

A Song of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment

(Tib: Lamrim Nyamgur)

- Lama Tsongkhapa (1357-1419)

Namo Guru Manjughoshaya!

Paying homage to the lineage of Gurus

1. Homage to the Buddha, a Supreme of the Shakya Lineage,
Whose body is born from a million virtues and excellences,
Whose speech satisfies the hopes of infinite beings,
Whose mind sees all things as they are.
2. Homage to Maitreya and Manjushri,
Supreme disciples of the peerless Master,
Bodhisattvas assuming the responsibilities of the Buddha's
deeds
By magically sending forth emanations in countless realms.
3. Homage to Nagarjuna and Asanga,
Who are (widely) famed throughout the three worlds,
Ornaments among the commentators who precisely

elucidate the Mother of the Buddhas,
The depth of which is so difficult to fathom.

4. Homage to Dipamkara,
The holder of the quintessential treasure of instructions,
Consisting of the paths of profound view and vast deeds,
The sublime lineages of the two great trailblazers.
5. You are the eyes to see all the teachings,
The supreme gate to liberation for the fortunate ones.
Moved by compassion you elucidate (the Dharma) with
skilful means;
To you, the spiritual masters, I pay homage.

The exceptional qualifications of the Lamrim Tradition

- 6-7. Through Nagarjuna and Asanga, banners unto all mankind,
Ornaments amongst the wise ones of the world,
Was transmitted the sublime Lamrim (teaching).
Fulfilling all aspirations of sentient beings,
It is the wish-fulfilling gem.
Being the confluence of a thousand streams of teaching,
It is also an ocean of eloquent speech.

8. (Through it) all doctrines are perceived as non-contradictory,
All teachings arise as personal advice,
The intent of the Buddha is swiftly realized,
One is protected from the precipice of great negativity.
9. Therefore, the wise and fortunate ones of India and Tibet
Have relied upon this supreme instruction
(Known as) the stages of the path of the three beings.
Which wise person would not be greatly drawn to it?
10. Even hearing or teaching this tradition just once,
That embodies the essence of all the Buddha's words,
Gathers waves of merit equal to hearing or teaching
All the doctrines of the Buddha.

The importance of relying upon a spiritual master

- 11-12. The root of all causes giving rise to happiness now and in
the future,
Is the practice of relying in thought and action
Upon a genuine spiritual guide who reveals the path.
Seeing this, follow them even at the cost of your life
And please them with the offering of practice of the
teachings.

I, a practitioner, did that myself;

You, O Seeker of Liberation, should do likewise.

The practices of a person of the lower scope

13-14. This birth of leisure is more precious than a wish-fulfilling gem.

Found but once, it is as brief as a flash of lightning.

Hard to obtain, it is easily lost.

Reflecting thus, realize that worldly activities

Are merely like the husk of a grain,

And strive day and night to take its essence.

The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;

I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

15-16. There is no certainty that after death, lower rebirth does not await.

But it is certain that the Three Jewels have the power to protect you from these fears.

Therefore, taking refuge resolutely,

Do not let the refuge instructions degenerate.

By reflecting well on positive and negative karmas and their results,

Depend on properly engaging in abandoning and practising.
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

17-18. Should you not find a suitable rebirth,
Swift progress along the supreme path will not occur.
Cultivate its causes in their entirety.
Of vital importance is purification,
Particularly of karmic defilements of the three doors,
Tainted by stains of negativities and infractions.
Relying on the Four Powers regularly is thus essential.
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

The practices of a person of the intermediate scope

19-20. If you do not strive to contemplate the fallacy of the
truth of suffering,
A genuine wish for liberation will not arise.
If you do not contemplate the cause of suffering – the
door to Samsara,
Knowledge of cutting the root of Samsara will not arise.
Generating renunciation characterized by a feeling of

despondency towards Samsara,
As well as having knowledge of what binds you to
Samsara is imperative.
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

The general practices of a person of the highest scope

21-22. Bodhichitta, the central pillar of the path of the supreme
vehicle,
Is the foundation of all the great deeds (of Bodhisattvas).
A gold-making-elixir of the two collections,
It is a treasure trove of merit,
For collecting the vast accumulation of virtues.
Knowing this, heroic Bodhisattvas cherish this precious
mind as their supreme practice.
The venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

The practice of the six perfections

23-24. Generosity, the wish-fulfilling gem which satisfies the
hopes of beings,
Is the best weapon to cut the knot of miserliness.

The Bodhisattva deed that gives rise to unflinching
determination,
It is the basis of the spread of fame throughout the
ten directions.
Realizing this, the wise ones practise the noble path
Of giving everything, their body, possessions and virtues.
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

25-26. Ethical discipline, the water that washes away the stains
of negativity,
Moonlight that cools the scorching heat of afflictions,
Elegant like Mount Meru amongst beings,
It is the power before which all beings bow, minds free
from fear.
Realizing this, noble ones protect the vows they have
received,
As they would their very eyes.
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

27-28. Patience, the supreme ornament for the powerful,
Is an exemplary fortitude against the torment of afflictions.

A Garuda to destroy the enemy of the snake of hatred,
It is an impenetrable shield against the weapon of harsh
words.

Realizing this, familiarize yourself in every way,
With the armour of supreme patience.

The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

29-30. By donning the armour of unrelenting, stable perseverance,
Qualities of learning and realization increase like the waxing
moon,

All actions become meaningful,
All work embarked upon, reaches fruition as intended.

Realizing this, the Bodhisattvas dispel indolence,
And engage with intense perseverance.

The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

31-32. Meditative concentration is the sovereign that rules the
mind.

When stabilized, it stands unwavering, like the king of
mountains.

When directed, it engages in all virtuous objects,
Giving rise to the great bliss that makes the body and mind

pliant.

Realizing this and always resorting to meditative
concentration,

Great yogis dispel the enemy of mental wandering.

The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;

I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

33-34. Wisdom is the eye to see the profound reality,

The means to pull out Samsara's root,

The treasure of excellences praised in all scriptures,

The supreme lamp that dispels the darkness of ignorance.

Realizing this, the wise, seeking freedom,

Strive to generate it.

The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;

I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

The practice of concentration and wisdom combined

35-37. The power to cut Samsara's root,

Lies not in single-pointed concentration alone.

However deeply analysed,

Wisdom devoid of the path of calm abiding reverses not
the delusions.

Wisdom that precisely discerns reality,
Should ride the horse of unwavering calm abiding,
And use the sharp weapon of Madhyamaka reasoning,
devoid of extremes,
To completely destroy all references of grasping at
extremes.
With this expansive insight that unerringly analyses,
The wisdom realizing reality will flourish.
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

38-39. What need is there to mention that single-pointed
meditation accomplishes Samadhi?
Seeing that proper analysis grounded on discretion,
Also gives rise to very stable Samadhi,
(But that) which unwaveringly focuses on reality.
Amazing are those who strive to achieve
This union of calm abiding and special insight.
The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

40-41. Praise be to you who meditate
On space-like emptiness during meditative equipoise,

And illusion-like emptiness during post-meditation.

Through this union of method and wisdom, you reach the
culmination of the Bodhisattva deeds.

Realizing this, not remaining complacent over incomplete
paths,

Is the tradition of the fortunate ones.

The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;

I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

Entering the path of Tantra

42-43. Having properly generated the path,

Required by both the excellent Causal and Resultant
Mahayana vehicles,

Rely upon the guidance of a wise adept,

And enter the great ocean of Mantrayana.

Embracing the pith instructions in their entirety,

Give meaning to this birth of leisure that you have obtained.

The Venerable Guru practised in this manner;

I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

Dedication

44-45. In order to acquaint my mind (with the path),

And also to benefit other fortunate beings,
I have herein explained in simple terms,
The complete path that pleases the Buddhas.
I pray that by the power of this virtue,
All sentient beings are never separated from the sublime and
noble path.
The Venerable Guru prayed in this manner;
I, the Seeker of Liberation, will do likewise.

Additional prayers by disciples of Lama Tsongkhapa

Through the kindness of my Guru,
I met with the teachings of the unexcelled Guide.
May this virtue be dedicated
Towards all beings being guided by noble Gurus.
Whichever Pure Land it may be, such as Tushita or
Sukhavati,
Where Venerable Losang Dragpa, my teacher resides,
May that be the place where others and I are born,
As his very first disciples.

Initially, strive to gain vast learning.
In the middle, all the teachings are reflected as pith

instructions.

In the end, practise diligently day and night.

Dedicate all (virtues) to the proliferation of the Dharma.

Colophon: