

them to freedom from pain and frustration. As noted above, the Nirmanakaya Buddha is the historical Buddha, who incarnates to teach humanity.

The highest form of renunciation is not renouncing the world. It is renouncing renunciation of the world and thus remaining a part of the world. It is the “secret” or esoteric path. It is the teaching of the inner side of all great religious traditions: not to “get saved” but to “help save.” Those who take this path sacrifice their union with the great and perfect Self for the good of the weak, imperfect selves of all beings.

To follow such an ideal, however, is not easy. It requires great courage to renounce peace and ease for labor and woe. And so verse 147 says that if we do not feel up to this challenge, we should simply follow the public, exoteric religious teachings, the “eye doctrine.” But don’t despair. If we are not up to the challenge in this life today, we may be so tomorrow: Gloss 24. “Tomorrow” means the following rebirth or reincarnation.

This consolation may remind us of the ending of the poetic passage beginning “There is a road”: “For those who win onward, there is reward past all telling: the power to bless and save humanity. For those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.” The road, the bodhisattva path, the *Nirmānakāya* robe is there for us. If we do not accept it this life, very well. There is always another time. The principle of karma guarantees that any effort we make will have its results, small or great, good or bad. The least attempt at spiritual progress will eventually bear fruit, as also will every wrong action: “A harsh word uttered in past lives, is not destroyed but ever comes again,” a saying that is identified in a note as one of the “Precepts of the Prasanga School.”

Verse 148 continues with a sweeping statement of the pervasiveness and inevitability of the operation of karma in our lives and in the whole world process. It applies to the entire sweep of our evolution, as the gloss says: Gloss 25. The “Great Journey” is the whole complete cycle of existences, in one Round.

Karma, however, is a complex subject — one that we often oversimplify. Some of its complexity is hinted at in verse 149, which alludes to the fact that our actions involve others. Our karma or actions affect not just ourselves, but other beings as well. We are all interlinked; we participate in