

Thirty Pieces of Advice From the Heart

Longchenpa · Longchenpa

source: https://web.archive.org/web/20060308195802/http://gileht.tripod.com/Longchenpa_30_Advices.txt

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By Gyalwa Longchenpa

In the midst of the all encompassing sky of his wisdom, the Absolute Space,
the warm rays of his compassion shining upon the clouds of his prayers,
the abundant rain of amrita falling continuously
on the field of the beings to be trained, ripening the sprouts of the Three Kayas -
We bow down at the feet of the Guru, the protector, the Supreme of the Three Jewels.
Through the power of my aspirations I could join the supreme lineage of accomplishment;
but lacking in diligence, this existence, lived in vain, come now to its twilight.
I had intention to do as the Rishis but
I am now utterly dejected and I have seen others like me.
This is why, to arouse in my mind a clear renunciation I have uttered these thirty
pieces of advice from the heart.

First Advice

Alas! Having, through all kinds of skilful means,
gathered round oneself a large circle of people, one may hold a flourishing monastic
estate.
But this is the source of quarrels and causes great attachments for oneself.
To remain alone is my advice from the heart.

Second Advice

At the occasion of village ceremonies intended
to discard obstacles and subdue evil spirits, one may display one's qualities in the
crowd.
But through covetousness for food and riches,
it is one's own mind that will be carried away by the demon.
To subdue one's own mind is my advice from my heart.

Third Advice

Having collected great contributions from poor people,
one may thus erect statues and monuments, distribute plenty of alms and so on.
But this is to cause others to accumulate sins on virtuous grounds¹.
To make one's own mind virtuous is my advice from the heart.

Fourth Advice

Desiring one's own greatness, one will expound Dharma to others and
through numerous deceitful tricks, one will retain a cycle of important and humble
people.
But such a mind clinging to gross realities is the cause of pride.

To have only short-term plans is my advice from the heart.

Fifth Advice

Selling, loaning with interest, and all these kinds of deceits;
with the wealth amassed in the wrong way one may very well make large offerings,
but merits resting upon greed are the source of the eight worldly dharmas².
To meditate upon the rejection of covetousness is my advice from the heart.

Sixth Advice

Acting as witness, guarantor, and getting involved in law disputes,
one may thus settle others' quarrels, thinking this is for the good of all.
But to indulge in this will bring up interested aims.
To remain without either expectations or apprehensions is my advice from the heart.

Seventh Advice

Administering provinces, having attendants and material wealth,
one's renown may thus spread all over the world.
But at the time of death, these things do not have the slightest use.
To endeavour in one's practice is my advice from the heart.

Eighth Advice

Bursars, attendants, those in responsible positions and cooks
are the pillars of the monastic community.
But a mind interested in these is the cause of worry.
To minimize this confusing bustle is my advice from the heart.

Ninth Advice

Carrying religious objects, offerings, books and cooking paraphernalia,
one may go to the mountains solitude with all necessary.
But to be well-equipped now is the source of difficulties and quarrels.
To have no needs is my advice from the heart.

Tenth Advice

In these decadent times one may reproach the crude people around one.
Although one thinks it will be useful to them,
it is just the source of poisonous thoughts.
To utter peaceful words is my advice from the heart.

Eleventh Advice

Without any selfish consideration, one may,
with affection, tell people their defects, only thinking of their own good.
But although what one says is true this will ulcerate their hearts.
To say gentle words is my advice from the heart.

Twelfth Advice

One engages in controversies, defending one's point of view and
contradicting the other's thinking thus to preserve the purity of the Teachings.
But in such a way one induces impure thoughts.

To remain silent is my advice from the heart.

Thirteenth Advice

Thinking one is rendering service,
one support in a partisan way one's Guru's lineage and philosophical views.
But to praise oneself and belittle others ripens one's attachments and hatred.
To leave these things is my advice from the heart.

Fourteenth Advice

Having examined thoroughly the Dharma one has heard,
one may think that understanding other's errors
is proof of having discriminative wisdom.
But to think in this way is to cause the accumulation of one's own sins.
To view everything as pure is my advice from the heart.

Fifteenth Advice

Speaking only the language of blank emptiness and disdaining cause and effect,
one may think that non-action is the ultimate point of Dharma.
But to forsake the two accumulations will wither the prosperity of one's practice.
To unite these two is my advice from the heart.

Sixteenth Advice

Concerning the third initiation, there is the descending of the essence and so on.
One may think that the way of the other's body will lead to outstanding progress.
But on this path of the impure many great meditators have been ensnared.
To rely upon the path of liberation is my advice from the heart.

Seventeenth Advice

To bestow empowerments upon unqualified people and distribute to crowd
sacramental substances is the source of abuse and of spoiling the samaya.
To prefer upright behaviour is my advice from the heart.

Eighteenth Advice

To go naked in public and other eccentricities,
one may think is to act as a yogi.
But this is how one causes worldly people to lose faith.
To be thoughtful in all things is my advice from the heart.

Nineteenth Advice

Wherever one stays, with the desire to be the greatest
one will act in a traditional and clever fashion.
But this is the cause of falling from the highest to the lowest.
To be neither tense nor relaxed is my advice from the heart.

Twentieth Advice

Whether one dwells in villages, monasteries, or mountains retreats,
without searching for intimates one should be friends with all,
but with neither intimacy nor animosity.

To keep one's independence is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-first Advice

Assuming an artificial countenance one may pay homage
in a fine way to the patrons who take care of one's subsistence.
But feigning on account of others causes one to entangle oneself.
To act with uniform taste is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-second Advice

There are innumerable writings upon divination, astrology, medicine and so on.
Although they all deal with the methods based upon
the interdependent links, leading to omniscience.
To become very fond of these various things will scatter one's contemplation.
To minimize the study of these sciences is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-third Advice

At the time one stays inside arranging the interior,
one may thus have all comforts in the midst of solitude.
But this is how to fritter away one's whole life on trivial details.
To put off all these activities is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-fourth Advice

Learned, virtuous and so on, also having some diligence towards accomplishment,
thus one's personal qualities may reach their peak.
But the clinging associated with this will just entangle oneself.
To know how to be free, without egocentricity is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-fifth Advice

To make hail and thunder fall, cast magic spells, while protecting oneself from all
these,
one may think to subdue what has to be subdued.
But by burning another's being one will end up in the lower realms.
To remain humble is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-sixth Advice

One might have an abundance of desirable texts, spoken advice, notes and so on.
But if one does not put them into practice, at the time of death they will be of no use.
To study one's mind is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-seventh Advice

At the time one practices one-pointedly, one may have experiences,
discuss them with others, write spiritual verses and sing song of realization.
Although such things are natural manifestations of the practice,
they will increase wandering thoughts.
To keep away from intellectualization is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-eighth Advice

Whatever thoughts arise it is important to stare at them.

Thus when one has a clear understanding of the mind
it is important to remain with it.
Although there is nothing to meditate upon,
it is important to remain in such meditation.
To be always attentive is my advice from the heart.

Twenty-nine Advice

In the midst of emptiness, acting according to the Law of cause and effect,
having understood non-action keeping the three vows³.
with absolute compassion⁴, may we strive for the benefit of all beings.
To unite the two accumulations is my advice from the heart.

Thirtieth Advice

One has followed many wise and accomplished Gurus, received many profound instructions,
and looked through a few sutras and tantras, still one does not apply them.
Alas! One is just deceiving oneself.

Thus for myself and those alike me I have spoken these thirty pieces of advice from the
heart. Whatever little merit may arise from such a spirit of renunciation, may all beings be
guided in the wild expanses of existence, and be established in the great bliss. By walking
in the footsteps of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times and of all the great
saints, may we become their supreme sons. Thus urged by a little bit of renunciation,
Tsultrim Lodro⁵ conceived these thirty pieces of advice from the heart.

Notes:

1. Doing so, instead of accumulating merit, both the lama and the donators accumulate demerit.
2. Fame and obscurity; pleasure and pain; gain and loss; praise and blame.
3. Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.
4. Compassion without representations, non-referential compassion.
5. One of Longchenpa's names

[End]