

# THE THREE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF THE PATH



**H**omage to the venerable Spiritual Guide

I shall explain to the best of my ability  
The essential meaning of all the Conqueror's teachings,  
The path praised by the holy Bodhisattvas,  
And the gateway for fortunate ones seeking liberation.

You who are not attached to the joys of samsara,  
But strive to make your freedom and endowment  
meaningful,  
O Fortunate Ones who apply your minds to the path  
that pleases the Conquerors,  
Please listen with a clear mind.

Without pure renunciation there is no way to pacify  
Attachment to the pleasures of samsara;  
And since living beings are tightly bound by desire for  
samsara,  
Begin by seeking renunciation.

Freedom and endowment are difficult to find, and  
there is no time to waste.  
By acquainting your mind with this, overcome  
attachment to this life;  
And by repeatedly contemplating actions and effects  
And the sufferings of samsara, overcome attachment to  
future lives.

When, through contemplating in this way, the desire  
for the pleasures of samsara  
Does not arise, even for a moment,  
But a mind longing for liberation arises throughout the  
day and the night,  
At that time, renunciation is generated.

However, if this renunciation is not maintained  
By completely pure bodhichitta,  
It will not be a cause of the perfect happiness of  
unsurpassed enlightenment;  
Therefore, the wise generate a supreme bodhichitta.

Swept along by the currents of the four powerful rivers,  
Tightly bound by the chains of karma, so hard to  
release,  
Ensnared within the iron net of self-grasping,  
Completely enveloped by the pitch-black darkness of  
ignorance,

Taking rebirth after rebirth in boundless samsara,  
And unceasingly tormented by the three sufferings –  
Through contemplating the state of your mothers in  
conditions such as these,  
Generate a supreme mind [of bodhichitta].

But, even though you may be acquainted with  
renunciation and bodhichitta,  
If you do not possess the wisdom realizing the way  
things are,  
You will not be able to cut the root of samsara;  
Therefore strive in the means for realizing dependent  
relationship.

Whoever negates the conceived object of self-grasping  
Yet sees the infallibility of cause and effect  
Of all phenomena in samsara and nirvana,  
Has entered the path that pleases the Buddhas.

Dependent-related appearance is infallible  
And emptiness is inexpressible;  
For as long as the meaning of these two appear to be  
separate,  
You have not yet realized Buddha's intention.

When they arise as one, not alternating but  
simultaneous,  
From merely seeing infallible dependent relationship,  
Comes certain knowledge that destroys all grasping at  
objects.  
At that time the analysis of view is complete.

Moreover, when the extreme of existence is dispelled  
by appearance,  
And the extreme of non-existence is dispelled by  
emptiness,  
And you know how emptiness is perceived as cause  
and effect,  
You will not be captivated by extreme views.

When, in this way, you have correctly realized the  
essential points  
Of the three principal aspects of the path,  
Dear One, withdraw into solitude, generate strong  
effort,  
And quickly accomplish the final goal.

Written by the great 15<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan Lama Je Tsongkhapa.  
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