

Lines of Experience

Tsongkhapa · Tsong Khapa

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Lines of Experience - the abbreviated points of the graded path
by Tsong Khapa

[Prostrations – the complementarity of the method and wisdom lineages]

Verse 1

I make obeisance to the Head of the Sakya Clan, Gautama Buddha.
Your body is the product of ten million virtues and the two perfect accomplishments (of the realization of the meaning of Sunyata and the attainment of Bodhicitta).
Your speech fulfils the hopes of endless numbers of sentient beings (by teaching them Dharma).
Your mind, being omniscient, sees all knowable phenomena in the way they exist as void.

Verse 2

I make obeisance to Maitreya (i.e. method lineage) and to Manjusri (i.e. wisdom lineage), the two chief disciples of the peerless teacher Gautama Buddha. Your incarnations manifest themselves in the countless worlds, having taken on the responsibility to further the action of the speech of Buddha (by teaching the Dharma to help liberate all sentient beings from samsara).

Verse 3

I make obeisance at the feet of the two Jewels of the Southern Continents , Nagarjuna (i.e. wisdom lineage) and Asanga (i.e. method lineage), famous throughout the Three Realms . You have made commentaries explaining correctly the most difficult to fathom Mother of the Buddhas, the "Prajnaparamita Sutras .")

Verse 4

I make obeisance to Atisha (i.e. method and wisdom lineage), the keeper of the treasure of the teachings. Your faultless abridgement of their essential points, the "Bodhipathapradipa," (i.e. Lamp of the Path to Enlightenment) summarizes and synthesizes the two major carriages of the Great Vehicle Mahayana
-- the paths of the profound insight of Sunyata (i.e. wisdom lineage: Manjusri, Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti, and down to Atisha "Exchanging self-with others")
-- and the widespread action of Bodhicitta. (i.e. method lineage: Maitreya, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Haribhadra and Suvarnadhipi, and again down to the great Atisha, "The Seven points -- cause & effect -- instructions")
This (it does for the first time since the "Prajnaparamita Sutras" of Buddha and) is in accordance with the proper lineages (from Buddha to Manjusri to Nagarjuna on the one side (i.e. wisdom lineage), and from Buddha to Maitreya to Asanga on the other (i.e. method

lineage).)

Verse 5

I make obeisance with great reverence to my Gurus (i.e. actual lineage). Motivated by loving-kindness, you make the Dharma clear by teaching it with skilful and effective means. You are the best bridge for crossing the ocean of samsara to Liberation for those fortunate to receive your teachings. You are the eyes for your disciples to see and understand all the profound scriptural texts.

[Four Preparations To Bodhicitta:

- 1. Know the benefits (verse 7)
- 2. Purification of all non-virtues (verse 12)
- 3. Accumulation of a wealth of merit (verse 8)
- 4. Understand the methods to develop Bodhicitta (verse 14)]

Verse 6

The stages of the path to Enlightenment [i.e. Lamrim] have been transmitted in their correct order by the proper lineages from Nagarjuna and Asanga, the crowning jewels of all the erudite Indian masters, the banner of whose fame is resplendent throughout the Three Realms. As following these stages can bring about the complete fulfillment of the two basic aims of the nine kinds of beings, they are considered the power-granting king of the precious teachings. Because these stages combine the streams of thousands of good scriptural texts, they are indeed an ocean of excellent and correct explanations.

Verse 7

(The four great benefits you will receive from studying the path to Enlightenment as taught in Atisha's "Bodhipathapradipa, (i.e. Lamp of the Path to Enlightenment)" are as follows.)

- You will understand that there is no contradiction in any of Buddha's teachings.
- You will be made aware that all the scriptural texts are to be taken as sound advice (as there is no contradiction between the texts and their practice.)
- You will then easily discover the significance of the threefold theme of Buddha's teachings :

- -- 1. (renunciation of the sufferings of samsara,
- -- 2. Bodhicitta,
- -- 3. and a true understanding of Sunyata.) (i.e. See Tsong Khapa's Three principals of the Path)

- Moreover, you will be protected from the abyss of the great mistake .

Because (the study of the stages of the path to Enlightenment has these four benefits), what intelligent person among the erudite masters of India and Tibet will not have his heart and attention stolen away by this best of teachings, which has been studied by many fortunate ones, and which is taught in a graded path according to three levels of human motivation.

Verse 8

(There is much good merit to be gained from) listening to or reciting even once this abridgement of Atisha's summary of the main points of all the scriptural texts .

Furthermore, it is certain that you will amass even more waves of good merit as a result of actually teaching and studying the pure Dharma contained in it. Therefore, this being the case, you should think about (the proper way to teach and study this text and about the benefits of so doing.)

[First seven Lamrim meditations: preliminaries to developing aspiring Bodhicitta

- M1: Relying Upon a Spiritual Guide
- M2: The Preciousness of Human Life
- M3: Death and Impermanence
- M4: The Danger of being Reborn in a Lower Realm
- M5: Taking Refuge from Samsara
- M6: Karma
- M7: Developing Renunciation for Samsara : Suffering in the six realms, Four Noble Truths, Dependent Origination & the Wheel of Life]

Verse 9

Zealous and pure devotion with your thoughts and actions to your Guru (M1), who shows you the path to Enlightenment, when properly done is the root cause resulting in the fulfillment of whatever good aims you may be pursuing for this and future lives . (Once you have seen that this is so and you have already accepted the Dharma by taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), you should then please your Guru by offering him your practice of complete obedience concerning the path to Enlightenment, which you would not abandon even at the cost of your life.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate Guru-devotion in this same way.

Verse 10

The human form endowed with the eight liberties for Dharma study (M2) is superior to the wish-fulfilling gem , (for although nagas wear such gems around their neck, they are of no use to them for attaining Liberation from samsara. Only the attainment of a suitable human form presents the opportunity of having a vehicle with which it is possible to reach Enlightenment. Moreover,) it is only this one time that you obtain a form like this. Such a form, so difficult to acquire, (affords you an opportunity) that can easily be lost, passing in a flash like lightning in the sky. Thinking about how (easily this can happen at any time), and understanding that all activities of the samsaric world are like threshed husks of grain (in that worldly activities do not employ the human body for its essential value as an instrument for the attainment of Enlightenment), you must try to take advantage of the essential (significance of having obtained such a body) at all times, day and night.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

Verse 11

After death (M3), you have no assurance that you can avoid being reborn into one of the three unfortunate states of rebirth (M4) . Nevertheless, it is certain that the Three Jewels of Refuge (M5) have the power to protect you from the fearfulness of these lower realms. For this reason, your belief in taking refuge should be firm, and you should never let your commitments from having taken refuge become lax. Your success in doing this depends on properly fulfilling what is to be practiced and avoided. This you will be able to do by thinking thoroughly about the white and black types of karmic cause and effect (M6).

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

Verse 12

[Virtues, non-virtues, confession:]

The basis most conducive for successful practice of the Mahayana path is an ideal human body (fully endowed with the eight favorable qualities for Dharma study and practice which are the ripened fruits of previously committed virtuous actions.) Because your practice will not advance by the fullest strides unless you obtain such a body, you should practice those virtuous actions that will cause you (to be reborn with this ideal form.) Likewise, it is very important to make a great effort to remove from the gateways of your body, speech, and mind the karmic obstacles that might prevent such a rebirth. As these three gateways have become polluted with the foul odor of the unripened consequences of your previously committed non-virtuous actions and of your breaches of vowed moral conduct, you should always have great respect and esteem for the four opponent powers (which can fully purge you of having to suffer these unripened consequences.)

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

Verse 13

If you do not make an effort to think about the First Noble Truth (M7) of suffering and that it is the unfortunate (consequence of your previously committed non-virtuous actions), you will not become properly motivated to take an interest in attaining Liberation from suffering (Nirvana). If you do not make an effort to think about the Second Noble Truth (M7) concerning the causes for your continued rebirth with suffering in samsara, you will not know the means for cutting the root of samsara, (which is ignorance of Sunyata). Therefore you must depend upon developing a complete abhorrence for suffering and having a pure renunciation of samsara (M7) (in order to become motivated to attain Liberation.) Thus, it is very important for you to know precisely what the factors are that bind you to samsara. I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

[Developing aspiring Bodhicitta: Advanced Lamrim meditations

- M8: Developing Equanimity
- M9: Recognizing that all Beings are as Precious as our Mothers
- M10: Remembering the Kindness of Others
- M11: Equalizing Self and Others
- M12: The Disadvantage of Self-Cherishing
- M13: The Advantage of Cherishing Others
- M14: Exchanging Self with Others
- M15: Developing Great Compassion
- M16: Taking Responsibility to Relieve Others' Burdens
- M17: Great Love
- M18: Sharing One's Own Good Fortune with Others
- M19: Bodhichitta
- M20: Tranquil Abiding
- M21: Superior Seeing]

Verse 14

The development of Bodhicitta (M8...) is the framework upon which the Mahayana path is built. It is the basis and foundation for great waves of the Enlightened Conduct of the Bodhisattvas. Bodhicitta turns all accumulations of both good merit and meditational insight into effective causes for the attainment of Buddhahood, just as the alchemists' elixir turns all metals into gold. Thus Bodhicitta builds up a treasure of good merit which it gathers from the accumulations of numberless meritorious deeds. Because the brave Bodhisattvas, (who fear neither the [two] obstacles to Liberation nor to Omniscience,) know this, they hold this precious Bodhicitta as the heart of their meditations. I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

[Stabilizing Bodhicitta: The Six Paramitas

- P1: Giving
- P2: Moral discipline
- P3: Patience / humility
- P4: Effort
- P5: Concentration
- P6: Wisdom]

Verse 15

Generosity (P1) is the wish-fulfilling gem by which you can fulfill the hopes of all sentient beings. It is the best weapon for cutting the selfish knot of miserliness. It is the basis of the Enlightened Conduct of the Bodhisattvas in that it develops the selflessness and undaunted courage to help all sentient beings towards Enlightenment. It is the reason for your good reputation to be spread in the ten directions. Knowing this, the wise masters have taught the path of giving away to others your body, wealth and the merit from your virtuous actions.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

Verse 16

The discipline of moral self-control (P2) is the water to wash away the dirt of non-virtuous actions. It is the ray of moonlight to cool the heat of the defilements. With this type of discipline, you stand above the masses of sentient beings, glorious as Mount Meru. By its power, you are able to be a good influence on others without any additional effort. Knowing this, the wise masters have protected as precious as they would their eyes, the vows they have sworn to keep pure.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

Verse 17

Patience (P3) is the best adornment for the mighty ones to wear and is the best means of endurance for those who are tormented by the suffering of defilements. It is like the high-soaring garuda in that it is the enemy of the snake of anger. It is the strongest armor to wear against the weapons of abusive language. Knowing this, wise masters have developed the habit in various ways of wearing the best armor, patience.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

Verse 18

Once you wear the armor of resolute and unfluctuating enthusiastic perseverance (P4), its beneficial effect towards your gaining both knowledge of the scriptural texts and insights into their meanings will increase like the waxing moon. All your actions will become effective for your attainment of Buddhahood and whatever you have undertaken will produce its result exactly as you had wished. Knowing this, the Bodhisattvas have exerted great waves of enthusiastic perseverance, eliminating all laziness.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

Verse 19

Meditative concentration (P5) is the king who rules over the dominion of the mind. If you focus it on one point, it stays there immovable like Mount Meru. If you project it, it can fix on any object of virtuous and religious value you choose. It leads to your attainment of great exhilaration and bliss at being able to have your body and mind (always at attention and under your control.) Knowing this, the yogis, who have gained control (over their mind and are above the power of the defilements,) have always devoted themselves to single-minded concentration, which overcomes the enemies of mental wandering and mental dullness.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

Verse 20

Wisdom (P6) is the eye with which to see the meaning of Sunyata and is the path by which to cut through ignorance, the root of samsara. It is the treasure of knowledge praised in all the scriptural texts. It is well known as the lamp that eliminates all the darkness of closed-mindedness. Knowing this, the masters who have wished to attain Liberation have made all efforts to progress along this path.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

[The Middle Way: we need to develop both together : virtuous methods (like deep bodhicitta, concentration ...) and wisdom (investigation of the way things really are using the Prasangika reasonings) – one alone is not enough]

[First developing both sufficient concentration, and an intellectual understanding of emptiness using the reasonings]

Verse 21

[i.e. We need both : concentration and insight; method and wisdom; dependent origination & emptiness – only then is it efficient because only then is it in accord with the real non-dual nature of everything – everything else is a mistake and will inevitably bring the consequences of the mistake: deception and suffering.]

I do not see how you can cut the root of samsara with merely single-pointed meditative concentration alone. Moreover, divorced from the path of mental quiescence meditation (to develop single-minded concentration,) I do not see how you can turn away from your defilements by merely examining them as much as possible with wisdom alone. Therefore, on the horse of mental quiescence meditation which trains your mind never to wander, the masters have mounted wisdom which cuts all doubts about how things exist and what is to be practiced or abandoned. Thus they have tried to expand their intelligence to understand Sunyata with the all-encompassing wisdom which examines things according to the way they actually exist. Armed in this way with the sharp weapon of the reasoning of the Middle Path, devoid of extremes, they have destroyed all traces of the idea that there can be such a thing as something that exists truly independently.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

[Then turning this tool inward to examine our own mind: directly realizing that everything is merely imputed by the mind through the union of calm abiding and insight meditation]

Verse 22

[i.e. The only way to Liberate ourselves and others from samsara is to remove the ignorance that is the root of all suffering; that is done by directly seeing the real non-dual nature of everything; that is done by directly seeing that everything is merely imputed by the mind; that is done by turning inward and directly seeing the real non-dual nature of our own mind, how it operates, and the real nature of conceptual thoughts; by directly seeing that the mistake is to take conventional truths and make them absolute truths, representing inherently existing things (existing independently of the imputation process); this is done only by uniting calm abiding and insight.]

Once you have developed single-minded concentration by having built up the habit of single-pointedness of thought (through mental quiescence meditation,) then, when (you direct this concentration towards an analysis of the nature of) all conceptual thoughts (i.e. Seeing that everything is merely imputed by the mind; not existent and not non-existent. Seeing that it is the nature of the mind to create those illusion, but by directly seeing this we become free from any attachment to those illusions.) -- (which entails) a proper examination (of them with the wisdom of Sunyata) -- you will witness the development of a very firm state of single-minded concentration focused unwaveringly on the actual way in which all things exist. (Keeping in mind how) admirable all efforts are to establish the union of both mental quiescence and penetrative insight into Sunyata, (you should make the initial effort to enable you to achieve such a union) by offering as many prayers and wishes for this as possible. I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

[Always combining virtuous methods and wisdom]

Verse 23

[i.e. Until we fully succeeded in realizing the perfect Union of The Two truths, we will alternate between those two. But, still we should remember that those two are not different, not the same; they are inseparable, non-dual: not two, not one.]

(Having achieved in your meditation a union of mental quiescence and penetrative insight,) you should focus your single-minded concentration on the Sunyata that is like space (during your meditation sessions.)

During your post-meditational periods you should focus on the Sunyata that is like conjured illusion.

By meditating on both these levels in turn, you will in this way unite the practice of skilful and effective means with the wisdom of understanding Sunyata. Thus you will achieve complete perfection in the conduct of the Bodhisattvas, (attaining the Full Enlightenment of Buddhahood) -- an accomplishment that is greatly praised. (i.e. This seems to mean that Tantrayana is not mandatory to attain full Buddhahood.) Having fully comprehended (the importance and necessity of following such a path uniting skilful and effective means with wisdom,) and not being satisfied with paths leading in directions other than this, you should (make all efforts to follow this course and thus) emulate the way of those fortunate enough (to have attained Buddhahood.)

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

[Progression toward Tantrayana]

Verse 24

[i.e. Hinayana and Mahayana are prerequisites to Tantrayana:]

The Great Vehicle, Mahayana, proceeds via the two high paths (of the Perfection Vehicle, Sutrayana, and the Diamond-hard Vehicle, Tantrayana.

Success in riding the Perfection Vehicle) enables (you to board the Diamond-hard Vehicle. Success in riding the Diamond-hard Vehicle is) the result (of having mastered the Perfection Vehicle. Renunciation, Bodhicitta, and a true understanding of Sunyata as the threefold theme of Buddha's teachings, are required stages on that part of the path through which both Mahayana Vehicles) in common must travel.

(As you have already studied this threefold theme in the course of perfecting the conduct of the Bodhisattvas,) you should now properly develop (the insights of these three even further) by boarding (the Diamond-hard Vehicle and crossing) the great ocean of the four classes of tantra. This you should do by depending on a skilful navigator as protector, (namely a fully qualified Tantric Master. In short,) you should take the opportunity to make this attainment of a fully endowed human body purposeful by fully relying on the complete oral tradition explanations of a Tantric Master (from the beginning of the path, Guru-devotion, until your full attainment of Buddhahood.)

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have had the experience of doing just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

[Dedication]

Verse 25

By the virtues of my explanation in easily understandable words of the complete path pleasing to all the Buddhas -- which I have written both for the sake of habituating my own

thinking to these teachings, as well as for the sake of benefiting others fortunate to meet with a true Guru and to be able to practice the pure Dharma -- I pray that all sentient beings may never be separated from this pure path combining the threefold theme of Buddha's teachings.

I, who actually have traveled a true path that leads to Enlightenment, have offered prayers for just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please offer prayers in the same way.

This concludes "Lines of Experience: The Main Aspects of the Practice of the Stages on the Graded Path to Enlightenment," compiled in brief so that they may not be forgotten. It has been written at dGe-lDan rNam-par rgyal-bahi Monastery on hBroG Ri-bo-che Mountain, Tibet, by the Buddhist monk, Blo-bzang grags-pa, rJe Rinpoche Tzong-kha-pa, a meditator who has heard many teachings.

L1: [Another Translation]

("The Abbreviated Points of the Graded Path".

#1.

I prostrate before you, (Buddha) Head of the Shakya Clan. Your enlightened body is borne out of tens of millions of positive virtues and the perfect accomplishments.¹ Your enlightened speech grants the wishes of limitless beings. Your enlightened mind sees all knowables as they are.

#2.

I prostrate before you, Maitreya and Manjushri, supreme spiritual sons of this peerless teacher. Assuming responsibility (to further) all Buddha's enlightened deeds, you sport emanations to countless worlds.

#3.

I prostrate before your feet, Nagarjuna and Asanga, embellishments of our Southern Continent. Highly famed throughout the Three Realms,² you have commented on the most difficult to fathom "Mother of the Buddhas"³ according to exactly what was intended.

#4.

I bow to Dipamkara (Atisha), holder of a treasure of instructions (as seen in your "Lamp for the Pathway to Enlightenment").⁴ All the complete, unmistakable points concerning the paths of profound view and widespread action, transmitted intact from these two great forerunners, can be included within it.

#5.

Respectfully, I prostrate before my own (two) spiritual masters.⁵ You are the eyes allowing (disciples) to behold all of the infinite scriptural pronouncements, the best ford for those of good fortune to cross to Liberation. You make everything clear through your skilful deeds which are moved by intense loving concern.

#6.

The stages of the path to Enlightenment have been transmitted intact by those who have followed in order both from Nagarjuna and Asanga, those crowning jewels of all erudite masters of our Southern Continent, and the banner of whose fame stands out above the masses.

As (following these stages) can fulfill every desirable aim⁶ of all nine kinds of beings,⁷ they are a power-granting king⁷ of precious instruction. Because they collect the streams of thousands of excellent classics, they are indeed an ocean of illustrious, correct explanation.

#7.

Atisha's text) makes it (easy) to understand how there is nothing incompatible in all (Buddha's) teachings, and makes every scriptural pronouncement, without exception, dawn on your mind as a personal guideline. It makes it easy to discover what Buddha intended⁹ and protects you as well from the abyss of "the great mistake".¹⁰ Because of these (four benefits), what discriminating person among the erudite masters of India and Tibet will not have his or her mind be completely taken by these stages of the path (arranged) according to three levels of motivation.¹¹ the supreme instructions to which many fortunate ones have devoted themselves.

#8.

Although (there is much merit to be gained from) listening to or reciting even once this brief manner (of Atisha's text) in which can be included the essential points of all the scriptural pronouncements, yet it is certain that you will amass even greater waves of beneficial collections from actually teaching and studying the sacred Dharma (contained within). Therefore you should consider the points (for doing this properly).

#9.

Then after (having taken refuge), you should see that the root cause excellently propitious for as great a mass of good fortune as possible for this and future lives is proper, zealous devotion in thoughts and actions to your sacred Guru who shows you the path (to Enlightenment). Thus you should please him by offering your practice of exactly what he says, which you would not forsake even at the cost of your life. I, the yogi,¹² have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#10.

This working basis (of a human form endowed) with liberties¹³ is superior to a wish-granting gem. Moreover, such is only obtained this very one time. Difficult to acquire and easily lost, (it passes in a flash) like lightning in the sky. Considering how (easily this can happen at any time) and realizing that all worldly activities are as (immaterial as) chaff, you must try to take advantage of its essential significance at all times, day and night. I, the yogi, have practiced in the same way.

#11.

After death, there is no assurance that you will not be reborn in one of the three unfortunate states.¹⁴ Nevertheless, it is certain that the Three Jewels of Refuge¹⁵ have the power to protect you from their terrors. For this reason, your taking of refuge should be extremely solid and you should follow its advice without ever letting (your commitments) weaken. Moreover, (your success in) so doing depends on your considering thoroughly which are the black or the white karmic actions together with their results, and then living according to the guides of what is to be adopted or rejected. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#12.

The fullest strides (of progress) in actualizing the supreme paths will not come about

unless you have attained a working basis (of an ideal human body) that is complete with (all eight ripened favorable) qualities.¹⁶ Therefore you must train in the causal (virtuous actions) that will preclude (your attainment of such a form) from being incomplete. (Furthermore) as it is extremely essential to cleanse away the stains of black karmic debts and downfalls (from broken vows) tarnishing the three gateways (of your body, speech and mind), and especially (to remove) your karmic obstacles (which would prevent such a rebirth), you should cherish continually devoting yourself to (applying) the complete set of four opponent powers¹⁷ (which can purge you of them). I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#13.

If you do not make an effort to think about true sufferings and their drawbacks, you will not properly develop a keen interest to work for Liberation. If you do not consider the stages whereby (true) origins of all suffering place and keep you in cyclic existence, you will not know the means for cutting the root of this vicious circle. Therefore you should cherish exuding total disgust and renunciation of such existence, while knowing which factors bind you to its wheel. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#14.

Ever-enhancing your Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta is the mainstay for the Supreme Vehicle's path. It is the basis and foundation for great waves of (altruistic) conduct (to bring you to Enlightenment). Like a gold-making elixir, (it turns) everything (you do) into the two collections,¹⁸ (building up) a treasure of merit gathered from infinitely collected virtues. Knowing this, the Bodhisattvas have held this supreme precious mind as their innermost mental bond. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#15.

Generosity is the wish-granting gem by which you can fulfill the hopes of sentient beings. It is the best weapon for cutting the knot of miserliness. It is the (altruistic) conduct which enhances your self-confidence and undaunted courage (to help everyone towards Enlightenment). It is the basis for your good reputation to be proclaimed in the ten directions. Knowing this, the wise have devoted themselves to the excellent path of completely giving away their body, possessions and merit. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#16.

Moral discipline is the water to wash away the stains of faulty actions. It is the ray of moonlight to cool the scorching heat of the delusions. (It makes you) radiant like a Mount Meru in the midst of the nine kinds of beings. By its power, you are able to bend all beings (to your good influence) without (recourse to) mesmerizing glares. Knowing this, the holy ones have safeguarded, as they would their eyes, the rules they have accepted (to keep) purely. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#17.

Patience is the best adornment (to wear) for those with power and the perfect ascetic practice for those tormented by delusions. It is the high-soaring eagle as the enemy of the snake of anger, and the thickest armor against the weapons of abusive language. Knowing this, (the wise) have accustomed themselves in various ways and forms to the armor of

supreme patience. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#18.

Once you wear the armor of resolute and irreversible enthusiastic perseverance, your expertise in the scriptures and insights will increase like the waxing moon. You will make all your actions meaningful (for attaining Enlightenment) and will bring whatever you undertake to its intended conclusion. Knowing this, the Bodhisattvas have exerted great waves of joyous effort, washing away all laziness. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#19.

Meditative concentration is the king wielding power over the mind. If you fix it (on one point), it remains there immovable like a mighty Mount Meru. If you project it, it can permeate any virtuous object (at will). It leads to the great exhilarating bliss of having your body and mind be applicable (to any virtuous task). Knowing this, the yogis of (mental) control have devoted themselves continuously to single-minded concentration which overcomes the enemies of mental wandering (and dullness). I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#20.

Discriminating awareness is the eye with which to behold profound Voidness and the path by which to uproot (ignorance) the source of cyclic existence. It is the treasure of genius praised in all the scriptural pronouncements and is renowned as the supreme lamp that eliminates the darkness of closed-mindedness. Knowing this, the wise who have wished Liberation have advanced themselves along this path with every effort. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#21.

In (a state of) merely single-pointed meditative concentration, you do not have the insight (which gives you) the ability to cut the root of cyclic existence. Moreover, devoid of a path of mental quiescence, discriminating awareness (by itself) cannot turn back the delusions, no matter how much you analyze them. Therefore, on the horse of unwavering mental quiescence, (the masters) have mounted the discriminating awareness that is totally decisive about how things exist. Then with the sharp weapon of the Middle Path logic, devoid of extremes, they have used wide-ranging discriminating awareness to analyze properly and destroy all underlying supports for their (cognitions) aimed at grasping for extremes. In this way they have expanded their intelligence which has realized Voidness. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#22.

Once you have achieved single-minded concentration through accustoming yourself to single-pointedness of mind your examination then of individual phenomena with a proper analysis should itself enhance your single-minded concentration settled extremely firmly, without any wavering, on the actual way in which all things exist. Seeing this the zealous have marveled at the attainment of a union of mental quiescence and penetrative insight. Is there need to mention that you should pray (to attain one as well)? I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#23.

#Having achieved such a union) you should meditate both on space-like Voidness while completely absorbed (in your meditation sessions) and on illusion-like Voidness when you subsequently arise. By doing this you will, through your union of methods and awareness, become praised as someone perfecting the Bodhisattvas' Conduct. Realizing this, those with the good fortune (to have attained Enlightenment) have made it their custom never to be content with merely partial paths. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#24.

Renunciation, an Enlightened Motive and a correct view of Voidness) are necessary in common for (achieving) supreme paths through either of the two Mahayana Vehicles of (practicing) causes (for Enlightenment)¹⁹ or (simulating now) the results (you will achieve).²⁰ Therefore once you have properly developed these (three principal) paths, you should rely on the skilful captain (of a fully qualified Tantric Master) as your protector and set out (on this latter, speedier vehicle) across the vast ocean of the (four) classes of tantra. Those who have (done so and) devoted themselves to his or her guideline instructions have made their attainment of (a human body with all) liberties and endowments have its full meaning (by achieving Enlightenment in their very lives). I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

#25.

In order to accustom this to my own mind and also to benefit others as well who have the good fortune (to meet with a true Guru and be able to practice what he or she teaches), I have explained here in easily understandable words the complete path pleasing to the Buddhas. I pray that the merit from this may cause all sentient beings never to be parted from these pure and excellent paths. I, the yogi, have offered prayers for just that. If you would also seek Liberation, please offer prayers in the same way.

This concludes "The Abbreviated Points of the Graded Path to Enlightenment", compiled in brief so that they may not be forgotten. It has been written at Geden Nampar-gyelwai Monastery on Drog Riwochey Mountain, Tibet, by the Buddhist monk, Lozang Dragpa, a meditator who has heard many teachings.

[End]