

A Song of Experience by Lama Tsongkhapa

Om. May there be happiness and excellence!

- [1] I bow my head to you, foremost of the Shakyas,
Whose body is formed by ten million perfections, virtues, and excellence;
Whose speech fulfills the hopes of infinite migrating beings;
Whose mind perceives all objects of knowledge.
- [2] I prostrate to Manjushri and Maitreya,
Whose emanations sport in innumerable universes.
Assuming the responsibility of all the conquerors' conduct,
You are the supreme sons of the peerless teacher.
- [3] I prostrate at the feet of Nagarjuna and Asanga,
Ornaments of Jambudvipa
Renowned throughout the three levels,
Who composed commentaries, in accordance with the intention,
On the Mother of the Conquerors so hard to fathom.
- [4] I bow to Dipamkara, holder of the treasury of instructions
That gathers together the important points, completely and unmistakably,
Of the paths of profound view and extensive deeds,
The excellent lineages descending from the two great charioteers.
- [5] I prostrate respectfully to the spiritual teachers,
Eyes that see all the infinite scriptures,
Who with skillful means moved by compassion
Clarify the supreme entranceway for the fortunate traveling to liberation.
- [6] The stages of the path to enlightenment
Are the excellent lineage handed down from Nagarjuna and Asanga,
Crown ornaments of the wise of Jambudvipa
And banners of fame resplendent among migrating beings.
- [7] This instruction, the king of powerful jewels,
Fulfills all the desired aims of the nine [types of] beings;
It is an ocean of glorious and excellent explanations
Gathering the rivers of a thousand fine scriptures.

- [8] Through it you can realize that all the teachings are without contradiction,
Understand all the scriptures as an instruction,
Easily find the intention of the Conqueror,
And be protected from the abyss of very faulty conduct.
- [9] Therefore, this supreme instruction is relied on by many fortunate ones,
The wise beings of India and Tibet.
What analytical [person] would not be captivated
By the stages of the path of the three [types of] beings?
- [10] Contemplate the meaning of this method
That gathers the essence of all the scriptures;
Even teaching or hearing a single session definitely gathers great waves
Of the assembled benefits of explaining or listening to the holy Dharma.
- [11] Rely, correctly and with effort, in thought and action
On the holy spiritual friend, the teacher of the path
And the foundation perfectly bringing auspiciousness
For all the excellent collections of this and future lives.
- [12] Having seen this, do not give him up even at the cost of your life,
And please him with the offering of practicing just as he instructs.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [13] This body of leisure,
More precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel,
Is found but once. Though difficult to obtain again,
It finishes as quickly as lightning in the sky.
- [14] Having reflected in this way, realize that all worldly activities
Are like winnowed chaff,
And seize its essence continuously day and night.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [15] Although there is no certainty that after death
You will not be reborn in the bad migrations,
The Three Jewels will definitely protect you from this fear,
Therefore, steadfastly go for refuge to them
And never degenerate their precepts.

- [16] In addition, think well about the results of black and white actions,
And depend on the correct practice of that to be adopted and that to be rejected.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [17] Until you attain a body with pure characteristics,
You will not make progress in your practice of the supreme path;
Train in the causes for becoming free from those impurities.
- [18] Since your three doors are defiled by negativities, downfalls, and stains,
It is particularly important to purify karmic obscurations;
Therefore, continuously cherish reliance on purification with the four forces.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [19] If you do not put effort into contemplating true sufferings—
the faults [of cyclic existence]—
You will not develop the wish for liberation.
If you do not contemplate [true] origins—the steps for entering cyclic existence—
You will not understand how to cut the roots of cyclic existence.
- [20] Therefore, rely on weariness, definite emergence from existence;
And cherish the knowledge of what binds you to cyclic existence.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [21] The generation of the mind is the central post of the Mahayana path,
The base and support of great waves of conduct,
A philosopher's stone transforming all into the two collections,
A treasure of merit gathering infinite virtue.
- [22] Having understood this, the heroic children of the conquerors
Maintain deeply the pledges of the precious supreme mind.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [23] Generosity is a wish-fulfilling jewel satisfying the hopes of migrating beings,
The supreme weapon cutting the knot of miserliness,
The activity of the children of the conquerors that strengthens courage without
dismay,
And the basis of being renowned in the ten directions.

- [24] Having understood this, the wise rely on the excellent path
Of giving away their bodies, possessions, and virtue.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [25] Morality is water cleansing the stains of faulty behavior;
Moonlight dispelling the hot torment of the afflictions.
As splendid as Mount Meru in the midst of the nine types of beings,
It gathers all migrating beings with no threat of force.
- [26] Having understood this, holy beings guard morality correctly taken
As they do their eyes.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [27] Patience is the finest ornament of the powerful,
The supreme of all hardships counteracting the torment of the afflictions,
A garuda against the enemy, the snake of hatred,
And thick armor against the weapon of harsh speech.
- [28] Having understood this, cultivate the armor
Of supreme patience in many ways.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [29] When you don armor-like effort steady and immovable,
The qualities of scripture and realization will increase like the waxing moon,
All your behavior becomes meaningful,
And whatever actions are undertaken will be accomplished as desired.
- [30] Having understood this, the conquerors' children put forth
Billowing waves of effort dispelling all laziness.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [31] Concentration is a king ruling the mind:
When placed, it is as immovable as Mount Meru;
When sent forth, it engages all virtuous objects.
It induces the great bliss of a serviceable body and mind.

- [32] Having understood this, the lords of yogis rely continuously
On the meditative stabilization that destroys the enemy, distraction.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [33] Wisdom is an eye seeing profound thusness,
The path eradicating the root of existence,
A treasury of qualities praised in all the scriptures,
And renowned as the supreme of lamps dispelling the darkness of ignorance.
- [34] Having understood this, the wise who desire liberation
Generate the path with much effort.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [35] One-pointed concentration alone
Is not considered to be able to cut the roots of cyclic existence.
Wisdom separated from the path of calm abiding
Will not avert the afflictions no matter how much you analyze.
- [36] Having mounted the wisdom that reflects on the real mode of existence
Upon the horse of steadfast calm abiding,
With the sharp weapon of the logic of the middle way free of extremes
Destroy all mental fabrications grasping at extremes.
- [37] With vast wisdom analyzing in this way,
Increase the wisdom that realizes thusness.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [38] The meditative stabilization achieved by one-pointed meditation
Is not enough; with the individual investigation of proper analysis
Generate the meditative stabilization that abides firm and immovable on the
mode of existence.
- [39] Having seen this, understand how wonderful are those who endeavor
To accomplish the union of calm abiding and special insight.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.
- [40] In meditative equipoise, emptiness is like space;
In post-meditation, emptiness is like an illusion;
Through meditation on both, method and wisdom are unified,
Whereby, the perfect conduct of the conquerors' children is praised.

- [41] Having realized this, the tradition of those of good fortune
Is not satisfied by either path alone.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.

- [42] Having generated the common path necessary for
The two supreme Mahayana paths, the causal and resultant,
Rely on a protector, a skillful master,
And enter the great ocean of the classes of tantra.

- [43] Then through reliance on complete and perfect instructions,
Make the attainment of your leisure and endowments meaningful.
I, a yogi, practiced like this.
You who desire liberation, should do likewise.

- [44] Due to the virtue from explaining in clear words
The perfect complete path pleasing to the conquerors
So as to familiarize my mind with it
And to benefit others of good fortune,

- [45] I made the prayer, “May all migrating beings
Never be parted from the excellent pure path.”
I, a yogi, prayed like this.
You who desire liberation, should pray likewise.

This brief presentation of the practice of the stages of the path to enlightenment, made in the form of a note, was composed by glorious Losang Dragpa, a fully ordained monk who had done much listening, at Genden Nampar Gyelwe Monastery on Solitary Mountain.

English translation by Joan Nicell.