



JE TSONG KHAPA's

Three Principal Aspects of the Path

I bow down to all the Venerable Lamas.

I will explain as well as I can
The essential meaning of all the Conqueror's scriptures,
The path praised by the excellent Sons of the Conqueror
And the gateway for the fortunate wishing Liberation.

You, who do not cling to the pleasures of the world;
You, who strive to give meaning to this precious human life
And you, who rely firmly on the path that pleases the Conqueror,
Fortunate Ones; listen with pure attention !

Without immaculate renunciation of worldliness
There is no way to subdue the intense desire and yearning
For the joys and fruits in this ocean of existence.
Also, passion for the round of existence completely ensnares
All living beings; therefore, in the beginning
Seek renunciation of worldliness.

Through the awareness of the difficulty of finding
This precious human rebirth and the short duration of its span,
One can turn from the fantasies of this life.
Reflecting again and again upon the immutable relationship
Between actions and their results and the sufferings of cyclic existence,
One can turn from the fantasies of future lives.

By such training, when the mind is no longer attracted,
Even for a moment, to the bounties of cyclic existence,
And day and night the mind yearns continually for liberation,
Then at that time, renunciation of worldliness has arisen.

But although renunciation has been developed,
If it is not sustained by the generation of pure Bodhicitta,
It will not lead to the wonderful bliss of unsurpassed Enlightenment.
Therefore, the intelligent should generate the supreme
Altruistic aspiration to Enlightenment (Bodhicitta).

All beings are swept along by the current of the four rivers,
Bound tightly by the irreversible chains of karma,
Deeply enmeshed in the iron net of self-grasping
And completely enshrouded by the dark gloom of ignorance.

In birth after birth, without respite in samsara
They are unceasingly tormented by the three types of suffering;
From contemplating the state of our mothers who exist in such conditions,
Cultivate the sublime mind of Bodhicitta.

Even if renunciation and Bodhicitta have been cultivated
But the wisdom that realises the way things are is lacking,
The root of cyclic existence cannot be cut.
Therefore exert yourself in the means of realising dependent arising.

Whoever, seeing the cause and effect of all phenomena
Of cyclic existence and Nirvana as inevitable,
Thoroughly destroys the misapprehension of these objects
(As inherently existent) has entered a path pleasing to Buddha.

As long as the two, realisation of appearance,
Or the inevitability of dependent arising, and realisation of Emptiness,
Or the non-assertion (of inherent existence),
Appear to be separate, there is still no realisation
Of the thought of Shakyamuni Buddha.

When (the two realisations exist) simultaneously without alternation,
And when, from only seeing dependent-arising as universal,
Definite knowledge destroys all the objects of the conception
(of inherent existence), then the analysis of the view
(of emptiness) is complete.

Further, the extreme of (inherent existence) is excluded
(by knowledge of the nature) of appearances (existing only as
Worldly designations), and the extreme of (total) non-existence
Is excluded (by knowledge of the nature) of emptiness
(As the absence of inherent existence and not the absence of
nominal existence).

If within emptiness (of inherent existence) the ways of the
Appearance of cause and effect are known, you will not
Be captivated by extreme views.

When you have realised thus just as they are
The essentials of the three principal aspects of the path,
Resort to solitude and generate the power of effort.
Accomplish quickly your final aim, my son.

FURTHER READING

The Principal Teachings of Buddhism; Tsongkapa

pub. Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press; ISBN 0-918753-09-0

Four Essential Buddhist Commentaries; His Holiness Dalai Lama XIV

pub. Library of Tibetan Works and Archives

CHÖ-YANG (Year of Tibet Edition); His Holiness Dalai Lama XIV (*p.91*)

pub. Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs of H.H. the Dalai Lama

The Three Principal Aspects of the Path; Geshé Sonam Rinchen, Ruth Sonam

pub. Snow Lion; ISBN 1559391162

The Door of Liberation; Geshé Wangyal

pub. Wisdom; ISBN 0-86171-032-0

Cutting Through Appearances; Geshé Lhundup Sopa, Jeffrey Hopkins

pub. Snow Lion; ISBN 0-937938-81-5