

A Hymn of Experience

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By Je Tsongkhapa

Translated by Ven. Joan Nicell

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Set in Calibri 12/15, Lydian BT, and Monlam Uni Ouchan 2.

A Hymn of Experience

Lam rim nyam gur

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 transmigratory beings;
Whose mind perceives all objects of knowledge.

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.

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.

I bow to Dipamkara Atisha, holder of the treasury of instructions
That gathers together the important points, completely and
unmistakenly,
Of the paths of profound view and vast conduct,
The excellent lineages descending from the two great charioteers.

I prostrate respectfully to the spiritual teachers,
Eyes that see all the infinite scriptures,

Who with skillful means moved by compassion
 Clarify the supreme entryway for the fortunate traveling to
 liberation.

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 transmigratory beings.

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.

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.

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?

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.

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.
 Having seen this, do not give him up even at the cost of your life,
 And please them with the offering of practicing just as they
 instruct.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.

I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.

Having reflected in this way, realizing that all worldly activities
 Are like winnowed chaff,

You must take its essence day and night.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.

I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

Although there is no certainty that after death

You will not be reborn in the bad migrations,

The Three Rare Sublime Ones will definitely protect you from this
 fear,

Therefore, steadfastly take refuge in them

And never degenerate their precepts.

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.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.

I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.

Since your three doors are defiled by negative actions, downfalls,
and stains,

It is particularly important to purify karmic obscurations;

Therefore, continuously cherish reliance on purification
with the four forces.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.

I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

If you do not put effort into contemplating true sufferings—
the faults of samsara—

You will not develop the wish for liberation.

If you do not contemplate true origins—the steps for entering
samsara—

You will not understand how to cut the roots of samsara.

Therefore, rely on weariness, definite emergence from samsara;

And cherish the knowledge of what binds you to samsara.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.

I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.

Having understood this, the heroic children of the conquerors

Maintain deeply the pledges of the precious supreme mind.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.

I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

Generosity is a wish-fulfilling jewel satisfying the hopes
of transmigratory 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.
 Having understood this, the wise rely on the excellent path
 Of giving away their bodies, possessions, and virtue.
 You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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 transmigratory beings with no threat of force.
 Having understood this, holy beings guard morality correctly taken
 As they do their eyes.
 You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.
 Having understood this, cultivate the armor
 Of supreme patience in many ways.
 You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.
 Having understood this, the conquerors' children put forth
 Billowing waves of effort dispelling all laziness.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.
 Having understood this, the lords of yogis rely continuously
 On the meditative stabilization that destroys the enemy, distraction.
 You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.
 Having understood this, the wise who desire liberation
 Generate the path with much effort.
 You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

One-pointed concentration alone
 Is not considered to be able to cut the roots of samsara.
 Wisdom separated from the path of calm abiding
 Will not avert the afflictions no matter how much you analyze.
 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.
 With vast wisdom analyzing in this way,
 Increase the wisdom that realizes thusness.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.

Having seen this, understand how wonderful are those
 who endeavor

To accomplish the union of calm abiding and special insight.
 You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.
 Having realized this, the tradition of those of good fortune
 Is not satisfied by either path alone.

You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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.
 Then through reliance on complete and perfect instructions,
 Make the attainment of your leisure and endowments meaningful.
 You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

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,
 I made the prayer, “May all transmigratory beings
 Never be parted from the excellent pure path.”
 You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way.
 I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche explained that although Lama Tsongkhapa wrote, “I, a yogi, practiced like this. You who desire liberation, should do likewise,” we disciples should recite, “You, the perfect guru, practiced in this way. I, who am seeking liberation, will also practice in this way.” (Amitabha Buddhist Centre, Singapore, 2019)

Colophons:

Original Colophon:

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.

Translator’s Colophon:

Translated by Ven. Joan Nicell, Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy, 1998. 1998. Edited by Ven. Joan Nicell, December 2019.

Care of Dharma Materials



Dharma materials contain the teachings of the Buddha and thus protect against lower rebirth and reveal the path to enlightenment. Therefore, they should be treated with respect.

Printed Dharma materials, as well as phones, tablets, laptops, and hard drives containing Dharma, should be kept off the floor, beds, chairs, meditation cushions, and all other places where people sit or walk. Dharma materials should not be stepped over or put in places where the feet or buttocks will point at them. They should be covered or protected for transporting and kept in a high, clean place separate from more mundane materials. Other objects, including statues, stupas, ritual implements, malas, reading glasses, and so forth, should not be placed on top of Dharma books and devices containing Dharma materials. Avoid licking the fingers to turn the pages of Dharma texts.

If it is necessary to dispose of printed Dharma materials, they should be burned rather than thrown in the trash. When burning Dharma texts, visualize that the letters transform into an A (ॐ) and the A absorbs into your heart. Imagine burning blank paper. As the paper burns, recite OM ĀḤ HŪḤ or the *Heart Sutra*, while meditating on emptiness.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche recommends that images of holy beings, deities, and holy objects not be burned. Ideally, if undamaged, they should be put in a stupa. Otherwise, put them high up in a tree inside a well-sealed structure, something like a bird house, so that the images are protected from the weather and do not end up on the ground.



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