



An Ornament of Dharma To Be Engaged with from the Heart

by Gendün Gyatso, the 2nd Dalai Lama

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OM – May bliss and happiness prevail.

From a mind that is a palace of great happiness,
A body with natural marks and signs, a perfected resource,
Speech of eloquent teachings, raining down like nectar.
My benevolent father, I prostrate at your feet.

To you with an impure and insubstantial body, but
Who aspires to attain the heart of the profound Dharma,
Spiritual aspirant with faith and enthusiasm,
I offer this extraordinary discourse as a gift.

If even conquerors abiding in the pure lands of the ten directions
Honour and serve due to their gratitude for
The tantric spiritual instructions their lama taught,
Should unexceptional people not do likewise?

All prosperity and well-being of this and future lives
Depends solely upon the excellent holy lama.
As there is purpose in offering your life and virtue,
You certainly should offer transitory material wares.

This precious human life that is astonishingly difficult to achieve, also
Does not last long but rapidly declines.
Up to now, this life of yours has passed purposelessly.
Please, from now and by all means achieve the very essence of its potential.

Scorning the worldly activities of this life,
Abandon immediately any state of procrastination.
If you do not exert yourself from this very day,
Not knowing when this life will cease, will you ever apply joy and effort?

If even your body and mind, close companions for so long,
Are separated by your cunning enemy, Yama, the Lord of Death,
Helpless again in this forced partition, how can
Your possessions, friends, loved ones and so forth be of any aid?

Rather than continuing to forsake your future lives
Through the constant and incessant struggle
Of the pointless activities of this one life,
You need to think about the causes of suffering.

“Pits of fire that are extraordinarily difficult to endure,
In hells that will be the home in which you must remain for an age.”
Right now, are you not exerting yourself in the activities
That will make such suffering a reality?

Generally, in order to attain happiness and comfort for this one life
People assiduously strive solely at non-virtuous karma
In order to sustain their life for up to just 100 years.
Alas, how shocking! It is like relying on poison and demons for nourishment.

If you have still not realised this truth
Then, even if you wear exquisite clothing and jewellery,
Speak eloquently and are highly educated,
How can it be said that your intention is any different from an animal?

If your mind is not thoroughly merged with the Dharma,
It will be futile to beautify and cover with a long robe
This short-lived body, an abode of foul substances,
As it will only waste away.

If your mind is adorned with realisations and virtue,
Your food and excrement become medicinal nectar, and
Even if your skin is covered by the shabbiest of rags,
You are worthy for beings to offer homage at your feet.

Because of all these reasons, attention to that which lacks a great purpose
In this life, should uncompromisingly be renounced.
From now on, without coming under the influence of distraction,
Please, by every possible means accomplish the profound Dharma.

Friends and loved ones who are not wholesome companions
Are ultimately deceptive and are unworthy of trust.
Because of these reasons, preoccupation with this life must be renounced.
Please, by every possible means accomplish the profound Dharma.

This banquet of sense pleasures, wealth and possessions
Are servants of Yama, enemies leading your mind astray.
Your body in the full bloom of youth is like a delightful garden,
Similar to a rainbow appearing in a clear sky.

Your cherished home, treasured possessions and dear family,
Are extraordinarily transient and are like an illusory horse or elephant.
Because of these reasons, preoccupation with this life must be renounced.
Please, by every possible means accomplish the profound Dharma.

Grasping at the self as dear, a looped rope that
Has since beginningless time continuously bound you night and day.
From now, and from your heart, exchanging yourself with others,
I implore you to generate the sacred mind of enlightenment.

Because all phenomena are dependent on labelling by mind,
They do not exist by way of their own essence.
By repeatedly meditating with meditative stabilisation,
Please, cut the root of samsara now!

Your clinging to ordinary conceptions of foes - birth, death and the bardo,
Can be transformed in a single lifetime through skilful means
Into the three bodies of a buddha.
This may be your only chance to develop a path such as this!

When covered with hair white like snow,
Wrinkles like waves, and unsteady,
Having trained like this in the Dharma each day,
Your mind will be relaxed and at ease as if in the full bloom of youth.

*This string of words, easy to understand, was composed as an ornament of
Dharma to be engaged with from the heart, by the beggar and madman,
Gendün Gyatso.*

*Taught by Geshe Thubten Rabten for the Winter Retreat 2022 at Atisha Centre,
translated by Venerable Lobsang Dorje.*

