

Chapter III

Mahāyāna Buddhist Ethics and Asaṅga's Work on Ethics

Ethics has to do with human conducts. Ethics normally act as codes of conducts for human beings. Buddhist ethics is concerned with Buddhist prescriptions of conducts for monasticism or laity to follow or to forbid in their lives. This chapter will first describe key concepts in Mahāyāna Buddhist ethics, followed by ethics proposed by Asaṅga, as shown in the Chapter on Ethics from the Bodhisattvabhūmi. In between that, Asaṅga's life and work is mentioned.

3.1 Mahāyāna Buddhist Ethics

Mahāyāna ethics has been explained with specific and comprehensive notions. In a specific notion, Mahāyāna ethics corresponds to morality (*śīla*), which is one category in the six Perfections (*pāramitās*), and is understood to be a discipline based on monastic codes. Perfections in Mahāyāna Buddhism are virtuous qualities practiced by a bodhisattva on the path to perfect Buddhahood. The six Perfections comprise: (1) generosity (*dāna*), (2) morality (*śīla*), (3) patience (*kṣānti*), (4) courage or vigour (*vīrya*), (5) meditation (*samādhi*), and (6) intuitive insight or wisdom (*prajñā*). Although morality or *śīla* is one aspect of six Perfections but it has typically been referred to or grouped with other aspects such as generosity/ compassion as well as wisdom. For example, according to the commentary to the Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra (or The Ornament of the Mahāyāna sūtras), the first three Perfections- generosity, morality, and patience correspond to “Higher Morality” (*adhiśīla*) in the Noble Eightfold Path, the fifth to “Higher Meditation” (*adhicitta*), the sixth to “Higher wisdom” (*adhiprajñā*), and the fourth (*vīrya*) is shared by all three divisions.¹ Other sūtras such as the Skill in Means (*Upāyakauśalya*) sūtra focuses on morality, compassion and wisdom. The sūtra narrates a few stories which describe a bodhisattva who is skilled in means as the one who uses wisdom and acts out of

¹ Damien Keown, **The Nature of Buddhist Ethics**, (Hampshire: MacMillan, 1992), p. 130.

compassion and can override monastic disciplines if there are no other better alternatives to help other sentient beings to progress towards enlightenment.

In a comprehensive notion, Mahāyāna ethics is not only one aspect of the virtuous perfections to be practiced on the bodhisattva path to perfect Buddhahood; rather it is a bodhisattva path. Harvey (2000) indicates that ethics (*śīla*) in the Mahāyāna became broadened and in the widest sense it encompassed the whole of the bodhisattva path.² Ethics based on Asaṅga's Chapter on Ethics from the Bodhisattvabhūmi and a moral theory based on the work of Śāntideva (the Śikṣāsamuccaya) could be understood as representing the bodhisattva path to full Buddhahood. As will be discussed later, Asaṅga's Chapter on Ethics classified ethics into three kinds: ethics of the vow (*saṃvara-śīla*), ethics of collecting wholesome factors (*kuśala-dharma-saṃgrāhaka-śīla*), and ethics of benefitting sentient beings (*sattva-ārtha-kriyāśīla*). These three sorts of ethics can be stated as the whole scheme for the bodhisattva. The essence of bodhisattva path, according to the Śikṣāsamuccaya of Śāntideva lies in the threefold explication of protection, purification, and cultivation (*rakṣā, śudhi, vardhana*) of three phenomena: the self, one's enjoyments or the objects of enjoyment, and one's good fortune or welfare (*ātmabhāva, bhoga, śubha*)³. In another work of Śāntideva, the Bodhicaryāvatāra, ethics was seen as the code of social ethics expected of bodhisattva-monks.⁴ The essence of bodhisattva code offered by Śāntideva is characterized by compassion (*karuṇā*) –being compassionate to every living being and hence evokes bodhi-citta, which is the only medicine for the sufferings of the world. A bodhisattva is considered by Śāntideva to be a person who does good deeds without asking for anything in return. Mitomo (1991) also points out that Śāntideva notes that the present is the most suitable time to perform good deeds and that only the present is the time for bodhisattvas to exert themselves to fulfill their vows.

² Peter Harvey, **An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics**, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.134.

³ Barbra R. Clayton, **Moral Theory in Śāntideva's Śikṣāsamuccaya**, (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.40

⁴ Ryojun Mitomo, "Ethics of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the Bodhicaryāvatāra", In C. Wei-Hsun Fu and S.A.Wawrytko (Eds), **Buddhist Ethics in Modern Society**, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991): 16.

Mahāyāna ethics is seen as symbolized by bodhisattvas who go on living for others.⁵ The term ‘Bodhisattva’ in Mahāyāna is a being who is on the path to perfect Buddhahood, whose task is to help beings compassionately while maturing his/ her own wisdom.⁶ As previously mentioned, the bodhisattva path (to perfect Buddhahood) is the meaning of Mahāyāna ethics in a comprehensive sense.

The bodhisattva has taken the vow to liberate all beings before he himself attains enlightenment and leaves the world. In Zen, Nichiren, Tendai, and other Mahayana schools of Buddhism, the common translation of the four Bodhisattva vows are as follows:

Beings are numberless, I vow to save them
 Desires are inexhaustible, I vow to end them
 Dharma gates are boundless, I vow to enter them
 Buddha's way is unsurpassable, I vow to become it.⁷

The first vow is primary, the overarching vow of a bodhisattva whereas the last vow is actually to attain “complete, perfect enlightenment”. It is said that if a bodhisattva does not accomplish the first vow of saving all sentient beings, he/ she can never complete the fourth vow of enlightenment.

Mahāyāna ethics has been described in the Mahāyānasamgraha (or Summary of the Mahāyāna) as superior to that of the Hīnayāna in four aspects: classifications, common and separate rules, breadth, and depth.⁸ Out of these four points, the most important one is classification, where three aspects of Mahāyāna morality may be distinguished, that is, (a) morality as temperance or restraint, (b) morality as pursuit of the good or cultivation of virtue, and (c) morality as altruism. According to the Mahāyānasamgraha (M.Sam.gr. VI.2), the first category is the support (*niśraya*) for the other two; the second is the support for the qualities of a Buddha (*Buddhadharma-samudāgama*), and the third is the support for the maturation of beings (*sattva-paripācana*). The superiority of the Mahāyāna in this respect lies in the fact that the Śrāvakas possess only the first of these three categories; śrāvakas do not practice

⁵ Roderick Hindery, **Comparative Ethics in Hindu and Buddhist Traditions**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978).

⁶ Peter Harvey, **An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics**, p.123.

⁷ Bodhisattva Vows, <http://buddhism.about.com/od/mahayanabuddhism/a/bodhisattva-vows.htm>, Retrieved on February 22, 2016.

⁸ Damien Keown, **The Nature of Buddhist Ethics**, p.136.

morality for the benefit of other beings. Bodhisattvas, on the other hand, practice all three categories.

3.2 Asaṅga's Life and Work

Arya Asaṅga was an Indian Buddhist monk and philosopher who lived some time during the late third to mid fifth centuries CE. Arya means “Noble One” and is a title of respect; Asaṅga means “untouched” or “unfettered.” According to Paramārtha (499-569 AD), Asaṅga belonged to a learned Brāhmaṇa family of Peshawar and was the eldest brother of Vasubandhu. Dutt (1970) referred to Prof. Péri who determined the date of Vasubandhu from 280-350 A.D. and stated that Asaṅga must have lived in about 275-345 A.D.⁹

Asaṅga was recognized as a founder of the Yogācāra School, along with his guru, Maitreyanātha, and his half-brother Vasubandhu. The Yogācāra, along with the Madhyamaka, is one of the two principal philosophical schools of early Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In the record of his journeys through India, Xuanzang wrote that Asaṅga was initially a Mahīśāsaka monk, but soon turned toward the Mahāyāna teachings. Asaṅga had a half-brother, Vasubandhu, who was a monk from the Sarvāstivāda school. Vasubandhu is said to have taken up Mahāyāna Buddhism after meeting with Asaṅga and one of Asaṅga's disciples.¹⁰

Asaṅga spent many years in serious meditation, during which time tradition says that he often visited Tuṣita Heaven to receive teachings from Maitreya Bodhisattva. Heavens such as Tuṣita Heaven is said to be accessible through meditation, and accounts of this are given in the writings of the Indian Buddhist monk Paramārtha, who lived during the 6th century CE.¹¹ Xuanzang tells a similar account of these events. At night Asaṅga went up to the place of Maitreya Bodhisattva in Tuṣita Heaven to learn the Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra, the Mahāyāna-sūtra-lamkāra-

⁹ Nalinaksha Dutt, **Buddhist Sects in India**, (Calcutta: F.K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1970), p. 4.

¹⁰ Li Rongxi (Tr.), **The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions**, (Numata Center, Berkeley, 1996), pp. 153-155.

¹¹ Alex Wayman, **Untying the Knots in Buddhism: Selected Essays**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997), p. 213.

śāstra, etc.; in the daytime, he lectured on the marvelous principles to a great audience.

Asaṅga went on to write many of the key Yogācāra treatises such as the Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra, the Mahāyāna-saṃgraha and the Abhidharma-samuccaya as well as other works, although there are discrepancies between the Chinese and Tibetan traditions concerning which works are attributed to him and which to Maitreya. Dutt¹² indicate that the authorship of the following works is attributed to Asaṅga: (1) Yogācārabhūmi in seventeen sections, (2) Mahāyānasūtropadeśa, which may be an alternative title of Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra, and (3) Mahāyāna-saṃgrahaśāstra¹³. In its Sanskrit and Tibetan versions, the Bbh, the fifteenth section of the Ybh, names its author as Asaṅga.¹⁴

Most of what is known about Asaṅga's life rests on legendary accounts. According to legend, Asaṅga's mother had been in a previous life a monk who verbally wounded another monk during debate. For this unkindness, the monk was punished by many incarnations as a woman. Sometime in the fourth century, this monk was born in as a Brahmin of the Kausika clan. Though a Brahmin, she first married a Kshatriya and gave birth to Asaṅga. Sometime later she married a Brahmin and had two other sons, Vasubandhu and Virinchivatsa, all of whom joined the Hīnayāna School of Buddhism. They lived in Purusapura, Gandhara, India (now Peshawar, Pakistan).

Traditional accounts relate that Asaṅga was a precocious child who became a monk at an early age. He belonged to the Mahīśāsakas, a sect that valued meditation and believed that only the present has reality. He studied with Pindola, an arhat, or worthy one, who had conquered hatred, desire, and delusion, the three unwholesome roots of future suffering. Under Pindola's guidance, Asaṅga learned all the sūtras of the Buddha's discourse, reading the scriptures of Hīnayāna as well as some of Mahāyāna Buddhism, for five years.

¹² Nalinaksha Dutt, **Buddhist Sects in India**, Introduction p.1.

¹³ It should be noted that in the last page of the Bodhisattvabhūmi text, it is stated that the Bodhisattvabhūmi can also be regarded as Mahāyānasamgraha.

¹⁴ Mark Tatz, **Asanga's Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa, The Basic Path to Awakening, The Complete Bodhisattva**, (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), p.27.

As a blue-robed Mahīśāśakas monk, he learnt advanced methods of meditation. When his understanding was equal to that of his teacher, he received a secret initiation and withdrew to a cave on a mountain called variously Kukkutapada, Gurpaparvata and Gurupada. There he meditated upon Maitreya, to whom he dedicated himself. After three years, however, he had failed to behold his celestial preceptor and made ready to leave his rocky abode. As he stepped outside the cave, he saw that the wings of birds had gradually worn down the rocks around their nests, and thinking, "I have lost assiduity", he returned to his meditations. Disappointed after another three years, he again made ready to leave, but he noticed the effect dripping water had had on the stones on which it fell, and he returned to his contemplation. A third time he left his cave and came across an old man rubbing a piece of iron with a fine cloth to make needles out of it, and he returned to his meditation. But in the twelfth year he gave up all hope and left his mountain fastness.

Heavy-hearted, he made his way towards the city of Achintya, where he saw a dog infested with worms. Realizing that the poor creature would die of the infestation, but not wishing to destroy the worms, he determined to give them flesh cut from his own body. No sooner had he made the sacrifice of his physical form than the dog vanished and in its place stood Maitreya, resplendent in a halo of *lakshanas*, divine graces. Asaṅga could not contain himself. Weeping, he asked why the vision had not occurred before, but only now when he was in too much physical pain to have wished for it. Maitreya explained that he had always been present, but that Asaṅga's own blindness had prevented him from seeing. Once his great insight – *prajna* – had been matched by compassion – *karuna* – his eyes became clear. Maitreya asked what Asaṅga truly desired, and he replied, "To spread the Mahāyāna." Thereupon Maitreya took Asaṅga into the Tushita realm, Maitreya's celestial abode. There he was taught the deepest meanings of the Prajnaparamita sūtras and was instructed in the five works of Maitreya. When Asaṅga returned to terrestrial existence six months – some say twenty-five years – later, he began an energetic career in rejuvenating Buddhist thought and practice in India. It was said that Asaṅga had attained the third stage of a bodhisattva (there are ten stages according to the Mahāyāna) and therefore, he was called Prabhākārī, or "Light-giving."

According to legend, after Asaṅga returned to earth, he devoted himself to all living beings with complete compassion. Asaṅga began by founding *viharas*, monastic communities, and since he had mastered the supernormal powers, he could travel as far in one day as the average monk could cover in nothing less than a month. Since he could read the minds of others, he matched his teachings to the understanding of his hearers. Eventually his great erudition brought him to the attention of King Gambhirapaksha, who became his patron and generously financed much of Asaṅga's work, which revived Mahāyāna Buddhism. In time Asaṅga wrote down the five books of Maitreya and wrote commentaries on them. In addition, Asaṅga wrote commentaries on the Prajnaparamita sūtras as well as his own expositions, including his enormous Yogācārabhūmi (Stages of Yoga Practice). Late in life he persuaded his half-brother Vasubandhu to join the Yogacara school, and Vasubandhu successfully labored to make Asaṅga's doctrines accessible to the general population. Arya Asaṅga, whose work thus secured by his brother, retired to Rajagriha (near modern-day Patna on the Ganges River) and died there. Rajagriha was the capital of Magadha, an ancient kingdom in India (now in the modern state Bihar, India). His disciples built a chaitya, a reliquary, in his honour.¹⁵

The encyclopedic Yogācāra-bhūmi-shāstra, a fundamental work of the Yogācāra School of Buddhism, is a multivolume work divided into five parts and written in prose with some short verses; it presents all of Yogācāra doctrine and forms the basis of Yogācāra School. The main part describes the bhūmis, or stages of spiritual development. The second part interprets the stages. The third is about the sūtras that are the basis for Yogācāra doctrine. The fourth is about the classes within the sūtras. The fifth includes topics from the canon. Although the original Sanskrit text of the Yogācārabhūmi survives as a fragment, complete translations exist in Chinese and Tibetan.

The Bodhisattvabhūmi or “Stages of the Bodhisattva” is the fifteenth volume of the first part of the Yogācāra-bhūmi-shāstra and is particularly revered. It has been

¹⁵ Theosophy Trust. “Asanga”. <http://www.theosophytrust.org/361-asanga>. Retrieved on November 14, 2015.

circulated as a separate work, as has its Chapter on Ethics¹⁶. The text was immediately successful. Tibetan and Chinese editions were produced in the early fifth century CE, whereas other volumes of the Yogācāra-bhūmi-shāstra were translated more than one hundred years later. The Bodhisattvabhūmi is a standard text in Mahāyāna monasteries. It presents the complete bodhisattva, instructs bodhisattvas how to interpret and move through the stages of spiritual development and includes information on proper behavior, meditation, and the teachings of the Buddha.

3.3 The Text and Summary of Asaṅga's Chapter on Ethics

3.3.1 The Text of Asaṅga's Chapter on Ethics

The Śīlapaṭala or Chapter on Ethics (or “the Chapter”) by Asaṅga is an excerpt of some thirty leaves from Asaṅga's Bodhisattvabhūmi (Bbh). The Chapter is based upon scriptures of the Greater Vehicle and is a condensation of the whole of the Bbh.¹⁷ The Chapter drew interest among Buddhist thinkers and practitioners in later centuries due to its overall practical content and its importance as a kind of manual of conduct that specifies in detail what kind of behavior a bodhisattva should avoid and what he/she is encouraged to do.¹⁸

The Bodhisattvabhūmi, being the fifteenth section, is the largest of the seventeen sections of Yogācārabhūmi (Ybh), a voluminous and monumental work compiled at the third to fourth centuries. Tatz states that the Ybh is one of a set of works attributed to Maitreya and Asaṅga. As indicated by Tatz, the Ybh is “apparently a systematizing work in which the stage of the bodhisattva follows the auditor and independent-buddha stages”¹⁹. The key to the structure of the Ybh is the concept of *gotra* or spiritual classes of Buddhists. The Ybh presents the practices and attainments of each spiritual class of Buddhists (many of which are shared), culminating in those of the highest class, the buddha.

¹⁶ Mark Tatz, **Asaṅga's Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa**, p.16.

¹⁷ Loc.cit.

¹⁸ Michael Zimmerman, The Chapter on Right Conduct in the Bodhisattvabhūmī. In M. Witzel (Ed.), **Harvard Oriental Series**, Vol. 75. Massachusetts: Department of South Asian Studies, Harvard University, 2013, p. 874.

¹⁹ Mark Tatz, **Asaṅga's Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa**, p. 26.

The importance of Bbh can be noted from the statement in its last page which states that: “all the topics (*uddeśa*) and their expositions (*niddeśa*) as given in the Bodhisattvapiṭaka have been put together in the Bodhisattvabhūmi, and as such, it can be designated as the Bodhisattvapiṭaka-māṭrkā or Mahāyānasamgraha”. Dutt (1970) points out that this work [the Bodhisattvabhūmi] is an epitome of Mahāyāna studies”.

Tatz (1986) indicated that the Bbh has been circulated as a separate work, as has its Chapter on Ethics. The Bbh presents the complete bodhisattva, his practices, progress, and attainments, beginning with the bodhisattva-in-potential (the chapter on gotra) and his first inspiration to strive for buddhahood and closing with the qualities of the mature bodhisattva or buddha.

The Bbh is divided into three parts with a separate title for each. According to Dutt, the first part Ādhārayogasthānam consists of 203 pages and is devoted to the basic spiritual exercises and acquisitions of a bodhisattva; the second part Ādhāranudharmayogasthānam, covering 40 pages, deals with the subsidiary spiritual exercises of a bodhisattva; the third part Ādhāraṇiṣṭhāyogasthānam covering 36 pages, summarizes the final achievement of the bodhisattva.²⁰ The Bbh has twenty-eight chapters altogether. Tatz refers to the division of the Bbh as having three sections (*yogasthāna*) entitled Foundations, Supplement, and Conclusion, comprising ten topics.²¹ The Foundations section and topic is the largest. The Śīlapaṭala or Chapter on Ethics is the tenth chapter and is included in the Foundations section as one of a set of chapters on each of the six perfections. That is, the ninth chapter in the Foundations section is Dānapaṭala whereas the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth chapter are Śīlapaṭala, Kṣāntipaṭala, Vīryapaṭala, Dhyānapaṭala and Prajñāpaṭala, respectively.

The time of composition of the Bbh was determined from the date of its earliest Chinese translation, which is attributed to Dharmarakṣa between 414-418

²⁰ Ibid., p.6, p.8.

²¹ Mark Tatz, *Asanga's Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa*, p.28.

A.D. Thus the Bbh should be composed before 414 A.D. and was placed about 340 A.D.²²

The Bbh survives in Sanskrit, having been published first by Wogihara (1930-36) from two Nepalese manuscripts. A more complete manuscript procured from Shalu monastery in Tibet in 1938 was the basis for the edition by Dutt. There are four Chinese translations of the Bbh, beginning with that of Dharmakṣema in A.D. 418 and closing with that of Hsuan Tsang from A.D. 846-48. A portion of the Chapter on Ethics dealing with the vow ceremony is preserved in Sanskrit, from Nepal, as the Bodhisattva-prātimokṣa-sūtra. Tatz made the translation of the Śīlapaṭala into Chapter on Ethics based on the Sanskrit of the Bbh as edited by Wogihara and Dutt both, and on the Tibetan as edited by Tatz himself. Where the versions diverge, Tatz adopted the preferable meaning (as indicated by commentaries and his own judgment). This study used the translated Chapter on Ethics by Tatz (1986) as a source.

3.3.2 Summary of the Chapter on Ethics

The Chapter starts with the contraction of nine aspects or nine modes of ethics for the bodhisattvas, followed by the explanation and elaboration of each aspect. Most of the Chapter focuses on the mode of “complete ethics” as Asaṅga indicates that: “The other sorts of ethics, the ethics of difficulty and the rest, should be understood as sections of this “complete ethics”²³ An aggregate of bodhisattva ethics is stated to bear the fruition of great awakening. The Chapter ends by indicating that past, present and future bodhisattvas have trained, are training and will train, respectively in bodhisattva ethics. There is nothing beyond and there is nothing more for the ethics.

3.3.2.1 Nine Aspects of Ethics

Asaṅga begins the Chapter with the question “What is ethics for bodhisattvas?” and the answer provided is that ethics has nine aspects or modes:

- (1) essence of ethics (*svabhāvaśīla*),

²² Nalinaksha Dutt, **Buddhist Sects in India**, p. 5.

²³ Mark Tatz, **Asaṅga’s Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa, The Basic Path to Awakening, The Complete Bodhisattva**, p. 85.

- (2) complete ethics (*sarvaśīla*),
- (3) difficult ethics (*duṣkaraśīla*),
- (4) universal gateway ethics (*sarvatomukhaṃ śīlam*),
- (5) the ethics of a holy person (*satpuruṣaśīla*),
- (6) ethics as all modes (*sarvākāraṃ śīlam*),
- (7) ethics as distress and wishing (*vighātārthi-kaśīla*),
- (8) ethics as well-being here and there (*ihāmutra-sukhaṃ śīlam*), and
- (9) purified ethics (*viśuddhaṃ śīlam*).

Whereas the “essence of ethics” provides the qualities of a bodhisattva in relation to taking and maintaining the vow, the “complete ethics” is indicated to represent all aspects of ethics. The other sorts of ethics, the “difficult ethics” and the rest, is stated to be understood as sections of the “complete ethics”. Based on this notion, the summary of the Chapter of Ethics will be focused on: the essence of ethics (the first aspect), the complete ethics (the second aspect), and the sections of complete ethics (the third to ninth aspect of ethics shown above).

3.3.2.2 The Essence of Ethics (*Svabhāvaśīla*),

3.3.2.2.1 Four Qualities

The second question in the Chapter was about the first aspect of ethics, i.e., “What is the essence of ethics?” and the answer was that to possess four qualities constitutes the essence of ethics of the bodhisattva. These four qualities are: (1) to correctly receive it [the bodhisattva bases of trainings and bodhisattva ethics] from someone else, (2) to have a quite purified intention, (3) to make correction after failure, and (4) to avoid failure by generating respect and remaining mindful of that.

The text then indicates the importance of the first two qualities, i.e., the qualities of correct reception from someone else and pure intention of the aspirant, in that they produce embarrassment and shame respectively for the bodhisattva who fails in training and they induce the last two qualities: correction after failure and respect that avoids failure. The first two qualities and the fourth qualities, i.e., correct reception from someone else, pure intention, and respect that avoids failure, respectively are stated to effectively prevent the failure of bodhisattva ethics. The correction of failure is explained as constituting rectification and recovery from breakage.

The first two qualities are commented by Tsong-kha-pa (Ts) as a matter of taking (the vow) whereas the last two qualities are part of the preservation model. These four qualities of the essence of ethics can thus be described as consisting of the acquisition mode (by the first two qualities) and the preservation mode (by the last two qualities) with the prevention and correction of failure as subsets of the preservation. The first two qualities are considered as the causes for the preservation.

The commentary also indicates that the four qualities could be classified based on the purification of ethics: those not infecting with transgression and those infected with transgression and having correction. The first three qualities, which are concerned with those not infecting with transgression, represent non-failure whereas the fourth is the correction of failure.

3.3.2.2.2 The Greatness of Ethics

The text (7b.2) describes that to undertake and proceed to train oneself in the essence of ethics endowed with these four qualities should be understood as: **wholesome**, because of benefit for oneself, for others and many people, pleasure for many people, mercy for the world, and welfare, benefit, and pleasure for divine and human beings; measureless because it comprehends the bodhisattva bases of training and should be understood as **immeasurable; favorable to all sentient beings** because they are lived for the benefit and pleasure of all sentient beings; and **a great result and advantage** because they acquire and bestow the result of supreme, right and full awakening. The commentary (21.1) explains the greatness of ethics that it is wholesome, immeasurable, favorable, and a great result and advantage.

Tsong-khapa²⁴ elaborated the notion about undertaking and proceeding to train oneself in ethics endowed with these four qualities is **wholesome** because of benefit for oneself and the rest as follows. The self-benefit of bodhisattvas is the two eliminations [of obscurations caused by defilement and by the cognizable] and the two gnoses [the exact and the full]. As for the “benefit for others”, he indicates that “the others” consist of those without a spiritual class (represented by the term “many people”) and those with a spiritual class (represented by “the divine and human beings” who are in shramana style of life). He used the terms “the benefit, the

²⁴ Ibid., p. 102.

pleasure and the mercy” for those without a spiritual class while using the term “welfare” for those with a spiritual class. For those without a spiritual class, the benefit includes protecting them from a lower state of rebirth by not creating any (new) unwholesomeness and eliminating unwholesomeness already created; the pleasure is to project them to a higher state of rebirth by creating new wholesomeness and by increasing wholesomeness which has already been created; the mercy for the world is the bodhisattvas awaiting the proper time for those who are hostile, who are without the opportunity and who, fall into distress and go to lower destinies not relinquishing the thought of achieving their benefit and pleasure. The benefit for those with a spiritual class or the "welfare for divine and human beings" are the paths of accumulation and application that induce the religious style of life; their pleasure is to remain in a state of well-being in this life out of tranquility, experiencing an exhilaration of body and mind, as well as the pleasure of spiritual deliverance.

Referring to the greatness of ethics which is **a great result and advantage**, the terms “result” and “advantage” are distinguished. “Result” is for the practitioner while “advantage” is for the others. The great “result” for the bodhisattva is to acquire full awakening whereas the great “advantage” for the situation of Buddhahood is to give that result to others.

3.3.2.3 Complete Ethics (*Sarvaśīla*),

The bodhisattva ethics is complete since it comprises the lay side and monastic side and based on this notion, there are three sorts: the ethics of the vow, the ethics of collecting wholesome factors, and the ethics of benefiting sentient beings. The threefold aggregate of ethics is stated to be a measureless aggregate of merit (24a.6). The text first describes these three sorts of ethics, followed by the elaboration of how the bodhisattva comes into possession of these sorts of ethics, and these can be briefly stated as follows.

3.3.2.3.1 Description of the Three Sorts of Ethics

The ethics of the vow (9a.3) refers to undertaking the prātimokṣa vow as one of the seven classes: monk, nun, nun-probationer, male and female novice, layman and laywoman. These classes comprise two sides: monastic side, consisting of the first five prātimokṣa classes and householder side, consisting the last two prātimokṣa classes. The ethics of collecting wholesome factors (12b.5), which is subsequent to

bodhisattva's undertaking the ethics of the vow, involves the bodhisattva accumulating with his body and speech [and mind] anything that is wholesome. It is also stated as the ethics that procures, preserves, and increases wholesome factors. And based on the conducts referred in the text, the wholesome factors that the bodhisattva procures, preserves, and increases with his body and speech [and mind] have to do with his own conducts as well as his conducts towards others. The examples of his own conducts include the bodhisattva guarding the gates of his sense by being aware of moderation in food, being wakeful in the earlier and later parts of the night, recognizing his own mistakes, looking at his faults and relinquishing them, etc. The examples of his conducts towards others include the bodhisattva making respectful address and does respectful service to his gurus from time to time, does service to the sick out of compassion, etc.

The ethics of benefiting sentient beings (14b.3) is stated to consist of eleven modes. The modes mainly include helping sentient beings to fulfill their various needs as well as introducing or attracting sentient beings to the Buddhist teaching to help them be on the path to enlightenment. The bodhisattva ministers to the needs of sentient beings and renders assistance by nursing any sufferings occurred to sentient beings. The bodhisattva shows what is relevant to worldly and transcendent goals. The bodhisattva shows gratitude and furnishes assistance to sentient beings who have helped him, protects sentient beings from sundry fearful things, dispels the sorrow in calamities to property and kinfolk, provides requisites to sentient beings destitute of requisites, attracts a Dharma-following by giving himself as a resource, complies with worldly convention, applauds the good qualities of others, and moves sentient beings from an unwholesome to a wholesome situation by suppression and by working wonders.

3.3.2.3.2 How the Bodhisattva Comes into Possession of These Sorts of Ethics

Upon giving some ideas about the three sorts of complete ethics, the text then addresses the question of how the bodhisattva comes to be possessed of ethics (14b.6). With regard to possessing ethics that is well restrained --ethics of the vow, the bodhisattva possesses ethics in ten branches: (1) disregarding sensory desires of a universal monarch in the past in order to go forth to the monastic life, (2) and (3)

neither anticipating sensory desires of the future nor longing for those of the present, (4) enjoying dwelling in isolation. The bodhisattva delights in solitude even when living in the midst of the community, (5) perfect purity of speech and preoccupation. The bodhisattava will not allow himself to engage in demeaning talk or demeaning preoccupation and as soon as demeaning conversation or demeaning preoccupation occurs, he withdraws from it, (6) not underestimating himself. The bodhisattva believes in the training of himself to attain the good fortune of restrained body and speech, (7) tenderness. The bodhisattva worries about his own faults and errors, not those of others, (8) forbearance. The bodhisattva has no thoughts of enmity or resentment for sentient beings who are violent and immoral and based upon great compassion, the bodhisattva furnishes for them a predominance of mercy and desire-to-do, (9) vigilance. The bodhisattva is endowed with vigilance to remedy any past, future and present faults and lives and acts in such a way that faults do not or will not develop, (10) Purity of lifestyle or conduct and of livelihood. The bodhisattva does not show off his virtues, he makes a clean breast of his vices; he is easily satisfied and content; he thinks nothing of suffering and his nature is free from anxiety; he is not frivolous nor is he wavering; his deportment is calm; and he is free from all the factors of wrong livelihood such as hypocrisy and the rest.

The bodhisattva possesses the ethics of collecting wholesome factors (17b.2) in ten aspects, which comprise the common grounds of giving, morality, patience, vigor, and meditation, and the five aspects of wisdom. The bodhisattva will not allow himself to pay regard to body and enjoyments. He will not allow any occurrence of defilement or subsidiary defilement such as anger and rancor, which are the foundations of immorality. He will not allow himself enmity, resentment, and spite towards others. He will not allow laziness and indolence to arise. He will not allow himself to savor the taste of the equalization²⁵ process, nor allow defilements of equalization. The bodhisattva wisely knows the five topics exactly as they are, i.e., the advantages of the effects of virtue; the causes of virtue, the distortions in regard to the effects caused by virtue, the non-distortions, and the impediments to collecting virtue. Seeing the advantages of the effects of virtue, the bodhisattva searches out the

²⁵ Bbh use the term “equalization” (*samāpatti*) for the higher stages of meditative achievement (Ibid., p. 270)

causes of virtue in order to collect wholesomeness. The bodhisattva wisely knows, exactly as it is, what is distorted and what is not distorted. He does not expect to find permanence in the impermanent when the fruition of virtue has been obtained, nor pleasure in the painful, purity in the impure, or a self in what is self-less. He comes to wisely know the impediments to collecting wholesomeness and he eliminates them.

The bodhisattva possesses the ethics of accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings (18a.3) in eleven modes: (1) The bodhisattva renders assistance by assessing the needs and deciding what is to be done to minister to the various needs of sentient beings; he nurses sentient beings stricken by illness as well as dispels the involvement of sentient beings who suffer involvement in sense-desire and preoccupation with objects of desire. (2) The bodhisattva teaches sentient beings with relevancy to eliminate misbehavior; he teaches them doctrine that is fitting, connected, congruent, coherent, skilful, appropriate, compliant, and painstakingly resourceful; he causes those who are hostile to [Buddhist] teaching to obtain faith, vision and by purifying their views, to rise above a bad rebirth and eventually to transcend all suffering by making an end of all fetters. (3) The bodhisattva shows gratitude to sentient beings who have helped him by treating them with respect and furnishing assistances. (4) The bodhisattva protects sentient beings from fear of harm from several fearful things. (5) The bodhisattva relieves the sorrow of sentient beings who have suffered calamities involving relatives, friends and property. (6) The bodhisattva provides requisites including food, drink, transport, clothing, shelter and others for those who want requisites. (7) The bodhisattva performs an act of gathering by attracting a crowd of sentient beings and gives himself as a resource. (8) The bodhisattva complies with the expectations of sentient beings: he lives with and acts towards sentient beings as one should live with and act towards them; he will reject the action of body or speech that will result in his own pain and unhappiness if it will not move him from an unwholesome to a wholesome situation and the reverse applies; he will reject the action of body or speech that will result in pain and unhappiness for a third party or for others whereas neither party nor others would be moved from an unwholesome to a wholesome situation and vice versa; he makes no praise of someone else who is possessed by anger; he does not cause others to be upset; he only desires to rebuke them out of mercy and with calm faculties; he does

not ridicule someone else, nor make himself sarcastic and intimidating; he does not fail to cultivate others, nor does he cultivate others excessively or unreasonably. (9) The bodhisattva applauds those endowed with the quality of faith, morality, learnedness, renunciation and wisdom by discussing such quality. (10) The bodhisattva rebukes minor, medium and major fault and transgression of sentient beings with mild, medium and major rebuke respectively; he will banish them for a certain period of time in cases of minor and medium fault or transgression; he will banish them for as long as they live in cases of major fault or transgression. (11) The bodhisattva frightens those misbehaved sentient beings and bends them to his will by the power of working wonders.

3.3.2.3.3 The Ceremony for Undertaking the Vow-of-Ethics of the Bodhisattva

The text also explains the ceremony that a bodhisattva aspirant, whether lay or monastic, seeks to receive the bodhisattva vow-of-ethics obligation and the bodhisattva bases of training from a learned bodhisattva who is a co-religionist (29a.8). The bodhisattva aspirant is reminded not to take on the vow-of-ethics from just any bodhisattva, although he may be learned (30a.3). The bodhisattva is advised not to receive the vow-of-ethics obligation from someone who has no faith, no devotion to the vow-of-ethics undertaking, nor participation in it, nor preparedness, nor from someone who has undesirable qualities such as possession of greed or overwhelmed attachment, rancor, laziness and stupidity. The bodhisattva is also warned not to announce the ceremony for undertaking the vow to sentient beings who are hostile or have no faith in the bodhisattva collection because those who are disinclined or obscured with unawareness will repudiate him and as long as the bodhisattva has not entirely eliminated those evil words, view and representations, he will become possessed of a measureless aggregate of demerit.

In the ceremony for undertaking the vow-of-ethics obligation, the person who is capable of imparting the vow should give to the bodhisattva aspirant a detailed account of the advantages of the vow, then describes the bases of bodhisattva training and the grounds for offense set forth in the code for the collection of bodhisattva

scriptures (in the Bbh) before the bodhisattva aspirant is given the vow²⁶. If the aspirant has the fortitude to take the vow, based upon sincere examination and analysis by wisdom as to whether or not he is capable, and neither based upon instigation by someone else nor out of competition with someone else, then he may be known as a steadfast bodhisattva. The vow-of-ethics obligation should then be received by him, and imparted to him, in accord with the ceremony. In brief, the ceremony includes the aspirant requesting to be granted with the vow-of-ethics obligation and the transmitter asks the questions regarding a firm resolution of the aspirant and asks whether the aspirant will receive from him the bodhisattva bases of training and all the bodhisattva ethics, to which the aspirant agrees to receive the vow-of-ethics obligations. The questions about receiving such obligations are to be asked three times by the transmitter and answered three times by the aspirant. Then, the announcement will be eventually made that the aspirant has undertaken the bodhisattva vow-of-ethics.²⁷ The point here is that the vow should not be given to someone who is only taking the vow without aspiring to train himself in bodhisattva practice, who has not generated the resolution thought. The commentary indicates that this is not like monastic discipline. One is made to listen and to understand prior to the vow, and one takes the vow when one has developed a firm idea of keeping to the training, and without such thoughts, the vow will not be created.²⁸

The bodhisattva vow-of-ethics undertaking is claimed to be the most distinguished of all vow-of-ethics undertakings because it has four distinguished features:²⁹

- (1) "It is supreme," because there is none higher.
- (2) "It is endowed with a measureless aggregate of merit," inasmuch as it comprises measureless merit as its result.
- (3) Inasmuch as it has been created by a good aspiration for the benefit and pleasure of all sentient beings, "it has been generated by the most wholesome attitude of mind."

²⁶ Ibid., p.140, p.142.

²⁷ Ibid., p.64, p.140, pp.146-148.

²⁸ Ibid., p.140.

²⁹ Ibid., p.149.

(4) It functions as the antidote to all types of misconduct entered through the three doors [body, speech, and mind] by all sentient beings. To undertake the prātimokṣa vow does not approach a hundredth part of the merit of [undertaking] this bodhisattva vow of ethics...

3.3.2.3.4 The Relinquishment of the Vow-of-Ethics of the Bodhisattva

The relinquishment of the bodhisattva vow-of-ethics undertaking comes from only two causes:³⁰ (1) complete relinquishment of the aspiration thought for supreme, right and full awakening, and (2) action with greater involvement in any or all of the four events, which functions similar to “grounds for defeat” to be mentioned below. Nonetheless, the vow-of-ethics that are relinquished can be re-created. That is, even when the events of defeat have developed, if the bodhisattva is not parted from the thought that aspires to Buddhahood, the vow can be corrected. And even when one has relinquished the aspiration thoughts, the bodhisattva vow can be re-created.³¹ In the case that the bodhisattva has neither relinquished the aspiration nor acted with greater involvement in events that are “grounds for defeat,” then even when he has changed lives, the bodhisattva born anywhere does not abandon the bodhisattva vow-of-ethics undertaking.³²

The relinquishment of the bodhisattva vow is not like the relinquishment of auditor’s prātimokṣa vow when a defeat has occurred. Even the bodhisattva vow has been relinquished in this life, the opportunity remains to receive it again in the same lifetime whereas the auditor for whom defeat has developed has no such opportunity. The reason for such difference has been explained in the commentary in two ways. The first way of explanation (by Samudramegha and Jinaputra) is that the defeat of bodhisattva vow does not cause the failure of conscience while the prātimokṣa defeat causes the conscience to fail because the auditor’s prātimokṣa functions as the ground for all wholesome factors and one is made to lose the opportunity to receive the vow [again] in the same lifetime. Another way of explanation by Tsong-kha-pa is cited from the passage in the ‘Questioning of Upāli’ as follows: “A defeat for someone of the auditors’ vehicle completely effects his ethics, for which reason he must act to

³⁰ Ibid., p.198.

³¹ Ibid., p.191.

³² Ibid., p.65, p.200.

eliminate all defilement as though his head and robes were set on fire," and according to its subsequent declaration, "So the auditors' training has no remedy,". The key point of the latter explanation is that the *prātimokṣa* vow is taken by the auditors in order to attain the exhaustion of outflows in that life and the defeat undermines the chief purpose for having undertaken the vow. For the bodhisattva, a defeat may not undermine the chief purpose for his reception [of vow].

The four events function similar to (*prātimokṣa*) grounds for defeat and makes the bodhisattva lose opportunity to gather needed resources for awakening. These four events of transgression³³ are that the bodhisattva: (1) praises himself and deprecates another, longing for gain and respect,³⁴ (2) fails to donate material things to those who are suffering and indigent, who have no protector and no recourse, who have approached in a proper manner, because he has a nature of attachment to the goods in his possession; and, out of stinginess in doctrine, not to teach doctrine to those who have approached in a proper manner eager for doctrine, (3) develops such involvement in anger that he strikes, hurts, damages sentient beings and he will not let loose that attitude, (4) repudiates the bodhisattva collection and devotes himself to counterfeits of the good doctrine, and then enjoys, shows, and establishes those counterfeits of the good doctrine. The greater degree of involvement which results in the relinquishment of the vow-of-ethics of the bodhisattva is specified as comprising four factors:³⁵ (1) regular practice, (2) with no sense of shame and embarrassment, (3) is pleased with and glad of it, (4) has a view for its good qualities. The bodhisattva will not relinquish the vow-of-ethics' undertaking with medium or lesser involvement in these four events.

The mnemonic summary of these four events, which appears in the Twenty Verses, state that the four events develop from severe defilement³⁶ and are

³³ Michael Zimmerman, The Chapter on Right Conduct in the Bodhisattvabhūmī. In M. Witzel (Ed.), 2013, p.174.

³⁴ "Gain": whatever may be gained, such as clothing, food, housing and transport; "respect": signs of respect such as throne and cushion (Mark Tatz, 1986, p.158)

³⁵ Mark Tatz, **Asanga's Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa**, 1986, p.65.

³⁶ "Severe defilement" refers to "total involvement", the usage of which term is peculiar to bodhisattva vow (Mark Tatz, 1986, p.158, p.162)

considered to be “similar to defeat” (*pārājayika*) as they cause the failure in the bodhisattva vow:

- (5) That which, developed from severe defilement,
Functions as destruction of the vow,
The four transgressions of it,
Are considered similar to defeats.
- (6) With attachment to gain and respect,
Praising oneself and deprecating another;
Stingily not giving doctrine and wealth
To the suffering, [poor] and forsaken;
- (7) Heedless of another's confession,
Striking him out of anger;
Rejecting the Greater Vehicle,
And showing what appears like the good doctrine.³⁷

The events of transgression can be viewed as an attachment of the bodhisattva to things. That is, in the first event, the bodhisattva praises himself and deprecates another, with an attachment to gain and respect. In the second event, the bodhisattva fails to donate material things and decline to teach doctrine because he has a nature of attachment to material things and of stinginess in doctrine. The third event involves the bodhisattva's attachment to the attitude of anger. The fourth event involves the bodhisattva's attachment to false doctrine.

The ground for defeats can be considered as four [in number] based on attitudes and be considered as eight in view of their application.³⁸ Four defeats [or ground for defeats] made in the face of attitude are: (1) attachment to gain and respect, (2) stinginess in goods, (3) thoughts of harm toward sentient beings, and (4) the stupidity of abusing the doctrine. Eight defeats in view of their application are (1-2) praising oneself and deprecating another, (3-4) not giving doctrine and not giving wealth, (5-6) striking sentient beings and not accepting an apology, and (7-8) rejecting the good doctrine and teaching a semblance of the doctrine. This study concurs with the four grounds of defeat in the light of their wide recognition; however, the

³⁷ Ibid., p.162.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 163.

underlying eight actions of these four grounds of defeats are also useful in providing details of actions.

3.3.2.3.5 Circumstances of Transgressions with/ without Defilement for the Bodhisattva

The text then describes the “fault” issue: what is a fault and what is not a fault for the bodhisattva established in the bodhisattva vow of ethics. This is concerned with the circumstances in which each transgression is specified as defiled (*kliṣṭa*) or undefiled (*akliṣṭa*). One is said to be “possessed of fault” because the act is reprehensible; one is said to be “possessed of contradiction” because the act contradicts what is natural to a bodhisattva.³⁹ A “defiled fault” means a transgression with defilement whereas an “undefiled fault” is a transgression without defilement. More than 40 transgressions have been mentioned. The transgressions to be avoided can be categorized, according to the commentary, into two parts, i.e., the set of defeats and the set of misdeeds.⁴⁰ The set of defeats are the four events of transgression mentioned in section 3.3.2.2.4 above whereas the set of misdeeds includes more than 40 items to be addressed below.

Should the bodhisattva established in the vow-of-ethics spend the time without having done something as his daily worship to the Buddha, the Buddha’s shrine, the Doctrine or to the Community of high-stage bodhisattvas, he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction. If developed out of lack of respect, laziness, or indolence, the fault is a transgression with defilement. If developed out of forgetfulness, the fault is a transgression without defilement. There is no fault in either the case of a distraught mind or the case for someone who has reached the stage of purified intention.

If the bodhisattva allows insatiability, discontent, and attachment to gain and respect to occur, then he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault. There is no fault if he has a will to eliminate it, takes the initiative in doing so, and continues to oppose it by keeping hold of the antidote, but nonetheless commits it over and over because he is by nature overwhelmed with a great share of defilement.

³⁹ Ibid., p.202.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.157.

If the bodhisattva interacts with others out of pride or a thought of enmity or resentment by acting or not acting in several situations, the conclusion is the same, that is, he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault. On the other hand, if the bodhisattva acts or does not act in the situations out of laziness or indolence or indeterminate thought or absent mind, then he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; but the fault is not defiled. If the bodhisattva acts or does not act in the situations because of his sickness or distraught mind or he is involved with teaching doctrine to others or conducting a discussion or listening to doctrine or disciplining the sentient beings and raising them from an unwholesome situation to a wholesome situation or keeping an internal rule of the community as well as guarding the thought of the majority, there is no fault.

The various situations which include the following:⁴¹ the bodhisattva seeing a co-religionist deserving deference to his more advanced age and endowment of qualities and failing to greet accordingly; the bodhisattva upon being invited by others to a home or another monastery and not going or not accepting the invitation; the bodhisattva not taking the opportunity to be provided with fine wealth; the bodhisattva failing to give doctrine to those who seek doctrine; the bodhisattva neglecting or discounting violent and immoral sentient beings on the grounds of the violence and immorality; the bodhisattva training himself as do the auditors; all of these acts of the bodhisattva arising out of pride or a thought of enmity or resentment; the bodhisattva is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault. On the other hand, if all of these behaviors of the bodhisattva arising out of laziness or indolence or indeterminate thought or absent mind, then the bodhisattva is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; but the fault is not defiled. The cases for no fault of the bodhisattva mainly includes his sickness or distraught mind or he is involved with teaching/ discussing/ listening to doctrine or disciplining the sentient beings and raising them from an unwholesome to a wholesome situation or already promising someone else, keeping an internal rule of the community as well as guarding against the thought of enmity of the majority. Some cases for “no fault” of the bodhisattva may have specific different details but in general if the bodhisattva does or does not

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.66-70.

act out of necessity (e.g. not knowing the doctrine and thus failing to give doctrine), proper reasons (e.g. failing to give doctrine to someone who would receive it disrespectfully and with bad deportment), or good concern for others (e.g. suspecting the donor will be impoverished and thus not obtaining wealth), there is no fault.

3.3.2.3.6 Acts with Skill in Means

The text indicates that even in the case of what is reprehensible by nature, the bodhisattva acts with such skill in means that no fault ensues; rather, there is a spread of much merit.⁴² The cases involve the bodhisattva acting with a thought of mercy or the intention of doing benefit associated with moving sentient beings from an unwholesome to a wholesome situation. One example is about the bodhisattva who takes the life of a robber or thief who is engaged in deeds of immediate retribution (*ānantarya-karma*) and is about to murder many hundreds of magnificent living beings – auditors, independent buddhas, and bodhisattvas – for the sake of a few material goods. Other examples include the bodhisattva speaking words to divide sentient beings from the unwholesome advisor; rebuking sentient beings who are taking the wrong path/doing wrong with harsh and severe words; pleading sentient beings with narrative containing dance, song, and music, and being endowed with idle chatter to draw them to listen to his words. The case that applies to only lay bodhisattva is the bodhisattva adopting merciful thought and meeting the needs of a single woman with the dharma of sexual embrace so that the woman can be influenced for abandonment of the unwholesome.

The text then addresses the faults relating to various issues of the bodhisattva such as wrong ways of livelihood, wrong view of nirvana, ignominy about himself, responses with abuse, offense giving, attitude of anger towards others, laziness and indolence, allowance of the hindrance of sense-desire to occur, and experience in the taste of meditative trance.⁴³ The general notion of these issues is that there is defiled fault if the bodhisattva acts in those ways or in some matters, acts out of a thought of enmity, of resentment, of self-interest, of pride, or of a malicious intention. There is defiled fault if the bodhisattva does not guard against bad things such as ignominy about himself, unhappiness, laziness and indolence, time spending

⁴² Ibid., p.70.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 72-75.

with mind enamored of social intercourse, self-praise, and deprecation of others. On the other hand, for some act, there is no fault if the bodhisattva generates the will to remove the defilement. For example, with regard to the ways of getting livelihood, the bodhisattva who allows the occurrence of events of the wrong ways of getting livelihood, i.e., hypocrisy, sweet talk, hint, extortion, and seeking to profit from possessions, and feels no constraint at and fails to remove them, is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault. If he has generated the will and begun to attempt to remove the defilement, but continues to act so because his mind is overcome by a great share of defilement, there is no fault. Regarding the view about nirvana, the bodhisattva who holds the view that he should neither look forward to nirvana but should avert from it, nor fear the defilements because the bodhisattva must accomplish bodhi in this way (i.e., revolving through saṃsāra for three incalculable aeons), is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault.

Concerning the holding of the doctrine, the bodhisattva who fails to apply himself to the bodhisattva collection or applies himself to the auditors' collection or to treatises of the tīrthikas or to heterodox treatises; then he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault. If he is endowed with an intellectual understanding and so long as he makes twice as much daily application to the exalted word of the Buddha, there is no fault. The bodhisattva who has no inclination for the profound topics in the bodhisattva collection and repudiates them, whether out of unskillful attention or following someone else's lead, he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault. If he has no inclination but does not repudiate them either, there is no fault. If the bodhisattva, repressed by pride and with thoughts of enmity and resentment, does not go when doctrinal discourse and discussion of the good doctrine are being held, then he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault. If the bodhisattva deliberately discounts the person speaking doctrine and pays no respect to him, ridicules him and makes his reference the letter rather than the meaning, then he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault.

The remaining issues relating faults are those concerning the acts of ethics of accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings. The general notion is that if the bodhisattva does not act accordingly, out of thoughts of enmity and resentment, in any of eleven modes of ethics of accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings, there is defiled fault. That is if the bodhisattva fails to do the followings, i.e., minister to the needs of sentient beings and render service to remove suffering in the suffering, point out what is relevant to present and future welfare, pay respect and assist those who help him, relieve sorrow in calamities to property and kinfolk, give requisites to those destitute of requisites, attract Dharma followers by giving himself as a resource, comply with worldly convention, praise good qualities of others, rebuke sentient beings who deserve to be rebuked and employ wonder-working power to frighten and bend sentient beings to his will; then he is possessed of fault, possessed of contradiction; there is defiled fault. The same principle of “not defiled” and “no fault” as previously mentioned applied to the acts in relation to ethics of accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings. It is also indicated that for all of these, one is without fault in cases of a distraught mind, being hard-pressed by a feeling of suffering, and not having undertaken the vow.⁴⁴ (p.83).

If an event that is “ground for defeat” has occurred with greater involvement, the vow is relinquished by this and should be received a second time. If it has occurred with medium involvement it is a misdeed, and should be confessed to three or more persons. Should an event that is “ground for defeat” has occurred with lesser involvement, it as well as the other faults as, are understood to be confessable before one person. If no congenial person is to be found, then the bodhisattva, before an image of the Tathāgata, should take the bodhisattva vow of ethics by himself.

The text states that on the bodhisattva’s path, there is nothing that is categorically a fault:

In what the Lord has declared-- “Know that the faults of a bodhisattva develop, for the most part, from aversion, rather than from desire-attachment” --the intention should be viewed thus: When the bodhisattva is ruled by love and affection for sentient beings, whatever he may do is the deed of a bodhisattva;

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.83.

there is nothing he can do that is not. Nor is it possible that there be any fault in doing what he should do.⁴⁵

However, when the bodhisattva bears hatred toward sentient beings, he can do no good for himself or others, and this being what is not the duty of a bodhisattva, thus doing what he should not (do) becomes a fault.

As for bodhisattva offenses, which should be known as minor, medium and major, were referred to the 'Topical Summary'.⁴⁶ According to the 'Disciplinary Code Summary',⁴⁷ minor, medium, and major degrees of transgression are taught in five modes: (1) In terms of essential nature, defeat is major, suspension is medium, and the rest are minor. In an alternative arrangement, defeat and suspension are grave, transgression and confessable are medium, and the rest are minor; (2) In terms of the agent, what is done out of disrespect is major, what is done out of much defilement is medium, and what is done out of unawareness and carelessness is minor; (3) In terms of intention, those done out of major, medium, and minor [degrees of] the three poisons are major, medium, and minor; (4) In terms of the matter: By analogy with intention, doing something that has but a single nature gives rise nonetheless to major, medium, and minor results. For example, in the case of aversion, the slaying of animals is transgression, the slaying of human beings aside from parents is defeat (but not an immediate), the slaying of one's parents is defeat that is an immediate. (5) The sum total also results in minor, major and medium. To fail to rectify, in accord with doctrine, from one to five offenses, is minor. To fail to rectify, in accord with doctrine, from six to as many as one can know the number of, is medium. Measureless offense, of which one cannot know the number, is major.

The Disciplinary Code also formulates the undefiled and defiled offenses. Undefiled offenses comprise: an offense that occur out of unawareness, because one has not heard of and comprehended the offense, and an offense that occurs, though one is thus aware of an offense, because of forgetfulness and a lack of full awareness. Defiled offenses comprise: an offense that occurs uncontrollably, because one has a great share of the three poisons, although one is aware of it, and an offense that occurs

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 84.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 249.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 249-250.

according to one's wishes, although one's intellect has been prepared, because of an inclination for something inferior, a disregard for the religious way of life, a disrespect for nirvana, doctrine, and community, forgetfulness, shamelessness, and a lack of desire and disrespect for the training. The antidotes to the causes for transgression are: knowing the transgressions, reliance upon mindfulness and awareness, application to the particular antidote to whichever defilement is greatest, shame and embarrassment, and respect for the teacher and the trainings.⁴⁸

The advantages of training in disciplinary code are then elaborated. The bodhisattva who is training in disciplinary code is stated to be blessed with a threefold good fortune: the blessing of practice, of attitude, and of previous causes--and so maintains contact with well-being.⁴⁹ The blessing of practice is explained as: the bodhisattva does not violate ethics; his behavior with body, speech, and mind is perfectly pure, he never commits an offense and evil deeds are disclosed. The blessing of attitude is explained as: the bodhisattva is ordained a monastic while thinking of doctrine, not thinking of livelihood; he is eager for the great awakening, for the religious life and for nirvana; his vigor is not feeble and he is not contaminated by unwholesome factors, that will result in a future rebirth, old age, and death that is a suffering fruition and is compounded of fever. The blessing of previous causes is explained as: the bodhisattva, in other lives of the past, has performed acts of merit and acts of virtue and because of this he never lacks requisite clothing, food, bed and bedding, and medicinal drugs for himself; he is able to share them with others. On the contrary, cursed with three misfortunes that are the reverse of these, one maintains contact with suffering.

3.3.2.4 Other Seven Aspects of Ethics

While Asaṅga subsumed the other seven aspects of ethics under the “complete ethics”, these aspects can well elaborate the notion of the bodhisattva ethics. That is, the bodhisattva ethics can be described as being difficult for practitioners; it is ethics in all directions; it belongs to a good person; it is ethics in all different aspects; it directs to petitioners in distress; it leads to happiness here and in

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.250.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.85.

the after-life⁵⁰; and it is purified, respectively. These seven aspects of ethics are as follows.

3.3.2.4.1 Difficult Ethics (*Duṣkaraśīla*),

The ethics is viewed as difficult in three aspects: the bodhisattva renounces the great possessions and the great sovereignty of the Ruler to take on the vow of ethics; the bodhisattva would not allow the vow-of-ethics obligation to weaken even at the cost of his life; the bodhisattva is established in mindfulness and careful attention to all his actions not to let even the subtlest fault to arise.

The “great possessions” are explained by the commentary as material goods and people such as relatives and servants whereas the great sovereignty of Ruler is sovereignty over others at will by means of command.⁵¹ The commentary refers to Gunaprabha who points out that [the vow] is both hard to take and hard to keep whereas the latter two are hard to keep. That is, it is hard to keep the vow-of-ethics obligation from weakening and hard to keep the actions from being soiled by the subtlest fault.

3.3.2.4.2 Gateway Ethics (*Sarvatomukhaṃ śīlam*)

The ethics is described as fourfold: adopted, natural morality, habituated, and conjoined with means. The threefold ethics is adopted, i.e., the ethics of the vow, the ethics of collecting wholesome factors, and the ethics of accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings. Natural morality is undertaking physical and verbal activity that is perfectly pure because of the natural goodness of a mental continuum. Habituated ethics represents continued progress from previous lives. Ethics conjoined with means is the reliance of bodhisattva on the four means of attraction to introduce sentient beings to wholesome physical and verbal activity. The four means of attraction are explained as: ⁵² (1) generosity that attracts with material goods, (2) kind words of advice to one’s converts on what to accept and reject, (3) deeds to induce them to put into practice the meaning of the words, and (4) consistency with the

⁵⁰ M. Zimmerman, M. The Chapter on Right Conduct in the Bodhisattvabhūmī. In M. Witzel (Ed.), **Harvard Oriental Series**, Vol. 75. (Massachusetts: Department of South Asian Studies, Harvard University, 2013), p. 875.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.152.

⁵² This follows the presentation in Bbh Chapter 15.

meaning, that is, the bodhisattva holds to what has been presented to others for practice.⁵³

3.3.2.4.3 Ethics of a Holy Person (*Satpuruṣaśīla*),

The ethics is to be understood as fivefold: the bodhisattva is endowed with ethics; he induces others to undertake ethics; he sings praise of ethics; he is glad to see a fellow in the doctrine; and he treats any fault that arises according to doctrine.

The “holy person” is defined by Jinaputra as: one who achieves non-injury of self and others and, beyond that, practices deeds of body, speech and mind that benefit self and others.⁵⁴ The commentary states that the five points are holy ethics because they prevent harm to others and are associated with holy deeds that achieve all welfare. The first and the last achieve one's own welfare, the remaining three achieve the welfare of others.⁵⁵

3.3.2.4.4 Ethics as All Modes (*Sarvākāraṃ śīlam*),

The ethics is indicated as sixfold and sevenfold, totaling thirteenfold. The six modes of ethics are: **extensive** because it acquires extensive bases of training and is dedicated to the great awakening; **unreprehensible** because it avoids the two extremes of indulgence in sense-desire and self-exhaustion; **basis for delight** because it is free from pointless suffering; **permanent**, so as not to abjure the training so long as one lives; **steadfast**, never to be overcome by gain and respect, disputants, defilements and subsidiary defilements; **adorned** with ethics, which may be known according to the Auditor Stage.

The seven modes are: **disengagement**, to avoid misbehavior such as murder and the rest; **engagement**, to collect wholesomeness and accomplish the welfare of sentient beings; **guardian** to protect the ethics of engagement and disengagement; **mature** in the characteristics of a great personage, mature in higher thinking, mature in pleasant destinies, and mature in the welfare of sentient beings.

⁵³ Ibid., p.253.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.310.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.253.

As proposed by Gunaprabha, the set of six modes represents the possession of any and all good qualities, whereas the seven modes represent sections of the essential nature and the fruition [of ethics]. The first three of the seven modes represent the essential nature [of ethics] and the last four of the seven modes represent the fruition [of ethics].

3.3.2.4.5 Distressed and Wishing Ethics (*Vighātārthi-kaśīla*)

The ethics is indicated as eightfold. It involves the wish of bodhisattva as well as the wish of others. According to his own wishes, the bodhisattva wishes that misbehaviors of anyone not occur to him. Such misbehaviors consist of eight deeds: depriving of the bodhisattva's life, stealing from him, sexual misconduct, speaking falsely, slander, harsh speech, idle chatter, and behaving with unwanted contacts of beating and hurting by hand, clump of earth and whip. If someone else should misbehave, that would distress the bodhisattva; that would be disagreeable to him. According to the wish of others, should the bodhisattva misbehave, they would be distressed; it would be disagreeable to the others. The bodhisattva investigates the matter in this way, and does not behave in the ways that are disagreeable to himself and to others.

The commentary explains that the ethics that rids one of the eight unwished-for distresses and brings about their eight wished-for alternatives is called “distressed and wishing ethics”.⁵⁶ The eight unwished-for things are murder, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slander, harsh speech, idle chatter, and a set of three disagreeable contacts- -the contacts of being beaten and hurt by hand, clump of earth, and whip. The eight wished-for things, which are the reverse of the eight unwished-for things, are proposed by Jinaputra as: long life, great possessions, a faithful wife, honesty, unalienated followers, sweet sounds, meaningful conversation, and agreeable contacts. My remark here is that the eight wished-for things may not be relevant to the bodhisattva because they represent the worldly desires that the bodhisattva attempts to dispel rather than yearning for.

3.3.2.4.6 Ethics of Well-Being Here and There (*Ihāmutra-sukhaṃ śīlam*)

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.255.

The ethics is to be seen as nine modes, divided into four plus five. The first four points are that the bodhisattva: forbids sentient beings who are preparing grounds for future suffering from situations that should be forbidden; permits situations that should be permitted for sentient beings who are preparing grounds for well-being; attracts sentient beings who should be attracted [those who proceed correctly in regard to the permitted and forbidden situations]; and stops sentient beings who should be stopped [those who proceed wrongly in regard to the permitted and forbidden situations]. He undertakes physical and verbal deeds in this regard that are perfectly pure. The other five modes are ethics endowed with: giving, patience, vigor, meditation, and wisdom. These are the five Perfections (besides the perfection of morality).

Inasmuch as these [modes] result in well-being for the bodhisattva and for others in present and future lives, they are called “well-being here and there.”

3.3.2.4.7 Purified Ethics (*Viśuddham ṣīlam*).

The ethics is to be seen as tenfold. Ethics is correctly undertaken in the first place out of a desire for the religious way of life and for full awakening, not for seeking a livelihood. There is no excessive discouragement because one is free of sluggish regret at an infraction.⁵⁷ There is no overdoing it because one is free of groundless regret. One is free of indolence and perseveres in wholesome directions day and night. One is sustained by carefulness because of reliance upon five-limbed vigilance. One is correctly aspiring, being free of yearnings for gain and respect, and not consenting to live celibate out of aspirations to divinity. One is sustained by a blessed lifestyle, with physical and verbal conduct that is very blessed and exemplary in deportment, incidental duties, and wholesome practices. One is sustained by blessed livelihood, avoiding all the faults of wrong livelihood such as hypocrisy. One avoids the two extremes, avoiding indulgence in sense-desires as well as self-exhaustion. It is conducive to deliverance, avoiding the views of all *tīrthikas*. One is unfailing in the obligation of bodhisattva ethics, not allowing it to weaken and disappear.

⁵⁷ The *Sbh* says that “...being “free of lesser regret” [in the *Bbh*] should be taken as having greater regret. If it meant that one is free from even so much as a little regret, the statement “no excessive discouragement” would be distorted, because one would be entirely free of regret”

The commentary points out that the summary teaching mentions ten, but eleven [modes] appear in the discussion. Tsong-kha-pa proposes to combine “carelessness” and “indolence” into one mode.⁵⁸ The notion is based on Asaṅga’s saying, in the Śrāvaka-bhūmi (Sbh), in context of the ten faults where carelessness and indolence are combined into one mode. The ten faults are: incorrectly taking it in the first place, excessive discouragement, overdoing it, being caught up with carelessness and indolence, wrong resolve, being cursed with unfortunate lifestyle, being cursed with unfortunate livelihood, falling into the two extremes, what is un conducive to deliverance, and failing in the obligation. The reverse of the ten faults are thus the ten purifications, where carefulness and free of indolence are counted as one mode. Without these causes for failure, there is what is called “blessedness,” or purified ethics.

Upon finishing the description of all nine aspects of bodhisattva ethics, the author (Asaṅga) states that the great aggregate of bodhisattva ethics bears the fruition of great awakening. And so long as the bodhisattva has not yet become a Buddha, he will obtain five sorts of advantages from training himself in this aggregate of ethics. That is, the bodhisattva: (1) comes to the notice of the buddhas, (2) dies in a state of great elation, (3) is reborn where those with the same higher ethics are found, (4) is endowed with a measureless aggregate of merit that fulfills the perfection of morality in this life, and (5) there is a natural morality of which, in future lives, he inherits the very essence.

The commentary refers to the phrase “great aggregate” as a great resource of merit, broad and vast. In other words, it refers to ethics as full-blown, measureless and complete.⁵⁹ It should be noted that only the “great aggregate” of ethics will bear the fruition of great awakening. For the bodhisattva who has trained in ethics but has not been up to the level of “great aggregate” of ethics, he will still obtain advantages both in present life as well as in future life. Samudra explains the reasons for the second advantage (the “great elation” at death) by relating this to other advantages. Samudra views that the bodhisattva, who turns attention to meeting the buddhas and bodhisattvas afterward, transcends the fear of death and the bodhisattva has no fear

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 258.

⁵⁹ Loc.cit.

for a lower state of rebirth, because he possesses measureless good roots. The commentary also points out that the first advantage brings about the second and third advantage. The explanation is that so long as one maintains the vow [and comes to the notice of the buddhas], the buddhas and their disciples consider the one as a son and a brother and his/her wholesome factors will grow. The second and fourth advantages are also indicated as benefits in this life whereas the third and fifth advantages are benefits for future lives: One is not parted from the vow in various rebirths.⁶⁰

The final paragraph of the Chapter summarizes that ethics has nine modes beginning with the essence of ethics, which should be understood to be included by the three sorts of ethics: the ethics of the vow, the ethics of collecting wholesome factors, and the ethics of accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings. The commentary also states that each mode of ethics should be understood to include by the threesome. These three sorts of ethics accomplish three sorts of bodhisattva work. That is: the ethics of the vow brings about mental stability; the collection of wholesome factors brings about the maturation of the factors of Buddhahood for oneself; the ethics of accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings brings about the maturation of sentient beings. These constitute all the work to be done by a bodhisattva, that is, to stabilize the mind in order to establish well-being in the present, to ripen the factors of buddhahood without physical or mental fatigue, and to bring sentient beings to full maturity. The bodhisattva ethics, its advantages, and the bodhisattva's work are considered to be all as in the saying:

This is bodhisattva ethics. These are the advantages of bodhisattva ethics. And this is the work of bodhisattva ethics. There is nothing beyond and there is nothing more. Past bodhisattvas desiring the great awakening have trained in it. Those of the future will train in it. And those presently abiding in the boundless, infinite realms of the universe are training in it.⁶¹

The commentary indicates that bodhisattva ethics is restricted to three [sorts] because the work of the bodhisattva comprises three things: (1) to stabilize the mind in undefiled well-being, (2) based upon that, to bring one's own elements to maturity, and (3) to bring to maturity the mental continuums of sentient beings. Ethics of the

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 259.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 89.

vow is to be first established or else the basis for the other two types of ethics is lost. Between the other two types of ethics, ethics of collecting wholesome factors is chief thing because one must strive to bring oneself to maturity.⁶² The essence [of ethics], benefit and work of bodhisattva are stated to have nothing beyond. All bodhisattvas train themselves according to these ethics. There is but one path to Buddhahood being travelled by those who train themselves on the bodhisattva's path to Buddhahood. Tsong-kha-pa also states that besides training in ethics [which is one kind of six Perfections], one should know and sincerely practices the other perfections, the four means of attraction, and the rest. He also indicates that the Chapter on Ethics is initially the most important [of Bbh] for the beginning bodhisattva.⁶³

In sum, upon describing briefly Mahāyāna ethics and Asanga's life, this chapter made a summary on the Śīlapaṭala or the Chapter on Ethics, which is Asanga's work from the Bbh. The bodhisattva ethics is described with the core aspect as completeness. The threefold aggregate of ethics- ethics of the vow, ethics of collecting wholesome factors, and ethics of benefitting sentient beings - is complete since it comprises the lay side and monastic side and it bears the fruition of great awakening. The next chapter is an analysis of the ethical concepts from Asanga's Chapter on Ethics and an application of the concepts to laity, which is modern leadership.

⁶² Ibid., p. 260.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 261.

