



*Spiritual Instructions to  
Practise in Order to Prepare  
for the Time of Death*

by *Gendün Gyatso, the 2nd Dalai Lama*

# SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS TO PRACTISE IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR THE TIME OF DEATH

*by Gendün Gyatso, the 2nd Dalai Lama {1475 - 1542}*

From the power of the state of emptiness, the natural expanse,  
Your bodies appear everywhere through your supranormal display,  
Simultaneously, throughout the countless realms of the universe.  
I bow at your feet, father Lozang Dragpa.

The basis for all spiritual and temporal well-being in this and future lives  
Is the lama's teachings of the profound Dharma.  
Supplicate him sincerely from the bottom of your heart, and  
Supreme and ordinary spiritual attainments will naturally arise.

Extraordinarily difficult to gain and so easily lost,  
This basis, a precious human life, has now been obtained.  
Do not be distracted by activities of no value.  
Rather, right now, strive perfectly and single-pointedly in the Dharma.

With confidence rely on what is always non-deceptive,  
Certain that the Three Jewels are the sole protecting refuge.  
Unceasingly and with deep-felt longing,  
Go for refuge sincerely day and night.

Even slight unwholesome karmic activity  
Produces unbearable suffering in future lives.  
To abandon non-virtue and cultivate virtue right now,  
It is necessary to strive from the depths of your heart.

The Buddha taught that the root of the Mahayana Dharma is  
The will to achieve supreme enlightenment.  
To attain this state be especially diligent and  
It is essential to abandon grasping at the cherished self.

Because all phenomena arise dependently,  
Ascertain the meaning of being naturally empty.  
Whatever object arises as an appearance to consciousness,  
Experience it as being like an illusion.

However vast one's wealth and possessions, it just  
Causes shackles of clinging and minds of attachment.  
Without hoping to attain a ripening result in this or future lives,  
Unceasingly be impartially generous with material wares.

The wonders of samsara generally end in misfortune,  
Especially in the great abyss of the three lower realms.  
That frightful time for all people is approaching  
With the rapid advance of the enemy, armies of the lord of death.

When abiding in Tushita, the Palace of Dharma, before  
The powerful lord of the ten grounds, the undefeated protector,  
– And amongst a community of countless bodhisattvas – who is  
Teaching there the mother perfection of wisdom sutras;  
At that time unhindered spiritual progress is attained.

Whatever virtue done from now by means of your three doors,  
Dedicate as causes for rebirth in that very place.  
As lifespans in degenerate times are fleeting,  
Do not fall prey to laziness again.

**Colophon:** *These meaningful words were requested by Chödze Kyawo, a student with intense single-pointed faith who came from afar and in person humbly requested with great insistence, “Please compose spiritual instructions for the time when death approaches in words that are easy to understand.” In the area of upper Tsang, the learned, wandering beggar and madman, Gendün Gyatso, composed this at the glorious Yerpa Lhari Nyingpo. “By means of this composition, may students swiftly attain the spiritual and temporal well-being they are striving for.”*

**Translated by** Venerable Lobsang Dorje in a literal style so as to complement the oral teaching of Geshe Thubten Rabten, at Atisha Centre 2022.



