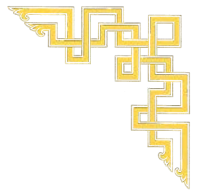


Three Principal Aspects of the Path

by Lama Tsongkhapa



I bow down to the holy lamas.

1 ~ The essence of the meaning of all the Conqueror's teachings,
The path acclaimed by supreme bodhisattvas,
The gateway for the fortunate aspiring for liberation:
This I will try to explain to the best of my ability.

2 ~ Those who are not attached to the pleasures of samsara,
Are eager to make meaningful the leisures and opportunities of this life,
And place their trust in the path that pleases the conquerors;
People of such fortune should listen with a sincere and open heart.

3 ~ Without an authentic determination to emerge from the ocean of samsara,
There is no way to calm the yearning for its pleasurable results.
Also, craving for samsaric existence binds sentient beings completely,
Therefore, from the outset, seek to be definite about emerging.

4 ~ This life of leisures and opportunities is difficult to find and has no duration.
Through familiarity with this, attraction to the joys of this life will cease.
Repeatedly reflecting on actions, their inevitable results, and the misery of samsara,
Attraction to the pleasures of future lives also cease.

5 ~ Having meditated thus, if the delights of cyclic existence
No longer lead to the rise of even a moment of yearning,
And a mind striving for liberation arises unceasing, night and day,
Then, the intention to definitely emerge from samsara has been born.

6 ~ Also, if this definite intention to emerge from cyclic existence
Is not conjoined with the generation of an authentic aspiration to highest enlightenment,
It does not become a cause for the marvellous bliss of unsurpassed buddhahood.
Thus, wise bodhisattvas should generate supreme bodhicitta.

7 ~ Swept along by four powerful currents on the mindstream of beings,
Restrained securely by karmic ties, so difficult to undo,
Trapped within the narrow confines of the steel cage of self-grasping,
Completely enshrouded in the thick darkness of ignorance,

8 ~ Born into cyclic existence that has no end,
Tormented by the three sufferings without respite.
Thinking of the plight of all mother beings who are in this very situation,
Generate the supreme altruistic intention to become enlightened.

9 ~ If you do not have the wisdom realising the natural state of existing,
Although well trained in definite emergence and bodhicitta,
You will not be able to cut the root of samsaric existence.
Therefore, strive in the skilful methods for realising dependent arising.

10 ~ When with respect to all phenomena of samsara and nirvana,
You see that causes and their results never deceive,
You completely eradicate whichever object is focussed upon,
And at that time enter a path delighting the buddhas.

11 ~ The understanding of appearances as non-deceptive dependent arisings,
And the understanding that they are empty –
For as long as those two are accepted as distinct, they will appear as separate,
And for that long, the Buddha's intent will not yet be realised.

12 ~ Eventually [the two realisations abide] without alternation but both together.
Then from the very moment of seeing dependent arising as non-deceptive,
That determinative consciousness completely eradicates the way objects are grasped.
At that point your analysis of the view is complete.

13 ~ Appearance eliminates the extreme of existence, also
Emptiness eliminates the extreme of non-existence; and
When you understand the manner in which causes and effects arise from within
emptiness,
You will no longer be robbed by the views of grasping at extremes.

14 ~ When, in this way, you realise precisely
The essential points of the three principal aspects of the path,
Rely on solitude and generating the power of joyful perseverance,
Quickly accomplish your final goal, my child.

Author's Colophon:

*This instructional teaching was given by the extensively learned monk, the
glorious Lobsang Drakpa, to Ngawang Drakpa, an official from Tsakho.*

