



*Texts for Meditation*

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by Aelxander Berzin ([www.berzinarchives.com](http://www.berzinarchives.com)).*

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*This concludes The Abbreviated Points of the Graded Path to Enlightenment, compiled in brief so that they may not be forgotten. It has been written at Ganden Namgyel Monastery on the Great Drog Mountain (Tibet) by the Buddhist monk, (Tsongkhapa) Lozang-dragpa, a meditator who has heard many teachings.*



The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(23) Having meditated both on space- like voidness  
during total absorption  
And on illusion-like voidness as the subsequent realization,  
Combining the two as awareness and method  
Is acclaimed as “going to the far shore of bodhisattva conduct.”  
From this realization, being discontent with (achieving)  
a one-sided pathway of mind  
Is the tradition of those with good fortune (to attain enlightenment).

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(24) The causal and resultant Mahayana vehicles travel in common  
These pathways of mind as requirements for (reaching)  
the supreme pathway (enlightenment).  
The more that you increasingly enhance these (stages of the path),  
The more your attainment of (rebirth with) respites and endowments  
Becomes meaningful and effective (for reaching enlightenment)  
By depending on navigational guidance from tantric masters,  
Embarking on the vast ocean of tantra,  
And healthily relying on their full guideline instructions.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(25) In order to accustom my mind (to these stages of the path)  
And also to benefit others of good fortune,  
I have explained here in easily understandable words  
The complete path that is pleasing to the Buddhas.  
I pray that, by this constructive act, may all limited beings  
Never be parted from this pure and excellent path.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has offered prayers like that.  
If you would also seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

## *The Three Principle Aspects of the Path*

*(Lam-gtso rnam-gsum)*

by Je Tsongkhapa

*translated by Alexander Berzin, 1983, revised 2003*

I prostrate to my ennobling, impeccable lamas.

I shall try to explain, to the best of my ability,  
The essential meaning of all the scriptural pronouncements  
of the Triumphant Ones,  
The path praised by the Triumphants' holy offspring,  
The fording passage for the fortunate desiring liberation.

Listen with a clear (mind), O fortunate ones,  
Whose minds would rely on the path pleasing to the Triumphant  
Through being unattached to the pleasures of compulsive existence  
And eager to make meaningful your life of respites and enriching factors.

Since taking keen interest in the pleasurable fruits  
of the ocean of compulsive existence, without pure renunciation,  
Is no method for (achieving) the peace (of liberation) –  
In fact, by craving what is found in compulsive situations,  
limited beings are completely bound –  
First, strive for renunciation.

By accustoming your minds that there is no time to waste  
When a life of respites and enrichments is so difficult to find,  
Turn from your obsession with the appearances of this life.  
By thinking over and again about the problems of recurring rebirth  
And that (the laws of) behavioral cause and effect are never a fraud,  
Turn from your obsession with the appearances of future (lives).

When, by accustoming yourself in this way, you never generate,  
for even an instant,  
A mind that aspires for the splendors of recurring samsara,  
And you develop the attitude that day and night always is interested  
keenly in liberation,  
At that time, you have generated renunciation.

But since even this renunciation, if not held with the development  
Of a pure bodhichitta aim, will not become a cause  
For the splendors and bliss of a peerless purified state (of enlightenment),  
Those with sense generate a supreme bodhichitta aim.

Carried by the currents of the four violent rivers,  
Tied by the tight fetters of karma, hard to reverse,  
Thrown into an iron-mesh pit of grasping for true identities,  
Completely enshrouded in the heavy gloom of the darkness  
of unawareness,

Unrelentingly tormented by the three types of suffering,  
Life after life in limitless compulsive existence –  
Having thought about the condition of your mothers  
Who have found themselves in situations like these,  
Develop a supreme bodhichitta aim.

Even if you have built up as habits renunciation and a bodhichitta aim,  
Still, if you lack the discriminating awareness of realizing the abiding  
nature of reality,  
You will be unable to sever the root of your compulsive existence.  
Therefore, make effort in the methods for realizing dependent arising.

Anyone who has seen that (the laws of) behavioral cause and effect  
Regarding all phenomena of samsara and nirvana are never a fraud,  
And who has had fall apart the sustaining supports of  
his or her (cognitions)  
Aimed (at inherent existence), whatever they might have been,  
Has entered the path pleasing to the Buddhas.

Appearances are non-fraudulent dependent arisings  
And voidness is parted from any assertions  
(of impossible ways of existing).  
So long as you have these two understandings appearing to you separately,  
You still have not realized the Able Ones' intention.

But when, not in alternation, but all together at once,  
Your certitude from the mere sight of non-fraudulent dependent arising  
Causes all your ways of taking objects (as inherently existent) to fall apart,  
You have completed discerning the correct view.

Further, when you know how appearance eliminates  
the extreme of existence  
And voidness eliminates the extreme of nonexistence,  
And how voidness dawns as cause and effect,  
You will never be stolen away by views that grasp for extremes.

(20) Discriminating awareness is the eye for beholding  
profound (voidness),  
the actual way (in which everything exists).  
It is the pathway of mind for extracting the root of compulsive existence.  
It is the treasure of genius praised in all the scriptural pronouncements  
And is renowned as the most brilliant lamp for dispelling  
the darkness of naivety.  
Realizing this, those who are wise and who wish liberation  
Make every effort to enhance this pathway- mind.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(21) Single-pointed constancy of mind, on its own, lacks the perception  
That is able to sever the root of samsara.  
Discriminating awareness, parted from a stilled  
and settled pathway of mind,  
Cannot reverse disturbing emotions and attitudes,  
No matter how much it analytically discerns.  
But, when the discriminating awareness that can be totally decisive  
about how things exist  
Mounts the horse of an unwaveringly stilled and settled mind,  
And, with the lance of Madhyamaka logic, devoid of extremes,  
Analytically discerns (voidness) correctly, destroying all underlying as-  
sumptions that would support any grasping for extremist views,  
That wide-ranging discriminating awareness expands the intelligence  
So that it realizes the actual way (in which everything exists).

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(22) Mentally abiding on how everything exists, unwaveringly,  
with total stability,  
While also (applying) the individualizing inspection that analytically  
discerns (voidness) correctly --  
What need to mention that it actualizes absorbed concentration through  
habituation with single-pointedness of mind,  
It increasingly enhances that absorbed concentration.  
Those who, seeing this, enthusiastically work to actualize a state of mind  
That is jointly stilled and settled and exceptionally perceptive are truly  
remarkable.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(17) Patience (not to become angry or upset) is the best adornment for  
those holding power,  
And the perfect ascetic practice for those tormented  
by disturbing emotions.  
It is the high-soaring eagle as the enemy of the snake of hostility,  
And the thickest armor against the sharp weapons of abusive words.  
Realizing this, (the wise) accustom themselves, in various ways and forms,  
To (wearing) the padding of supreme patience.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(18) Once you suit up with the armor of resolute,  
unswayable positive enthusiasm,  
Your proficiency in scriptural understanding and in realization grow full  
like the waxing moon.  
Your entire mode of behavior takes on meaningful purpose,  
And you bring whatever you start to its intended conclusion.  
Realizing this, bodhisattvas exert great waves of positive enthusiasm,  
Washing away all laziness.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(19) Mental constancy is the king wielding power over the mind.  
When you fix it, it remains immovable like a mighty Mount Meru.  
When you project it, it fully engages in any constructive aim.  
It induces the exhilarating bliss of feeling physically and mentally fit.  
Realizing this, yogis with (mental) control continuously rely on absorbed  
concentration, in a healthy manner,  
Overcoming their enemy, mental distraction.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

When you have understood the points of these three  
Principle aspects of the path, as they are,  
Rely on solitude and, by generating the power of joyful perseverance,  
Quickly realize, my child, your immemorial goal.



*Je Tsongkhapa*

## ***Eight-Verse Attitude-Training***

*(Blo-sbyong tshig-brgyad-ma)*

by Langri-tangpa (dGe-bshes gLang-ri thang-pa)

*translated by Alexander Berzin*

*June 2001, revised February 2004*

1

May I always cherish all limited beings  
By considering how far superior they are  
To wish-granting gems  
For actualizing the supreme aim.

2

Whenever I come into anyone's company,  
May I regard myself less than everyone else  
And, from the depths of my heart, value others  
More highly than I do myself.

3

Whatever I am doing, may I check the flow of my mind,  
And the moment that disturbing emotions arise,  
Since they debilitate myself and others,  
May I confront and avert them with forceful means.

4

Whenever I see beings instinctively cruel,  
Overpowered by negativities and serious problems,  
May I cherish them as difficult to find  
As discovering a treasure of gems.

5

When others, out of envy, treat me unfairly  
With scolding, insults, and more,  
May I accept the loss upon myself  
And offer the victory to others.

6

Even if someone whom I have helped  
And from whom I harbor great expectations  
Were to harm me completely unfairly,  
May I view him or her as a hallowed teacher.

7

In short, may I offer to all my mothers,  
both actually and indirectly,  
Whatever will benefit and bring them joy;  
And may I hiddenly accept on myself  
All my mothers' troubles and woes.

If you too draw you into samsara,  
You will not see the means for cutting the root of this vicious circle.  
Therefore, relish knowing the factors that bind you to this wheel,  
Exuding disgust, and becoming determined to leave such existence.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(14) Developing and enhancing bodhichitta is the bedrock for the Supreme  
Vehicle's paths.

It is the basis and foundation for great waves of enlightening conduct.  
Like an elixir for transmuting into gold, (it transfigures into enlightening  
features) all aspects of the two networks (of potentials and awareness).  
It (builds up, day and night) a treasure of positive potential,  
Amassed from an endless array of constructive acts.  
Realizing this, bodhisattvas take this supreme precious mind  
as their innermost bond.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(15) Total willingness to give is the wish-granting gem for fulfilling the  
hopes of wandering beings.

It is the sharpest weapon to sever the knot of stinginess.  
It leads to bodhisattva conduct that enhances self-confidence and courage,  
And is the basis for universal proclamation of your fame and repute.  
Realizing this, the wise rely, in a healthy manner, on the outstanding path  
Of (being ever-willing) to offer completely their bodies, possessions, and  
positive potentials.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(16) Ethical discipline is the water to wash away the stains of misdeeds.  
It is the ray of moonlight to cool the scorching heat of disturbing emotions.  
(With it, you stand out) amidst the nine kinds of beings, radiant like a  
Mount Meru.

By its power, you bend all beings (to your positive influence) without (need  
for) mesmerizing stares.  
Realizing this, the holy ones safeguard, as they would their eyes,  
The vowed discipline that they have accepted purely.

Is like trying to winnow (something meaningful from) chaff,  
You must try to take the essence of life at all times, day and night.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(11) After death, there is no assurance of avoiding one of the  
worse rebirth forms.  
Yet, it is certain that the Three Supreme Gems provide safe direction away  
from any dread (of this fate).  
For these reasons, be extremely steadfast in taking their  
safe direction in life  
And unrelenting in following their points for training.  
(Success in not falling) further depends on considering well  
Which types of impulsive behavior are noble or dark, and what are their  
results,  
Then living by adopting (the former) and avoiding (the latter).

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(12) The fullest strides in actualizing the supreme paths  
will not come about  
Until attaining as a working basis (a precious human life) with a full set of  
(eight) definitional factors.  
Therefore, train in their causal (constructive acts),  
So that you will not be lacking in any of these (factors).  
As it is utterly essential to cleanse your three channels  
Of tarnishes from stains of negative potentials and from downfalls  
(from vows),  
And especially (to purge them of) obstacles from karma,  
Cherish healthy and continual reliance on a full set of four opponent forces.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama has practiced like that.  
If you too would seek liberation,  
Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(13) Without working hard at pondering true problems and their draw-  
backs,  
You will not properly gain keen interest in liberation (from them).  
Without considering the stages whereby (true) origins  
of suffering like that.

8

Through a mind untarnished by stains of conceptions  
Concerning eight passing things, throughout all of this,  
And that knows all phenomena as an illusion,  
May I break free from my bondage, without any clinging.



## Seven-Point Mind-Training

*(Blo-sbyong don-bdun-ma)*

by Geshe Chaykawa (dGe-bshes 'Chad-kha-ba)

*Togmey-zangpo (Thogs-med bzang-po) edition  
translated by Alexander Berzin, June 2004*

Prostration to great compassion.

1

Train first in the preliminaries.

2

Ponder that phenomena are like a dream.

Discern the basic nature of awareness that has no arising.

The opponent itself liberates itself in its own place.

The essential nature of the path is to settle within a state  
of the all-encompassing basis.

Between sessions, act like an illusory person.

Train in both giving and taking in alternation,

Mounting those two on the breath.

(In regard to) the three objects, (take) the three poisonous attitudes

And (give) the three roots of what's constructive,

(While) training with words in all paths of behavior.

As for the order of taking, start from myself.

3

When the environment and its dwellers are full of negative forces,

Transform adverse conditions into a path to enlightenment,

By banishing one thing as (bearing) all blame

And meditating with great kindness toward everyone.

Voidness, from meditating on deceptive appearances

As the four Buddha-bodies, is the peerless protector.

The supreme method entails four actions to use,

(So) instantly apply to meditation whatever I might happen to meet.

4

In brief, the essence of the guideline instructions

Is applying the five forces.

The guideline instruction for the Mahayana transference of mind

Is the five forces themselves,

While giving importance to my path of deportment.

Because they gather within them the streams of myriad excellent classics,  
They comprise a veritable ocean of all-around perfect, correct explanation.

(7) You understand all Buddha's teachings with no contradictions.

The scriptural pronouncements, without an exception,

dawn on your mind as personal guidelines.

You easily discover the Triumphant One's intended meanings.

They protect you from the abyss of the great misdeed

(of forsaking the Dharma).

Because of these (benefits), what scrutinizing persons among the erudite

masters of India and Tibet

Will not have their minds enraptured by the stages of the path of three

spiritual scopes,

The supreme instructions to which many fortunate ones have

relied upon fully.

(8) Although (positive potential accrues) from reciting or

hearing even once

(Atisha's) manner (of text) that fully encompasses

The essential points of all scriptural pronouncements,

Even greater waves of massive benefit, for certain, build up

From actually teaching or studying the sacred Dharma (contained within).

Therefore, consider the points (for doing this properly).

(9) A healthy relation, (worked on) with effort in thought and action,

With a holy spiritual mentor who indicates the path

Is the root most appropriate for the dependent arising

Of the hugest networks (of potential and awareness) for this  
and future lives.

Seeing this, then (having taken the safe direction of refuge),

Please (your mentors) by offering practice

That accords with their enlightening words,

Which you would not forsake even at the cost of your life.

The Ever-Vigilant Lama (Tsongkhapa) has practiced like that.

If you too would seek liberation,

Please cultivate yourself in the same way.

(10) This working basis (of a human life) with (eight) respites

Is far more precious than a wish-granting gem.

(A rebirth) like this is gained perhaps only once.

Hard to acquire and easily lost, (it passes in a flash) like lightning in the sky.

Considering (your precious human life) in these ways

And realizing that (engaging in) any worldly activities

# *The Abbreviated Points of the Graded Path*

*(Lam-rim bsdsu-don)*

by Je Tsongkhapa

*translated by Alexander Berzin,  
Berlin, Germany, January 2001*

- (1) I prostrate before you, Foremost of the Shakya Clan.  
Your body is born from a host of positive actions and splendid attainments,  
Your speech grants the wishes of limitless beings.  
Your mind sees all knowables just as they are.
- (2) I prostrate before you, Maitreya and Manjushri,  
Supreme spiritual sons of this peerless Teacher.  
Accepting the mantle (to enact) the full set of Triumphant Ones' deeds,  
You display emanations in countless worlds.
- (3) Before your feet, I prostrate, Nagarjuna and Asanga,  
(Gems) adorning the Southern Continent.  
Celebrated throughout the Three Realms,  
You have commented on the most difficult to fathom  
Mother of the Triumphant (The Prajnaparamita Sutra),  
In perfect accord with its intended meaning.
- (4) I bow before you, Dipamkara (Atisha),  
Holder of a fortune of instructions,  
Which encapsulate in full and without a mistake,  
The essential points of the paths of profound view and extensive behavior,  
In excellent lineage from these two outstanding pioneers.
- (5) Respectfully, I prostrate before you, my spiritual mentors,  
Eyes for beholding all the infinite scriptures,  
Superlative ford for the fortunate to cross to liberation.  
You clarify everything through skillful means,  
prompted by your loving-concern.
- (6) The stages of the path to enlightenment have passed down intact  
Through successive generations from Nagarjuna and Asanga,  
The crown jewels of all erudite masters of the Southern Continent,  
And the banner of whose fame flies gloriously  
above the wandering masses.  
As (following the stages) can fulfill, without an exception,  
The desired spiritual aims of the nine types of rebirth,  
They constitute a power-granting king of precious instruction.

5

If all my Dharma practice gathers into one intention  
If, from the two witnesses, I take the main;  
If I can continually rely on my mind being only happy;  
And if even distracted I'm still able;  
Then I've become trained.

6

Train always in the three general points.  
Transform my intentions, but remain normal.  
Don't speak of (others') deficient or deteriorated sides.  
Don't think anything about others' (faults).  
Cleanse myself first of whichever disturbing emotion is my greatest.  
Rid myself of hopes for fruits.  
Give up poisoned food.  
Don't rely (on my disturbing thoughts) as my excellent mainstay.  
Don't fly off into bad play.  
Don't lie in ambush.  
Don't put (someone) down about a sensitive point.  
Don't shift the load of a dzo to an ox.  
Don't make a race.  
Don't reverse the amulet.  
Don't make a god fall to a demon.  
Don't seek suffering (for others) as an adjunct for (my) happiness.

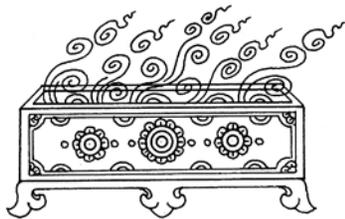
7

Do all yogas with one.  
Do all the quashing of what's distorted with one.  
At the beginning and the end, have the two actions.  
Whichever of the two occurs, act patiently.  
Safeguard the two at the cost of my life.  
Train in the three difficult things.  
Take the three major causes.  
Meditate on the three undecending things.  
Possess the three inseparables.  
Act purely, without partiality to objects.  
Cherish (applying) wide and deep training toward everything.  
Always meditate toward those set aside (as close).  
Don't be dependent on other conditions.  
Practice primarily now.  
Don't have reversed understandings.  
Don't be intermittent.  
Train resolutely.

Free myself through both investigation and scrutiny.  
Don't meditate with a sense of a loss.  
Don't restrict myself with hypersensitivity.  
Don't act for merely a short while.  
Don't wish for (any) thanks.

(Like this,) transform into a path to enlightenment  
This (time when) the five deteriorations are rampant.  
This essence of nectar of guideline instructions  
Is in lineage from Serlingpa.

From the awakening of karmic remainders  
From having previously trained,  
My admiration (for this practice) abounded.  
And due to that cause,  
Ignoring suffering and insult,  
I requested the guideline teachings  
To tame my self-grasping.  
Now even if I die, I have no regrets.



*This concludes A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment composed by the Great Master Dipamkara Shrijnana. It was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian Abbot himself Dipamkara Shrijnana and the Tibetan translator monk Geway-lodro. This Dharma text was composed at the Toling Temple in Zhangzhung.*



61  
 And through a blissful awareness, you wish to fully complete  
 The enlightenment-building networks,  
 And if you wish also to practice the actions of the secret mantras  
 Discussed in the kriya, charya, and so forth classes of tantra,

62  
 Then, in order to be conferred the vajra master empowerment,  
 Please your hallowed guru by all such things  
 As respectful service, giving him precious substances, and so on,  
 And doing what he says.

63  
 By being conferred the complete vajra master empowerment  
 From having pleased your guru,  
 You will purify yourself completely of all negative forces  
 And, in nature, become endowed with the proper share to achieve the  
 actual attainments.

64  
 Because it has been strictly prohibited  
 From The Great Tantra of the Primordial Buddha,  
 The secret and discriminating awareness empowerments  
 Are not to be conferred or received in a literal fashion by those who are  
 abstinent.

65  
 If you were to take these empowerments so conferred  
 While living according to the ascetic practice of abstinence,  
 You would be committing prohibited actions  
 And because of that, your vows of asceticism would degenerate.

66  
 In other words, as a practitioner of tamed behavior  
 You would contract the downfalls of total defeats  
 And since you would definitely fall to one of the worse rebirth states,  
 You would never have any attainments.

67  
 However, if you have received in a nonliteral fashion  
 The conferral of the vajra master empowerment and are aware of actuality,  
 There is no fault in your actions of listening to all the tantras,  
 explaining them,  
 Performing fire pujas, making offering pujas, and so forth.

I, the Elder Shri Dipamkara, having seen everything to be as is explained  
 from the Dharma teachings of the sutras and so on, and having been request-  
 ed by Jangchub-wo, have composed this abbreviation of the explanation of  
 the path to enlightenment.

## *The Foundation for Good Qualities*

*(Yon-tan gzhi-gyur-ma)*

by Tsongkhapa (Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang grags-pa)

*translated by Alexander Berzin, 1982, revised 2003*

(Healthy) reliance on a kind spiritual master,  
 The foundation for all good qualities, is the root of the path.  
 Seeing this well, I request inspiration to rely  
 With great appreciation, through many endeavors.

This excellent working basis with its respites, found but once,  
 Is difficult to obtain. Having realized its great importance,  
 I request inspiration to develop without disruption  
 An attitude to take its essence in all ways, day and night.

At death, my body and life-force will perish quickly  
 Like bubbles on a moving stream. Remembering this  
 And having found stable certainty that after death,  
 The fruits of my noble and dark actions will follow behind,

Like a shadow to a body, I request inspiration always to take care  
 To rid myself of even the slightest, most minor action  
 That would build up a network of faults and to accomplish  
 Every possible deed that will build up a network of constructive force.

The splendors of compulsive existence, even when indulged in,  
 never suffice;  
 The gateway of all problems, they are unfit to make my mind secure.  
 Aware of these pitfalls, I request inspiration  
 To develop a great avid interest in liberation's bliss.

I request inspiration to take to heart, with mindfulness, alertness,  
 And great care, induced by this pure motivating thought,  
 The practices for individual liberation,  
 The root of the teachings,

Just as I have fallen into the ocean of compulsive existence,  
 So, too, have all wandering beings – they have been my mothers.  
 Seeing this, I request inspiration to grow to a supreme bodhichitta aim  
 To take responsibility to free these wandering beings.

Even if I have developed merely this resolve, if I lack the habit  
Of the three types of ethical discipline, I will be unable to attain  
A (supreme) purified state. Seeing this well, I request inspiration  
To train with strong efforts in the bodhisattva vows.

I request inspiration quickly to develop on my mind-stream a path  
That combines the pair: a stilled, settled mind and an exceptionally percep-  
tive mind,  
By stilling mental wandering toward objects of distortion  
And properly discerning the correct meaning (of voidness).

When I have trained myself through the common paths  
And become a vessel, I request inspiration easily to board  
The Diamond-strong Vehicle, the supreme of all vehicles,  
The sacred fording passage for those of good fortune.

Then, when I have found uncontrived certainty in what has been said,  
That the foundation for realizing the two types of actual attainments  
Is the closely bonding practices and vow restraints kept totally pure,  
I request inspiration to uphold them even at the cost of my life.

Then, understanding correctly the essential points of the two stages  
That are the essence of the tantra classes, I request inspiration  
To actualize them in accord with the Holy One's enlightening speech,  
Never straying from the conduct of four (daily) sessions of yoga.

I request inspiration for the feet of the spiritual mentors  
Who indicate the excellent path like this  
And of friends for proper practice to remain firm,  
And for the masses of outer and inner interference to be stilled.

May I never be parted for all my lives from perfect gurus;  
May I put to good use the all-around perfect Dharma;  
And by achieving in full all good qualities of the stages and paths,  
May I quickly attain a Vajradhara supreme state.

55  
This compulsive existence which comes from conceptual thoughts of  
inherent existence  
Has a true nature merely fabricated by these conceptual thoughts.  
Therefore, the state of being rid of all these conceptual thoughts,  
without an exception,  
Is the supreme Nirvana State Beyond Sorrow.

56  
Like this as well, the Vanquishing Master Surpassing All has said,  
"Conceptual thought of inherent existence is great unawareness,  
That which makes you fall into the ocean of uncontrollably  
recurring existence.  
By abiding in single-minded concentration devoid of conceptual thought  
of inherent existence,  
You will make clear the mind that is without these conceptions  
just as is space."

57  
Also, from The Dharani Formula for Engaging in the Nonconceptual, he  
has said,  
"If the Offspring of the Triumphant involved in this pure Dharma practice  
Were to contemplate this state of no conceptual thoughts  
of inherent existence,  
They would transcend these conceptual thoughts which  
are difficult to pass through  
And would gradually attain the state of no such conceptions."

58  
When you have become certain, by these quotations and lines of reasoning,  
That all things are devoid of inherent existence  
And without an inherently existent arising,  
Meditate in a state of no conceptual thoughts of inherent existence.

### *Manifesting the Result*

59  
When you have meditated on actuality like this  
And have gradually attained the heat stage and so forth,  
You will then attain the stage of extremely joyous one and so on,  
And the enlightenment of Buddhahood will not be far.

60  
If, however, through actions such as pacifying,  
Stimulating, and so forth, attained from the force of mantras  
And through the power as well of the eight great actual attainments  
and so on,  
Such as actualization of an excellent vase and so forth,

48

If things inherently existed at the time of their causes,  
it would be illogical for them to have to arise.  
Further, if they inherently did not exist at all they could not  
be made to arise, like a flower out of space.  
Moreover, because there would be the absurd conclusions of  
both these faults,  
Things do not come about from being both inherently  
existent and nonexistent at the time of their causes either.

49

Phenomenal things do not arise from themselves,  
Nor from something inherently different, nor from both.  
Neither do they arise from no causes at all.  
Because of this, everything by nature lacks inherent existence.

50

Furthermore, when you analyze all things  
If they are inherently one or many,  
Then since you cannot be aimed at anything that has existence  
from its own nature,  
You can become certain of the nonexistence of inherent existence.

51

Furthermore, the lines of reasoning in *The Seventy Stanzas on Voidness*  
And from *The Root Text on the Middle Way* and so forth  
Explain as well how the nature of phenomenal things  
Is established as voidness.

52

However, because this text would have become too long,  
I have therefore not elaborated here.  
What I have explained has been for the purpose of meditation  
On merely a proven system of philosophical tenets.

53

Thus, since you cannot be aimed at the inherent existence  
Of any thing, without exception,  
Meditation on the lack of inherent identity  
Is meditation on discriminating awareness.

54

With discriminating awareness, an inherent nature  
Of any phenomenon is never seen;  
And it is explained that the same is true regarding the actuality  
of discriminating awareness itself.  
In this way meditate on voidness nonconceptually.



*Je Tsongkhapa*



Atisha

41

When a yogi actualizes a stilled settled mind,  
He or she attains as well advanced awareness.

*Training in Higher Discriminating Awareness*

However, if you have failed to apply yourself  
to far-reaching discriminating awareness,  
You will be unable to deplete the obscurations.

42

Therefore, in order to rid yourself of all obscurations, without exception,  
Regarding the disturbing emotions and knowable phenomena,  
Always meditate on the yoga of far-reaching discriminating awareness  
Together with methods.

43

This is because discriminating awareness lacking methods  
As well as methods lacking discriminating awareness  
Have been said still to be .  
Therefore, never abandon having both.

44

To get rid of doubts concerning  
What is discriminating awareness and what are methods,  
I shall clarify the actual division  
Between methods and discriminating awareness.

45

The Triumphant One has explained that  
Leaving aside far-reaching discriminating awareness,  
All networks of constructive factors,  
Such as far-reaching generosity and so forth, are the methods.

46

It is by the power of having meditated on the methods that,  
Through meditating thoroughly on something  
with discriminating awareness,  
Someone with a bodhichitta nature can quickly attain enlightenment.  
It does not come about by having meditated on the lack  
of inherent identity alone.

47

Awareness of the voidness of inherent existence  
That has come to realize that the aggregates, cognitive spheres,  
And cognitive stimulators lack inherently existent arising  
Has been fully explained as discriminating awareness.

33

Through this will come the completely purified, full state of enlightenment;  
For, by exerting yourself in the vows of the bodhisattva vows,  
You will fully complete the networks needed  
For total enlightenment.

### *Training in Higher Concentration*

34

As for the cause that will fully complete these networks  
Having the nature of positive force and deep awareness,  
All the Buddhas have asserted that it is  
The development of advanced awareness.

35

Just as a bird without fully developed wings  
Cannot fly in the sky,  
Likewise lacking the force of advanced awareness,  
You will be unable to fulfill the aims of limited beings.

36

Whatever positive force is had in a day and a night  
By someone possessing advanced awareness  
Is not had even in a hundred lifetimes  
By someone lacking advanced awareness.

37

Therefore, if you would wish to fully complete,  
Quickly, the networks for total enlightenment,  
Make effort and thereby come to attain  
Advanced awareness. It is not to be had by the lazy.

38

Someone who has not achieved a stilled settled mind  
Will not attain advanced awareness.  
Therefore, repeatedly exert effort  
To actualize a stilled settled mind.

39

However, should the factors for a stilled settled mind be weak,  
Then even if you have meditated with great effort  
And even if for thousands of years,  
You will not attain single-minded concentration.

40

Therefore, maintain well the factors mentioned  
In the chapter on A Network for Single-Minded Concentration.  
Then place your mind on something constructive:  
One appropriate object of focus.

## *A Bodhisattva's Garland of Gems*

*(Byang-chub sems-dpa'i nor-bu'i phreng-ba, Skt. Bodhisattva-mani-avali)*

by Atisha (Dipamkara Shrijnana)

*translated by Alexander Berzin, 2004*

I make prostration to great compassion.  
I make prostration to the sublime teachers.  
I make prostration to the Buddha-figures,  
Those in whom to have belief.

1

Let me rid myself of all indecisive wavering  
And cherish being wholeheartedly earnest in my practice.  
So, let me rid myself fully of being sleepy, foggyminded, and lazy,  
And always make effort with joyful perseverance.

2

Let me always safeguard the gateway of my senses  
With mindfulness, alertness, and care.  
So, let me check repeatedly the flow of my mind,  
Three times each day and each night.

3

Let me make my own failings be known  
And seek not mistakes in others.  
So, let me keep my own good qualities hidden  
And make the good qualities of others be known.

4

Let me rid myself of (desire for) material gain and honor  
And always rid myself of (desire for) profit and fame.  
So, let me have few desires, be content,  
And show appreciation for the kind acts that've been done.

5

Let me meditate on love and compassion  
And stabilize my bodhichitta aim.  
So, let me rid myself of the ten destructive actions  
And make myself stable, always, with belief in fact.

6

Let me overcome rage and pride  
And come to have an attitude of humility.  
So, let me rid myself of dishonest ways of living  
And make my living with a livelihood that accords with the Dharma.

7

Let me rid myself of all material burdens  
And adorn myself with an arya's gems.  
So, let me rid myself of all bustling activities  
And live in seclusion.

8

Let me rid myself of idle words  
And always restrain my speech.  
So, when I see a sublime teacher or learned master,  
Let me extend my service with respect.

9

As for persons with the eye of the Dharma  
And limited beings who are beginners,  
Let me expand my discernment  
Of them as my teachers.

10

Whenever I see any limited beings,  
Let me expand my discernment of them as my father,  
    my mother, my child or grandchild.  
So, let me rid myself of misleading friends  
And entrust myself to spiritual friends.

11

Let me rid myself of hostility and uneasy mental states,  
And go happily everywhere.  
So, let me rid myself of whatever I'm attached to  
And live without attachments.

12

With attachment, I won't attain even a happy rebirth  
And I'll cut off the life of my liberation, in fact.  
So, wherever I see a Dharma measure (for bringing) happiness,  
Let me exert effort always in that.

13

Whatever I've undertaken to start with,  
Let me accomplish that very thing first.  
Everything, this way, will get accomplished well;  
Otherwise, neither will come about.

14

While still acting always negatively and parted from joy,  
When a feeling of superiority arises about anything,  
Let me cut off my pride and remember  
My sublime teacher's guideline instructions.

26

"Before the eyes of my Guardians,  
I generate bodhichitta  
And, inviting all wandering beings as my guests,  
I shall liberate them from uncontrollable rebirth.

27

From now until my attainment  
Of a supreme purified state,  
I shall never act with harmful intentions,  
An angered mind, miserliness, or jealousy.

28

I shall live according to abstinent behavior;  
I shall rid myself of negativities and attachment/greed.  
Taking joy in the vows of ethical discipline,  
I shall continually train myself as the Buddhas have done.

29

I shall take no delight in attaining enlightenment  
By a speedy means for my own self,  
But shall remain until the end of the future,  
If it be a cause for helping one limited being.

30

I shall cleanse everything into  
Immeasurable, inconceivable realms  
And remain everywhere in the ten directions  
For those who have called my name.

31

I shall purify all the actions  
Of my body and speech,  
And purify as well the actions of my mind:  
I shall never commit any destructive acts."

### *Practicing Bodhisattva Conduct*

#### *Training in Higher Ethical Discipline*

32

If you train yourself well in the three trainings of ethical discipline  
By living in accord with the vows that are the very nature  
    of engaged bodhichitta  
And which are a cause for purifying completely your  
    body, speech, and mind,  
Your respect for the three trainings in ethical discipline will increase.

*Taking the Vows for Engaged Bodhichitta*

19

Except through the vows that are the very nature of engaged bodhichitta,  
Your pure aspiration will never come to increase.  
Therefore, with the wish to progress toward aspired full enlightenment,  
Take them definitely on, energetically for that sake.

20

Those who maintain at all times other vows  
From any of the seven classes for individual liberation  
Have the proper share for the bodhisattva vows;  
Others do not.

21

As for the seven classes for individual liberation,  
The Accordingly Progressed has asserted in his explanations  
That those of glorious abstinence are supreme;  
And those are the vows for fully ordained monks.

22

Through the ritual well expounded in  
The “Ethical Discipline Chapter” of The Bodhisattva Stages  
Take the bodhisattva vows  
From an excellent, fully qualified guru.

23

Know that an excellent guru is someone who  
Is skilled in the vow ceremony,  
By nature lives by the vows,  
Has the confidence to confer the vows,  
And possesses compassion.

24

However, if you have made effort in this  
And have been unable to find such a guru,  
There is a ritual other than that for receiving the vows,  
Which I shall explain in full.

25

Concerning this, I shall write here very clearly  
How Manjushri generated bodhichitta in previous times  
When he was King Ambaraja,  
Just as is explained in The Sutra of  
An Adornment for Manjushri’s Buddha-Field.

15

And when a feeling of discouragement arises,  
Let me praise the glories of the mind  
And meditate on the voidness of both (states).

16

Whenever an object of attachment or hostility arises in any situation,  
Let me regard it like an illusion or a projection;  
Whenever I hear unpleasant words,  
Let me regard them like an echo;  
And whenever harm happens to my body,  
Let me regard it as (coming from) my previous karma.

17

Let me step up to living in a sequestered place,  
Outside the limits (of any town),  
And, like a corpse of a dead game animal,  
Hide myself in solitude and live without attachments.

18

(There,) let me always be stable with my Buddha-figure  
And whenever a feeling of laziness or exhaustion arises,  
Let me enumerate my own shortcomings  
And remind myself of the essential points of taming behavior.

19

But if I happen to see others,  
Let me speak calmly, gently, and sincerely,  
Rid myself of any frowns or closed-off expressions,  
And always keep a smile.

20

And when I’m continually seeing others,  
Let me not be miserly, but take joy in giving,  
And rid myself of all envy.

21

In order to safeguard the minds of others,  
Let me rid myself of all contention  
And always have patient tolerance.

22

Let me not be fawning, nor fickle in friendship,  
But rather always stay faithful.  
Let me rid myself of insulting others,  
And keep a respectful manner.  
Then, when imparting guideline instructions to others,  
Let me have compassion and a mind to help.

23

Let me never deny the Dharma and,  
Setting my intention on whichever ones I fervently admire,  
Let me make effort to split my days and nights  
(Passing) through the gateways of the ten Dharma acts.

24

Let me dedicate to great peerless enlightenment  
As many constructive acts as I've amassed throughout the three times,  
And extend out to limited beings my positive force.  
So, let me always offer the great prayer  
Of the seven-part practice.

25

Doing like that, let me complete my two networks  
of positive force and deep awareness,  
And deplete my two obscurations as well.  
Thus, making my attainment of a human body meaningful,  
Let me attain a peerless enlightenment.

26

The gem of belief in fact, the gem of ethical self-discipline,  
The gem of generosity, the gem of listening,  
The gems of care for how my actions reflect on others  
and of moral self-dignity,  
And the gem of discriminating awareness make seven.

27

These sacred gems  
Are the seven gems that will never deplete.  
They must not be mentioned to quasi-humans.

28

When in the midst of many,  
Let me keep a check on my speech;  
When remaining alone,  
Let me keep a check on my mind.

*Notes:*

Verse 23:

*The ten Dharma acts (chos-spyod rnam-bcu) are (1) copying scriptures, (2) making offerings to the Three Gems, (3) giving to the poor and sick, (4) listening to teachings, (5) reading scriptures, (6) taking to heart the essence of the teachings through meditating, (7) explaining the teachings, (8) reciting sutras, (9) thinking about the meaning of the texts, and (10) meditating single-pointedly on the meaning of the teachings.*



12

The benefits of generating aspiring minds like this  
Have been thoroughly explained  
By Maitreya in  
The Sutra Spread Out Like a Tree Trunk.

13

When you have read this sutra  
or heard from your guru concerning this,  
And have become aware of the boundless benefits  
of full bodhichitta,  
Then as a cause for making it stable  
Generate this mind over and again.

14

The positive force of this is shown extensively  
In The Sutra Requested by Viradatta.  
As it is summarized there in merely three stanzas,  
Let me quote them here.

15

“If the positive force  
Of bodhichitta had form,  
It would fill completely the sphere of space  
And go beyond even that.”

16

Although someone may totally fill with gems  
Buddha-fields equal in number  
To the grains of sand on the Ganges  
And offer them to the Guardians of the World,

17

Yet should anyone press his or her palms together  
And direct his or her mind toward bodhichitta,  
His or her offering would be more specially noble;  
It would have no end.”

18

Having generated the aspiring states of bodhichitta,  
Ever enhance them with many efforts;  
And, to be mindful of it in this and other lives too,  
Thoroughly safeguard as well the trainings explained in the texts.

*Bodhichitta as the Entranceway for the Advanced Scope*

5

Anyone who fully wishes to eliminate completely  
All the sufferings of others  
As the sufferings included in his or her own mental continuum  
Is someone of supreme motivation.

6

For these hallowed beings  
Who have come to wish for supreme enlightenment,  
I shall explain the perfect methods  
That the gurus have shown.

*The Ritual for Aspiring Bodhichitta, Together with Advice*

7

Before paintings, statues, and so on of fully enlightened Buddhas,  
As well as stupas and hallowed Dharma texts,  
Offer flowers, incense,  
And whatever material things you may have.

8

Also with the seven-limb offering mentioned in  
The Prayer of Excellent Conduct,  
With the mind never to turn back until  
The ultimate realization of your Buddha-essence,

9

With supreme belief in the Three Supreme Gems,  
With bent knee touching the ground  
And palms pressed together,  
Firstly, take safe direction three times.

10

Next, with a mind of love toward all limited beings as a start,  
Look to all wandering beings, baring none,  
Suffering from birth and so forth in the three worse realms,  
And from death, transference, and so on.

11

Then, with the wish that all wandering beings  
Be liberated from the suffering of pain,  
From suffering, and from the causes of suffering,  
Generate pledged bodhichitta with which you will never turn back.

***Seven-Limb Prayer of Shantideva***

*translated by Alexander Berzin, 2004.*

*If we wish, we may then recite the verses from Shantideva that cover these seven points, together with the verses beforehand for setting the motivation and the verses afterwards of the mandala offering:*

I take safe direction, till my purified state,  
From the Buddhas, the Dharma, and the Highest Assembly.  
By the positive force of my giving and so on,  
May I actualize Buddhahood to help those who wander.

May the surface of the land in every direction  
Be pure, without even a pebble,  
As smooth as the palm of a child's hand,  
Naturally polished, as is a beryl gem.

May divine and human objects of offering,  
Actually arrayed and those envisioned  
As peerless clouds of Samantabhadra offerings,  
Completely fill the sphere of space.

1

I prostrate to all the Buddhas who have graced the three times,  
To the Dharma and to the Highest Assembly,  
Bowing down with bodies as numerous  
As all the atoms of the world.

2

Just as Manjushri and others  
Have made offerings to the Triumphant,  
So do I make offerings to the Accordingly Progressed  
And to our Guardians, their Spiritual Offspring.

3

From beginningless samsara, in this and other lives,  
I have unwittingly committed destructive acts,  
Or caused others to do likewise,  
Bewildered by the confusion of naivety.  
I have even rejoiced in all this.  
Seeing these mistakes, I openly declare them  
To you, our Guardians, from the depth of my heart.

4

With happiness I rejoice at the ocean of virtues  
of developing bodhichitta,  
Wishing to bring joy to all limited beings  
And working for everyone's sake.

5

With hands pressed together,  
I request the Buddhas of all directions  
To light the lamp of Dharma for those who are groping  
In the darkness of suffering.

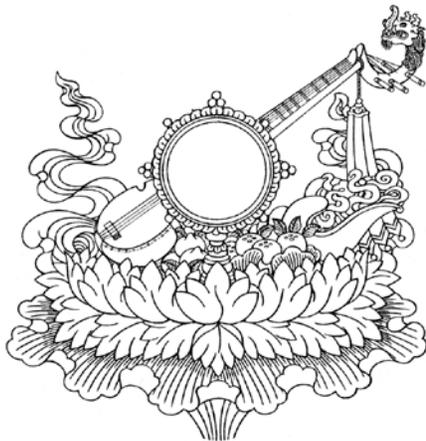
6

Triumphant Ones, wishing to pass beyond sorrow,  
I beseech you with hands pressed together:  
These beings wander blindly with no one to guide them;  
Please live for eons beyond all count.

7

By the positive force built up  
From all I have done in this way,  
May all sufferings  
Of every limited being disappear.

By directing and offering to the Buddha-fields  
This base, anointed with fragrant waters, strewn with flowers,  
And decked with Mount Meru, four islands, a sun, and a moon,  
May all those who wander be led to pure lands.  
Om idam guru ratna mandala-kam nir-yatayami.  
I send forth this mandala to you precious gurus.



## ***A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment***

*(Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma, Skt. Bodhipathapradipam)*

by Dipamkara Shrijnana Atisha

*translated by Alexander Berzin, 1980*

*in accordance with an explanation by Tsenzhab Serkong Rinpoche  
following the commentary by the First Panchen Lama;*

*revised January 2003*

I prostrate to the Bodhisattva Youthful Manjushri.

### *Promise to Compose*

1

Having prostrated most respectfully to all the Triumphant  
of the three times,  
To their Dharma and to the Sangha community,  
I shall light a lamp for the path to enlightenment,  
Having been urged by my excellent disciple, Jangchub-wo

2

Since practitioners come to have small, intermediate, and supreme scopes,  
They are known as the three types of spiritual persons.  
I shall therefore write about these specific divisions,  
Clarifying their defining features.

### *Initial Scope*

3

Anyone who takes keen interest in himself or herself  
Achieving, by some means, merely the happiness  
Of uncontrollably recurring samsara  
Is known as a person of minimum spiritual scope.

### *Intermediate Scope*

4

Anyone with the nature to turn his or her back  
on the pleasures of compulsive existence  
And to turn back negative impulses of karma,  
And who takes keen interest in merely his or her own state of peace,  
Is known as a person of intermediate spiritual scope.