitive sense. This *actual saṃgha* is the *mahāyāna* community of Noble Irreversible *bodhisattvas* (*avaivartika*, *phyir mi ldog pa*) who are destined for the state of Buddhahood through attaining

AA	<i>Abhidharmakośa</i> (mṛdu-indriya) śraddhānusārin (tikṣṇa-indriya) dharmānusārin śraddhānimukta dṛṣṭiprāpta saptakṛtvaparama kulamkula sakṛdāgāmin no terms ekavīciḥ anāgāmin antarāparinirvāyin upapadyaparinirvāyin sābhisamskāraparinirvāyin anabhisamskāraparinirvāyin akaniṣṭha pluta ardhpluta sarvacyuta bhavāgrāga no terms kāyasākṣin Verse vi.24 khadga	<i>Abhidharmasamuccaya</i> śraddhānusārin dharmānusārin śraddhānimukta dṛṣṭiprāpta sakṛdāgāmin kulamkula No terms sakṛdāgāmin ekavīciḥ anāgāmin antarāparinirvāyin upapadyaparinirvāyin abhisamskāraparinirvāyin anabhisamskāra ūrdhvaśrotas No terms kāyasākṣin pratyekajina	<i>Mahāvvyūtpatti</i> 1021. śraddhānusārin 1022. dharmānusārin 1023. śraddhānimukta 1024. dṛṣṭiprāpta 1012 sakṛdāgāmin 1011. kulamkula No terms 1012 sakṛdāgāmin 1013. ekavīciḥ 1014 anāgāmin 1015. antarāparinirvāyin 1016 upapadyaparinirvāyin 1017. abhisamskāraparinirvāyin 1018. anabhisamskāra 1019. ūrdhvaśrotas No terms 1020. kāyasākṣin 1006. pratyekabuddha
mṛdu-indriya	(mṛdu-indriya) śraddhānusārin	śraddhānusārin	1021. śraddhānusārin
tikṣṇa-indriya	(tikṣṇa-indriya) dharmānusārin	dharmānusārin	1022. dharmānusārin
śraddhāprāpta	śraddhānimukta	śraddhānimukta	1023. śraddhānimukta
dṛṣṭiprāpta	dṛṣṭiprāpta saptakṛtvaparama	dṛṣṭiprāpta sakṛdāgāmin	1024. dṛṣṭiprāpta 1012 sakṛdāgāmin
manuṣyakuḷamkula	kulamkula sakṛdāgāmin	kulamkula	1011. kulamkula
devatakuḷamkula	no terms	No terms	No terms
ekavīciya	ekavīciḥ anāgāmin	sakṛdāgāmin ekavīciḥ	1012 sakṛdāgāmin 1013. ekavīciḥ
antara	antarāparinirvāyin	anāgāmin antarāparinirvāyin	1014 anāgāmin 1015. antarāparinirvāyin
utpadya	upapadyaparinirvāyin	upapadyaparinirvāyin	1016 upapadyaparinirvāyin 1017.
kāra	sābhisamskāraparinirvāyin	abhisamskāraparinirvāyin	abhisamskāraparinirvāyin
ākara	anabhisamskāraparinirvāyin	anabhisamskāra	1018. anabhisamskāra
akaniṣṭha	akaniṣṭha	ūrdhvaśrotas	1019. ūrdhvaśrotas
plutas-traya #1	pluta	No terms	No terms
#2. (implied)	ardhpluta		
#3 (implied)	sarvacyuta		
bhavasāgraparama	bhavāgrāga		
rūparāgahā	no terms	kāyasākṣin pratyekajina	1020. kāyasākṣin 1006. pratyekabuddha
dṛṣṭadharmasrama			
kāyasākṣin	kāyasākṣin		
khadga	Verse vi.24 khadga		

Figure 2. Terminology comparison.



*anuttarasamṃyak-saṃbodhi*. They are the *actual saṃgha* mentioned in the *Pañcaviṃśatiprajñāpāramitāsūtra*. Tsong kha pa, along with the Indian commentators Ārya Vimuktisena and Haribhadra, will correlate the relationship between these two distinctions of *saṃgha* with the analogies given in the *Avaivartikadharmacakrasūtra* (AAV: 46; AAĀ: 36).

In this essay (Part I) we will focus upon Tsong kha pa's articulation of the *allegorical saṃgha*. Tsong kha pa examines the *allegorical saṃgha* primarily in his *Stairway* and has complementary remarks regarding this *saṃgha* in his *Golden Garland*. The allegorical *saṃgha* serves as an analogical template for the *actual saṃgha* of *bodhisattvas*. Part II of this essay will articulate the *actual saṃgha* of *bodhisattvas* and its semiotic relationship with the *allegorical saṃgha*.

*The allegorical Saṃgha* (mtshon par byed pa'i dpe'i dge 'dun)

The *allegorical saṃgha* is an illustration of the *saṃgha* which is composed of individuals from within the *śrāvakayāna*. Before we discuss the details and specifics of this type of *saṃgha*, I would like to give a brief sketch of the general doctrinal principles and soteriological structures in which the matrix of the *śrāvaka saṃgha* takes place.<sup>23</sup>

In the *śrāvaka* vehicle as discussed by the AA, *śrāvakas* become averse to the sufferings of conditioned existence and wish to escape *saṃsāra*, the endless cycle of rebirth that beings go through. The goal for *śrāvakas* is to obtain *nirvāṇa*, spiritual emancipation that is the cessation of suffering and rebirth. *Nirvāṇa* for *śrāvakas* is understood in terms of extinguishing the causes for rebirth and suffering. The causes which generate *karma* and contribute to the continuation of rebirth are defilements (*kleśa*). Therefore, the most important factor and organizing principle in the construction of the *śrāvaka* path is the abandoning of defilements.

In the systemized *Abhidharma* tradition that Tsong kha pa follows, based on the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika school, defilements are referred to generically as: fetters (*saṃyojana*), bonds (*bandhana*), latent defilements (*anuśaya*), and afflictions (*kleśa*). In general ten basic defilements are to be abandoned: belief in the perishable aggregates (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*), doubt

<sup>23</sup> In this section we will be following primarily the outline of the Vaibhāṣika path structure based on the *Abhidharmakośa*, vi.17–25ff, its related commentaries and Obermiller, 1932: 18–26. See Apple (2001) for a detailed discussion of this path system. Similar outlines may be found in E. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins to the Śaka Era*: 678–686; H. Guenther (1957), *Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma* (Berkeley and London: Shambhala Publications, 1976, reprint edn.), 215–232; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought*, 175–177; Sopa and Hopkins, *Cutting Through Appearances* (Snow Lion, 1989), 203–220; E. Frauwallner (SUNY, 1995), “The Abhisamayavāda”, *Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems*: 149–184.

(*vicikitsā*), the belief that ethics and rituals are supreme (*śīlavrataaparā-marśa*), sensual pleasure (*kāmarāga*), hostility (*vyāpāda*), desire for existence in the form realm (*rūparāga*), desire for existence in the formless realm (*ārūpyarāga*), pride (*māna*), delusion (*moha*), and excitability (*auddhatya*). These defilements are divided into different enumerations depending on how they are removed. Tsong kha pa follows the enumeration that is calculated in relation to how the defilements are removed by the path of seeing (*darśanamārga*) and the path of cultivation (*bhāvanāmārga*).

A *śrāvaka* progresses to the goal of *nirvāṇa* through successively abandoning defilements that are associated with an established sequence of cosmic realms and meditative stages. A result of practice is a stage on the way to *nirvāṇa* that is defined in accordance with the abandonment of specific defilements associated with specific realms. For example, in order to become a Once-returner one must abandon the sixth path of cultivation defilement of the desire realm. The variety of defilements are correlated with three cosmic realms—the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm. Each defilement in each realm is specified according to whether it is to be abandoned by the path of seeing (*darśanamārga*) or the path of cultivation (*bhāvanāmārga*). Abandonment occurs by progressing through successive stages of seeing the Nobles' Four Truths in the path of seeing and then repeated practice in the path of cultivation of what was seen in the path of seeing. Therefore, comprehensive realization (*abhisamaya*) of the Nobles' Four Truths characterize both the path of seeing and path of cultivation.

The path of seeing involves sixteen thought-moments (*cittakṣaṇa*) in which sixteen aspects of the Nobles' Four Truths are cognized. The path of cultivation involves a removal of defilements through a repeated familiarization with the Nobles' Four Truths. The defilements of the path of cultivation are calculated as eighty-one: each of the nine stages of the cosmic realm – i.e., the realm of desire, four concentration levels of the realm of form, and four spheres in the form realm, possess nine varieties of defilements (coarse-coarse, coarse-moderate, coarse-subtle, etc.). The first nine path of cultivation defilements are important to note because they exist in the desire realm and mark the boundary to progressing into the form and formless realms. The paths of seeing and cultivation are demarcated by the character of the defilements to be abandoned, the frequency of practice each path requires, and the type of individual engaged in the path.

In general, there are two types of individuals: ordinary people (*prthagjana*) and Noble Beings (*ārya*). These two types of individuals are differentiated in relation to the sixteen moments of the path of seeing.

Generally, at the beginning of the first sixteen moments of the path of seeing one becomes a Noble Being (*ārya*) and various results of spiritual praxis can be attained depending on the categories of defilements that have been, or still need to be, abandoned through practicing the path of cultivation. One has to pass through the moments of the path of seeing only once, whereas one must pass through the stages of the path of cultivation repeatedly. Ordinary individuals (*prthagjana*) practice only the mundane path of cultivation, while Noble Beings (*ārya*) may practice both the path of seeing and the supermundane path of cultivation. When ordinary persons abandon certain defilements by practicing the path of cultivation, it is referred to as a mundane path (*laukikamārga*). Abandoning defilements as an ordinary person on the mundane path obviates the need to abandon them once again as a Noble Being (*ārya*) on the path of seeing. Defilements removed by a Noble Being after completing the path of seeing occur in the supermundane path of cultivation (*lokottarabhāvanāmārga*).

At the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing, a Noble Being achieves the result known as Stream-enterer, one will never be reborn again as a hell-being, hungry ghost, or animal. While making effort to abandon the first six of the nine desire realm defilements, one is a candidate for the result of Once-returner. At this point a practitioner is approaching or entering into the next result. We will apply the term “enterer” to those individuals who are approaching or entering into a given result. When the sixth desire realm defilement is removed, an individual obtains or abides in the result of Once-returner. We will apply the term “abider” to an individual who is “staying in a certain status” (*phalastha*), that is, residing or abiding (*viharati*) in a given result on the way to *nirvāṇa*. A Once-returner will return to the desire realm by the force of unabandoned defilements one more time, will then strive to abandon the three remaining defilements of the desire realm, and will become an enterer to the result of Non-returner. At the time when an individual has removed the ninth defilement of the desire realm, he is known as an abider in the result of Non-returner. A Non-returner will never take rebirth in the desire realm again and has removed all the path of cultivation defilements associated with the desire realm. However, a Non-returner may take birth in various form or formless realm heavens depending on defilements that need to be abandoned. At this point one takes rebirth in the form and formless realms to remove the remaining seventy-two defilements of the path of cultivation. When an individual makes effort to abandon the remaining seventy-two defilements of the form and formless realms, he becomes an enterer to the result of Arhat. One becomes an abider in the result of Arhat with the removal of all eighty-one defilements of the path of cultivation, and this result is synonymous

with the *śrāvaka* goal of *nirvāṇa* – i.e., emancipation from the suffering of *saṃsāra*.

Tsong kha pa mentions both in the *Stairway* (268) and *Golden Garland* (224) that these four principal results of Stream-enterer, Once-returner, Non-returner, and Arhat compose the *allegorical saṃgha*. These four results are also known as the four pairs of persons (*skyes bu zung bzhi*). When enumerating the *allegorical saṃgha* according to entering into and abiding in the four principal results, the *saṃgha* is referred to as the eight great individuals (*gang zag chen ya brgyad, mahāṣṭapudgala*):<sup>24</sup> the enterers to (*pratipannakāḥ, zhugs pa rnams*) and abiders in (*phalasthā, gnas pa rnams*) the results of the Stream-enterer (*srota-āpanna, rgyun du zhugs pa*), the Once-returner (*sakṛdāgāmin, lan cig phyir 'ong*), the Non-returner (*anāgāmin, phyir mi 'ong*), and the Arhat (*dgra bcom pa*). Tsong kha pa will also include the *Pratyekabuddha* (*rang sangs rgyas*) in this *saṃgha*.

Tsong kha pa's interpretation is primarily based on the *Abhidharmaśālistambhāṣya* and *Vyākhyā* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and its *Bhāṣya*. Tsong kha pa's system of this aspect of the Twenty *Samghas* represents a synthesis of the doctrinal points from texts correlated to the system of the AA. In utilizing the methodology of presenting an *allegorical saṃgha* as the basis of the *actual saṃgha*, Tsong kha pa will be able demonstrate an understanding of the *saṃgha* from the viewpoint of all three vehicles. More importantly, Tsong kha pa will be able to demonstrate how the principles and terminology utilized for the community of *mahāyāna bodhisattvas*, as found in the presentation of the *actual saṃgha*, are principles extended from basic *Abhidharma* categories found in the definition of the *śrāvaka saṃgha*. This approach to defining the *saṃgha* jewel reveals a systematic coherence between scholastic categories of the *śrāvakayāna* and the *bodhisattvayāna*. It illustrates that the *mahāyāna saṃgha* jewel reappropriates the defining elements of the *śrāvaka saṃgha* and extends those elements to the more demanding and strenuous *bodhisattva* path to full Buddhahood.

At this point we must briefly present several specific doctrinal presumptions that Tsong kha pa assumes of the reader that provide the soteriological structure of how fruition within the *śrāvaka* vehicle functions.

<sup>24</sup> May, *Prasannapadā*: 281, f.n. 740: *catvāraḥ pratipannakāḥ pudgalāś catvāraś ca phalasthā ity ete 'ṣṭau paramadaḥṣiṇārḥā mahāpuruṣapudgalā bhagavatā saṃgho bhavantīty uktāḥ* / We will not discuss the definition of the Noble beings according to Candrakīrti in the *Prasannapadā* as well as Tsong kha pa's *Rtsa shes ṭik chen* (1975: 395–399) since this represents a different system of interpretation.

*Fruition within the śrāvaka vehicle: The results of śrāmaṇya*

The four general results of the religious life within the *śrāvaka* vehicle are based on what is known as *śrāmaṇya* (*dge sbyong gi tshul*), rendered in Tibetan as literally the “method of training [in] virtue.” *Śrāmaṇya* is the stainless (*amala*) and uncontaminated uninterrupted path (*anāsravānantaryamārga*).<sup>25</sup> A traditional etymology (*nirukti*) relates *śrāmaṇya* to one who pacifies (*śamayati*) the afflictions.<sup>26</sup> The AKBh states that *śrāmaṇya* is understood as such because “one who thoroughly pacifies all the various pollutions and unvirtuous qualities [that extend] from rebirth up to old and death is known as a *śramaṇa*.”<sup>27</sup> Yaśomitra comments that *śrāmaṇya* is a purifying activity like the cleaning of a cloth and he also defines the term *śrāmaṇya* from “pacifying” (*śamayati*) the afflictions (*kleśa*).<sup>28</sup>

*Śrāmaṇya* is understood to be equal to the “uncontaminated uninterrupted path,” and it enables a Noble Being (*ārya*) who abides on an uncontaminated path to be a “true *śramaṇa*” (*paramārthaśramaṇa*), one who pacifies the defilements in an absolute sense. When a fruition from *śrāmaṇya* is attained, the uninterrupted path (*ānantaryamārga*), there is a result of *śrāmaṇya* (*śrāmaṇyaphala*) that is both conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) and unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). The conditioned result is the path of liberation (*vimuktimārga*) and the unconditioned result is a true cessation (*nirodhasatya*). The path of liberation is the result of a homogeneous cause (*sabhāgaḥetu*), and it consists of outflowing results (*niṣyandaphala*) and results through effort (*puruṣakāraphala*). True cessation as result of *śrāmaṇya* is the disconnection (*visaṃyoga*) of that path and the abandonment of afflictions at the corresponding level. In other words, true cessations result in the mental continuum becoming bereft of afflictions.

The conditioned paths of liberation (*saṃskṛtavimuktimārga*) are eighty-nine in number. There are eight paths of liberation which abandon the eight afflictions (*kleśa*) to be removed by the path of seeing (*darśanaheyaprahāṇa*). The eight afflictions removed by the path of seeing

<sup>25</sup> AKBh: 369: *kim idaṃ śrāmaṇyaṃ nāma* / (AK, vi.51a) *śrāmaṇyam amalā mārgaḥ* / *anāsrava mārgaḥ śrāmaṇyaṃ* / (370) . . . *tatrānantaryamārgaḥ śrāmaṇyam* / See Apple (2001) section 3.2.1.1.4 for details regarding the uninterrupted path.

<sup>26</sup> *Dhammapada*, #265: *yo ca saṃeti pāpāni aṇuṃ thūlāni sabbaso samitattā hi pāpānaṃ samaṇo* ‘*ti pavuccati*’ / “One who totally subdues pollutions, both great and small, is known as a *samaṇa* because he is the conqueror of all pollutions.”

<sup>27</sup> AKBh: 369: *saṃitā anena bhavanti anekavidhāḥ pāpakā akuśalā dharmā vistareṇa yāvaj jarāmarañyās tasmāc chramaṇa ity ucyata iti sūtre vacanāt* / Poussin (241) identifies the sūtra from the *Madhyama*: 48.

<sup>28</sup> AKV: 979: *śrāmaṇyayogāc chramaṇo bhavati* / *yathā śauklyayogāc chuklaḥ paṭa iti* / *śamayati kleśān iti śramaṇaḥ* /

comprise the defilements removed within the desire realm and upper realms of the form and formless heavens. These are abandoned by seeing the truths of suffering (*duḥkha*), arising (*samudāya*), cessation (*nirodha*), and the path (*mārga*). Therefore there are eight paths of liberation correlated to the path of seeing.

There are eighty-one paths of liberation which remove the eighty-one afflictions abandoned by the path of cultivation (*bhāvanāheyaprahāṇa*). These comprise the nine-three coarse, three medium, and three subtle-afflictions abandoned by the path of cultivation (*bhāvanāheyakleśa*) within the realm of desire. Likewise there are nine-three coarse, three medium, and three subtle-afflictions abandoned by the path of cultivation in each of the first, second, third, and fourth concentrations of the form realm, the realms of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and peak of existence of the formless realms. Therefore, there are eighty-one paths of liberation which abandon these eighty-one afflictions (*kleśa*). There are also eighty-nine unconditioned true cessations (*asaṃskṛtanīrodhasatya*) according to a similar method of counting. In this way the *Abhidharmaśāstra* states:

*Śrāmaṇya* is the stainless path, the result is conditioned and unconditioned, there are eighty-nine, the path of liberation along with the cessations.<sup>29</sup>

Even though there are eighty-nine two-fold results of *śrāmaṇya* it is not contradictory to classify them into four results such as the Stream-enterer, Once-returner, Non-returner, and Arhat. Classifying the results of *śrāmaṇya* into four results involves numbering the results according to the principle proclivities to abandon in order to achieve emancipation. These are the three fetters (*saṃyojana*) abandoned by the path of seeing (*mithong spang kun sbyor gsum*), the five “inferior” fetters (*avarabhāgīya*) and the five “superior” fetters (*ūrdhvaabhāgīya*). The three fetters abandoned by the path of seeing are the view of the perishable aggregates (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*, ‘*jig tshogs la lta ba*), holding the belief that ethics and conduct are supreme (*śīlavrataparāmarśa*, *tshul khrims dang brtul zhug mchog ‘dzin*), and doubt (*vicikitsā*, *the tshom nyon mongs can*). Abandoning these fetters

<sup>29</sup> AK, vi.51: *srāmaṇyam amalō mārgaḥ saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtaṃ phalam / ekānnanavāṭistāni muktīmārgāḥ saha kṣayaiḥ /* AKBh (369–370): *darśanaheyaprahāṇāyāṣṭāv ānantaryamārgā aṣṭau vimuktīmārgā bhāvanāheyaprahāṇāya navasu bhūmiṣu pratyekaṃ nava prakārāṇāṃ kleśānāṃ prahāṇāya tāvanta evānantaryamārgā vimuktīmārgāś ca / tatrānantaryamārgāḥ śrāmaṇyam vimuktīmārgāḥ saṃskṛtāni śrāmaṇyaphalāni / tan niṣyandapuruṣakārāphalatvāt / teṣāṃ kleśānāṃ prahāṇānyasaṃskṛtāni śrāmaṇyaphalāni /* AKV (980): *tasya śrāmaṇyasyānantaryamārgalakṣaṇasya yathāyogaṃ vimuktīmārgā asaṃskṛtāni ca niṣyandaphalatvāt puruṣakārāphalatvāc ca / vimuktīmārgāś tasya niṣyandaphalaṃ puruṣakārāphalaṃ ca / asaṃskṛtāni puruṣakārāphalam eva /*

leads to the result of Stream-enterer. The five “inferior” fetters include the three of the first set along with sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*) and hatred (*vyāpāda*). Through abandoning most of the *avarabhāgīya* the result of Once-returner is attained and through abandoning all of the *avarabhāgīyasamyojana* the result of Non-returner is attained. The five superior fetters (*gong ma'i cha dang mthun lnga*) are the two, craving of the form and formless realms, conceit (*māna*), excitability (*auddhatya*), and delusion (*moha*).<sup>30</sup> The result of *śrāmaṇya* based on abandoning all the fetters is the stage of Arhat.

Another manner of establishing four results is based on the enumeration of five reasons. This is the method that Tsong kha pa uses in both the *Stairway* (352) and *Golden Garland* (1970: 244). Tsong kha pa bases the five reasons for four results entirely according to the *Abhidharmakośa*:

Four results are set forth on account of five causes: letting go of the previous path of result, obtaining another path, a collected cessation, obtaining the eight knowledges, and realizing the sixteen aspects [of the Nobles' Four Truths].<sup>31</sup>

As Tsong kha pa comments in the *Stairway*:

One posits four results as follows: (1) there is the release from a **previous path of result**; (2) obtaining the **path of another result**, and; (3) a **collected cessation**, or collected abandonment, as in acquiring a single attainment which consists of all the abandonments to be abandoned by the path of seeing at the time of the sixteenth moment; (4) **eight knowledges** to be obtained are the four dharma knowledges [on the truths of suffering, origination, cessation, path] and the four subsequent knowledges; (5) one also obtains the **sixteen** uncontaminated **aspects**, impermanence and so forth [of the Nobles' Four Truths]. Attainment of these five distinct states are posited in the four results.<sup>32</sup>

Tsong kha pa therefore reasons that the results of *śrāmaṇya* are arranged into four results of the Stream-enterer, etc. because it is set forth accordingly by these five causes. (1) That each of the four results has its own previous path of entrance. (2) That one attains the realization of abiding on a result other than entrance into those paths. (3) There is an acquisition of an abandonment, which is like a single attainment, that

<sup>30</sup> AK, v.45a–c (Pradhan 311): *pañcadhaivordhvabhāgīyaṃ dvau rāgau rūpyarūpijau auddhatyamānamohāś ca . . .*

<sup>31</sup> AK, vi.52c–53b (Pradhan 370): *catuḥphalavyavasthā tu pañcakāraṇasambhavāt pūrvatyāgo 'nyamārgāptiḥ kṣayasamkalanam phale (53) jñānāṣṭakasya lābho 'tha ṣoḍaśākārabhāvanā (laukikāptam tu miśratvānāsravāptiḥ dhrteḥ phalam l)*

<sup>32</sup> *Stairway*: 352: . . . 'bras bu bzhi 'jog pa la zhugs pa'i lam sngon la btang pa dang / gzhan 'bras bu'i lam thob pa dang zad pa bsdoms pa ni spang pa bsdoms pa ste / dper na bcu drug pa'i tshe mthong spang spangs pa thams cad kyi thob pa gcig rnyed pa lta bu'o / chos shes bzhi rjes shes bzhi ste brgyad thob pa dang / mi rtag pa la sogs pa'i zag med kyi rnam pa bcu drug thob pa ste / khyad par de lnga thob pa ni 'bras bu bzhi 'jog pa'o zhes 'dod do /

allows one to be free of all objects to be abandoned by the path of seeing. (4) There is an acquisition of the set of eight knowledges – i.e., the eight paths of liberation. Finally, (5) the acquisition of the knowledge which realizes the sixteen aspects of the Nobles' Four Truths, impermanence, and so on.

*Basic enumeration of the allegorical saṃgha*

As we have mentioned, the *allegorical saṃgha* which is demonstrated as a model of the *actual saṃgha* of the AA is comprised of four pairs of individuals that are eight persons: the enterer to and abider in the result of Stream-enterer, the Once-returner enterer and abider, the Non-returner enterer and abider, and the Arhat enterer and abider.

Tsong kha pa notes (*Stairway*: 268; *Golden Garland*: 224) that according to the *Abhidharmakośa*, these eight persons are Noble Beings (*āryas*). This is because even the lowest cognitive threshold entering to the Stream-enterer is explained as abiding on no later than the “persevering receptivity to the doctrine in regards to the truth of suffering” (*duḥkhe dharmakṣānti*) on the path of seeing. Tsong kha pa also states that the two enterers who skip fruitions have attained the path of seeing, the three later enterers to the results of Once-returner, Non-returner, and Arhat who progress gradually attain the path of cultivation. This is because the abiders in the first three results have attained the path of cultivation and because at the sixteenth moment, the subsequent knowledge with regards to the truth of the path (*mārge anvayajñāna*) is considered in the *Abhidharmakośa* system to be the path of cultivation (*bhāvanāmārga*).

According to the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, the enterer of the Stream-enterer and the two enterers of the skipper fruition are on the path of preparation (*prayogamārga*). The Stream-enterer and the abider who skips results, those two are on the path of seeing because the sixteenth moment in the system of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* is considered to be the path of seeing. Tsong kha pa notes these two different points of reference because it has consequences for how the results of Stream-enterer and those who skip fruitions (*thod rgal*) are defined.<sup>33</sup>

*General classifications of individuals within the results of śrāmaṇya*

Tsong kha pa utilizes certain classifications throughout both the *Stairway* and *Golden Garland* as a method of categorizing the divisions within the results of *śrāmaṇya*. I would like to provide basic descriptions of these terms here as a reference point to the specific descriptions in later sections. Tsong kha pa employs five different types of terminology to categorize the

<sup>33</sup> See section on the Stream-enterer and section on those who skip fruitions.



results of *śrāmaṇya*: (1) those who skip fruitions (*thod rgal ba*), (2) those who go previously separated from attachment (*chags 'bral sngon song ba*), (3) those who attain results gradually (*'bras bu rim gyis pa*), (4) those who gradually abandon defilements (*spang bya rim gyis pa*), and (5) those who abandon defilements instantaneously (*spang bya cig car ba*).

(1) Those who skip fruitions (*thod rgal ba*) are individuals who remove defilements to be abandoned by the path of cultivation by a mundane path before reaching the path of seeing. At the moment of reaching the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing, they “skip over” lower results based on the number of defilements removed previously by a mundane path of cultivation (*laukikabhāvanā mārga*). Tsong kha pa (*Golden Garland*: 225) mentions that the term “*thod rgal*” (“skipper”) is applied to the terms “One who is separated from attachment for the most part” (*phal cher chags dang bral ba, bhūyovītarāga*) and “One who is separated from attachment in the desire [realm]” (*'dod chags dang bral ba, kāmavītarāga*). These terms are from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and Tsong kha pa employs the designation “skipper” (*thod rgal ba*), although the actual term “skipper” in the *Abhidharmakośa* is in the context of a name of a meditative attainment (*vyutkrāntakasamāpatti, thod rgal gyi snyoms par 'jug pa*).<sup>34</sup>

(2) Those who go previously separated from attachment (*chags 'bral sngon song ba*) are those who, in the period previous to the path of seeing, separate from attachment to the desire realm *kleśas*.

(3) Those who gradually attain results (*'bras bu rim gyis pa*) are those individuals who gradually achieve the four fruitions in a progressive and sequential manner. (4) Those who gradually abandon defilements (*spang bya rim gyis pa*) are those individuals who abandon gradually the nine most subtle obstacles within the desire, form, and formless realms to be removed by the path of cultivation. (5) Those who abandon defilements instantaneously (*spang bya cig car ba*) are individuals who abandon instantaneously the nine subtle of the subtle afflictions of the desire, form, and formless realms to be removed by the path of cultivation.

Tsong kha pa utilizes these general classifications in his analysis of the *allegorical saṃgha* comprised of the *śrāvaka-saṃgha*. The specific types of individuals that are placed within these general classification will be discussed below.

<sup>34</sup> AKBh: 72.10, 444.2, 445.15. See also Ruegg, 1989: 164–167. It is interesting to note that the term “*thod rgal*” is well known in the Rdzogs chen tradition, but yet carries a different meaning than the one Tsong kha pa appropriates to the term.

*The path parameters of śrāmaṇya*

Along with the assumptions related to topic of *śrāmaṇya* that we have discussed so far, Tsong kha pa also provides a brief discussion in the *Golden Garland* (1970: 227) concerning parameters of the path in which the results of *śrāmaṇya* are attained. These parameters are mentioned from four points of view: (1) the acquisition of results having relied on a certain meditative state, (2) the path from which the acquisition of results take place, (3) the realms in which the attainment of *śrāmaṇya* take place, and (4) the time of attainment. These topics are briefly mentioned in the *Golden Garland* as a point of reference. Each of these topics could be expanded to the encyclopedic proportions that are characteristic of Tibetan scholasticism, but this not necessary in our articulation of the Twenty *Samghas*.

(1) As regards to the acquisition of results by having relied on a certain meditative state: most of the results are obtained by having relied on the “not-incapable” preparation (*anāgamyasāmantaka*) of the first concentration or the fourth concentration itself. The Tibetan traditions refers to the *anāgamyā* as “that which is not-incapable” based on the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*. According to this lexical text, it is called “‘not-incapable’ since it is without the inability to abandon all the afflictions of the three realms through the mind of meditative absorption on the first concentration.”<sup>35</sup> This interpretive gloss may be related to the *Abhidharmakośa*’s statement that, “One becomes detached from all spheres by means of pure *anāgamyā*.”<sup>36</sup> Briefly, the not-incapable (*anāgamyā*, *mi lcogs pa med pa*) preparation is the first preparatory concentration. The fundamental (*maula*) concentrations of the four *dhyānas* and the four *ārūpyas* each have a preliminary threshold called *sāmantaka* (*nyer bsdogs*), the one before the first concentration being known specifically as *anāgamyā*. The theory of *anāgamyā* and its use in detachment (*vairāgya*) is based on the principle that a meditator cannot enter concentration without being free from the defilement of a lower sphere, and that one cannot, while in the same lower sphere, become free from the said lower sphere defilements. Therefore it is necessary to have a threshold that is preliminary to concentration. In other words, a meditator cannot be free of desire realm defilements if his mental awareness is stuck in the desire realm by being attached to various sensual pleasures. At the same time, if a meditator’s mental awareness is at

<sup>35</sup> See Angdu (1973: 80): *anāgamyā* = *nāsyagamyā* / *bsam gtan dang po la snyoms par ‘jug pa’i sems kyis kham gsum gyi nyon mongs pa thams cad spongs mi nus pa med pas na ni lcogs pa med pa zhes bya* / Cf. MVP #1483. Also see AK, iv.18, vi.20, 47, vii.22; LVP: 235, n. 3; Traité: 1036ff.

<sup>36</sup> AK, vi.47c–d: *anāsraveṇa vairāgyamanāgāmyena sarvataḥ* /

the level of the first concentration, s/he experiences the joy and bliss that comes with the first attainment of that concentration and he/she will not be able to abandon defilements. The *anāgāmya* then is a threshold between desire realm mental awareness and first concentration mental awareness in which the conditions are possible for the removal of defilements. The *anāgāmya* is considered to be deficient in *śamatha*, or quiescence, while the *ārūpya* concentrations lack the quality of *vipaśyanā* (AKBh, vi.66b).

(2) The second parameter mentioned by Tsong kha pa concerns the path in which results take place. The three results of Stream-enterer, Once-returner who skips fruitions, and the Non-returner who skips fruitions, attain a result from merely relying on the path of seeing, because they attain the result having relied on just the subsequent persevering receptivity (*anvayañānakṣānti*) in regards to the truth of the path, that is, the fifteenth moment on the *śrāvaka* path of seeing. The results of the Once-returner who progresses gradually and the Non-returner who progresses gradually are attained by having relied on the path of cultivation (*bhāvanāmārga*). That is because the Once-returner who progresses gradually practices to a great extent special insight (*vipaśyanā*), and attains the actual antidote of the sixth affliction of the desire realm having relied on an uninterrupted path. The Non-returner who progresses gradually attains the actual antidote of the ninth affliction of the desire realm having relied on an uninterrupted path. These two results can also be attained having relied on a mundane path (*laukikabhāvanāmārga*) because an individual that is empowered to a great extent by the practice of quiescence (*śamatha*) relies on a meditative cultivation which alternates between grossness and peacefulness (*zhi rags*) and can remove either the sixth or ninth affliction previous to the path of seeing. The result of the *śrāvaka arhat* is obtained by having relied only on the supermundane path of cultivation (*lokottarabhāvanāmārga*). This is because the essential antidote of the ninth affliction of the peak existence (*bhavāgra*) can only be attained by having relied on the uninterrupted path which corresponds with the peak of existence.

(3) The third parameter concerns the realms in which the attainment of *śrāmaṇya* take place. It is clear that the result of Stream-enterer and Once-returner are achieved in states of existence within the desire realm. These two results are not born in the upper realm states of existence, the form and formless realms, since it is not possible for them to become detached from the attachment of the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*). However, it is important to keep in mind that these results can be attained within the heavens of the classes of gods within the desire realm. Also, the path of seeing is absent above the desire realm because it is not possible to carry

out analysis in the form and formless realm (see AK, chapter 6), perhaps mental continuums in the upper realms are too “spaced out” to perform reasoning. Nevertheless, as a result of the lack of a path of seeing in upper states of existence, a person detached from the desire realm and reborn in a higher abode cannot attain the state of Non-returner. The result of Non-returner therefore is attained in a desire realm state of existence because one cannot achieve the causes for state of Non-returner in the upper realms. The result of the *śrāvaka arhat* can be attained in a state of existence within the desire realm. This is because it is possible to manifest this result in a desire realm state of existence by the Stream-enterer who simultaneously abandons obstacles. The *śrāvaka arhat* can also be manifest in the abode of the form realm because the Non-returner who transmigrates to the form realm passes beyond the fifth affliction and by having undertaken this in the realm of desire one is caused to make achievement in the realm of form. The *śrāvaka arhat* can also be manifest in formless realm states of existence because there are Non-returns who transmigrate in the formless realms. Although Tsong kha pa does not mention his source, the above statements concerning how results are attained within each sphere are derived from the *Abhidharmakośa*:

Three are obtained in the desire realm, the last in the three [realms], in the upper [realms] there is not a path of seeing, there is not disgust because from the *sūtra*: ‘here [one] sets out, there one achieves’.<sup>37</sup>

(4) The fourth and final parameter concerns the time of attainment. The Stream-enterer and the Once-returner and Non-returner who skip fruitions attain a result at the time of obtaining the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing. The Once-returner and Non-returner who skip fruitions obtain the result at the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing by having previously abandoned the sixth or ninth desire realm defilement to be abandoned by the mundane path of cultivation. If the sixth defilement to be removed by the path of cultivation is not abandoned and one abandons up to the first five defilements, one obtains only the result of Stream-enterer at the sixteenth moment. Therefore, the Once-returner or Non-returner who skip fruitions can be counted as a first result, since they do not previously release from, or proceed onwards from, either the result of Stream-enterer or Once-returner. The two middle fruitions who gradually progress – i.e., Once-returner and Non-returner, manifest the result after obtaining the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing and obtain the result when abandoning either the sixth or ninth desire realm defilement to be

<sup>37</sup> AK, vi.55, Pruden: 998–999, Śāstrī: 987–988: *kāme trayāptiḥ antyasya triṣu nordhvaṃ hi dr̥kpathaḥ asaṃvegād iha vidhā tatra niṣṭeti cāgamāt* /

abandoned by the path of cultivation. In this way, with regards to the gradual progressor, although it is possible to abandon previous to the path of seeing one to five defilements, the sixth and ninth defilements can only be abandoned after the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing. Those who skip fruitions abandon either six of nine defilements previous to the path of seeing.

These parameters mentioned above serve as reference points for when and where various results can be attained. We have incorporated these path parameters into charts on the following pages to facilitate a graphical reference of the divisions of the four results which comprise the Twenty *Samghas*. We will need to keep these parameters in mind for the next section in which the characteristics of each of the categories of Noble Beings are described.

*Descriptions of each type of noble being*

Tsong kha pa divides his exegesis of the individual descriptions of the *saṅgha* of *śrāvakas* from three standpoints: those who progress gradually in the path (*rim gyis pa*), those who skip over fruitions (*thod rgal ba*), and those who are simultaneous abandoners (*cig car ba*).

*Gradual progressors (rim gyis pa)*

As mentioned above, gradual progressors are those individuals who sequentially and in a progressive manner attain results one by one. Tsong kha pa classifies those who progress gradually into four basic categories: Stream-enterers, Once-returners, Non-returners, and Arhats.

*Stream-enterers (rgyun du zhugs pa, srota-āpanna)*

For individuals who progress gradually, the first result is the stage of Stream-enterer (*srota-āpanna*). In the *Abhidharma* tradition that Tsong kha pa follows, the contextual etymology (*nirukti*) of “*srota-āpanna (rgyun du zhugs pa)*” refers to “one who has entered (*āpanna, zhugs pa*) in to the river or stream (*srotas, rgyun*), the stream of the path leading to *nirvāṇa*.”<sup>38</sup> The Stream-enterer is explained from two aspects: the enterer to the result of Stream-enterer and the abider in the result of Stream-enterer. Tsong kha pa begins his description of the enterer to the result of Stream-enterer (*rgyun zhugs zhugs pa*) in the *Stairway* with an analysis of the characterization of the path of seeing (*darśanamārga*) from among two textual systems available to him. These two textual systems are the *Vaibhāṣika*, based on the *Abhidharmakośa*, and the system of the *Ārya Asaṅga*, from

<sup>38</sup> AKBh: 356: *nirvāṇasroto hi mārgas tena tatra gamanāt / tad asāv āpanna āgataḥ prāpta iti srota-āpannaḥ /*

Result	Process	Realm	Path	Type	Defilements removed
srota-āpanna	pratīpannaka	kāma	darśana	mṛdu indriya śraddhānusārin or dharmānusārin tīkṣṇa indriya	1 to 5
			bhāvanā		
		rūpa	darśana		
			bhāvanā		
		ārūpya	darśana		
			bhāvanā		
	phalastha	kāma	darśana	saptakṛtvaparama kulamkula	0
			bhāvanā		
		rūpa	darśana		
			bhāvanā		
		ārūpya	darśana		
			bhāvanā		

Figure 3. Stream-enterers.

Result	Process	Realm	Path	Type	Defilements removed
sakṛdāgāmin	pratipannaka	kāma	darśana	sakṛdāgāmin pratipannaka	1 to 5
			bhāvanā		
		rūpa	darśana		
			bhāvanā		
		ārūpya	darśana		
			bhāvanā		
	phalastha	kāma	darśana	sakṛdāgāmin phalastha	6
			bhāvanā		
		rūpa	darśana		
			bhāvanā		
		ārūpya	darśana		
			bhāvanā		
			darśana		
			bhāvanā		

Figure 4. Once-returners.

Result	Process	Realm of Attainment	Path	Type	Realm of Nirvāṇa	Mode of Progress	Defilements removed
anāgāmin	pratipannaka	kāma	darśana				
			bhāvanā	ekavīcika	Desire Realm Deities	Gradual	7 or 8
		rūpa	darśana				
			bhāvanā				
	ārūpya		darśana				
			bhāvanā				
	phalastha	kāma	darśana	anāgāmin phalastha			9
			bhāvanā				
			darśana				
		rūpa	bhāvanā	antarāparinirvāyin	form realm intermediate state	By means of intermediate state	9+
				upapadyaparinirvāyin	form realm form realm	By rebirth	
				abhisamskāraparinirvāyin	form realm	With effort	
				anabhisamskāraparinirvāyin	form realm	Without effort	
				akaniṣṭhaga 1. pluta 2. ardhapluta 3. sarvacyuta	Akaniṣṭha Heaven	Alternating Concentration	
				bhāvāgra-parama	Peak of Existence		
		ārūpya	darśana	upapadya-parinirvāyin	Formless Realm	Form realm detachment	9+
			bhāvanā	abhisamskāra-parinirvāyin			
				anabhisamskāra-parinirvāyin			

Figure 5. Non-returners.



Result	Process	Realm	Path	Type	Defilements removed
arhat	pratipannaka	kāma	darśana bhāvanā	arhat enterer	73-80
		rūpa	darśana bhāvanā		
		ārūpya	darśana bhāvanā		
	phalastha	kāma	darśana bhāvanā	arhat	81
		rūpa	darśana bhāvanā		
		ārūpya	darśana bhāvanā		

Figure 6. Arhats.

the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. The system of the *Abhidharmakośa* (vi.29–30) considers the path of seeing to consist of fifteen moments. Therefore the parameter in this system of the enterer to the result of Stream-enterer is considered to be up to the intellectual receptivity on the truth of the path (*mārga anvaya jñānakṣānti*) – i.e., fifteenth moment of the path of seeing. The threshold point of the first enterer in the system of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (AS: 88) is considered to be located in the path of preparation (*prayogamārga*) from among the preparatory analytical factors (*nirvedhabhāgiya*). Tsong kha pa characterizes this boundary based on the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* which states that:

... holding from a single session meditative equipoise of the “preparatory analytical factors” up to the first result there is no attainment.<sup>39</sup>

Tsong kha pa notes in the *Stairway* (269) that the single session of meditative equipoise (*sbyor lam stan gcig*) is not exactly defined other than that an enterer must have continual effort and activity that puts forth effort for the purpose of abandoning defilements. The *Stairway* (269) also states that it is not evident from the source texts which of the four preparatory analytical factors generates the single session of meditative equipoise. However, the *Golden Garland* (1970: 231) states, without a textual reference, that it is generated from the first preparatory analytical factor of heat (*uṣmagata*). Tsong kha pa concludes from his comparison of these two textual systems in the *Stairway* (270) that:

Accordingly, on account of proposing two discordant [systems] in terms of a single basis of analysis, the enterer to the result of Stream-enterer, it is not reasonable for both systems to be correct. If both [systems] are incorrect what is the definite meaning to be accepted? Because it will be damaging to the explanation, the first opinion is not to be admitted. Accordingly it is just that system of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* that is not flawed.<sup>40</sup>

He bases this statement on the premise that one should explain the method of entrance into the first result that generates in the mental continuum a realization that is consonant for the individuals of the three vehicles: *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *bodhisattvas*. In other words, it is important for Tsong kha pa to establish a *mahāyāna* understanding of the first enterer based on the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (AS). As we will see later

<sup>39</sup> ASBH, Tatia: 119: (*srota-āpatti phalapratipannaka*) *ekāsanikaṃ nirvedhabhāgiyaṃ ārabhya yāvad ādyaṃ phalaṃ na prāpnoti* /

<sup>40</sup> *Stairway*: 270: *de ltar lugs de gnyis ka 'thad pa ni mi rigs te dpyad par bya ba'i gzhi rgyun zhugs zhugs pa gcig bu'i steng du mi mthun pa gnyis dam bcas pa'i phyir ro l gnyis ka mi 'thad na gang nges pa'i don du 'dod par bya zhe na ci skad bshad pa'i skyon du 'gyur ba'i phyir phyogs dang po ni khas mi len no l de ltar na yang kun las btus kyi lugs de kho na rma med pa yin ... l*

on in Part II, Tsong kha wishes to demonstrate how the AA interpretation of the Twenty *Samghas* is consonant with AS, both of which are considered to be *mahāyāna* texts. The AA and AS encompass doctrines pertaining to the three vehicles while the *Abhidharmakośa* accounts for only the *śrāvaka* vehicle – i.e., *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*. This distinction will allow Tsong kha pa to demonstrate the difference of interpretation between Ārya Vimuktisena and Haribhadra in the section concerning the *actual samgha* of *bodhisattvas*. Tsong kha pa therefore defines the parameter of the enterer to the result of Stream-enterer from the heat of the path of preparation up to the subsequent intellectual receptivity on the truth of the path. After comparing these two textual systems, Tsong kha pa defines the enterer to the result of Stream-enterer in the *Stairway* (271) as follows:

Thus, a person of the inferior vehicle who makes effort for the sake of obtaining the result of Stream-enterer either does not abandon the series of obstacles to be removed by the path of cultivation in the desire realm or abandons the first up to the fifth but does not [abandon] the sixth [defilement]; as previously explained, an enterer to the result of Stream-enterer is one who abides from the path of preparation of one meditative session up until the time of abiding in the subsequent intellectual receptivity of the path.<sup>41</sup>

In these moments of the path of seeing that lead of up to attaining the result of Stream-enterer, there are two types of enterers that are characterized by their strength of faculties (*indriya*). Tsong kha pa correlates the division of enterers found at the beginning of AA, i.23 *mṛdutīkṣṇendriyau* (“those with dull and sharp faculties”) with that found in the *Abhidharmakośa* (vi.30cd): “the ascetics of weak and sharp faculties (*mṛdutīkṣṇendriyau*) are the ones who follow by faith (*śraddhānusārin*) and the ones who follows by doctrine (*dharmānusārin*) (*mṛdutīkṣṇendriyau teṣu śraddhādharmānusāriṇau*).” Tsong kha pa therefore divides these enterers to the first result by the means of faculty, the weak faculty enterer of Stream-enterer is a follower through faith (*śraddhānusārin*), and the one that has sharp faculties is a follower through dharma (*dharmānusārin*).

The *Abhidharmakośa* provides a contextual etymology (*nirukti*) of the *śraddhānusārin* as *śraddhayā anusāraḥ* = *śraddhānusāraḥ*, “pursuit by reason of faith.” One is known as such because while in the state of being an ordinary individual (*prthagjana*), s/he pursues the Truths

<sup>41</sup> *Stairway*: 271: *de lta na ‘dod pa’i bsgom spang gtan ma spangs pa’am / gcig nas lnga’i bar du spangs kyang drug pa ma spangs shing / rgyun zhugs kyi ‘bras bu thob pa’i phyr du brtson pa’i theg dman ni sngar bshad pa ltar stan gcig pa’i sbyor lam nas bzung ste lam la rjes bzod kyi bar la gnas pa na rgyun du zhugs pa’i ‘bras bu la zhugs pa yin no /*

under the impulse of another, through having confidence in another.<sup>42</sup> Tsong kha pa states basically the same definition but relies upon the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

Who is the follower of faith? One who, having acquired the provisions, having weak faculties, practices for the sake of clearly realizing the truth having recollected the teaching [given] by others.<sup>43</sup>

Likewise, the *dharmānusāraḥ* is explained in a similar manner from the *Abhidharmakośa*: *dharmair anusāraḥ* = *dharmānusāraḥ*, “pursuit by means of dharmas.” This is one who pursues the Truths by himself, without relying on another, by means of the twelvefold scriptures, sūtras, and so forth.<sup>44</sup> Tsong kha pa accepts the definition from the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

Who is the follower of the doctrine? One who, having acquired the provisions, having sharp faculties, practices the clear realization of the truth having recollected the doctrine dominated by the truth by himself.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> AKBh: 353: *śraddhayānusāraḥ śraddhānusāraḥ / so'syāstīti śraddhānusārī / śraddhayānusartuṣīlam asyeti vā / pūrvaṃ parasampratyañenārthānusaraṇāt* / Also AKBh: 380.

<sup>43</sup> *Stairway*: 271. AS, Pradhan: 88: *śraddhānusārī pudgalaḥ katamaḥ / saṃbhṛta-saṃbhāro mṛdvindriyaḥ paropadeśam anusmṛtya yaḥ satyābhisamayāya* / Compare with Pugg #36, p. 15: *yassa puggalassa sotāpattiṭṭhānasacchikiriyāya paṭipannasasaddhindriyaṃ adhimattaṃ hoti / saddhāvāhiṃ saddhāpubbaṅgamaṃ ariyamaggaṃ bhāveti / ayaṃ vuccati puggalo saddhānusārī sotāpattiṭṭhānasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno puggalo saddhānusārī. . .* / “The faculty of faith of one entering to the stage of stream-entry develops to a large extent. One cultivates the Noble Path carrying with it faith, preceded by faith, this one is said to be an individual who follows through faith. A person striving for the fruition stage of stream-enterer like this is one who follows through faith.” MVP #1021, GBBN (1990: 48): *śraddhānusārī zhes bya ba / śraddhā zhes bya ba ni dad pa / anusārī ni rjes su 'brang ba ste / bdag nyid kyi shes pas rtogs pa med kyi / lung las thos pa bzhin du dad pas 'phags pa'i lam gyi rjes su 'jug pas na dad pas rjes su 'brang ba zhes bya* / “a *śraddhānusārī* is called such since ‘*śraddhā*’ means faith and *anusārī* means to follow. When an individual does not realize through insight but rather engages in the Noble path through faith, as in the case of listening to scripture, one is called ‘a follower through faith.’”

<sup>44</sup> AKBh: 353: *evaṃ dharmānusārī / pūrvaṃ svayam eva sūtrādibhirdharmair arthānusaraṇā* /

<sup>45</sup> *Stairway*: 271. AS, Pradhan: 88: *dharmānusārī katamaḥ / saṃbhṛtasamābhārasatīk-ṣṇendriyaḥ svayam eva satyādhipateyaṃ dharmamanusmṛtya yaḥ (satyābhi)samayāya prayujyate* / Compare with Pugg #35, p. 15: *yassa puggalassa sotāpattiṭṭhānasacchikiriyāya paṭipannassa paññāndriyaṃ adhimattaṃ hoti paññāvāhiṃ paññāpubbaṅgamaṃ ariyamaggaṃ bhāveti ayaṃ vuccati puggalo dhammānusārī sotāpattiṭṭhānasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno puggalo dhammānusārī. . .* / “The faculty of insight of an individual entering to the result of stream-entry develops to a great extent. One cultivates the Noble Path carrying with it insight, preceded by insight, this one is said to be an individual who

The *Stairway*, in addition to these definitions, notes from the *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya* that if these followers of faith and doctrine have not previously abandoned the defilements to be abandoned through the mundane path of cultivation (*laukikabhāvanāmārga*), they are known as one who is “bound by all the bonds” (*sakalabandhana*). If it is the case that these two types of followers have previously abandoned the obstacles to be removed by the mundane path of cultivation, up to the fifth category of desire realm defilements, they are still the same as enterers to the first result.<sup>46</sup> Tsong kha pa concludes his discussion of the enterer to the result of Stream-enterer in the *Stairway* with the following descriptive stanza:

Not having abandoned six obstacles of the desire realm, from the meditative period of the path of preparation up to the subsequent patience of the path, that abider, is an enterer [to the result] of Stream-enterer.<sup>47</sup>

After describing the enterer to the result of Stream-enterer, Tsong kha pa examines those who abide in the result of Stream-enterer (*rgyun zhugs gnas pa*, *srota-āpannaphalasthā*). The *Stairway* provides a general definition for the abider in the result of Stream-enterer as:

One of the inferior vehicle who abides on the realization of the sixteenth [moment] and does not abandon the sixth obstacle to be removed by the path of cultivation in the desire realm.<sup>48</sup>

follows through the doctrine. A person striving for the fruition stage of stream-enterer like this is one who follows through doctrine.” MVP #1022, GBBN (1990: 49): *dharmmānusāri zhes bya ba / dharmma anusartuṃ śīlanayasya zhes bya ste / dbang po rnon po gzhan gyi dring la mi* ‘jog cing chos kyi tshul dang mthun par rigs par sbyor bas chos skyi rjes su ‘brang ba zhes bya / “*dharmmānusāri* means *dharmma anusartuṃ śīlanayasya*; that is, one with sharp faculties, who does not engage through the confidence of another and applies reasoning which is congruent with the nature of the doctrine is one who is a follower of doctrine.”

<sup>46</sup> AKBh, Pruden: 953, Śāstrī: 933: ... *yadi pūrvam laukikena mārgenāprahīṇabhāvanāheyau bhavataḥ sakalabandhanau tau srota-āpatti-phalapratiṣṭhānakāḥ ucyate / ... yadi pūrvam laukikena mārgenā kāmāvacarāṇāṃ bhāvanāheyānāṃ yāvat pañca prakārāḥ prahīṇā bhavanti tathaiva prathamaphalapratiṣṭhānakāḥ ucyate /*

<sup>47</sup> *Stairway*: 272; *Rjes snang*: 606: ‘*dod nyon drug pa ma spangs par / sbyor lam stan gcig nas bzung ste / lam la rjes bzod par dag la / gnas pa de ni rgyun zhugs zhugs / Pugg #47*, p. 17 is much different: *tiṇṇaṃ saññōjanānaṃ pahānāya paṭipanno puggalo sotāpatti-phala-sacchikiriya paṭipanno. ... /* “A person who enters into abandoning the three fetters is one who enters into striving for the result of Stream-enterer.”

<sup>48</sup> *Stairway*: 272: ‘*dod pa’i sgom spang drug ma spangs shing bcu drug pa’i rtogs pa la gnas pa’i theg dman pa’o / Pugg #47*, p. 17: *yassa puggalassa tīṇi saññōjanāni pahīnāni ayaṃ vuccati puggalo sotāpanno /* “The individual who abandons the three fetters, this one is called an stream-enterer individual.” MVP #1009, GBBN (1990: 45–46): *srota-āpanna zhes bya ba srota ni chu’i rgyun lta bu la bya / āpanna ni nang du zhugs pa la bya ste / sphyir na mya ngan las ‘das pa’i mtshor ‘bab pa’i ‘phags pa’i lam gyi chu bo’i rgyun du zhugs pa la bya ste / rgyun du zhugs pa zhes bya /* “A srota-āpanna is called

The *Stairway* (269) notes that the sixteenth moment on the path of seeing abandons all the obstacles to be removed by the path of seeing and that one attains the result of Stream-enterer by merely that moment. The result of Stream-enterer may also be divided into two categories by means of abandoning defilements: one who abandons obstacles in the path of cultivation gradually (*spang bya rim gyis pa*) or simultaneously (*spang bya cig car pa*). The one that abandons simultaneously is considered to be more prominent in realization and we will discuss this type of Stream-enterer in the section on the simultaneous abandoners.

Tsong kha pa categorizes an abider in the result of Stream-enterer who abandons defilements gradually into two: the mere abider in the result (*'bras bu tsam la gnas pa*) and the abider in the result who has superior distinction (*khyad par can*). The mere abider in the result refers to the Stream-enterer who takes seven-rebirths-at-the-most (*saptakṛtvaparama*) and the abider with distinction refers to the Stream-enterer who goes from family to family (*kulamkula*). The difference between these two, the mere abider and superior abider, is based on the continual effort to further abandon defilements. Tsong kha pa, citing the AKBh and AKV,<sup>49</sup> states that an abider in the result of Stream-enterer who does not forcefully abandon the obstacles to be removed by the path of cultivation in the desire realm and likewise does not achieve in the abandoning of the first five defilements, or who does not put forth effort in further abandonment, is merely an abider in the result of Stream-enterer. As the *Stairway* states:

It is indicated that the abider in the result of Stream-enterer, if not making effort in the application of abandonment, does not enter to the upper fruitions and does abide in the [superior] distinction of the [Stream-enterer] result.<sup>50</sup>

*The mere abider in Stream-entry: Saptakṛtvaparama*

A mere abider in the result of Stream-enterer does not abandon any of the obstacles to be removed by the path of cultivation and accumulates the karma of definitely experiencing seven existences at the time of each

such since 'srota' is like a stream of water and 'āpanna' means to enter into and therefore a 'Stream-enterer' is one who enters into the stream of the Noble path that flows into nirvāṇa."

<sup>49</sup> AKBh, Pruden: 955, Śāstrī: 935–936: *phale hi labhyamāne phalaviśiṣṭo mārgo na labhyata ity eṣu niyamaḥ / ataḥ phalastho yāvan na viśeṣāya prayujyate phalāntaraprāptau tāvat pratipannako nocyate / evam anyatrāpi phale veditavyam /* AKV, Śāstrī: 936: *yāpannāprahīṇākṣeprahāṇāya phalāntaraprāptinimittam prayogaṃ karoti tāvat pratipannako nocyate / yadā prayujyate tadā pratipannaka ity arthāduktam bhavati /*

<sup>50</sup> *Stairway*: 273: *rgyun zhugs 'bras gnas spong ba'i sbyor ba la mi brtson na 'bras bu gong ma la ma zhugs pa dang / 'bras bu khyad par can mi gnas par bstan no /*

rebirth and is called “one who takes existence seven-times.” One does not achieve realization in an eighth existence in the desire realm because by the seventh existence the mental continuum is considered to be fully matured. The path is exhausted by seven desire realm existences similar to the way a certain snake is called “the seven-footed serpent” or similar to how the sickness called “four-day fever” lasts four days. According to the AKV a “seven-footed serpent” is a snake that kills a person after having taken seven steps, likewise one is called a seven-timer by being reborn up to a possibility of seven times. If all rebirths are taken, the term utilized is “seven times at the most” (*saptakṛtvaparama*) and the abider in the result is considered to be the “lowest of all” Noble Beings. An individual who takes seven times by not exhausting the obstacles to be removed by the path of cultivation and by taking seven times is said to be the lowest of the seven-timers. In this way, the *Stairway* explains this mere abider in the result of Stream-enterer as one who:

... being an abider in the result [of Stream-enterer] explained previously, [does] not abandon firmly the defilements to be abandoned by the path of cultivation, and accumulates the karma which definitely experiences seven rebirths in the desire realm at the time of each rebirth is an abider in the result of *Saptakṛtvaparama* (Stream-enterer which takes up seven times).<sup>51</sup>

Tsong kha pa cites the AKBh and the AKV to demonstrate that the *Saptakṛtvaparama* does not necessarily take rebirth seven times. Just as

<sup>51</sup> *Stairway*: 274: *sngar bshad pa'i 'bras bu la gnas pa dang / bsgom spang gtan ma spangs pa dang / so skye'i dus su 'dod par skyes ba bdun myong nge kyi las bsags pa'i khyad par gsum ldan de nyid kho na lan bdun len par nges kyi rgyun zhugs 'bras gnas gzhan rnams re ltar thogs na lan bdun pa yin . . . / MVP #1010, GBBN (1990: 46): saptakṛdbhava parama zhes bya rgyun du zhugs pa sgom pas spangs pa'i nyon mongs pa ma zad la / 'bras bu thos pas mi'i nang du yang lan bdun skye / lha'i nang du yang lan bdun skye ba la bya ste / mir skye ba'i srid pa bar ma bdun dang / lhar skye ba'i srid pa bar ma bdun gyis bsnan na skye ba bdun bzhi nyi shu rtsa brgyad kyi bar du 'khor ba'i nang du zhugs pas na re ltar thogs na srid pa lan bdun pa zhes bya / “One called *saptakṛbhava parama* is a Stream-enterer who does not exhaust the afflictions to be abandoned by cultivation and who, having attained the result, takes seven rebirths among humans, seven rebirths among gods, and included within this takes seven human intermediate state rebirths and seven god intermediate state rebirths such that one takes rebirth up to twenty-eight times and is called one who ‘takes seven rebirths at the most’.” As we will see this is consonant with Tsong kha pa’s definition. The Pugg #37, pp. 15–16 offers a different interpretation: *idh’ekacco puggalo tiṇṇaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayā paṭipanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano so sattakkhattuṃ deve ca mānusse ca sandhāvitvā saṃsarityā dukkhass’antaṃ karoti ayaṃ vuccati puggalo sattakkhattuṃ paramo / “Here a certain person abandons the three fetters and becomes an enterer, one does not backslide to a lower rebirth and is certain to achieve enlightenment, one runs on and transmigrates up to seven times among gods and men and achieves the end of suffering, this one is called an individual who ‘does not take rebirth more than seven times’.”**

the *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas* (a type of Non-returner that will be discussed below) does not necessarily transmigrate up to the Akaniṣṭha heaven or the Peak of Existence, likewise the *Saptakṛtvaparama* does not necessarily take up to seven existences.<sup>52</sup> The term “*saptakṛtvaparama*” does not exclusively refer to Noble Beings (*ārya*) as there are others who may have their mind-stream ripened before achieving an eighth desire-realm existence. As Tsong kha pa states:

The ordinary individual seven-times-at-the-most and the Ārya Stream-enterer seven-times-at-the-most are the two [types]. The first [type] in that life’s path of preparation or on a childish [path] definitely actualizes *nirvāṇa* while not achieving an eighth existence and the second [type], as stated above, is of two [divisions] definitely or not definitely [taking seven rebirths].<sup>53</sup>

What is a seven-times existence? Tsong kha pa goes to great lengths (*Stairway*: 277–281) to demonstrate that a seven-times existence refers to taking up to twenty-eight existences: seven existences among humans, seven intermediate state existences, seven existences among gods, and then seven intermediate state existences. One reborn up to “seven-times” therefore refers to the series or cycles of seven existences as like a monk who is “wise in seven objects” (*saptasthānakūśala*) or like a tree called “seven-petaled” (*saptaparṇa*). A “seven-petaled” tree does not have just seven leaves. Rather, it is called such since it grows leaves which have seven petals. Likewise, the *Saptakṛtvaparama* Stream-enterer takes up to seven rebirths in cycles of seven existences. The series of seven rebirths that this type of Stream-enterer takes is only counted for the desire realm. If this Stream-enterer goes on to take an eighth existence in the form or formless realm, Tsong kha pa (*Stairway*: 280) maintains that there is no problem because the cycle of seven rebirths is only counted for rebirths among gods and humans of the desire realm. What is the manner in which this type of Stream-enterer takes rebirth? Tsong kha pa (*Golden Garland*: 233) posits, based on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, his own theory of the manner in which the *Saptakṛtvaparama* takes rebirth. In this instance, a *Saptakṛtvaparama* Stream-enterer achieves emancipation in the same type

<sup>52</sup> AKBh, Pknyu 26b.7–8, Pruden: 969, Śāstrī: 953: *antarāpi tu parinirvāṇam ūrdhvasrotaso yujyamānaṃ paśyāmaḥ / akaniṣṭhabhavāgraparamatvaṃ tu pareṇa gatyabhāvād / yathā saptakṛtvāḥ paramatvaṃ srota-āpannasyeti /* AKV, Pk chu 223b.8–224a.2, Śāstrī: 953: *tadyathā srota-āpannasya saptakṛtvāḥ paramatvam na hi tasya dvau trīṇ vā bhavānabhinirvartya parinirvāṇam na sambhavatīti / tataḥ pareṇa tvaṣṭaṃ bhavaṃ nābhinirvartayatīti saptakṛtvāḥ parama ukta iti /*

<sup>53</sup> *Stairway*: 275: *so skye re ltar thogs na lan bdun pa dang ‘phags pa rgyun zhugs lan bdun pa gnyis su ‘gyur la / dang po ni sbyor lam pa tshe de ‘am bu la yang srid pa brgyad pa mi ‘grub par myang ‘das mngon du byed nges rnams yin zhing / gnyis pa la ni gong du smos pa ltar nges pa dang ma nges pa gnyis so /*



of life-support in which s/he first achieved the result of Stream-enterer. In this regard the *Golden Garland* states:

As to the manner of taking rebirth, when obtaining [the result of] Stream-enterer in the embodiment of a human, taking six times as a human, seven times as a god, finally having been born as a human, one is emancipated. When obtaining [the result] in the embodiment of a god, taking six times as a god, having been reborn seven times as a human, finally one is emancipated in the embodiment of god. Likewise, fourteen existent rebirths among gods and humans plus fourteen intermediate existences equals taking twenty-eight and because it is similar to the series seven one is called a 'seven-timer'.<sup>54</sup>

Tsong kha pa sums up the *Saptakṛtvaparama* by stating that the gradualist Stream-enterer who does not abandon even a single defilement to be abandoned by the path of cultivation takes at least two rebirths in the desire realm, that in general the cycle of rebirths is seven times at the most and that the certainty of taking seven times is mentioned as a distinction. These characteristics are applied at the beginning of the mere Stream-enterer's career because by abandoning a single affliction and taking a single rebirth the characteristics of this type of Stream-enterer are left behind.

*Distinctive abider in Stream-entry: Kulamkula*

An abider with distinction refers to the Stream-enterer who goes from family to family (*kulamkula*). The *Stairway* (283) considers that the abider in the distinctive result of Stream-enterer makes the effort to abandon the first to the sixth desire realm obstacles to be removed by the path of cultivation. Tsong kha pa notes that the embodiments of the abider in the result of Stream-enterer, when passing away and manifesting as a Once-returned or Non-returned, takes rebirth in either the form or formless realm. The implication from this is that one who goes from family to family, a *Kulamkula*, cannot be reborn in either the results of Once-returned or Non-returned and does not transmigrate in the upper form and formless realms. He states that one born from family to family needs to have three distinctive qualities: the distinction related to abandoning afflictions, the distinction in the manner of taking birth, and the distinction of obtaining a relative. These qualities are from the *Abhidharmakośa* which states:

Delivered from three or four categories, destined for two or three rebirths, is one who goes family to family (*Kulamkula*)<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Golden Garland*: 233: *skye ba len tshul yang mi'i rten la rgyun zhugs thob na mir lan drug lhar lan bdun blangs shing mthar mir skyes nas 'da' la / lha'i rten la thob na'ang lhar lan drug dang mir lan bdun skyes nas mthar lha'i rten la 'da'o / de ltar na lha mi'i skye srid bcu bzhi bar srid bcu bzhi ste nyer brgyad len kyang bdun tshan du 'dra ba'i phyir lan bdun pa zhes bya ste /*

<sup>55</sup> AK, vi.34c–d, Pk nyu 24b3, Pruden: 962, Pradhan: 357, Śāstrī: 944: *tricaturvidham uktas tu dvitrijanmā kulamkulah /*

In relation to the distinction of abandoning afflictions, a *Kulaṃkula* needs to definitely abandon the third defilement to be removed by the path of cultivation, and although it may abandon the fourth defilement, the *Kulaṃkula* definitely does not abandon the fifth defilement. The fourth defilement is an option because the *Kulaṃkula*, who is more than a mere Stream-enterer, does not aspire to remove just the first and second defilements. However, if it were the case that the fifth defilement was abandoned, one would definitely abandon the sixth defilement, and become a Once-returner. The idea here is that when the fifth category of defilement is abandoned, since it is not necessary to pass over or leave from the desire realm to abandon the next category of defilement, the sixth category also becomes abandoned. If one were to abandon the sixth defilement, one would then be a Once-returner and not take two rebirths as a single desire realm transmigrator. Therefore, Tsong kha pa reasons that to abandon the fifth category of the path of cultivation defilements is not suitable for one who goes family to family.

The *Stairway* (285) notes for the distinctive manner of taking birth that it is necessary to take two rebirths in a single transmigration sequence within the desire realm because that is the conventional or expressed meaning of one who is born from family to family (*Kulaṃkula*). Tsong kha pa states that a *Kulaṃkula* may or may not take three rebirths but that one definitely does not take four rebirths because the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* says a *Kulaṃkula* has "... two or three lives remaining."<sup>56</sup>

With regard to the distinction of antidote, the *Kulaṃkula* obtains the uncontaminated path antidotes which abandon the above mentioned obstacles. According to Tsong kha pa, the aforementioned quote from the *Abhidharmakośa*, "delivered from three or four categories . . .," explicitly demonstrates two qualities, the quality of abandoning afflictions and the quality of taking rebirth, while the quality of obtaining the antidote to the afflictions is implicitly understood. Tsong kha pa reasons that after the Stream-enterer abandons one category of the defilements, the antidote of those defilements, which consists in the attaining of the uncontaminated path, although not mentioned in the text will be realized because an individual does not abandon afflictions without an antidote and also because an individual attains an uncontaminated path as a Noble Being (*ārya*). This is based on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* which states that:

<sup>56</sup> AKBh, Pruden: 962, Śāstrī: 944, Pradhan: 357: (*janmato*)*dvitrijaṇmāvaśeṣatvāt* /; Pk nyu 24b4 mistakenly says "one or two rebirths remaining". Tsong kha pa's text agrees here with the Sanskrit readings.

Within the verse only two [qualities] are mentioned, for when abandoning the afflictions after [attaining the result of] Stream-enterer, one obtains the antidote of that [result], the faculty of the uncontaminated, although not spoken, is achieved.<sup>57</sup>

After clarifying the above distinctions the *Stairway* provides a general definition of the *Kulaṃkula*:

Accordingly, if not abandoning the sixth obstacle of the desire realm to be removed by the path of cultivation, possessing the application of abandoning afflictions, abiding on the subsequent knowledge on the truth of the path, liberated having definitely taken two births in a single transmigration of the desire realm that one is a family to family Stream-enterer (*kulaṃkula srota-āpanna*).<sup>58</sup>

Following the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Tsong kha pa accepts that there are two types of *Kulaṃkula*: one that is born family to family among gods (*devakulaṃkula*) and one that is born family to family among humans (*manuṣyakulaṃkula*). A *Devakulaṃkula* is a one who, having obtained the status of Stream-enterer in a suitable embodiment from among the six types of desire realm gods, having been born two times among a lineage of the first class of gods or whatever suitable other five classes of desire realm gods, then achieves emancipation. A *Manuṣyakulaṃkula* is one who, having obtained the status of a Stream-enterer in a embodiment within *Jambudvīpa*, having been born two times as a human, born in the *Jambudvīpa* continent itself or a suitable eastern or northern continent, then achieves *parinirvāṇa*.

The *Stairway* sums up in a stanza the definition of a *Kulaṃkula*:

Definitely abandoning three afflictions and definitely taking two rebirths gradually, the fourth abandonment and the third rebirth may or may not be abandoned or taken. Four rebirths and five abandonments are definitely not taken nor abandoned. This particularity of the *Kulaṃkula* should be realized by the wise in the doctrine.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> AKBh, Pk 024b.6, Pruden: 963, Śāstrī: 945: *sloke tu dvayograhāṇam srota-āpannasya paścāt prahīṇe sati tatpratipakṣānāsravendriyasyānuktasiddhatvāt* /

<sup>58</sup> *Stairway*: 285–286: *de ltar na ‘dod pa’i bsgom spang drug pa ma spangs pa lam la rjes shes pa gnas pa nyon mongs spong ba’i sbyor pa dang ldan pa ‘dod pa’i ‘gro ba gcig tu skyes ba gnyis nges par blangs nas ‘da’ ba de ni rgyun zhugs rigs nas rigs skye yin no* /

<sup>59</sup> *Stairway*: 291: *nyon mongs gsum dang skye ba gnyis / rim bzhi nges spang nges par len / bzhi pa spangs dang skye ba ni / gsum pa blangs dang ma blangs ‘dra / spang bya lnga pa skye ba bzhi / nge par ma spangs ma blangs pa / rigs nas rigs skye’i khyad chos su / mkhas pa rnams kyis rtogs par bya* / This definition corresponds to MVP #1011, GBBN (1990: 46): *kulaṃ kula zhes bya ba rgyun du zhugs pa ‘dod pa’i kham kyis nyon mongs pa gsum dang bzhi pa man chad las grol ba / skye ba gnyis sam gsum gyi bar du ‘khor ba na gnas shing lha dang mi’i rigs bzang por skye bas na rigs nas rigs su skye ba zhes bya* / “A ‘kulaṃ kula’ is a Stream-enterer who is liberated from either three or four desire realm afflictions and when transmigrating up to two or three rebirths is born in a good family among gods and men and is called ‘one born from family to family’.” Pugg

*Once-returners (Sakṛdāgāmin)*

The second result of those who progress gradually is the state of Once-returner (*Sakṛdāgāmin*). A Once-returner is divided into an enterer and an abider. Tsong kha pa states in the *Stairway* (292) that one who, having obtained the sixteenth moment and not abandoning the sixth desire realm affliction, makes effort at abandoning the first through the sixth desire realm afflictions is called “an enterer to the result of Once-returner.” This is synonymous with possessing a distinction in abiding in the result of Stream-enterer.

Tsong kha pa remarks also that in a similar fashion, according to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the remaining enterers are differentiated from the three abiders in a result. Thus, not counting the first enterer to the result of Stream-enterer, the three later enterers, gradually, are spoken of as possessing distinction in abiding in the results of Stream-enterer, Once-Returner, and Non-returner.

Tsong kha pa compares the definitions between the *Abhidharmakośa*<sup>60</sup> and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*<sup>61</sup> for this enterer and determines that they are congruent. Like the definition above, the *Golden Garland* (234) defines an enterer to the result of Once-returner as an abider in the result of Stream-enterer, who, when making effort for the sake of obtaining the result of Once-returner, does not abandon whichever defilement up to the fifth to be removed by the path of cultivation nor makes effort to abandon the sixth defilement. Tsong kha pa provides a summary of this type of enterer in the *Stairway* (293):

#38, p. 16 is similar: *idh' ekacco puggalo tiṇṇaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayā sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano so dve vā tīṇi vā kulāni sandhāvitvā saṃsaritvā dukkhass'antaṃ karoti ayaṃ vuccati puggalo kolaṅkolo* / “Here a person having abandoned the three fetters becomes a Stream-enterer, no longer falls into low rebirth and is certain to achieve enlightenment; one who runs and transmigrates among two or three families and puts an end to suffering, this one is called a person who transmigrates family to family.”

<sup>60</sup> AK vi.35a–b, Pk nyu 025a1, Pruden: 963, Pradhan: 357: *āpañcamprakāraghno dvitīyapratipannakaḥ* / “One who has conquered up to five categories is an enterer to the second [result].”

<sup>61</sup> AS, Rahula: 153, Pradhan: 89: *sakṛdāgāmiphalaḥ pratipannakaḥ katamaḥ* / *bhāvanā-mārga kāmāvacarāṇāṃ pañcaprakārāṇāṃ kleśāṇāṃ prahāṇamārga yaḥ pudgalaḥ* / “Who is one that enters to the fruit of Once-returner? This is the person who, in the path of cultivation, abides in the path of abandoning the five aspects of the afflictions pertaining to the desire [realm].”

Making effort to abandon up to the sixth [aspect], and making effort to abandon the sixth definitely, [one] is called an Once-returner enterer as explained in the system of the two, upper and lower, *Abhidharmas*.<sup>62</sup>

The abider in the result of Once-returner is that enterer who abandons the sixth desire realm affliction. The *Stairway* defines the Once-returner as:

The lesser vehicle [person] who does not abandon the ninth [affliction] and abandons the sixth desire realm affliction on obtaining the sixteenth moment.<sup>63</sup>

The Once-returner abider has two aspects: the abider in the mere result (*'bras bu tsam la gnas pa*) and the abider in the distinctive result (*'bras bu khyad par can la gnas pa*). Tsong kha pa considers that the one who merely abides in the Once-returner result does not abandon other than the sixth desire realm affliction and does not try to abandon the upper realm afflictions. The *Golden Garland* (234) notes that when abiding on the path of liberation (*vimuktimārga*) which abandons the sixth defilement, one is a mere abider in the result and when making effort in abandonment up to the ninth defilement, one possesses distinction (*khyad par can, viśeṣa*).

#### *Distinctive Once-returner: Ekavīcika*

The Once-returner who has distinction is called an *Ekavīcika*. This one makes effort to abandon from the seventh up to the ninth defilements to be abandoned by the path of cultivation and is synonymous with the Non-returner enterer. Tsong kha pa defines the *Ekavīcika* in the *Stairway* (293) as:

One who has distinction as an abider in the result of Once-returner obtains the result of Non-returner by abandoning the seventh and eighth desire realm afflictions and is

<sup>62</sup> *Stairway*: 293: *drug pa'i bar spong brtson pa dang / nges par drug pa spong brtson pa / phyir 'ong zhugs yin zhes pa ni / gong 'og gnyis kyi lugs su bshad /*

<sup>63</sup> *Stairway*: 293: *bcu drug pa thob la 'dod nyon drug pa spangs shing dgu pa ma spangs pa'i theg dman no / MVP #1012, GBBN (1990: 46) gives an etymological definition: sakṛdāga mi zhes bya ba sakṛt ni lan cig āgami ni 'ong ba ste / tshe 'di nyid la mya ngan las mi 'da' ste / lan cig slar 'jig rten 'dir skye bas na lan cig phyir 'ong ba zhes bya / "sakṛdāga mi is called such that sakṛt means 'one time' and āgami means 'to come'; since one does not achieve emancipation in this very life but takes rebirth in this world one more time one is called a 'Once-returner'." Pugg #40, p. 16: Idh' ekacco puggalo tiṇṇaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayaṃ rāga-dosa-mohānaṃ tanuttā sakadāgāmī hoti sakid eva imaṃ lokaṃ āgantvā dukkhass' antaṃ karoti ayaṃ vuccati puggalo sakadāgāmī / "Here a certain person, having completely abandoned the three fetters, lust, hatred, and delusion becomes a Once-returner; one comes back to this world only once, putting an end to suffering. Such a person is called a Once-returner."*

obstructed by a single affliction and obstructed by a single life for obtaining emancipation.<sup>64</sup>

Here it is noted that in exhausting the seventh affliction there is a single interval and that an interval is the principle hindrance to the result of Non-returner because an interval is itself also the ninth defilement. The *Golden Garland* (235) explains that the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* relates that the meaning of one interval (*eka vīci*) is an interruption between one rebirth. The ASBh states:

The *Ekavīcika* Once-returner is only an enterer to the result of Non-returner who, having transmigrated a single existence among the gods, is emancipated. For one who has “one interval” means the intermediate state, the intermediate time between birth (*janmāvakāśaḥ*), that is the *Ekavīcika*.<sup>65</sup>

With one interval to go the *Ekavīcika* at the time of already abandoning the seventh and eighth affliction will not become a Non-returner from abandoning the ninth affliction. However, abandoning the ninth affliction at the time of death manifests the result of Non-returner and by manifesting *nirvāṇa* in that very embodiment itself, one is obstructed by a single affliction for the result of Non-returner and obstructed by one life for *nirvāṇa*. The Non-returner is unable to be obstructed for attainment in that life by the ninth affliction. Why is the situation of the *Ekavīcika* not similar to that of the *Kulaṃkula* mentioned earlier who, if abandoning the fifth affliction,

<sup>64</sup> Stairway: 293–294: . . . 'dod nyon bdun nam brgyad spangs pas phyir mi 'ong gi 'bras bu thob pa la nyon mongs gcig gis bar du chod la myang 'das 'thob pa la tshe gcig gis bar chod pa gang yin / MVP #1013, GBBN (1990: 47): *eka vīcika zhes bya ba lan cig phyir 'ong ba 'dod pa'i kham s kyi nyon mongs pa bdun pa dang brgyad pa spangs pa / s kye ba gcig gis mya ngan las 'das pa'i 'bras bu 'am / phyir mi 'ong ba'i sa thob pa'i bar du chod pas na bar chad gcig pa zhes bya* / “A Once-returner that is called ‘eka vīcika’ abandons the seventh and eighth desire realm affliction and is called ‘One with a single interval’ since being separated from the result of nirvāṇa by one birth or an interval from attaining the state on Non-returner.” In Pugg # 39, p. 16 an *Ekabīja* is a type of Stream-enterer: *Idh' ekacco puggalo tinnaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayā sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano so etaṃ yeva mānussakaṃ bhavaṃ nibbattetvā dukkhass' antaṃ karoti ayaṃ vuccati puggalo ekabījī* / “Here a certain person, having abandoned the three fetters, does not degenerate but is certain to reach enlightenment; one who returns to this human existence and makes an end of suffering, this is a person called ‘One with a single seed’.” Pugg-A (1972: 196) clarifies what “single-seed” means: *ekabījīniddesse khandhabījaṃ nāma kathitaṃ / yassa hi sotāpannassa ekaṃ yeva khandhabījaṃ atthi / ekaṃ attabhāvagahaṇaṃ / so ekabījī nāma* / “What is called seed of the aggregates indicates the seed. A Stream-enterer who has a single seed of the aggregates to remove and who takes one existence is called one who is single-seeded.”

<sup>65</sup> ASBh, Tatia: 120: *ekavīcikaḥ sakṛdāgāmy evānāgāmiphalapratipannako deveṣv evaikaṃ bhavaṃ saṃsṛtya parinirvāti / ekā vīcir antaraṃ janmāvakāśo 'sya so'yaṃ ekavīcikaḥ* /

would undoubtedly also abandon the sixth affliction? Tsong kha pa reasons that an *Ekavīcika* is unable to pass over the desire realm, which is necessary to abandon afflictions that allow acquisition of a passage to the form realm and the state of Non-returner. However, the category of defilements to be abandoned by a *Kulaṃkula* to reach the state of Once-returner are within the desire realm. According to the texts available to him, an *Ekavīcika* does not appear to be born in the upper transmigrations of the form and formless realms. Tsong kha pa cites the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

Who is the *Ekavīcika*? A Once-returner who, just among the gods, obtains the end of suffering.<sup>66</sup>

The *Ekavīcika* therefore obtains emancipation in the embodiment of a desire realm deity. The *Stairway* (295) states however, that the distinction of rebirth does not apply for the mere abider in the result of Once-returner, for a mere Once-returner is reborn as a human and will return back one time because of not coming back more than a single time in a single transmigration. The general characteristic of the Once-returner is that he/she comes back one time to the desire realm. Tsong kha pa gives the following condensed verse to provide a summary of the distinctive Once-returner:

That *Ekavīcika* Once-returner, abandoning the seventh and eighth affliction, is shown to make manifest *nirvāṇa* in the embodiments of desire realm gods when dying.<sup>67</sup>

We have so far discussed the first two results of *śrāvakas* who progress gradually in the results of *śrāmaṇya*.

#### *Non-returners (Anāgāmin)*

The third result of *śrāmaṇya* is the state of Non-returner. A Non-returner may also be initially divided into an enterer and an abider. As Tsong kha pa states in the *Stairway*:

Who is the enterer to the result of Non-returner? That same abider in the result of Once-returner formerly explained who makes application of abandoning from the seventh to ninth [afflictions].<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, an enterer to the result of Non-returner is essentially an *Ekavīcika*. If that enterer abandons the ninth defilement to be abandoned on the path of cultivation, he is a then a Non-returner. The *Stairway* explains the abider in the state of Non-returner:

<sup>66</sup> AS, Rahula: 155, Pradhan: 90.8: *ekavīcikaḥ katamaḥ / sakṛdāgāmī deveṣv eva yo duḥkhasyāntamo anuprāpnoti /*

<sup>67</sup> *Stairway*: 295: *phyir 'ong bar chad gcig pa de / nyon mongs bdun nam brgyad spangs shing / tshe 'phos 'dod lha'i rten dag la / myang 'das mngon du byed par bstan /*

<sup>68</sup> *Stairway*: 296: *phyir mi 'ong 'bras bu la zhugs pa gang zhe na / sngar bshad pa'i phyir 'ong 'bras gnas de nyid bdun pa nas dgu pa'i bar spongs ba'i sbyor ba can no /*

The lesser vehicle trainee who, obtaining realization of the sixteenth [moment] abandons the ninth [affliction] to be abandoned by the path of cultivation in the desire realm.<sup>69</sup>

In regards to the state of Non-returner, Tsong kha pa emphasizes that if one does not apply oneself to the abandoning the afflictions of the upper realm, one is a mere abider in the Non-returner result. To engage in the application of abandoning the afflictions contained within the first concentration up to the ninth affliction of the peak of existence, one is then considered an abider in the distinctive Non-returner result and possesses the foundation for entering into the state of *Arhat*. Once again, in Tsong kha pa's system, it is necessary to constantly apply effort in abandoning defilements in order to progressively advance to upper stages of the path. Tsong kha pa divides the distinctive Non-returner into four principle divisions: a Non-returner who transmigrates in the form realm (*rūpopaga*), one who transmigrates in the formless realm (*arūpyopaga*), one who achieves emancipation in the present life (*dr̥ṣṭadharmasramah*), and a bodily witness (*kāyasākṣī*). Tsong kha pa (*Stairway*: 296) explains that although it is acceptable to classify these Non-returners as distinctive abiders in the result, they are not to be understood as definitely abandoning the remaining afflictions to be abandoned by the path of cultivation. As we will see, the examination of distinctive Non-returners who progress gradually involves a system of categorizing that differentiates them in regards to the levels of the form or formless realm they transmigrate through and differentiates them in correlation with the different levels of meditative concentration they have mastered. The chart (Figure 7) on the following page presents the four general divisions in which Tsong kha pa divides the distinctive Non-returners of the *allegorical saṃgha*. We note here that these divisions are applied to the Non-returners of the *allegorical saṃgha* because these categories are not divided the same way in the AA system of the *actual saṃgha* of *bodhisattvas*. The chart on the following page (Figure 7) also illustrates the various subdivisions found within each of the four general categories of Non-returners classified by Tsong

<sup>69</sup> *Stairway*: 296: *bcu drug pa'i rtogs pa thob cing 'dod pa'i bsgom spangs dgu pa spangs pa'i theg dman slob pa'o* / MVP #105, GBBN (1990: 47): *anāgāmi zhes bya ba tha ma'i skal ba can gyi chos rnam pa lnga spangs pa slar 'dod pa'i kham su mi skye bas phyir mi 'ong ba zhes bya* / "One called 'anāgāmi' because of abandoning the five dharmas of the lower destinies and thereby no longer born in the desire realm is called a 'Non-returner'." Pugg #41, p. 16: *Idh' ekacco puggalo pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saññojanāṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyī anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā ayaṃ vuccati puggalo anāgāmī* / "Here a certain person abandons the five fetters related to rebirth in the lower worlds, becomes 'a being of apparitional rebirth' (*opapātiko*), and then attains *nibbāna*; because of the quality of not returning from that world, this person is called a 'Non-returner'."



kha pa and serves as a reference for the Non-returners presented in this section.

Rūpopaga: *Non-returners in the form realm*

The first division of distinctive Non-returners consists of those that transmigrate in the form realm (*rūpopaga*). The *Stairway* (297) provides a general definition of such Non-returners:

The Non-returner who possesses a desire realm embodiment that obtains *nirvāṇa* having definitely taken rebirth in the form realm.<sup>70</sup>

This implies that one who progresses gradually reaches toward the state of Non-returner in the desire realm and takes rebirth in the form realm to achieve emancipation. Tsong kha pa notes that a karmic connection (*mtshoms sbyor*) which establishes a rebirth existence itself in the form realm is not necessary because of the absence of such a connection for the Non-returner (i.e., *Antarāparinirvāyin*) who achieves emancipation in the intermediate state between death in the desire realm and rebirth in the form realm.

Tsong kha pa also explains that it is not necessary to achieve *nirvāṇa* in a form realm embodiment because of the emancipation process of the Non-returner who may go to the Peak of Existence (*Bhavāgraparama*).

Tsong kha pa classifies three types of transmigrators in the form realm: the *Antarāparinirvāyin* (Non-returner who achieves emancipation in the intermediate state), *Upapadyaparinirvāyin* (Non-returner who achieves emancipation through birth), and the *Ūrdhvamśrotas* (Non-returner who achieves emancipation through going higher). These three are essentially differentiated based on the karmic bonds which propel them into various form realms. The *Antarāparinirvāyins* possess the karma of coming into being (*abhinirvṛttikarma*), while the *Upapadyaparinirvāyins* have karma which will experience rebirth (*upapadyavedanīyakarma*), and the *Ūrdhvamśrotas* possess karma which will be experienced at another time (*aparaparyāyavedanīyakarma*). Tsong kha pa defines an *Antarāparinirvāyin* as follows:

This is one who goes in the form realm obtaining *nirvāṇa* in that embodiment itself which is connected to whatever suitable of the sixteen intermediate states, not counting the intermediate state of the *Mahābrahma* heaven of the form realm.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> *Stairway*: 296–297: gzugs su nye bar ‘gro ba gang zhe na / ‘dod pa’i rten can gyi phyir mi ‘ong gang gzugs khams su nges par skye ba blangs nas myang ‘das ‘thob ba’o /

<sup>71</sup> *Stairway*: 297: gzugs su nye bar ‘gro ba gang gzugs khams kyi tshangs chen gyi bar do ma gtogs pa bar do bcu drug gang rung du nyid mtshams sbyor ba’i rten de nyid la mya ngan las ‘das pa’i thob pa’o / MVP# 1015, GBBN (1990: 47): antarā parinirvāyī zhes bya ba phyir mi ‘ong ba srid pa gcig nas ‘phos pa pha rol tu yang ma skyes par srid pa bar

(1) <i>Rūpopaga</i> (transmigrator in the form realm)	<i>Antarāparinirvāyin</i> (One achieves <i>nirvāṇa</i> in the intermediate state)	<i>Āsuparinirvāyin</i> (Immediately in the intermediate state)	
		<i>Anāsuparinirvāyin</i> (Not immediately in the intermediate state)	
		<i>Ciraparinirvāyin</i> (After a long time)	
	<i>Upapadyaparinirvāyin</i> (One who achieves <i>nirvāṇa</i> through birth)	<i>Abhisamṣkāraparinirvāyin</i> (One who achieves through effort)	
		<i>Anabhisamṣkāraparinirvāyin</i> (One who achieves without effort)	
	<i>Ūrdhvamsrotas</i> (One who goes higher)	<i>Upapadyaparinirvāyin</i>	
		<i>Akaniṣṭhaga</i> (Non-returner who goes up to Akaniṣṭha)	
		<i>Pluta</i> (Jumper)	
		<i>Ardhapluta</i> (Half-jumper)	
		<i>Sarvasthānacyuta</i> (One who dies in all abodes)	
(2) <i>Arūpyopaga</i> (transmigrator in the formless realm)	<i>Ūrdhvamsrotas</i> <i>Upapadyaparinirvāyin</i> (3 types)	<i>Bhavāgraparamaga</i> (One who may go up Peak of Existence)	
	(3) <i>Drṣṭadharmasrama</i> (One who is emancipated in the present life)		

Figure 7. Tsong kha pa's division of distinctive Non-returners: (*Anāgāmin*) in the *Śrāvaka Saṃgha* illustration.

Based on the AKBh, Tsong kha pa explains that there are three aspects to the *Antarāparinirvāyin*: those who obtain *nirvāṇa* quickly in the intermediate state (*Āśuparinirvāyin*), not quickly (*Anāśuparinirvāyin*), and after a long time in the intermediate state (*Ciraparinirvāyin*). These three are thought to either obtain *nirvāṇa* immediately upon taking rebirth in the intermediate state, in the middle time of the intermediate state, or at the end period of the intermediate state. Tsong kha pa bases his interpretation of these three types of *Antarāparinirvāyin* through the examples given in the *Sūtra showing the Seven Transmigrations of Holy Individuals* (*Saptasatpuruṣagatī*) found in Yaśomitra's AKV.<sup>72</sup> As Tsong kha pa explains:

What are these three illustrations? In the manner of three stages: like a spark of hay that is immediately extinguished, like a spark of iron struck by the hammer of an iron smith that ascends up towards the sky and is extinguished, and like a flaming iron spark, having turned up towards the sky, is extinguished before hitting the ground ...<sup>73</sup>

These three examples also occur in the *Aṅguttaranikāya* (AN, iv.70) and *Śrāvakabhūmi* (ŚBh). Poussin (1906: 446) has made a comparison between the AKV and the AN. Wayman (1974) has translated the Sanskrit from the *Śrāvakabhūmi* which Masefield (1986: 110ff) has compared with the AN. The AN, AKV, and ŚBh present similes which are very much alike, although the Sanskrit and Pāli traditions widely differ in interpreting them (see Masefield, 1986). Nevertheless, Tsong kha pa interprets the three aspects of the *Antarāparinirvāyin* from the explanation of Asaṅga found in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.<sup>74</sup>

*ma do'i tshes dgra bcom pa'i 'bras bu mngon du byas nas mya ngan las 'da' bas na bar ma dor yong su mya ngan las 'da' ba zhes bya* / "A Non-returner called *antarā parinirvāyī* [is one who], having passed from a single existence is no longer born in another and in the life of the intermediate state manifests the result of Arhant, thereby achieving emancipation; this one is called 'One who is emancipated in the intermediate state'." The Pāli tradition in the Pugg #42, p. 16 has a totally different interpretation.

<sup>72</sup> AKV commenting on AK, vi.38. See *Stairway*: 298.

<sup>73</sup> *Stairway*: 298: *dpe gsum yang gang zhe na / zhogs ma'i me stag grub ma thag 'chi ba dang / lcags mgar kyi tho bas lcags brdungs pa'i me stag gnam du yar ba phyir ldog khar 'chi ba dang / lcags kyi tsha tsha gnam du yar ba phyir log nas sa la ma lung tsum du 'chi ba ...*

<sup>74</sup> AS, Rahula: 155, Pradhan: 90: *antarāparinirvāyī katamaḥ / upapattisaṃyojane prahīṇe abhinivṛttisaṃyojane aprahīṇe antarābhavam abhinirvarttayann eva yo mārgaṃ saṃmukhikṛtya duḥkhasyāntam anuprāpnoti abhinirvṛtto vā antarābhave upapattibhava-gamanāya cetayann eva yo mārgaṃ saṃmukhikṛtya duḥkhasyāntam anuprāpnoti / abhisamcetayitvā vā upapattibhavam abhisamprasthitāḥ bhavānupapattic chandaṃ yo mārgaṃ saṃmukhikṛtya duḥkhasyāntam anuprāpnoti* / "Who is the person that attains *nirvāṇa* in the intermediate existence? This is a person who, abandoning the fetters of birth but not abandoning the fetters of coming into existence, when progressing toward

Tsong kha pa states:

[F]irst, manifesting the path at the same time of achieving the intermediate state, one abandons the remaining abandonments and obtains *nirvāṇa*; or one achieves an intermediate existence and the desire of transmigrating into a rebirth merely does not occur, one manifests the path and achieves *nirvāṇa*; or having achieved an intermediate state existence, one manifests the path when there is desire to pass through an abode of rebirth, then obtains *nirvāṇa*; these [*Antarāparinirvāyins*], although abandoning the afflictions of actual birth in the god abodes of the form realm, since they do not abandon the afflictions of achieving the intermediate state existence, take rebirth in the intermediate state.<sup>75</sup>

That Non-returner *Antarāparinirvāyin* who possess a desire realm embodiment refers to the four *Antarāparinirvāyin* of the first concentration. There are sixteen in the intermediate state of *Brahmakāyika* heaven and so forth. The states of Stream-enterer and Once-returner are without an *Antarāparinirvāyin*. According to Tsong kha pa this is because of not being accustomed for very long on the path and not having few afflictions. The *Stairway* (313) quotes the *Vaibhāṣikas* as stating that the Stream-enterer and Once-returner have non-virtuous afflictions of the desire realm and many abandonments of the upper realms not demonstrated in the scripture, and many other results to acquire. It is necessary for the Stream-enterer to obtain three results and the Once-returner to obtain two results. Since both have many realms to pass over, these realms are unable to be made by them because they abide in the intermediate state for a short time.

The next type of *śrāvaka* Non-returner who transmigrates in the form realm is the *Upapadyaparinirvāyin*. This is a Non-returner who obtains *nirvāṇa* through birth in the form realm. The *Stairway* states:

A transmigrator in the form realm who, in that very first embodiment itself in whatever suitable sixteen abodes of form realm gods, obtains *nirvāṇa*.<sup>76</sup>

the intermediate existence, having made manifest the path, obtains the end of suffering; or one who, progressing in the intermediate existence, while thinking to transmigrate in the existence of rebirth, manifests the path and obtains the end of suffering; or one who, having reflected (*abhisamcetanā*), does not yet arrive at the existence of rebirth, manifests the path and obtains the end of suffering.”

<sup>75</sup> *Stairway*: 298: ... *dang po bar do grub pa dang mnyam du lam mngon du byas nas spang bya lhag ma spangs te myang 'das thob pa dang l bar srid grub cing skyes srid du 'gro ba'i 'dod pa ma byung tsam dang l bar srid grub nas skyes gnas su bgrod par 'dod pa na lam mngon du byas nas te myang 'das thob par byed la de dag gzugs kham kyī lha gnas su dngos su skye ba'i nyon mongs spangs kyang bar srid 'grub pa'i nyon mongs ma spangs pas bar dor skyes ba bzhed de l*

<sup>76</sup> *Stairway*: 299: *gzugs su nye bar 'gro ba gang gzugs kham kyī lha gnas bcu drug gang yang rung bar dang por skyes pa'i rten de nyid la mya ngan las 'da' ba'o l MVP #1016, GBBN (1990: 47): upapadya parinirvāyī zhes bya ba phyir mi 'ong ba lam la zhugs shing brtson pa tshe 'phos nas pha rol tu skyes ma thag tu nyon mongs pa thams cad spangs te l lhag ma dang bcas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa mngon du byed pas na skyes nas yongs su*

Tsong kha pa classifies these into three: those who obtain *parinirvāṇa* having been liberated from mere birth, without effort and with effort. These distinctions are also explained (*Stairway*: 300) based on the *Sūtra showing the Seven Transmigrations of Holy Individuals*. According to this *sūtra* there are three *Antarāparinirvāyins*, three *Upapadyaparinirvāyins*, and the *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas*. Tsong kha pa follows the system of that *sūtra* in positing a succession of three *Upapadyaparinirvāyins*: those that arise first in liberation by the manifesting *nirvāṇa* without effort (*Anabhisamṣkāraparinirvāyin*)<sup>77</sup> and the distinction just the opposite from that, one who achieves through effort (*Abhisamṣkāraparinirvāyin*).<sup>78</sup> The third type has the distinction of being liberated through mere birth and without accomplishment, the *Upapadyaparinirvāyin*. These arise by a more spontaneous path and their abandonments are weaker than those without accomplishment. Tsong kha pa considers that the succession and

mya ngan las ‘da’ ba zhes bya / “A Non-returner called *upapadya parinirvāyī* is one who, when dying makes effort and enters into the path, immediately upon rebirth abandons all the afflictions and manifests *nirvāṇa* with remnant; [on account of this] one is called ‘One who achieves *nirvāṇa* through birth.’” Pugg #43, pp. 16–17 has *upahacca-parinibbāyī*, which is different than the above definitions.

<sup>77</sup> MVP #1018, GBBN (1990: 48): *anabhisamṣkāraparinirvāyī zhes bya ba phyir mi ‘ong ba lam la brtson zhing ‘grus par zhugs pa ma yin gyi nam bsam pa’i rgyud smin pa’i tshe dgra bcom pa’i ‘bras bu thob cing mya ngan las ‘da’ bas na mngon par ‘du byed pa med par yongs su mya ngan las ‘da’ ba zhes bya / “A Non-returner called *anabhisamṣkāraparinirvāyī* does not enter into the path with effort but rather, at the time of ripening the mental continuum obtains the result of Arhat and achieves *nirvāṇa*; one is called ‘one who achieves *nirvāṇa* without effort.’” Pugg #44, p. 17: *Idh’ ekacco puggalo pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyī anāvatthidhammo tasmā lokā so asaṅkhāreṇa ariyamaggaṃ sañjaneti upariṭṭhimānaṃ saññojanānaṃ pahānāya ayaṃ vuccati puggalo asaṅkhāra parinibbāyī / “Here, a person having abandoned the five lower fetters causing rebirth, takes an apparitional rebirth, then attains *nibbāna*, not returning from that realm; one brings forth the path without effort abandoning the fetters of the upper realms; this one is called a person who achieves *nibbāna* without effort.”**

<sup>78</sup> MVP #1017, GBBN (1990: 47): *sābhisamṣkāraparinirvāyī zhes bya ba phyir mi ‘ong ba ‘khor ba rgyun mi bcad pa pha rol tu skyes nas brtson ni brtson la lam la byang ba’i rtsol ba dang bcas pas mya ngan las ‘da’ bar byed pas na mngon par ‘du byed pa dang bcas pas yongs su mya ngan las ‘da’ ba zhes bya / “A Non-returner called *sābhisamṣkāraparinirvāyī* is one who makes effort through rebirth but does not cut off the transmigrating continuum; by training in the path with effort one is called ‘one who achieves *nirvāṇa* with effort.’” Pugg #45, p. 17: *Idh’ ekacco puggalo pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyī anāvatthidhammo tasmā so sasaṅkhāreṇa ariyamaggaṃ sañjaneti upariṭṭhimānaṃ saññojanānaṃ pahānāya ayaṃ vuccati puggalo sasaṅkhāraparinibbāyī / “Here, a person having abandoned the five lower fetters causing rebirth, takes an apparitional rebirth, then attains *nibbāna*, not returning from that realm; one brings forth the path with effort abandoning the fetters of the upper realms; this one is called a person who achieves *nibbāna* with effort.”**

the distinction of these three *Upapadyaparinirvāyins* is again based on the *Sūtra showing the Seven Transmigrations of Holy Individuals*. Establishing this *sūtra* as the source for the Non-returners who transmigrate in the form realm is important for Tsong kha pa so that he can demonstrate that Vasubandhu and Asaṅga have a unified understanding of these types of Non-returners based on the same *sūtra*. Tsong kha pa accepts only the following sequence for these types of Non-returners: one without accomplishment and then one with accomplishment. He considers that these individuals generate in their mental continuum a path which does not rely on great accomplishment for the purpose of quickly achieving *nirvāṇa* (*Stairway*: 302).

In regards to the *Upapadyaparinirvāyins* and *Antarāparinirvāyins*, Tsong kha pa examines whether they achieve *nirvāṇa* with remnant (*sopadhiśeṣa*) or *nirvāṇa* without remnant (*nirupadhiśeṣa*), based on the discussion in the AKBh and AKV.<sup>79</sup> The *Stairway* (302) reasons that the *Upapadyaparinirvāyin* does not have the ability to obtain *nirvāṇa* without achieving the end of life because it is necessary to have the power for abandoning life by means of the concentration known as *prāntakoṭīcaturthadhyāna*. The *Upapadyaparinirvāyin* does not have the power to abandon life through the force of *prāntakoṭīcaturthadhyāna* because, according to the AKBH (Pradhan: 420), only the embodiment of an individual of the three continents (*dvīpa*) or a woman has that power. Based on this, Tsong kha pa states that the *Upapadyaparinirvāyin* has a *nirvāṇa* with remnant (*sopadhiśeṣa*) and the *Antarāparinirvāyin* has a *nirvāṇa* without remnant (*nirupadhiśeṣa*). As regards the *Antarāparinirvāyin*, the *Stairway* (303) explains that it does not matter whether an *Antarāparinirvāyin* has the power to abandon life or not. Tsong kha pa considers death in the intermediate state to not really be a death, but rather an uncompleted life-time, because the intermediate state is cast by a single karma which puts forth an intermediate state existence and two rebirth existences. Therefore, the *Antarāparinirvāyin* has connections in that very abiding rebirth for *nirvāṇa* without remnant since releasing

<sup>79</sup> For this discussion Tsong kha pa is relying on Yaśomitra's comments on AKBh, vi.37a–c, AKV, Śāstrī: 949: ... *naitad evam so'pi niruprohiśeṣaparinirvāṇeneti kasmāt / āyurutsargāvaśītvāt / āyusa utsarge tasyāvaśītvāt / kasmāt punar asyātrāvaśītvam / yatprāntakoṭīkacaturthadhyānalābhina āyurutsargaviśītvam tac ca prāntakoṭīkaṃ dhyānaṃ manuṣyeṣv eva triṣu dvīpeṣūtpādyate / sa ca rūpadhātūpapanna iti kim antarāparinirvāyīno'sty āyur utsarga vaśītvam / yata evam asau nirupadhiśeṣaparinirvāṇena parinirvāti tasyāpi vaśītvam nāsti / antarābhavāvasthānāya tu tādrśaṃ karma nāsti yādrśaṃ upapadyaparinirvāyīna iti ato'ntarāparinirvāyī śīghraṃ parinirvāti / upapadyaparinirvāyī tu yāvad āyuh sthītvā parinirvātīty upapadyaparinirvāyī eva sopadhiśeṣanirvāṇena parinirvātīty ucyate /*

the conditionings of the previous life immediately abandons all the afflictions. Otherwise, the *Antarāparinirvāyin* previously obtains a *nirvāṇa* with remnant which abandons all afflictions and at that time of death has a *nirvāṇa* without remnant.

The third type of Non-returner that Tsong kha pa classifies as achieving *nirvāṇa* in the form realm is the *Ūrdhvamśrotas*. The *Stairway* (303) provides a general definition:

Who is the *Ūrdhvamśrotas*? One who goes in the form realm, not obtaining *nirvāṇa* in the embodiment of first birth in the form realm but going higher to upper [realms] obtains *nirvāṇa*.<sup>80</sup>

Tsong kha pa notes in the *Golden Garland* (236) that an *Ūrdhvamśrotas* is a Non-returner who is emancipated in the form realm having passed through at least two rebirths of existence within the form realm. Tsong kha pa (*Stairway*: 304) divides the *Ūrdhvamśrotas* into two primary categories: the transmigrator up to the limit of *Akaniṣṭha* heaven and the transmigrator up to the limit of the peak of existence, *Bhavāgra*. If it is an *Ūrdhvamśrotas* who has the possibility of transmigrating to the limit of the realm of form then that Non-returner is called an *Akaniṣṭhaga*. If the Non-returner has the potential to travel up to the edge of the formless realm then it is a *Bhavāgraparamaga*. The *Golden Garland* (236) also classifies an *Ūrdhvamśrotas* by means of cause, alternating or not alternating concentrations and an *Ūrdhvamśrotas* by means of result, transmigrating up to *Akaniṣṭha* heaven or to *Bhavāgra*. We will explain the process of “alternating concentrations” below. We note that each general type of *Ūrdhvamśrotas* has the “potential” to transmigrate up to its respective realms, similar to the situation of the *Saptakṛtvaparama* not taking seven rebirths, since they do not necessarily go up to those realms to achieve emancipation.

Since these Non-returners progress through the Form realm, we should quickly review Buddhist Form realm (*rūpadhātu*) cosmology. The form realm has seventeen divisions which are divided into four main areas correlated in ascending order with the levels of concentration (*dhyāna*). The first concentration marks the beginning of the form realm and is composed

<sup>80</sup> *Stairway*: 303: gong du ‘pho ba gang zhe na / gzugs su nye bar ‘gro ba gang gzugs khams su dang por skyes pa’i rten la myang ‘das mi ‘thob par gong du ‘phos te ‘da’ ba yin . . . / MVP #1019, GBBN (1990: 48): ūrdhva srota zhes bya ba phyir mi ‘ong ba thog ma gzhi gar skyes pa de nyid du mya ngan las mi ‘da’i steng du lha’i khams su skyes nas gdod mya ngan las ‘da’ bas na gong du ‘pho ba zhes bya / “A Non-returner called *ūrdhvamśrotaḥ* is one who does not achieve *nirvāṇa* in that very rebirth in an upper abode and, in addition, taking birth in the deva realms achieves *nirvāṇa*, [that one] is called ‘One who goes higher’.”

of three abodes. The first is the *Brahmakāyika*; the second, *Brahmapurohita*; and the third, *Mahābrahma*. The second concentration has three abodes. They are, in ascending order, called *Parittābhā*, *Apramāṇābhā*, and *Ābhāsvara*. The third concentration also has three abodes, which are, in ascending order, *Parittaśubha*, *Apramāṇaśubha*, and *Śubhakṛtsna*. The last main area of the form realm is equal to the fourth concentration and consists of eight heavens with the first three called, in ascending order, *Anabhraka*, *Puṇyaprasava*, and *Bṛhatphala*. The remaining five abodes of the fourth concentration are collectively known as *Śuddhāvāsakāyika*. It consists of the heavens *Abṛha*, *Atapas*, *Sudṛśa*, *Sudarśana*, and finally *Akaniṣṭha*. With these form levels in mind, we can now see how Tsong kha pa defines the various divisions of the *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas* called *Akaniṣṭhaga*.

The *Stairway* (304) follows the AKBh in defining the transmigrator up to the limit of *Akaniṣṭha* heaven:

That is the *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas* who possesses the lineage of obtaining *nirvāṇa* in an embodiment of *Akaniṣṭha* heaven. For that there are three types: the jumper (*pluta*), half-jumper (*ardhapluta*), and the jumper who dies in all places (*sarvasthānacyuta*).<sup>81</sup>

Tsong kha pa explains in the *Stairway* that a jumper (*pluta*) is a transmigrator to the limit of *Akaniṣṭha* heaven who, having been born in *Brahmakāyika* heaven, has the characteristic of shifting to a embodiment of *Akaniṣṭha* heaven by jumping over all other form realm heavens in between the first heaven of *Brahmakāyika* and the last form realm heaven of *Akaniṣṭha*. The half-jumper (*ardhapluta*) is a transmigrator up to the limit of *Akaniṣṭha* heaven who has the characteristic of obtaining *nirvāṇa* in *Akaniṣṭha* heaven through jumping over rebirth in the *Brahmakāyika* heaven up to the interval for rebirth in the first three *Śuddhāvāsas* realms.

<sup>81</sup> *Stairway*: 304: gong du ‘pho ba gang ‘og min gyi rten la myang ‘das ‘thob pa’i rigs can no / de la yang ‘phar ba dang / phyed du ‘phar ba dang / gnas thams cad du ‘chi ‘pho zhing ‘phar ba rnam pa gsum mo / MVP or GBBN does not provide a definition which divides the *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas*. Pugg #46, p. 17 subsumes the *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas* and *Akaniṣṭhagaḥ* under one definition: *Idh’ ekacco puggalo pañcannaṃ orabhāgiyānaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyī anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā so avihā cuto atappaṃ gacchati atappā cuto sudassaṃ gacchati sudassa cuto sudassiṃ gacchati sudassiyā cuto akaniṭṭhaṃ gacchati akaniṭṭhe ariyamaggaṃ sañjaneti upariṭṭhimānaṃ saññojanānaṃ pahānāya ayaṃ vuccati puggalo uddhamso akaniṭṭhagāmī /* “Here a certain person, having abandoned the five inferior fetters that cause rebirth in the lower regions, takes an apparitional rebirth, then attains *parinirvāṇa* not returning from that world; one who having deceased from the *Aviha* heaven (Skt. *Abṛha*), goes to *Atappa* heaven (Skt. *Atapa*), having deceased from *Atappa* one goes to *Sudassa* (Skt. *Sudṛśa*) having deceased from *Sudassa* one goes to *Sudassi* (Skt. *Sudarśana*), having deceased from *Sudassi* one goes to *Akaniṭṭha* (Skt. *Akaniṣṭha*), in *Akaniṭṭha* one brings forth the Noble path such that one can abandon the higher fetters. This one is a person called ‘One who goes upward to *Akaniṭṭha* heaven’.”



The jumper who dies in all abodes (*sarvasthānacyuta*) is a transmigrator to the limit of *Akaniṣṭha* heaven who transmigrates through all abodes in the form realm, not counting *Mahābrahma* heaven, in order to obtain *nirvāṇa* in a embodiment of *Akaniṣṭha* heaven.<sup>82</sup> Tsong kha pa (*Golden Garland*: 236) cites the AKBh as to why Noble Beings (*ārya*) are not born in *Mahābrahma* heaven:

A [*śrāvaka*] *ārya* is not reborn among the *Mahābrahmas* because this heaven is a place of [wrong] view: [one considers *Mahābrahma* as the creator there]; and because only one leader can be found there: an *ārya* would be superior to *Mahābrahma* there.<sup>83</sup>

In both the *Stairway* (305) and *Golden Garland* (236), Tsong kha pa notes that these three jumpers first have had a desire realm embodiment which generates the cause of rebirth in the *Śuddhāvāsas* heavens, the cultivation which alternates the fourth level of concentration. Through falling from the three later concentrations one experiences the first concentration and as a result takes rebirth in *Brahmakāyika*. At this point, through the force of previous familiarization with alternation of the fourth concentration, one passes over either, all, some, or none of the heavenly realms in between, takes rebirth in *Akaniṣṭha* heaven, and achieves emancipation. Practicing the alternating cultivations of the fourth concentration is a cause to be reborn in the *Śuddhāvāsas* heavens. With regard to the latter two jumpers, Tsong kha pa states that one takes rebirth in the upper levels from *Brahmakāyika* heaven up to the *Bṛhatphala* heaven in an upper realm embodiment having generated the higher absorption and

<sup>82</sup> *Stairway*: 304: 'phar ba gang zhe na / 'og min gyi mthar thug par 'gro ba gang tshangs ris su skyes nas gnas gzhan par pa thams cad bor nas 'og min gyi rten la 'dar rung ba'i rigs can no / phyed du 'phar ba gang zhe na / 'og min gyi mthar thug par 'gro la gang tshangs ris su skyes de nas shi 'phos te bar ba rnams bor nas gnas gtsang ma dang por gsum gang rung du skyes de nas kyang bar pa rnams dor te / 'og min du 'da' ba'i rigs can no / gnas thams cad du 'phar ba gang zhe na / 'og min gyi mthar thug par 'gro ba gang tshangs chen ma gtogs pa gnas gzhan thams cad du brgyud nas 'og min gyi rten la 'da' pa'i rigs can no /

<sup>83</sup> All of the preceding discussion has been based on AKBH, Pk nyu 026a8–026bb3, Pruden: 968, Śāstrī: 951–952: *tatra pluto nāma ya iha dhyānāni vyavakīrya dhyānatrayāt parihīṇaḥ prathamam dhyānamāsvādya brahmakāyikeṣūpapannaḥ pūrvābhyāsavaś caturtham dhyānam vyavakīrya tasmāt pracyuto 'kaniṣṭheṣūpapadyate / eṣa hi madhyānimajjanāt plutaḥ / arhapluto nāma yas tataḥ śuddhāvāseṣūpapadya madhyād ekam api sthānāntaram vīlāndhyākaniṣṭhān praviśati / mahābrahmasv āryo nopapadyate dṛṣṭisthānatvād ekanāyakatvāc ceti / sarvacyuto nāma yaḥ sarvāṇi sthānāntarāṇi saṃcaryākaniṣṭhān praviśati / AKV: 952: mahābrahmaṇām prathamopapanānām ca mahābrahmaṇi nirmāyakāyābhimānataḥ / ekanāyakatvāc ceti / kiṃ mahābrahmasvāryo nopapadyate / āryasya hi prabhāvavatas tatotpāde satyubhayanāyaktvaṃ syāt / niḥsapatmena ca karmaṇā tatrādhīpatyam / ataḥ saptapatnam na bhavātīti /*

then having generated the alternation of cultivation in a *Brhatphala* heaven embodiment, one is reborn successively in the *Śuddhāvāsas* heavens.

The discussion of these types of Non-returners begs the question, “what is alternating cultivations (*spel ma bsgom pa*, *vyavakīrṇabhāvanā*)?” Alternating cultivations is a meditative technique which consists of mixing contaminated and uncontaminated moments of concentration that causes rebirth in the *Śuddhāvāsa* heavens. In both the *Stairway* (306–310) and *Golden Garland* (236–239), Tsong kha pa utilizes the discussion from the AKBh (on vi.42a–43b) to explain this meditative technique. We will give a brief summary of alternating cultivations based on Tsong kha pa’s exegesis.

This technique is only cultivated by the Non-returner and liberated in two ways (*Ubhayatogbhāgavimutka*) *Arhat*. The reason being that since it is necessary to alternate with uncontaminated concentration, the cultivation that is necessary for the Noble Being (*ārya*) is unable to be cultivated by the Stream-enterer and Once-returner because they do not obtain an actual concentration. Non-returners with sharp faculties cultivate the technique of alternating concentrations for the sake of birth in the *Śuddhāvāsakāyika* heavens and for the sake of abiding in bliss for this life. Alternating concentrations is necessary for the Non-returners with weak faculties so that they may not either backslide from a result, generate more afflictions, or take rebirth in the formless realms. *Arhats* with sharp and weak faculties cultivate for the sake of abiding in bliss for this life and for the sake of abandoning degeneration through fear of the afflictions. Tsong kha pa considers the *Vaibhāṣikas* to accept the degeneration of the *Arhat*’s immovable liberation. However, Tsong kha pa does not accept this type of *Arhat* degeneration and the cultivations are not necessary for the *Arhat* for this reason. We will discuss specifics regarding the *Arhat* in the next section.

One first cultivates this technique in a desire realm embodiment and then later cultivates it in a form realm embodiment. The first period of alternation is only in the fourth concentration since there is an equilibrium of calming and special insight making this level the most suitable from among all meditative stabilizations. Later on one can make alternation with other levels of concentration.

Tsong kha pa states that the grounds for achievement in this meditative technique are based on the moments in which one mixes or alternates the contaminated and uncontaminated moments. This is based on the *Abhidharmakośa* which states:

... achievement is by a combination in moments.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> AK, vi.42b, Pruden: 975, Pradhan: 362: *niṣpattikṣaṇamīśraṇāt* /

Tsong kha pa also defines the achievement of alternation from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*:

With the exception of a Buddha, it is impossible to alternate [thoughts] in a single moment, because of that, [alternation of concentrations] is achieved by means of entering, for as long as one wants into three continuous [concentrations].<sup>85</sup>

In this manner, first having alternating the fourth concentration, one also alternates other concentrations. The actual alternation is the result, the cause of birth in the five *Śuddhāvāsa* heavens which has five alternating cultivations. That is, from alternating three thoughts up to alternating fifteen thoughts. What is the manner of these alternations? First one alternates three weak thoughts. After that, one alternates six medium thoughts, alternates nine strong, alternates twelve stronger, and then fifteen strongest. Tsong kha pa follows Yaśomitra in the manner of how alternated moments are mixed. For instance, to say that one alternates six thoughts one enumerates as follows: one counts the three moments as uncontaminated, contaminated, and uncontaminated and again three moments as uncontaminated, contaminated, and uncontaminated. This manner of counting applies to nine, twelve, and fifteen moments also.

In regards to this alternation, the cause of rebirth in the *Śuddhāvāsa*s is contaminated thought, since uncontaminated thought cuts off existence. The *Golden Garland* (239) notes that the contaminated aspect of the alternating concentration is the mundane cultivation which focuses on comparing the peacefulness and grossness between the upper and lower realms. This contaminated aspect is a pure mundane virtue. It is a path of liberation from the lower realms because a contaminated fundamental threshold is contradictory as being a path of abandonment. Any Non-returner who takes rebirth within the *Śuddhāvāsa*s heavens must practice the technique of alternating cultivations to be born there.

Along with the transmigrator up to the limit of *Akaṇiṣṭha* heaven, the other category of the *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas* is the transmigrator up to the limit of the *Bhavāgra*, the *Bhavāgraparamaga*. The *Stairway* (310) defines this Non-returner:

An *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas* who, from *Brahmakāyika* heaven, not counting *Mahābrahma* heaven, is connected in all [heavens] up to the *Bṛhatphala* heaven, from that, having gone gradually

<sup>85</sup> AKBh, Pknyu 029a.2, Poussin: 222, Pruden: 976, Śāstrī: 961: *aśakyaṃ tu kṣaṇavya-vakiraṇaṃ anyatra buddhāt ata icchātaḥ pravāhatrayasamāpattito niṣpannaṃ bhavati (iti paśyāmaḥ) /*

in the four formless [realms], possesses the lineage of obtaining *nirvāṇa* in an embodiment of the Peak of Existence (*Bhavāgra*).<sup>86</sup>

The *Golden Garland* (239) states that one who transmigrates to *Bhavāgra*, although not definitely transmigrating up to *Bhavāgra*, is necessarily thought to be emancipated in a formless realm embodiment. Tsong kha pa considers that the *Bhavāgraga*, although not counted as one of the nine Non-returner transmigrators who achieve emancipation in the form realm, is actually a transmigrator in the form realm. He states that the meaning is not that the *Bhavāgraga* achieves emancipation in a form realm embodiment but that it was caused to be born there on account of desire.

Tsong kha pa notes that the above presentation of the first two jumpers (i.e., *Pluta* and *Ardhapluta*), along with the *Bhavāgraparamaga* and *Akaniṣṭhaga* derived from the third jumper, is difficult to determine. This is because there are not any *sūtras* which support the defining characteristics of these individuals. Tsong kha pa casts the blame on the *Vaibhāṣikas* for not stating the *sūtras* which support the *Abhidharma* interpretation. However, he notes (*Stairway*: 312) that in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* the source *sūtras* are also not taught. Nevertheless, Tsong kha pa bases his articulation of the Non-returners who transmigrate in the form realm on the *Saptasatpuruṣaḡatīsūtra*, from which the *Vaibhāṣikas* enumerate a single *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas* and from which Asaṅga, as a follower of that *sūtra*, arranges the Jumpers and *Ūrdhvaṃsrotas*. Tsong kha pa therefore sees a coherent arrangement of these Non-returners based on the *Abhidharmakośa* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, although neither one of these *śāstras* give scriptural reference for the subdivisions they provide.

At the end of the discussion of form realm Non-returners, Tsong kha pa addresses how many types of Non-returners are possible. He does this through the example of counting the number of possible *Antarāparinirvāyins* and then applying it to other form realm Non-returners. Tsong kha pa's calculation is as follows. The *Antarāparinirvāyin* can pass through any of the sixteen intermediate states of the form realm and can be divided by means of lineage (*gotra*),<sup>87</sup> separation from

<sup>86</sup> *Stairway*: 310: *gong du 'pho ba gang tshangs ris nas tshangs chen ma gtogs pa 'bras bu che ba'i bar thams cad du brgyud cing de nas gzugs med bzhir rim gyis song nas mthar srid rtse'i rten la 'da' ba'i rigs can ... /*

<sup>87</sup> "Lineage" (Skt. *gotra*, Tib. *rigs*), as Ruegg (1976, 1969) explains, is a term that connotes in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism either "an *extensionally* designated (soteriological) category or class; or *intentionally* designated spiritual factor or capacity that determines classification in such a category or class. In these meanings the term *gotra* is evidently related to the concept of a lineage, clan, or family, or of a genus; and its meanings are then associated with a sociobiological metaphor (*gotra=kula, vaṃśa* "family", etc.) and a biological or botanical metaphor (*gotra=bīja*, "seed, germ") (Ruegg, 1976: 341–342).

attachment (*vairāgya*), and faculty (*indriya*). The lineage consist of six different types consonant with that of the six different Arhats (discussed below): these are, the lineages of the *Parihāṇadharman*, *Cetanādharman*, *Anurakṣaṇadharman*, *Sthitākampya*, *Prativedhanādharman*, and an *Akopyadharman*. Each of the six lineages, the *Antarāparinirvāyin* of the first concentration, from the one bound by all bonds in not abandoning the nine obstacles to be removed by the paths of cultivation of the first concentration up to the one abandoning the eight abandonments to be removed by the path of cultivation, has nine aspects. In similar fashion, for the three later concentrations there are nine and nine times six groups makes fifty-four. These fifty-four times the number of form realm heavens, sixteen, will make eight hundred sixty-four. Then, by dividing the *Antarāparinirvāyin* into three kinds of faculty – dull (*mṛdu*), moderate (*madhya*), and sharp (*adhimātra*): three times eight hundred sixty-four makes two thousand five hundred and ninety-two *Antarāparinirvāyin* Non-returners. This manner of calculation also applies to the three types of *Upapadyaparinirvāyins* and the *Ūrdhvasrotas*. Therefore, five types of Non-returners each have the possibility of two thousand five hundred and ninety-two to make twelve thousand nine hundred sixty types of Non-returners who transmigrate in the form realm.<sup>88</sup> Tsong kha pa gives the following verse as a summary of the Non-returners in the form realm (see Figure 8):

The transmigrator in the realm of form has ten aspects, divisions in the desire realm embodiment and the five alternating cultivations causing rebirth in the *Śuddhāvāsas*, explained to the intention of the masters [Asaṅga and Vasubandhu].

#### *Other types of Non-returners*

Along with the Non-returners who transmigrate in the form realm, Tsong kha pa enumerates other types of Non-returners that either progress in the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*) or in the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*). Tsong kha pa explains in the *Golden Garland* the *śrāvaka* who transmigrates in the formless realm:

<sup>88</sup> Tsong kha pa adapts this method of counting from AKBh on AK, vi.43c–d with categorical details from AKV. Canonical Tibetan is Pk nyu 029b8–030a4. Śāstrī: 964–965: *antarāparinirvāyīṇastrayo mṛdumadhyādhimātendriyamedāt / bhūmibhedāc catvāraḥ / parihāṇadharmanādigotrābhedaḥ ṣaṭ / sthānāntarābhedaḥ ṣoḍaśa / bhūmivairāgyābhedaḥ ṣaṭtriṃśat / rūpadhātāu sakalabandhano yāvac caturthadhyānāṣṭāprakāravītarāgaḥ sthānāntaragotra vairāgyendriyābhedaḥ dvānavatīni pañcaviṃśatiḥ śatāni / katham kṛtvā / ekasmin sthāne ṣaṭ gotrāṇi gotre gotre nava pudgalāḥ sakalabandhano yāvadaṣṭāprakāravītarāgaḥ svasmāt sthānāt ṣaṇṇavakāni catuṣpañcāśat ṣoḍaśa catuṣpañcāśatkāni catuṣṣaṣṭānyaṣṭau śatāni / indriyābhedaḥ punas triguṇa ity evaṃ kṛtvā yo hy adhare dhyāne navaprakāravītarāgaḥ sa uttare sakalabandhana uktaḥ samagaṇanārtham / yathāntarāparinirvāyīṇa evaṃ yāvad ūrdhvasrotasa ity abhisamasya sarve catvāriṃśadūnāni trayodaśa-sahasraṇyanāgāmināḥ bhavanti /*

<b>Antarāparinirvāyin</b> (One achieves <i>nirvāṇa</i> in the intermediate state)
(1) <b>Āśuparinirvāyin</b> (Immediately in the intermediate state)
(2) <b>Anāśuparinirvāyin</b> (Not immediately in the intermediate state)
(3) <b>Ciraparinirvāyin</b> (After a long time)
<b>Upapadyaparinirvāyin</b> (One who achieves <i>nirvāṇa</i> through birth)
(4) <b>Abhisamṣkāraparinirvāyin</b> (One who achieves through effort)
(5) <b>Anabhisamṣkāraparinirvāyin</b> (One who achieves without effort)
(6) <b>Upapadyaparinirvāyin</b>
<b>Ūrdhvamśrotas</b> (One who goes higher)
<b>Akaniṣṭhaga</b> ([Non-returner] who goes up to Akaniṣṭha)
(7) <b>Pluta</b> (Jumper)
(8) <b>Ardhapluta</b> (Half-jumper)
(9) <b>Sarvasthānacyuta</b> (One who dies in all abodes)
(10) <b>Bhavāgraparamaga</b> (One who may go up to the Peak of Existence)

Figure 8. Ten aspects of the form realm transmigrator.

[A Non-returner in the formless realm,] having the force of exhausting the fetter of the form realm, does not transmigrate in the form realm, and takes rebirth in the formless realm.<sup>89</sup>

Tsong kha pa notes that since a rebirth in the formless realm lacks an intermediate state, there are only four types of these Non-returners: One who is emancipated from mere rebirth (*Upapadyaparinirvāyin*), One who is emancipated with effort (*Abhisamṣkāraparinirvāyin*), without effort (*Anabhisamṣkāraparinirvāyin*), and the one who goes higher (*Ūrdhvamśrotas*). Tsong kha pa states that the definitions of these Non-returners resemble the corresponding definitions given for transmigrators in the form realm, except that these Non-returners progress through the four levels of the formless realm. However, Tsong kha pa (*Stairway*: 317) notes that some scholars believe that one should not count the *Ūrdhvamśrotas* and the three jumpers among the formless realm Non-returners. This is because there are no scriptural citations for supporting these types of formless realm Non-returners and their meaning cannot be determined through reasoning because there is not a formless realm heaven in which to count the Half-jumper.

Tsong kha pa defines the fourth category he gives for Non-returners as those that obtain peace in this very existence (*Dṛṣṭadharmaparinirvāyin*). He states that this type of Non-returner is one who obtains *nirvāṇa* in the very embodiment in which one obtained the Non-returner state. The *Golden Garland* (242) mentions that this Non-returner does not take rebirth in the upper realms and also does not take rebirth in the desire

<sup>89</sup> *Golden Garland*: 239: . . . gzugs kyi kun sbyor zad pa'i mthus 'di nas gzugs su mi 'gro bar gzugs med du skye ba len pa'o l

realm. In the brief discussion of this type of Non-returner, Tsong kha pa (*Stairway*: 317) mentions that the *Dr̥ṣṭadharmaparinirvāyin* develops from those who obtain the state of *Arhat* in an embodiment which first has already obtained the result of Stream-enterer or One-returner. Tsong kha pa also defines in this section the Non-returner who witnesses with the body (*Kāyasākṣin*) directly from the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

Who is the bodily witness? One in the course of training who concentrates on the eight liberations.<sup>90</sup>

Tsong kha pa therefore accepts the definition of a bodily witness as the Non-returner who is able to enter into absorption of the eight liberations.<sup>91</sup> In the discussion on the *bodhisattva saṁgha*, the *Golden Garland* describes the *śrāvaka kāyasākṣin*:<sup>92</sup>

When the [Noble Being] emerges from the absorption of cessation, from the moment when thinking, “This cessation is calm like *nirvāṇa*”, a calmness of the afflicted body which has consciousness is obtained that was never previously acquired. In this way one directly witnesses by the body [the calmness of extinction].<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> AS, Rahula: 150, Pradhan: 88: *kāyasākṣī katamaḥ / śaikṣaḥ aṣṭavimokṣadhāyī yaḥ pudgalaḥ / MVP #1020, GBBN (1990: 48): kāyasākṣi zhes bya ba nirvāṇasadr̥śyā nirodhasamāpatte kāyena sākṣātkarāṇa kāyasākṣi zhes bya ste phyir mi 'ong ba 'gog pa'i snyoms par 'jug pa mya ngan las 'das pa dang 'dra bar sems dang sems las byung ba 'gags kyis kyang lus kyis mngon du byed pa zhes bya / “A Non-returner called *kāyasākṣin* is one who directly witnesses with the body the attainment of cessation which is like *nirvāṇa*, one who cultivates the attainment of cessation bringing to cessation the mind and mental factors in a way similar to *nirvāṇa*, one is called a ‘bodily witness’.” Pugg #32, p. 14: *ldh' ekaccao puggalo aṭṭha vimokkhe kāyena phusitvā viharati paññāya c'assa disvā ekacce āsavā parikkhīṇā honti ayaṃ vuccati puggalo kāya sakkhī / “Here, when a certain person experiences and dwells in the eight liberations with the body, and having seen with insight, completely abandons the defilements; this is a person who is called ‘bodily witness’.”**

<sup>91</sup> Briefly, the eight liberations (*aṣṭavimokṣa*) is a meditation exercise that progresses through the eight levels of concentration and aids in overcoming all bodily and non-bodily factors. It consists of (1) cognitions of internal and external forms; (2) cognition of external forms but not internal; (3) cognition of the beautiful; (4) attainment of the state of limitless of space; (5) attainment of the state of limitless consciousness; (6) attainment of the state of nothingness; (7) attainment of the state of neither perception nor non-perception; (8) cessation of perception and feeling (*nirodha samāpatti*). See AKV, viii.32–34; DN, II: 71.

<sup>92</sup> *Golden Garland*, 1970: 260: ‘gog pa las langs pa na ‘gog pa ni myang ‘das dang ‘dra bar ches zhi ba yin no snyam du sems pas rnam shes dang bcas pa’i lus nyon mongs zhi ba sngon ma thob pa thob pas lus mngon byed de zhes bshed de /

<sup>93</sup> Tsong kha pa quotes this section of his comments from the AKBH on AK, vi.43c–d. Pradhan, 363: *kathaṃ punaḥ kāyena sākṣātkaroti / cittābhāvāt kāyāśrayotpatteḥ / evaṃ tu bhavitavyam / sa hi tasyād avyuthāyāpratīlabdhapūrvā savijñānakāmī kāyāśāntiṃ pratīlabhate / yato'syaivaṃ bhavati śāntā vata nirodhasamāpattir nirvāṇasadr̥śī vata nirodhasamāpattir iti / evaṃ anena tasyāḥ śāntatvaṃ kāyena sākṣātkṛtaṃ bhavati /*

Tsong kha pa considers the *Dr̥ṣṭadharmaparinirvāyin* and *Kāyasākṣin* to not be suitable as a Non-returner who has terminated rebirth in the desire realm (*parivṛttajanmā anāgāmin*). This is because for the one who has terminated rebirth in the desire realm transmigration in the upper realms does not exist. Tsong kha pa bases this assertion on statements from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and *Abhidharmakośa* that a Noble Being (*ārya*) who terminates rebirth (*parivṛttajanma*) in the desire realm does not transmigrate to another realm. A Noble Being who terminates other rebirths in the desire realm does not transmigrate to another realm because in that birth itself, having obtained the result of Non-returner, one achieves *parinirvāṇa*.<sup>94</sup> Tsong kha pa defines the Non-returner who terminates rebirth in the desire realm based on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya-vyākhyā*:

A Non-returner who terminates rebirth is one that in the first birth, having obtained the result of Stream-enterer or the result of Once-returner, in the second birth becomes a Non-returner.<sup>95</sup>

Therefore, Tsong kha pa differentiates this Non-returner from the *Dr̥ṣṭadharmaparinirvāyin* on whether they have previously achieved the state of Stream-enterer or Once-returner or not. Due to the ambiguity of these terms in the AK, it is not clear whether or not Tsong kha pa's interpretation, which differentiates a Non-returner who terminates rebirth and a *Dr̥ṣṭadharmaparinirvāyin*, reflects the meaning given in the AKBh.

#### Arhats

The fourth division of those who progress gradually in the results of *śrāmaṇya* is the state of *Arhat*. It is important to keep in mind that the *Arhats* discussed here belong to the *śrāvaka* vehicle and are primarily seeking emancipation from suffering through realizing the sixteen aspects of the Nobles' Four Truths. In the *Stairway* (321) the *Arhat* enterer is considered to be synonymous with the distinctive Non-returner abider whom we have just discussed in the previous section. The *Golden Garland* (242) states that an *Arhat* enterer is

... an abider in the result of Non-returner who makes effort to abandon the first defilement to be abandoned by the path of cultivation of the form realm up to making effort to abandon the ninth defilement of the peak of existence.

<sup>94</sup> AKBh, Pruden: 973, Śāstrī: 958: *kim puna parivṛttajanmano 'pyanāgāmīna eṣa bhedo 'sti / yasmāt (AK, vi.41a b): na parāvṛttajanmāryaḥ kāmā dhātvantaropagaḥ / kāmādhātau parāvṛttajanmāntara āryo na dhātvantaram gacchati / anāgāmiphalaṃ prāpya tattraiva janmani parinirvāṇāt / rūpadhātau tu parāvṛttajanmā kadācid ārūpyān praviśati /*

<sup>95</sup> AKV, Śāstrī: 958: *parivṛttajanmānāgāmīyaḥ prathame janmani srota-āpattiphalaṃ sakṛdāgāmiphalaṃ vā prāpya dvitīye janmany anāgāmī bhavati /*



Tsong kha pa follows the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* in defining the abider in the result of Arhat:

The lesser vehicle person who abandons all nine afflictions of the Peak of Existence.<sup>96</sup>

Tsong kha pa divides *Arhats* by means of several different classifications. *Arhats* classified according to how they abandon defilements are two: the *Prajñāvimukta* and the *Ubhayatobhāgavimukta*. *Arhats* classified according to whether they fall or do not fall away from abiding in the bliss of concentration are six:<sup>97</sup> *Parihāṇadharman* (one who can fall away), *Cetanādharmā* (one who can put an end to his existence), *Anurakṣaṇadharman* (one who can protect himself), *Sthitākampya* (one who firmly holds his ground and is unshakable), *Prativedhanādharmā* (one who can penetrate at will), and an *Akopyadharman* (one who is immovable). When classified by means of faculty there are two types of *Arhats*: an *Arhat* who is liberated dependent upon particular occasions (*samayavimukta*) and an *Arhat* who is liberated regardless of occasion (*asamayavimukta*).

Regarding these classifications, Tsong kha pa considers that *Arhats* who are not able to enter the meditative absorption on the eight liberations are called *Prajñāvimukta*<sup>98</sup> (liberated by wisdom) because they do not abandon obscurations through entering absorption but are liberated from

<sup>96</sup> AS, Rahula: 154, #13, Pradhan: 89–90: *arhan katamaḥ / bhāvāgrikasya navamasya kleśaprakāraṣya prahāṇamārge yaḥ pudgalaḥ / Who is the Arhat? The person who abides in the path of abandoning the nine aspects of afflictions of the Peak of Existence.*

<sup>97</sup> The AKBh, Pradhan: 373–374 glosses these six as follows: *tatra parihāṇadharman yaḥ parihātum bhavyo na cetanādharmā / cetanādharmā yaś cetayitum bhavyaḥ / anurakṣaṇadharman yaḥ anurakṣitum bhavyaḥ / sthitākampya yaḥ parihāṇipratyayaṃ balavantam antareṇānurakṣaṇam āpi sthātum bhavyo na hātum nāpi vardhayitum vinābhīyogena / prativedhanādharmā yaḥ prativeddhum bhavyaḥ / akopyadharman yaḥ naiva parihātum bhavyaḥ /* “Here a *Parihāṇadharman* is one who may fall away and is not a *Cetanādharmā*, etc. . . .; a *Cetanādharmā* is one who puts an end to his existence; an *Anurakṣaṇadharman* is one who protects himself; a *Sthitākampya* is one who when powerful conditions of falling away are absent, even without protecting himself, remains stable, does not fall away, yet without effort, does not progress; a *Prativedhanādharmā* is one who enters into the immovable; an *Akopyadharman* is one who does not fall away.”

<sup>98</sup> MVP #1027, GBBN (1990: 50): *prajñā vimukta zhes bya ba prajñayā vimukta prajñāvimukta zhes bya ste / dgra bcom pa ‘gog pa’i snyoms par ‘jug pa ma bsgrubs par shes rab kyis zag pa nyi tshe las grol bar byas pas na shes rab kyis rnam par grol ba zhes bya /* “An *Arhat* called *prajñāvimukta* is *prajñayā vimukta prajñāvimukta*, that is, one who is liberated from the subtle defilements by wisdom who does not achieve the attainment of cessation; that one is called ‘liberated through wisdom’.” Pugg #31, p. 14: *Idh’ ekacco puggalo na h’ eva kho aṭṭha vimokkhe kāyena phusitvā viharati paññāya c’ assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti ayam vuccati puggalo paññā-vimutto /* “Here a certain individual does not experience the eight liberations with the body but through perceiving

obscurational afflictions by the wisdom which cognizes selflessness. Those able to enter the meditative absorption on the eight liberations are *Ubhayatobhāgavimukta*<sup>99</sup> because they are liberated from both the obscuration of entering absorption and the obscurations of the afflictions (*Stairway*: 321).

Tsong kha pa states that of the classification consisting of six divisions, the first five *Arhats* are without distinction and have dull faculties. The characteristics of these *Arhats* are to be divided by whether or not they degenerate from abiding in bliss of body and mind in this life by the meditative stabilization of mundane concentration. Tsong kha pa explains each of these first five *Arhats* by means of their name. So, a dull faculty *Arhat* that is a *Parihāṇadharman* (one who can fall away), when differentiated by gratification of the senses definitely degenerates from concentration or does not fall away if not gratified through the senses. The *Cetanādharman* is one who can put an end to his existence; if not putting an end to the mental continuum by oneself, the *Arhat* degenerates and if putting an end to the mental continuum by oneself, the *Arhat* does not continuously degenerate. Likewise, an *Anurakṣaṇadharman* is one who can protect himself; if protecting the mind from sensual gratification, the *Arhat* does not degenerate, and if not increasingly protecting the mind, the *Arhat* degenerates. These *Arhats*, successively from the *Parihāṇadharman* up to the *Prativedhanādharman*, may change from dull to sharp faculties. In this case, Tsong kha pa states that whether or not one protects from sensual gratification, there is an *Arhat* for whom it is not possible to degenerate and not change from dull to sharp faculties, the *Akopyadharman*. Tsong kha pa cites the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

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with insight abandons the defilements; this one is an individual called liberated by means of insight.”

<sup>99</sup> MVP #1028, GBBN (1990: 50): *ubhayato bhāga vimukta zhes bya ba ubhaya ni gnyis ka / bhāga ni cha / vimukta ni rnam par grol ba ste / dgra bcom pa nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa dang / snyom par 'jug pa'i sgrib pa gnyis ka las grol bas na gnyis ka'i cha las rnam par grol ba zhes bya /* “Concerning *ubhayato bhāga vimukta*, ‘*ubhaya*’ means both; *bhāga* means ‘factor’; *vimukta* means liberated. If an *Arhat* is liberated from both the obscurations of afflictions and the obscurations of attainment (*samāpatti*) it is called ‘liberated from both factors’.” Pugg #30, p. 14: *Idh' ekacco puggalo aṭṭha vimokkhe kāyena phusitvā viharati paññāya c' assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti ayam vuccati puggalo ubhatobhāgavimutto /* “Here a certain individual experiences the eight liberations with the body and through perceiving with insight abandons the defilements; this one is an individual called liberated in both ways.”

Who is the *Akopyadharman*? This is one who has by nature sharp faculties, distracted or not, reflective or not, does not possess the fortune of falling from abiding in bliss for the present life.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, Tsong kha pa classifies these six types of *Arhats* based on whether they have sharp or dull faculties. Tsong kha pa states that the *Parihāṇadharman* and so forth can be located in the realm of desire. The *Sthitākampya* and the *Akopyadharman* can be located in the form and formless realms because these realms are without degeneration, volitional thought, and [the ability to] change faculties.

According to Tsong kha pa, the *Vaibhāṣikas* assert the first five *Arhats* to exist as Stream-enterers when degenerating from the state of *Arhat*. The *Sautrāntikas*, on the other hand, assert that it is not possible to degenerate from the state of *Arhat* and that the *Arhat* degenerates from merely abiding in bliss for the present life.

Tsong kha pa has an extended discussion in the *Stairway* (326–335) in which he demonstrates the arguments and scriptural citations that the *Vaibhāṣikas* utilize to prove that one may degenerate from the state of *Arhat*. The *Vaibhāṣikas* assert that each one of these six *Arhats* are distinguished from each other according to whether their faculties, lineage, or practice degenerates. The distinction of faculty is that the first five go previously aspiring by faith and have dull faculties and the sixth obtains by seeing and has sharp faculties. The distinction of lineage is based on the individual who abides in the lineage from the beginning or the individual who although not in a lineage from the beginning changes lineages later. The first kind is the sharp faculty *Akopyadharman* and the second kind is for the later five lineages.

Tsong kha pa also states that the *Vaibhāṣika* position is that one cannot degenerate from a first result, one obtained either by gradual progress, i.e., – a Stream-enterer, or one obtained by skipping fruitions, i.e. – the results of Once-returned or Non-returned, although one may fall away from the result of *Arhat*. This is because the abandonment of the first three fruitions is made firm by both a mundane and supermundane path. In regards to the gradual progressor, the *Vaibhāṣika* holds that they will degenerate from the result of *Arhat* and turn into a Non-returned by producing in the continuum the upper realm afflictions. The *Arhat* will turn into a Once-returned by producing the upper seven desire realm afflictions, and will turn into a Stream-enterer by producing the lower six desire realm afflictions. However, *Vaibhāṣikas* posit that it is not possible to degenerate from the result of Stream-enterer or either of the skipper results. The

<sup>100</sup> AS, Rahula: 158, Pradhan: 91: *akopyadharmā arhan katamaḥ / tīkṣṇendriyaprakṛtiko vikṣipto vā avikṣipto cetayitvā vā acetayitvā na dṛṣṭadharmasukhavihārāt parihāṇameti /*

abandonments of the Stream-enterer are irreversible since the obstacles to be abandoned by the path of seeing, the root of the false view of the imaginary self (*ātmadarśana*), is removed by a Noble Being because of directly perceiving the selflessness of the imaginary self and therefore does not produce the afflictions from the view of the self. On the other hand, the basis of the obstacles to be removed by the path of cultivation, desire and anger, may reoccur. Tsong kha pa (*Stairway*: 329–331) shows that the *Vaibhāṣikas* rely on four scriptural sources to assert the possibility of degenerating from the state of *Arhat*. These are found in the AKBh and the AKV. The first has to do with five conditions which may hinder an *Arhat*. The second concerns the *Arhat* being interrupted by fame and fortune. The third scriptural source is the *Aṅgārakarṣūpama Sūtra* (= SN, i.120) in which the Venerable Gautika (Godhika) kills himself. The fourth concerns the eight powers of the monk who is an *Arhat*. Through quoting their interpretation of the principles given in these *sūtras*, Tsong kha pa demonstrates that the *Vaibhāṣika* propose there to be a possibility of degenerating from the state of *Arhat*.

Tsong kha pa counters each of the arguments and meticulously examines the scriptural citations quoted by the *Vaibhāṣikas* to demonstrate that it is not possible to degenerate from the state of *Arhat*. Tsong kha pa asserts that if an *Arhat* does degenerate, it is merely degenerating from abiding in bliss for the present life. Tsong kha pa follows the statements in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyavyākhyā*:

Not only is there no degeneration by abandoning that to be abandoned by the path of seeing, but there is also no degeneration from [the result of] *Arhat* itself. Not from the first [result], but there is falling from the result of Once-returner and Non-returner because those attainments can occur by a mundane path. That is the intended meaning.<sup>101</sup>

Tsong kha pa explains (*Stairway*: 331) that for Vasubandhu both the first and last result do not degenerate because they are obtained only from a supermundane path. However, it is possible to fall away from the two middle fruitions since the Noble Being may obtain them by a mundane path, and the abandonment by a mundane path is reversible. Tsong kha pa (*Stairway*: 332) also demonstrates, through quoting the *Pramāṇavārttika* of Dharmakīrti, that since the abandonment of the Buddha is irreversible and complete, a Buddha is superior to outsiders (*bāhya*), Buddhist trainees (*śaikṣa*), and those Buddhists beyond training (*aśaikṣa*). Tsong kha pa understands this to implicitly show that the defilements abandoned by a

<sup>101</sup> AKV, Śāstrī: 996: *na kevalam darśanaheyaprahāṇān nāsti parihāṇaḥ arhattvādipi nāsti parihāṇir ity api śabena darśayati aprathamabhyām tu sakrdāgāmyanāgāmiphālābhyām parihāṇiḥ sambhavati / laukikena mārgeṇa tat prāptisambhavādity abhiprāyaḥ /*

Noble trainee (*āryaśaikṣa*) may reoccur but not the defilements abandoned by an Arhat.

Tsong kha pa cites the following scriptural statement for the non-degeneration from the state of *Arhat*:

In this way Monks, abandonment is abandonment through *āryan* wisdom.<sup>102</sup>

Tsong kha pa considers the abandonment mentioned in this *sūtra* is definite abandonment since *ārya* wisdom does not allow for the possibility of afflictions regenerating. Tsong kha pa also states that it is taught that “a *śaikṣa* should cultivate vigilance,”<sup>103</sup> but that the Buddha did not state that the *Arhat* should cultivate vigilance. In other words, a *śaikṣa* must still observe training but an *Arhat* no longer needs to train in abandoning defilements. Tsong kha pa holds that the *Abhidharma* teaches the collection of three causes and conditions which generate the latent defilements of the desire realm: the latent defilement (*anuśaya*) of sensual desire that has not been completely known and has not been abandoned, the qualities which appear favorable to the increase of sensual desire, and erroneous judgment.<sup>104</sup> Since an *Arhat* abandons all latent defilements it cannot fulfill the three causes of generating these defilements. Tsong kha pa argues that since an *Arhat* produces meditative antidotes that do not generate the seed of afflictions, how can it degenerate? If an Arhat does not eradicate the seed of afflictions, how can an Arhat be called a “*kṣīṇāsrava*,” one who exhausts (*kṣīṇa*) the vices (*āsrava*). Therefore, Tsong kha pa surmises that there is no degenerating from the state of *Arhat*.<sup>105</sup>

What about the intention of those *sūtras* cited by the *Vaibhāṣikas*? For Tsong kha pa, these *sūtras* refer to occasional degeneration and the meaning of the *sūtras* in this instance is to degenerate from the meditative stabilization of the fourth concentration. Tsong kha pa notes that one *sūtra* (see *Stairway*: 329.4) states “a degeneration from the four concentra-

<sup>102</sup> AKBh, Pk 038b.4, Pruden: 1006, L.V.P., Śāstrī: 996: *taddhi bhikṣavaḥ prahīṇaṃ yadāryaprajñayā prahīṇaṃ* / cf. SN, ii.50 (Kalārasutta). The first and last result can only be obtained by the pure path (= *āryaprajñā*), AK, vi.45c.

<sup>103</sup> AKBh, Pk 038b.4, Pruden: 1006, Śāstrī: 997: *śaikṣasya cāpramāḍakaraṇīye ‘pramāḍakaraṇīyaṃ pravedayāmi / ity uktam nārhaṭaḥ* / cf. SN, iv.25.

<sup>104</sup> AKBh, Pk 039b.2–3, Pruden: 1008–1009, L.V.P.: 262, Śāstrī: 1000–1001: *abhidharṃ ‘pi cōktaṃ tribhiḥ sthānaiḥ kāmarāgānuśayasyotpādo bhavati kāmarāgānuśayo ‘prahīṇo bhavaty aparijñātaḥ kāmarāgaparyavasthānīyāś ca dharmā ābhāsagatā bhavanti tatra cāyonīso manaskāraḥ* / See also AK V.34.

<sup>105</sup> Tsong kha pa has paraphrased this section from AKBh, Pk 039b.3–4, Pruden: 1009, Śāstrī: 1001: *kathaṃ yuktitaḥ yadi tāvad arhataṣṭadrūpaḥ pratipakṣa utpanno yena kleśā atyantam anutpattidharmatāmāpannāḥ kathaṃ punaḥ parihīyate / atha notpannaḥ kathaṃ kṣīṇāsravo bhavati / atyantam anapoddhṛtāyāṃ tad bijadharmatāyāṃ akṣīṇāsrava vo vā punaḥ kathaṃ arhan bhavatiṭy evaṃ yuktiḥ* /

tions that arise from superior intellect” may occur. In regards to the third *sūtra*, the *Aṅgārakarsūpamasūtra*, Tsong kha pa states that Gautika kills himself having repeatedly degenerated from meditative stabilization, he does not kill himself having repeatedly degenerated from the state of *Arhat*. Gautika, although having experienced concentration at the time of training, because of weak faculties, degenerates repeatedly from concentration and from disgust stabbed himself with a dagger, and at the moment of death he attained the state of *Arhat* and achieved *nirvāṇa*. Finally, Tsong kha pa demonstrates that the meaning of the fourth *sūtra* applies to the qualities of Noble trainees (*śaikṣa*) not *Arhats*. The quality of the *Arhat* has the distinction of having qualities which are preeminent (Skt. *prakarṣa*).<sup>106</sup> At the conclusion of these arguments in the *Stairway*, Tsong kha pa states:

The Second Buddha [*Vasubandhu*] extensively explained the refutations eloquently with reasoning and scripture of the bad ideas of the *Vaibhāṣikas* who say, “the *Arhat* reverses abandonment.” Fearing it would be too prolific, I have not extensively presented the proofs of the refutations. Have no doubt though, for I have properly explained the intentions of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and *Bhāṣyavyākhyā*.<sup>107</sup>

Tsong kha pa finally discusses the *Arhat* from the point of view whether it is occasionally delivered (*samayavimukta*)<sup>108</sup> and not-occasionally delivered (*asamayavimukta*).<sup>109</sup> The first five lineages of *Arhats* are

<sup>106</sup> Tsong kha pa draws remarks from AKBh (Pruden: 1009, 1076, f.n. #380) and AKV, Śāstrī: 1002: *yattūktam dīrgharātram vivekanimnam iti tacchaikṣasyāpi sambhavati / arhataḥ tu prakarṣeṇa bhavātīti viśeṣaḥ* /

<sup>107</sup> *Stairway*: 334: *dgra bcom spangs pa zlog ces pa'i / bye brag smra ba'i ngan rtog rnams / sangs rgyas gnyis pas lung rigs kyi / legs par bkag rnams rgyas par bkral / mangs kyi dogs nas shes byed rnams / rgyas par ma bkod rang 'grel dang / 'grel bshad dgongs pa tshul bzhi du / phye ba yin gyi som nyi dor /*

<sup>108</sup> MVP #1025, GBBN (1990: 49–50): *samayavimukta zhes bya ba dad pas rjes su 'brang ba'i dgra bcom pa dbang po rtul po dus dang yo byad la sogs pa dang ldan na nyon mong pa las grol zhing 'bras bu 'thob kyi / mi ldan na thar pa thob par mi nus pas na dus kyi rnam par grol ba zhes bya* / “A dull faculty *Arhat* who is a follower through faith is called a *samayavimukta*, one is liberated from the afflictions and obtains the result when possessing the necessities with respect to an occasion; since one is unable to achieve liberation without them one is ‘liberated on occasion.’” Pugg #1, p. 11: *Idh' ekacco puggalo kālena kālaṃ samayena samayaṃ aṭṭha vimokkhe kāyena phusitvā viharati paññāya c'assa disvā ekacce āsavā parikkhīṇā honti ayaṃ vuccati puggalo samayavimutto* / “Here a certain person experiences the eight liberations with the body from time to time and having seen through insight, some of the defilements are abandoned; this person is called liberated on occasion.”

<sup>109</sup> MVP #1026, GBBN (1990: 50): *asamayavimukta zhes bya ba dgra bcom pa dbang po rnon po chos kyi rjes su 'brang ba yo byad dang dus la ltos mi dgos par nyon mongs pa spong nus pas na dus dang mi sbyor bar rnam par grol zhes bya* / “A sharp faculty *Arhat* follower of doctrine is called *asamayavimukta*, because one is able to abandon the afflictions without having to rely on an occasion or provisions is called ‘liberated without occasion.’” Pugg #2, p. 11: *Idh' ekacco puggalo no h' eva kho kālena kālaṃ samayena*

considered to have the possibility of degenerating from meditative concentration because it is possible to fall away at a certain occasion that abandons liberation. The sixth lineage of *Arhat* is not possible to fall away because there is not an occasion for which it will degenerate. Tsong kha pa follows the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*<sup>110</sup> in interpreting the statement “the *Arhat* who is liberated occasionally” to refer to one who, because of weak faculties, will be directly facing meditative stabilization with respect to time. The opposite is called liberation which is not connected with time.

Tsong kha pa concludes this section on *Arhats* by stating that these *Arhats* which have been explained above, are also classified as the “nine *aśaikṣas*” – i.e., the nine Noble Beings who are no longer subject to training on the *śrāvaka* path. Tsong kha pa cites a *sūtra* from the AKV:

Who are the nine *aśaikṣas*? The *Parihāṇadharman*, *Aparihāṇadharman*, *Cetanādharmā*, up to the *Akopyadharmā*, *Prajñāvimukta*, and *Ubhayatobhāgavimukta*, these are called the nine *aśaikṣas*.<sup>111</sup>

#### *Those who skip fruitions*

Besides those Noble Beings who actualize through progressive fruition and abandon defilements by progressive abandonment – i.e., gradual progressors (*ānupūrvaka*), Tsong kha pa also classifies Noble Beings (*ārya*) of the *allegorical saṃgha* into those who skip fruitions (*thod rgal*, *vyutkrāntika*) and those who simultaneously abandon defilements (*cig car pa*, *sakṛnnairyāṇika*). In regards to this classification, as we mentioned earlier, there are two that either gradually obtain or skip over in obtaining fruitions and two that, either gradually or simultaneously, abandon defilements. Tsong kha pa states in the *Stairway* (338) that one who skips fruitions is not in contradiction with those who gradually abandon defilements but those who gradually progress in fruition are definitely contradictory to be simultaneous abandoners.

*samayaṃ aṭṭha vimokkhe kāyena phusitvā viharati paññāya c’ assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti ayaṃ vuccati puggalo asamayavimutto / sabbe pi ariyapuggalā ariye vimokkhe asamayavimutta /* “Here a certain person experiences the eight liberations with the body and not from time to time, having perceived through insight abandons the defilements, this one is called a person liberated not on occasion. Indeed, all Noble individuals are not occasionally delivered with respect to the Noble liberation.”

<sup>110</sup> AKBh, Pruden: 1006–1107.

<sup>111</sup> Sanskrit found in the AKV, Śāstrī: 998: *navāśaikṣāḥ katame / parihāṇadharmā aparihāṇadharmā cetanādharmā anurakṣaṇādharmā sthitākampyaḥ prativedhanābhavyaḥ akopyadharmā prajñāvimuktaḥ ubhayatobhāgavimuktaḥ ima ucyante navāśaikṣāḥ /*

As we mentioned earlier, those who skip fruitions (*thod rgal ba*) are individuals who remove defilements to be abandoned by the path of cultivation by a mundane path before reaching the path of seeing. At the moment of reaching the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing, they “skip over” lower results based on the number of defilements removed previously by a mundane path of cultivation (*laukikabhāvanāmārga*). The classification of fruition skipper applies only for the four enterers and abiders of the two middle fruitions. This is due to the fact that a fruition skipper is characterized as skipping over former results at the time of first obtaining the sixteenth moment and there is not a former result for the result of Stream-enterer to skip over. Also, the result of Arhat is unable to be obtained at the time of the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing because one cannot abandon the path of cultivation abandonments of the Peak of Existence previous to the path of seeing and because the path of seeing is unable to abandon those path of cultivation defilements. Tsong kha pa mentions in the *Golden Garland* (225) that the term “skipper” (*thod rgal*) is construed to be consonant with the terms “*Bhūyovītarāga*” and “*Kāmaṣvītarāga*” found in the AKBh. These fruition skippers, although skipping over results, are regarded as gradual progressors in the result. Tsong kha pa notes that the AKBh in stating that even though there are from a nominal standpoint eight Noble Beings – i.e., four enters and four abiders, essentially there are only five. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* states:

In actuality there are five aspects, the first enterer and four abiders in the result because the remaining enterers are not differentiated from the three abiders in the result. It is explained thus because of obtaining by gradual progression.<sup>112</sup>

In this manner of counting, the enterers to the three later results—Once-returner, Non-returner, and Arhat, are not regarded as categorically different from the first three abiders in the results of Stream-enterer, Once-returner, and Non-returner and are in substance set forth as five construed through the domain of gradual progression. These five are the Stream-enterer enterer and the four abiders in the result. Tsong kha pa (*Stairway*: 340) states that although this method of counting is in agreement with the system of gradual progression, that if a Noble Being is a fruition skipper, an enterer to a later result is not certain to be an abider in a former result. For example, the results of the fruition skipper Once-returner enterer and Non-returner enterer are not definitely considered to be Stream-enterers or Once-returners. The AKBh states in this regard:

<sup>112</sup> AKBh, Pk 031b.5–6, Pruden: 985, Śāstrī: 973: *dravyatas tu pañca / prathamah pratipannakah catvāraś ca phalasthāḥ śeṣāṇaṃ pratipannakānāṃ triphalasthāvyatirekāt / anupūrvādhigamaṃ praty evam ucyate /*



The *Bhūyovītarāga*'s and *Kāmaṣītarāga*'s are, in the path of seeing, enterers to the result of Once-returner and Non-returner but also are not [necessarily] Stream-enterers or Once-returners.<sup>113</sup>

Tsong kha pa construes a classification scheme based on this statement along with implicitly reading into the following statement of Yaśomitra in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyavyākhyā*:

That being the case, in actuality there are seven: the three enterers to the results of Stream-enterer, Once-returner, and Non-returner and the four abiders in the result. However, one should realize that one [of the eight,] the enterer to the result of Arhat, is not different from the result of Non-returner.<sup>114</sup>

Tsong kha pa notes here that the gradual progressor (*ānupūrvaka*) in substance is five, but along with that we have two fruition skipper enterers – i.e., enterers to the results of Once-returner (*Bhūyovītarāga*) and Non-returner (*Kāmaṣītarāga*), who are different than the abiders in the result and if including these there will be essentially seven Noble individuals who enter and abide in the results of *śrāmaṇya*. This is enumerated by counting a single enterer to the first result in the period of the gradual progressor along with the two skipper fruition enterers to make three individuals who enter into the first three fruitions and then adding the four abiders in the result adds up to seven. Tsong kha pa states that the enterer to the result of *Arhat* is only a gradual progressor and that undifferentiated from the Non-returner means the state that is let go of before attaining *Arhatship*. The following list depicts how Tsong kha pa enumerates essentially seven Noble Beings.

*Tsong kha pa's enumeration of essentially Seven Noble Beings*

- 1) Stream-enterer enterer (*srota-āpanna pratipannaka*) [*ānupūrvaka*]
- 2) Once-returner enterer [skipper] (*bhūyovītarāga*)
- 3) Non-returner enterer [skipper] (*kāmaṣītarāga*)
- 4) Stream-enterer abider (*srota-āpannaphalasthā*) [*ānupūrvaka*]
- 5) Once-returner abider (*sakṛdāgāminphalasthā*) [*ānupūrvaka*]
- 6) Non-returner abider (*anāgāminphalasthā*) [*ānupūrvaka*]
- 7) Arhat

<sup>113</sup> AKBh, Pk 031b.6–7, Pruden: 985, Śāstrī: 973: *bhūyaḥ kāmaṣītarāgau tu syātām darśanamārga sakṛdāgāmyanāgāminphalapratipannakau na ca srota-āpannasakṛdāgāmināv iti*.

<sup>114</sup> AKV, Śāstrī: 974: *tathā ca satī dravyataḥ sapta bhavanti srota-āpattisakṛdāgāmyanāgāminphala-pratipannakāstrayaś catvāraś ca phalasthā iti arhattvaphalapratipannaka eko'nāgāminphalasthān na vyatirikta ity avagantavyam* /

The *Stairway* (340) states that all sections of the *Abhidharma* concerning the fruition skipper mention only two: those separated from attachment to a great extent (*bhūyovītarāga*, *phal cher las 'dod chags dang bral pa*), consonant with the Once-returner, and those who go previously separated from desire-realm attachment (*kā mavītarāga*, *'dod pa las 'dod chags dang bral pa*), consonant with the Non-returner. For these two types of fruitions, Tsong kha pa posits both an enterer and abider.

The *Golden Garland* defines the enterer to the state of Once-returner who skips fruitions as follows:

[One] who abandons the six defilement of the desire realm to be abandoned by the mundane path of cultivation previous of the path of seeing, although the seventh or eighth defilement may or may not be abandoned, that one does not abandon the ninth [defilement] and abides in whatever suitable [level] from the doctrinal forbearance on suffering up the subsequent forbearance on the [truth of the] path possessing both the quality of realization and the realization of abandonment.<sup>115</sup>

Tsong kha pa notes (*Stairway*: 341) that when entering a result, in addition to the abandoning of the path of seeing abandonments, one engages in the abandonment of the path of cultivation abandonments and enters the three later fruitions. If abandoning a single abandonment of the path of seeing, one enters only the result of Stream-enterer. Here, when one abandons six, but does not abandon nine, of the path of cultivation abandonments of the desire realm by a mundane path previous to the path of seeing and abides in the first fifteen moments of the path of seeing, one is considered an enterer to the Once-returner result. When that individual obtains the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing, having abandoned all path of seeing defilements and discards the path of cultivation's sixth abandonment, then that individual first obtains a result and is considered a fruition skipper Once-returner. The individual skips over the result of Stream-enterer because of obtaining the result of Once-returner.

The *Golden Garland* defines the enterer to the Non-returner fruition skipper as:

[One] who abandons the ninth defilement of the desire realm to be abandoned by the path of cultivation previous of the path of seeing and [who] possesses, as like the former [enterer], the quality of realization and abandonment from the first concentration, being separated or not separated from attachment, [up] to the realms lower than Nothingness.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>115</sup> *Golden Garland*, 1970: 229: *mthong lam gyi sngon du 'jig rten pa'i lam gyis 'dod pa'i sgom spang drug pa spangs la bdun brgyad spangs pa'am ma spangs kyang rung dgu pa ma spangs pa dang / sdug bsngal la chos bzod nas lam la rjes bzod kyi bar gang yang rung ba la gnas pa rtog pa'i khyad par te spangs rtogs de gnyis dang ldan pa'o /*

<sup>116</sup> *Golden Garland*, 1970: 229: *mthong lam gyi sngon du 'dod pa'i sgom spang dgu pa spangs la / bsam gtan dang po nas gong ma ci yang med pa man cad la chags pa dang bral*

The *Stairway* (342) adds that one definitely abandons the nine afflictions of the desire realm by a mundane path previous to the path of seeing and is separated from attachment from the first concentration up to the realm of nothingness. Tsong kha pa states that if abiding on the first fifteen moments of the path of seeing, one is an enterer to the result of Non-returner. Likewise, if abandoning nine defilements by a mundane path of cultivation and then obtaining the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing, one is a Non-returner.

Concerning these skippers, the *Golden Garland* (230) explains that after those abandonments of each one of these enterers who skip fruitions is obtained, at the time of reaching the sixteenth moment one will be abiding in the result of Once-returner or Non-returner; the previous enterers, dull faculty followers of faith and sharp faculty followers of doctrine, after obtaining the result, will respectively have the conventional name of “One who aspires by faith (*śrāddhādhimukta*)” and “One who obtains by seeing (*drṣṭiprāpta*)”. Tsong kha pa follows the *Abhidharmakośa* which states:

In the sixteenth [moment], [whichever enterer becomes] an abider, at that time, those of dull and sharp faculties become respectively “One who aspires by faith” and “One obtains by seeing.”<sup>117</sup>

When one is called “Once-returner” through skipping fruitions and abandons the sixth defilement on the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing one is not yet considered an enterer to the result of Non-returner. Tsong kha pa states that if at the sixteenth moment one abides in a mere result but does not enter to a path which causes a higher result, one is not called “an enterer to later fruitions.” This also applies to the case of the Non-returner result. The *Abhidharmakośa* remarks in this regard:

At the moment of obtaining a result, a path of a higher result is not obtained, therefore, the abider in a result does not make effort for and is not an enterer to a superior result.<sup>118</sup>

The category of the fruition skippers is important because it allows for the inclusion of non-Buddhist meditative practices by crediting mundane meditative stabilization with some soteriological value. However, a fruition skipper still must pass through the sixteen moments of the Buddhist

*pa'am ma bral yang rung ba'i spang pa dang rtogs pa'i khyad par snga ma lta bu dang ldan pa ste /*

<sup>117</sup> AK, vi.31a, c–d, Pk nyu 022a2, 022a5, Pruden: 934, Pradhan: 354: *ṣoḍaśe tu phalasthau tau (yatra yaḥ pratipannakaḥ) / śrāddhādhimuktadrṣṭyāptau mṛdutiḥṣṇendriyau tadā /*

<sup>118</sup> AK, vi.32, Pk nyu 022a8, Pruden: 935, Pradhan: 354: *phale phalaviśiṣṭasya lābho mārgasya nāstyataḥ / nāprayukto viśeṣāya phalasthaḥ pratipannakaḥ /*

path of seeing and the previously established mundane meditative experience, whether propelling one to the result of Once-returner or Non-returner, these attainments are subject to degeneration. This category is also important in that the system of skipping fruitions is only established in the *Abhidharmakośa* and its commentaries. In the section on the *actual bodhisattva saṃgha*, we will see how this system from the *Abhidharmakośa* affects the interpretation of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* verses as opposed to an interpretation based strictly from the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.

#### *The simultaneous abandoner*

The final classification of the *allegorical saṃgha* that Tsong kha pa employs is the distinction of simultaneous abandoner (*spang bya cig car ba*, \**sakṛtprahāṇaka*). This class of Noble Beings is found only in the exegesis of the *allegorical saṃgha* and is completely based on a statement from the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. In regard to the simultaneous abandoner, the *Stairway* states:

... the simultaneous abandoner is established as two: the first and last fruitions; [they are so defined] because [1] the Once-returner is without abandoning the afflictions of the upper realms and because [2], if not abandoning the ninth [affliction] of the desire realm, [one] will not be a Non-returner and if abandoning the ninth, [one] abandons the all nine of the three realms and then becomes an Arhat.<sup>119</sup>

Tsong kha pa's articulation of the simultaneous abandoner in both the *Stairway* (346) and *Golden Garland* (243) relies on a citation from the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

One who is liberated simultaneously, is a person who, having made the comprehension of the truth, having relied on [the liminal absorption of] that which is not-unable, by the supermundane path, abandons simultaneously the afflictions which are committed in the three realms. Here are distinguished two [results], the result of the Stream-enterer and the result of Arhat. Ordinarily, in the present life or at the time of death, one obtains perfect knowledge itself. If it is the case that one does not do so, one possesses the power of resolution. By the power of resolution, [one] take birth just in the desire realm. If a Buddha does not appear, one will be a *pratyekajina*.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>119</sup> *Stairway*: 338: ... *spang bya cig car ba ni* 'bras bu dang po dang tha ma gnyis nyid la bzhaḡ ste phyir 'ong la khamḡ gong ma'i nyon mongs gang yang spangs pa med pa'i phyir dang / 'dod pa'i dgu pa ma spangs na phyir mi 'ong du mi 'gyur la dgu pa spangs na khamḡ gsum ga'i dgu char spangs pas dgra bcom du 'gyur ba'phyir ro /

<sup>120</sup> AS, Pk sems-tsam, Li, 130b.4–8, Rahula: 160, Pradhan: 92: *sakṛnnairyāṇikaḡ satyābhisamayam abhisampraviṣṭaḡ aprāpta samāpattim āśritya adhigatena lokottara-margeṇa sakṛt traidhatukāvacarāt sarvakleśān prajāhāti prakāraṣaḡ prajāhāti / dvayoḡ phalayoḡ srota-āpattiphālārhatvaphalayoḡ prajñāpyate / sa ca pudgalo bhūyo drṣṭe dharṃe maraṇakāle ājñāmāragayati / yadi nāragayati praṇidhānavaśena /*

Tsong kha pa analyzes this citation and the simultaneous abandoner from five points of view: (1) from the time or circumstance; (2) by the level of path; (3) the method for simultaneous abandonment; (4) the type of individuals who achieve simultaneous abandonment; and (5) the method which generates this type of abandonment.

(1) A Simultaneous abandoner practices from the time of the sixteenth moment of the path of seeing which completes the realization of the Nobles' Four Truths. This is because it is not possible to abandon simultaneously the defilements in the mundane path of cultivation previous to the path of seeing and because during the path of seeing the defilements removed by the path of cultivation are not abandoned. (2) Simultaneous abandonment by the supermundane path of cultivation (*lokottarabhāvanāmārga*) relies on only the "not-incapable" (*anāgāmya*) preparation of the first concentration from among the nine levels of the three realm's existence. For Tsong kha pa, those who do not rely on this level of the path are not capable of achieving simultaneous abandonment. The supermundane path is necessary because the mundane path of cultivation is unable to abandon defilements simultaneously. (3) In general there are two types of defilements to be abandoned: the defilements to be abandoned by the path of seeing and the defilements to be abandoned by the path of cultivation. The *Stairway* (349) states that the defilements to be abandoned by seeing the Nobles' Four Truths are not simultaneously abandoned. For Tsong kha pa, only the defilements to be abandoned by the path of cultivation have the possibility of either being abandoned simultaneously or gradually. The path of cultivation defilements of the three realms can therefore be abandoned simultaneously. (4) Both the text of the AS and ASBh mention that only the result of Stream-enterer and *Arhat* have the possibility of simultaneous abandonment. This excludes the enterers of those two results. (5) When one has abandoned all afflictions, in the present life, at the time of circumstance previous of death, or at the time of death, the state of *Arhat* is obtained. If it is the case that one is not able to abandon all afflictions, when one dies and takes rebirth in the desire realm through the force of resolution, one may obtain *Arhatship* in a situation where there are no Buddhas nor teachings of the *śrāvakas* at the time of the last *saṃsāric* existence. In this situation one will be a *pratyekajina* because it is a characteristic of this lesser vehicle person to manifest enlightenment in the desire realm while not relying on others. Tsong kha pa states that at

*tarhi prañidhānavaśena kāmādhātāvevopapannaḥ abuddhabhave pratyekajinobhavati /* Pradhan reads *aprāptasamāpatti* while Tsong kha pa reads *anāgāmya*. The four form *dhyānas* and the four formless *dhyānas* each have a liminal threshold called *sāmantaka* (*nyer bsdogs*). The one before the first *dhyāna* is specifically known as *anāgāmya*. See path parameter (1) of *śrāmaṇya* above and Apple (2001: 199–201).

the time of abandoning simultaneously one is not a *pratyekajina*, although after such abandonment one may become a *pratyekajina*.

#### *The pratyekabuddha*

We have seen above how simultaneous abandonment may provide the germinative cause for the possibility of a *pratyekabuddha* to occur. Tsong kha pa emphasizes that the *pratyekabuddha* is not a simultaneous abandoner and that this has been a point of confusion for previous Tibetan scholars. The *Golden Garland* does not address the definition of the *pratyekabuddha* in the section concerning the *allegorical saṃgha*. Yet in the *Stairway* (350), Tsong kha pa asks whether it is suitable to count a *pratyekajina* among the eight enterers and abiders or not. He points out that earlier Tibetan scholars claimed that the *pratyekajina* is not placed in the two middle results and that they asserted the *pratyekajina* result's paths of liberation as definitely being seventeen-i.e., above a Non-returner abider. Tsong kha pa provides a description of the *pratyekajina* from the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*,

... whether not generating or generating the preparatory analytical factors, whether obtaining a result previously or not, where a Buddha has not arisen, when manifesting the path by ones self one will be like [the horn of a] rhinoceros abiding solitarily, or one will be as a *pratyekajina* obtaining the end of suffering when practicing in a group.<sup>121</sup>

Tsong kha pa sees the *pratyekajina*<sup>122</sup> therefore as having two aspects based on whether or not one previously releases from the *śrāvaka* path. The first aspect is a *pratyekabuddha* who does not generate the preparatory analytical factors in a former time period and is solitary like the

<sup>121</sup> AS, Rahula: 146–147, Pradhan: 87: *anutpāditpūrvanirvedhabhāgīyaḥ utpāditapūrvanirvedhabhāgīyaḥ aprāptapūrvaphalaḥ abuddhabhave ātmanā cetanayā ārya mārga-saṃmukhībhūtaḥ khadgaviṣṇāṇakalpaḥ ekavihārī pratyekajinaḥ varggacārī duḥkhasya antam anuprāpnoti* / Tsong kha pa's quote follows the options given by Pradhan: 87 in footnotes #5 and #6.

<sup>122</sup> MVP #1005, GBBN (1990: 44): *pratyekabuddha zhes bya ba ekam ātmānam pratibuddhavan iti pratyekabuddha zhes bya ste / sems can mang po'i don mi mdzad kyi / bdag gcig pu byang chub pa dang mya ngan las 'das par sgrub pas na rang sangs rgyas shes bya* / "One called *pratyekabuddha* is *ekam ātmānam pratibuddhavan iti pratyekabuddha*, that is, when one does not act for the purpose of many beings but achieves bodhi and liberation for oneself, one is called a *pratyekabuddha*." Pugg #29, p. 14: *Idh' ekacco puggalo pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu sāmāṇaṃ saccāni abhisambujjhati na ca tatha sabbaññutaṃ pāpuṇāti na ca phalesu vasībhāvaṃ ayaṃ vuccati puggalo paccekasambuddho* / "Here a certain person thoroughly understands in regard to doctrines unheard before, and does not achieve omniscience nor mastery over its results; this one is called a person who is a *paccekasambuddha*."

horn of a rhinoceros (*khadgaviṣāṇakalpā*).<sup>123</sup> The second aspect of a *pratyekabuddha* has two divisions. One may either previously attain the path of preparation and not obtain a result then become a *pratyekabuddha*, or having obtained only the result of Stream-enterer one becomes a *pratyekajina*. Tsong kha pa states that the Noble Being who lives in solitude and abides like the horn of a rhinoceros is not tormented with fierce effort and thus has previously developed only the path of the ordinary individual (*prthagjana*). The latter two divisions of the *pratyekajina* are known as “abiding within a group (*vargacāri*).”<sup>124</sup> Tsong kha states that in Tibet they are also called “the greater and smaller practicing within a group (*tshogs che chung*).” These later two types of *pratyekajina* are either a Once-returner or Non-returner because, having obtained merely the result of Stream-enterer, one becomes a *pratyekajina*, and then, having abandoned the sixth desire realm affliction, one becomes a Once-returner or, if abandoning the ninth desire realm affliction, one becomes a Non-returner.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The topic of the Twenty *Samghas* is important because it provides the defining characteristics of one of the three essential components – i.e., *Buddha*, *Dharma*, and *Samgha* – that are accepted as objects of refuge universally among Buddhists. More specifically, the topic of the Twenty *Samghas* incorporates methods of taxonomic organization through which the list of the twenty individuals provides a worldview in which soteriological results of the Buddhist path, whether that path be individual liberative in scope or universally liberative in scope, are possible.

<sup>123</sup> MVP #1006, GBBN (1990: 44): *khadgaviṣāṇakalpa zhes bya ba khadga viṣāṇa tulyatvāt / khadga viṣāṇa kalpa zhes bya ste / rang sangs rgyas bskal pa brgya'i bar du tshogs bsags pa'i dbang po rnon po phal dang mi 'dre bar bse ru dang 'dra bar gcig bu bzhugs pas na rang sangs rgyas bse ru lta bu zhes bya / khadgaviṣāṇakalpa means 'khadga viṣāṇa tulyatvāt'; 'khadga viṣāṇa kalpa' means a Pratyekabuddha who is not like one of sharp faculties who accumulates provisions for up to a hundred aeons but since one dwells in solitude similar to the horn [of a rhinoceros], one is called 'Pratyekabuddha who is similar to a horn [of a rhinoceros].'*

<sup>124</sup> MVP #1007, GBBN (1990: 45): *vargga cāri zhes bya ba vargga ni sde 'am tshogs sam mang po 'dus pa la bya / cāri ni cāra gatyārtha zhes bya ste / 'gro ba yin pas rang sangs rgyas phal dang thabs gcig tu gshegs shing bzhugs pa dang spyod pa la bya ste / tshogs dang spyod pa zhes bya ste / "vargga cāri refers to vargga, a clan, group, many people gathered together; cāri is cāra gatyārtha; that is, the pratyekabuddha goes [together] by coming and going, and performing as a single troop, one is called 'practicing with a group'."*

In my view, one of the principal aims on Tsong kha pa's exegetical agenda is to establish a single unified intention between the scholastic systems of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu in constructing a coherent structure to the Twenty *Samghas*. In establishing a unified and coherent structure, Tsong kha pa is able to create a homogenous system of ideal figure descriptions from the *Abhidharma* materials available to him. This allows for Tsong kha pa's *mahāyāna* system to be inclusive of Abhidharmic – i.e., *śrāvaka*, descriptions of ideal figures. At the same time, such exegesis allows Tsong kha pa to develop a system of interpreting the Twenty *Samghas* that can be understood through multiple purviews. In other words, Tsong kha pa's exegesis is such that it produces an awareness of the Twenty *Samghas* that is coherent from the perspective of either a *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, or *bodhisattva*.<sup>125</sup>

We do believe that there is enough textual evidence to support Tsong kha pa's presentation as being reasonable, but not necessarily *the* one and only correct interpretation of the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verse of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*'s first chapter. Our analysis has demonstrated the doctrinal importance of Tsong kha pa's approach to the Twenty *Samghas* and their soteriological significance for the Tibetan Buddhists who came to follow him.

We have introduced the topic from the root text of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* (PP) *sūtras* and provided a comparison of the list of Twenty *Samghas* with other Indian Buddhist sources. This comparative listing was designed to indicate that the Twenty *Samghas* most likely embodies a category of Abhidharmic scholasticism carried into the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. The denaturalized terminology we charted in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* in comparison with other Indian Buddhist sources demonstrated that, from a terminological standpoint, the Twenty *Samghas* represents a classification of Noble Beings fairly well established by the 6th century in India. The comparison of nomenclature from Indian Buddhist sources revealed that the system of terminology employed by the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is closely related to the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣika school, as the terms are most similar to those in the *Abhidharmakośa*.

Our exposition involved presenting a description of the *śrāvaka samgha* as a model that serves as a metaphor to the *bodhisattva samgha*, the actual *samgha* that is represented in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and PP *sūtras*. This presentation and exegesis will serve as the necessary background material to apprehend how the Tibetan scholastic tradition and Tsong kha

<sup>125</sup> Stairway: 270: *theg pa gsum gyi gang zag rnams kyi mngon rtogs rgyud la bskyes pa'i tshul la sogs pa'i rnam gzhag.*



pa understood the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and its earliest commentators to be influenced by various Abhidharma traditions.

As we have indicated, the topic of the Twenty *Samghas* is a special instruction (Skt. *avavāda*, Tib. *gdams ngag*) for *bodhisattvas*, and within the context of the *saṃgha* jewel, it is the instruction giving a detailed articulation of twenty types of Noble Individuals (*āryapudgala*). The paradigm of soteriological typologies listed in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verse of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*'s first chapter therefore represents essential information that *bodhisattvas* who are training in the path of *Prajñāpāramitā* must receive in order to fulfill the *mahāyāna* path leading to omniscient Buddhahood.

### ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Abhisamayālaṃkāra</i>
AAĀ	<i>Abhisamayālaṃkāralokā</i> of Haribhadra
AAV	<i>Abhisamayālaṃkāravṛtti</i> of Ārya Vimuktisena
AK	<i>Abhidharmakośakārikā</i>
AKBh	<i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i>
AKV	<i>Abhidharmakośavyākhyā</i>
AN	<i>Aṅguttaranikāya</i>
AS	<i>Abhidharmasamuccaya</i>
ASBh	<i>Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya</i>
AASPh	<i>Abhisamayālaṃkārasphuṭārthā</i> of Haribhadra
BHSD	Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary, Edgerton, F.
DN	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>
GBBN	<i>Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa</i>
Golden Garland	<i>Legs bshad gser phreng</i> of Tsong kha pa
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JIABS	<i>Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies</i>
JIP	<i>Journal of Indian Philosophy</i>
LRC	<i>Lam rim chen mo</i> of Tsong kha pa
LVP	La Vallée Poussin's French translation of AK
MHTL	<i>Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature</i>
MN	<i>Majjhimanikāya</i>
MVP	<i>Mahāvīyūtpatti</i>
MW	Monier-Williams Sanskrit English Dictionary
<i>Pañcaviṃśati</i>	<i>Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra</i> (Dutt, 1934)
Pk	Peking edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭika
PP	<i>Prajñāpāramitā</i>
Pugg	<i>Puggala-paññatti</i>
Pugg-A	<i>Puggala-paññatti-atthakathā</i>
SN	<i>Saṃyuttanikāya</i>

Stairway                      *Blo gsal bgrod pa'i them skas* of Tsong kha pa  
W                                Wogihara edition of *Abhisamayālamkāralokā*

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