

**Directions on the Stages of the Path to  
Enlightenment: Instructions from the Mouth of  
Mañjuśrī<sup>1</sup>.**

by the Vth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso  
(1617-1682)

*(translated by Ilija Durovic)*

127

When I behold the Well-Born from the outer ocean of the twin collection of the State of Union, Method and Wisdom,  
Atop the colossal boughs of harmonious major and minor marks,  
Peerless Omniscience, ripened fruit of one hundred tastes,  
Guru of the migrators, who has become a kin of the sun, bestow excellent virtue  
through [Your] amassed power !

When the modes of the profound and vast Dharma have sunk in the ocean of those of low forbearance,  
The tortoise of explanation, debate and composition  
“Wise in erecting both aspects of the Great Chariot”  
Of irreproachable repute<sup>2</sup>, battles from within existence and is praised.  
The land surrounded by the cool walls of snow  
Is illuminated by the sun of the Great Vehicle Dharma !

Since pervasive Ātiśa seemed equal to the Muni  
In dispelling the gloom of wrong conceptions,  
After setting his works, supreme wish-fulfilling jewels,  
Atop the victory-banner of hearing, thinking and meditating  
Certainly, this doctrine of the so-called “Kadampas”  
Which pervades all directions and sates every wish and desire, is marvelous<sup>3</sup>.

Through merely hoisting it, the intelligence of detailed analysis, the  
hundred-tipped broad vajra, defeats

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1. We have relied for this translation on Thubten Jinpa’s critical edition of ལམ་རིམ་འཇམ་དཔལ་ཞལ་ལུང། in “དཔལ་དགེ་ལུན་པའི་ལམ་རིམ་དང་སྐྱེན་བརྒྱུད་ཀྱི་ཚེས་སྐོར།”, བོད་ཀྱི་གཙུག་ལག་གཅེས་བཅུས།, vol.6, Institute of Tibetan Classics, Noida, Delhi 2005. We have also consulted throughout the excellent block-prints of the collected works of the 5th Dalai Lama as well as the ‘bo ra par ma edition.

2. སྐབས་དཀའ་བ།

3. འདི་ཀོ་ = འདི་ལྟེ།

The nefarious explanations fallaciously uttered in ten million fetid, erroneous,  
scriptural traditions which wander on conquered land<sup>4</sup>  
And, equally, the wise, noble and worthy<sup>5</sup> fame<sup>6</sup> of Indra utterly  
incinerates  
Demi-Gods<sup>7</sup> inflated with evil disputations,  
All of the newly delivered burdens for the wombs of lasses.  
The omniscient Tsong kha pa is victorious !

When the sun of the Conqueror set on the western mountain of the afflictive  
obstructions,  
Noble Tutor<sup>8</sup> who emerged from the conquered land in the east of those of weak  
acumen,  
Thou who art related to the seed<sup>9</sup> of Khöntön<sup>10</sup>, Crown ornament,  
Upon receiving the inexhaustibility of the Holy Dharma  
Which is glorious in virtue in the beginning, the middle and the end,  
126 Ruling through dwelling in the throat of Mañjuśri,  
Virtuous Friend who art the source of the spontaneous Four Bodies,  
Through the moonbeams of your utterly pure activities,  
Out of the immense outer ocean of worthy speech,  
Powerful king of the jewels of felicity exterior to this,  
Wise in the alms dispelling the misery of existence and peace,  
Particularly, the great river of the instructions of  
The Three Brothers<sup>11</sup>: Nezurpa<sup>12</sup>, Potowa<sup>13</sup> and Chengawa<sup>14</sup>  
Which came from the crisp<sup>15</sup> river of the Father and Son<sup>16</sup>,  
Dipaṃkara<sup>17</sup>, the blood-brother<sup>18</sup> of the five-hundred,  
Flowed into the ocean of mind.

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4. ས་འཛོལ་

5. བཟང་པོ། These two syllables are a pun on Je Tsong kha pa's name "Lobsang Dragpa".

6. བྲགས་པ།

7. ལྷིན་ལྷེས།

8. This refers to Khöntön peljor lhündrub (འཛོལ་ལྷོན་པེལ་ལྷུང་རུབ།) 1561-1637 a member of the great Sakya dynasty of Khön, who was appointed Abbot of Sera Je monastery in 1605. He became one of the two main tutors of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, with his disciple Zurchen. As Khöntön orthodoxy was contested by those who wished to attack, indirectly, the Great Fifth's hegemony, both the Fifth Dalai Lama and his main tutor, later in life, the First Panchen Lama praised Khöntön fulsomely.

9. ཀུན་དཀ། Literally "jasmine", a poetic metaphor for semen.

10. 'khon ston tshe dbang no rgyas who is referred to here was Khöntön peljor lhündrub of the Khön dynasty.

11. རྩམ་ here is an abbreviation for སྐུ་མཚེད་རྩམ་གསུམ།, the "Three Brothers", which are traditionally considered to be Dromtönpa, Potowa and Chenngawa. Here the 5th Dalai Lama includes Nezurpa in the list and excludes Dromtönpa, presumably because he will be mentioning him in the next verse.

12. ལྷེ་རུབ་པ། (1042-1018)

13. Emending ལུ to པོ། Geshe Potowa (པོ་ཏོ་པ་ལྷོ་ལྷེ་གསུམ།) (1027-1105), one of Ātiśa's foremost disciples and founder of the "Kadampas following Scripture" lineage.

14. ལྷུན་པ་ལྷུ་ལྷེས་ལྷེས། (1038-1103)

15. i.e. pure and unaffected by personal interpretation.

16. Ātiśa (972/982-1054) and his foremost Tibetan disciple, Dromtönpa (1004/1005-1064).

17. Ātiśa's name upon ordination.

18. དལུང་གཉེན།

In this manner, while thinking that it would be most difficult to be able to assess

And recollect the burden of benevolence most weighty  
 Until the attainment of the outer limit  
 Of the essence of Enlightenment, I folded my hands at my heart.

Within, the conduct of the scions of the Conquerors is as vast as space,  
 While the meaning of the intent regarding the mode of abiding is as subtle as the  
 subtlest particle,  
 Hence, for one such as myself, to bear the burden of uttering it,  
 Is akin to measuring the great ocean with the pit of a mango<sup>19</sup>.  
 Nonetheless, the mere sight of the examples, the reading-transmission albeit  
 Unattached to the directions, the speech of the holy lineage-bearers and  
 One's experience, the ambrosial essence of valid cognition,  
 Swirl in the amphora of this precious tome !

Regarding that, here, should a person who is a practitioner practicing this recapitulation of the cardinal points without exception of all of the teachings of the Ones Gone to Bliss, these very instructions on the stages of the path of the Beings of the Three Scopes which guide fortunate persons to the Ground of Enlightenment, examine, out of the rationale that it is necessary to study<sup>20</sup> with a Virtuous Friend of uninterrupted lineage, the verses which have been uttered:

. . . The paths of the Profound View and the Vast Conduct  
 Worthily transmitted from the two great trailblazers<sup>21</sup> . . .

and:

To teach the nobleness of the source of the Dharma,  
 teach the greatness of the author<sup>22</sup> . . .

and:

Upon having become utterly, perfectly Enlightened, endowed with  
 instructions transmitted uninterruptedly from the holy<sup>23</sup> . . .

these are of great potency.

Moreover, the stage of the transmission from our Teacher, the Son of Śuddhodana<sup>24</sup>, to the Dharma-King Tsong kha pa are set out in a clear, un-mistaken sequence in the “Entreaty of the Stages of the Path”, however,

19. *Spondias pinnata*. A fruit tree native to south-east asia and Bengal.

20. ཐོས་པ། Literally “heard”, since all study was done through “hearing” teachings in both India and Tibet until very recently.

21. Je Tsong kha pa, “Collected Works”, vol. ལ, “The Song of Realization of the Stages of the Path” (ལམ་རིམ་ཉམས་མཐུང་།), p. 55

22. Je Tsong kha pa, “Collected Works”, vol. ལ, “The Great Stages of the Path” (ལམ་རིམ་ཆེན་མོ།), p. 3

23. Je Tsong kha pa, “Collected Works”, vol. ལ, “The Great Stages of the Path” (ལམ་རིམ་ཆེན་མོ།), p. 7

24. i.e. Buddha Śākyamūni, whose father was King Śuddhodana.

127

thereafter, since the Noble Guru's scriptural and realized teachings and disciples, both wise and realized<sup>25</sup>, became as pervasive in all directions as the stars in the sky and the soil of the earth, even though the mode of the transmission might merely satisfy the criterion of connecting with those, there are nowadays countless occurrences in which the lineage Gurus of one's monastery are merely invited and those lacking a source in the intermediary transmission teach others. However, regarding the difficult explanations severing the additions<sup>26</sup> to the verbal and semantic components of this Dharma and the mode of practice in the explicit directions<sup>27</sup> and so forth I have, with great effort, thoroughly swept the abode in keeping<sup>28</sup> with the time and the location as is explained in [the passage]:

A clean and appealing area . . .

in the system<sup>29</sup> of the entourage of those having the directions, the system of the lineage of those having studied and reflected, the system originating from the Noble Sherab Senge down to my own Root Guru.

In keeping with what was taught in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and the “Giving Rise to Gradual Entry into Dharma<sup>30</sup>”, seating the Dharma teacher on a high seat, a lion throne and so forth, one must generate the respectful recognition that he is akin to a Buddha. Since this is the meaning of the quote in the Kṣitigharbhasūtra:

With single faith and veneration,  
One should neither deride nor deprecate  
One [from] whom the Dharma was listened to.  
One should perform offerings to the Dharma-utterer  
Generating the recognition that he is akin to a Buddha.

it is said that it is necessary that there should be no inauspiciousness from the very beginning and no occurrence of disdain.

First, should one recite the mantra annihilating demons, it is explained in the “Sūtra requested by Akṣayamati<sup>31</sup>” that the category of demons does not have the means<sup>32</sup> to be able to stay within a hundred league<sup>33</sup> radius, however as a substitute for not performing the recitation of that mantra, one should definitely recite the Sūtra three times.

25. It is tempting to engage in conjectural emendation and add an instrumental particle after “disciples” in Tibetan, but seems unwarranted.

26. ལྷོ་འདོགས་ལ།

27. དམར་ཁྲིང། Literally “red-directions”.

28. བསྐྱུན་པ།

29. ཕྱག་བཞེས་ལ།

30. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (“Twenty-Five Thousand Verse Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra”), ལྷེ་དཔལ་བཀའ་འཇུག་ལ་འཇུག་པའི་ལྷོ་འདོགས་ལ་བཀའ་འཇུག་པའི་ལྷོ་འདོགས་ལ་བཀའ་འཇུག་པའི་ལྷོ་འདོགས་ལ།

31. *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra*

32. ལྷོ་འདོགས་ལ།

33. དཔལ་ཚོད། (*Sk. yojana*). A unit of measure used in Ancient India which was the distance an ox-cart could cover in one day, estimated at 6-15 kms.

Thereafter perform un-mistakenly<sup>34</sup> and in sequence the entreaties to the complete Lineage Gurus from the Buddha to the Root Guru, down to the offering of the Mandala. As to neophytes, since it is said that happy and facile compositions sent by teachers, crib-notes<sup>35</sup> from the treatises on application, do not become Dharma<sup>36</sup>, it is an important point that the intelligent should analyze the beginning, middle and middle of all practice, great and small, without contamination by the stains of one's own fabrications.

128

The ascertainment, by means of hearing, thinking and meditating, in the manner of the Great Vehicle, of the works of the glorious Dipamkaraśrijñāna<sup>37</sup>, the river which mingles the waters of the instructions of both the Protector Nāgārjuna<sup>38</sup> and Ārya Asaṅga who independently, without relying on other Masters, in dependence on the benevolence of the two Regents<sup>39</sup> broke the trails<sup>40</sup> through all the heaps of the Profound and Vast, Holy Dharma which the Teacher, the One Gone to Bliss, had uttered for the sake of attaining the state of Full and Utter Enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings equal to space, is the source of the benefit and bliss which dispel all of the woes<sup>41</sup> of existence and peace<sup>42</sup>. Moreover, as is said in the “Florilege of Hearing<sup>43</sup>”:

Through hearing, one will know the Dharmas;  
Through hearing, one will turn away from sin;  
Through hearing, one will forsake the meaningless;  
Through hearing, one will attain Nirvāna.

initially, to ascertain through hearing, [as is said] in a Sūtra:

Listen intensely, well and memorize !

abandon the three faults of:

- i. the upside-down,
- ii. the fetid and
- iii. the pierced vessel

and [adopt] the six discernments of:

34. འཕུགས་མེད། a variant spelling of འཚུགས་མེད།. Thubten Jinpa's note 11 (p. 602. op. cit) “ A picture of the continent of perfect Meru” is incomprehensible.

35. མཚུབ་གྲིང།

36. The 5th Dalai Lama explicitly criticizes much of the tradition of epistolary religious instructions which was prevalent in Tibet at the period, condemning the reliance on such concise instructions at the expense of careful and detailed analysis. A very similar trend, in a Christian setting, can be found in France at approximately the same period (16th-17th cent.).

37. Atiśa (982-1054)

38. fl. 1st cent AD

39. Mañjuśrī and Maitreya

40. འཇིག་རྟེན་སྲོལ་བར་བྱེད་པ།

41. ལྷན་པ།

42. i.e. cyclic existence and Nirvana

43. Sk. Udanavarga; T. མོས་པའི་ཚོམས།

- i. oneself as a patient,
- ii. the one who utters the Dharma as a physician,
- iii. following the teachings as medicine,
- iv. those who practice carefully as nurses,
- v. the Tathāgata as a Holy Being,
- vi. that the modes of the Dharma may abide for long,

in brief, endeavor to listen after visualizing all the general and specific motivations, behaviors and so forth for listening to the Dharma.

The Dharma which is to be listened to is said in the “Song of Experience<sup>44</sup>” to be:

Since these Stages of the Path to Enlightenment  
Thoroughly transmitted in order from Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga,  
Crown ornaments of the scholars of Jambudvīpa and  
Limpid banners of hearing for migrators,  
Fulfill the yearnings of all beings, without exception,  
The precious instruction which is the king of powers<sup>45</sup>  
Encompasses the river of a thousand worthy treatises.  
And is as well an ocean of glorious thorough explanations:  
The realization that all the teachings are non-contradictory,  
The dawn of all scriptures, without exception, as instructions,  
The easy discovery of the intent of the Conqueror and  
Protection, as well, from plummeting into the abyss of great wrong  
conduct.

129

Hence, which of the greatly fortunate learned, analytical beings of India  
and Tibet  
Was not enthralled by  
The Stages of the Path for the Three Beings:  
The supreme instruction which was taught.

The sole highway travelled by all the Ones Gone to Bliss of the three times was ascertained by:

- i. the first principles<sup>46</sup> of the eighty-four thousand heaps of Dharma thoroughly uttered by the peerless leader, the Son of Śudhodana,
- ii. the intentional meaning explained independently by the two trailblazers,
- iii. the explanations of the Paṇḍits who were their followers.

44. Je Tsong kha pa’s “Song of Experience”, also known as the “Abbreviated Lam Rim”, which lists the stages of the path in the sequence in which he realized them, is the foundation for the assertion that Je Tsong kha pa was a Fully Enlightened Being.

45. དབང་གི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

46. གཞན་ལ་གསུང་།

The sole, glorious deity, Dīpamkara<sup>47</sup> after gathering un-mistakenly all the incremental practices of the Lords of the Siddhas in a method for practicing the oral instructions, “The Stages of the Path of the Beings of Three Scopes”, composed the “Lamp for the Stages of the Path<sup>48</sup>” and so forth and, through its dissemination, the holders of the un-degenerated conduct in wisdom, ethics and goodness, renowned as the Jowo Kadampas, who followed that system, pervaded this Snowy Land throughout, as the sky covers the earth. Thereafter, again, for the sake of dispelling contamination by the stains of misunderstanding and wrong views due to eon’s period<sup>49</sup>, Mañjuśrī, the Dharma King, Tsong kha pa the Great, akin to a second great trailblazer, wise in the dance of human existence, [composed] these great, unprecedented, explanatory treatises renowned as the Great and Small Stages of the Path to Enlightenment without engaging in partial practice and abandonment, out of attachment to biased teachings of the scriptures and realizations of the High and Low Vehicles, in keeping with Dromtönpa’s meaning:

My Guru is one who knows taking all teachings as taking a square-path<sup>50</sup> !

A person who has not generated within his continuum a mindset akin to nausea<sup>51</sup> with regards to the goal of the faulty mind wishing for liberation from the heartfelt fear of suffering in the three lower realms, which is explained in the context of the Being of Small Scope, will have no opportunity to generate an uncontrived thought wishing to definitely emerge from cyclic existence upon seeing existence<sup>52</sup> bereft of the lustful<sup>53</sup> craving for all the consummate happiness of gods and men, the high states which are taught in the context of the Being of Middling Scope and everything within cyclic existence as within a blazing fire.

130

Lacking even a smattering of the experience of detachment<sup>54</sup> from cyclic existence, how is it be possible to give rise to a fully characterized, uncontrived Great Compassion observing other sentient beings ? Since the Bodhisattva who has generated Bodhicitta and trains in the six Perfections without having generated Great Compassion within his continuum is akin to phenomena such as sky-lotuses<sup>55</sup>, although one might suspect that:

- i. the Dharma cycle of the means for liberating oneself from the lower realms, and

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47. Atiśa (982-1054)

48. The Bodhisattvapradīpa.

49. i.e. the age of degeneration

50. The “Great Tibetan-Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary” interprets “taking a square path” (སྐྱུ་བཞི་ལམ་ལྟེན་པ་) as follows:

A method of explanation of the Kadampas: acquiring the understanding of all Utterances of the Buddha, in all their parts, as an instruction. (vol. 1, pp. 402)

51. ལྷན་ལོག་པ།

52. This passage is problematical in Tibetan (the Bo ra par ma edition, 5b2 has the same reading as Thubten Jinpa’s critical edition). One cannot help but feel that there is one existential negative too many and that the line should read:

མདོན་འདོད་ཀྱི་སྲིད་པའི་སྲིད་པ་འཁོར་བའི་ངང་རྩུ་མ་མཐའ་དག་མེ་འབར་བའི་གྲོང་ལྗར་མཐོང་ནས།

emending སྲིད་པ་མེད་པའི་སྲིད་པ་ to སྲིད་པའི་སྲིད་པ།

53. མདོན་འདོད།

54. ཡིད་འབྱུང།

55. i.e. doesn’t exist. The sky-lotus, the child of a sterile mother and the horn of a rabbit are standard examples of non-existent phenomena in Buddhist logic.

- ii. the cycle of taking the responsibility for the welfare of others, after relinquishing one's own welfare, which are explicitly taught,

are verbally contradictory, nonetheless, in actuality, through being in the manner of branches of causality or the root of the path<sup>56</sup> as partial conditions for one person becoming Enlightened, since all scriptures are some to be travelled upon and some to be acquainted with, [this is] the greatness realizing that all teachings are non-contradictory.

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56. Reliance on the Spiritual Friend.