

Advice Given To Lhawang Tashi

by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye

I take refuge in Padmasambhava.
O Kagyü gurus, please grant your blessings!
Please turn the minds of faithful ones towards the dharma;
May we embrace the path of liberation beyond return!

Atisha, the protector of the snowland, said:
“Among many, examine your speech;
When you stay alone, examine your mind.”
Briefly he taught these two points.

The mind is the root of faults
And the mouth is the gateway for these faults to emerge.
Thus, always watch over both.

All of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are your own mind;
They don't arise from anything else in the slightest.
Everything, such as joy and suffering, good and bad,
High and low, are the conceptual constructs of mind.

If your mind is pure, you are buddha:
Wherever you reside is a pure realm;
Whatever you do is from the state of the dharmatā;
Whatever appears is the jewel display of wisdom.

If your mind is of an impure nature,
You'll see faults even in the buddhas,
You'll get angry even at your parents,
Most things will appear as if they were your enemies.

Expectation, fear, attachment, and anger will continue unabated.
Such useless things will waste your life away.
Whomever you associate with, there will be discord
And wherever you stay it will be uncomfortable.

However much you own, you won't be content.
For everything you accumulate, you'll need that much more.

Being distracted again and again by the appearances of this life,
Even if you think about practicing dharma
You'll waste your life caught up in present activities.

At first, when you feel a sense of renunciation
You'll feel like you could be rid of each and everything you own;
Once you become intractable you'll cling even to needles.

At first, when you feel a sense of devotion
You won't think of anyone except your guru.
After a while, you'll have wrong views.

At first, when you feel a sense of faith
Your spiritual practice will pile up one on top of the other;
As you get older, all of this fades away.

Whenever you find a new friend
You value their life more than your own.
Once your enthusiasm fades away,
You'll be upset with them as if they were your enemy.

The root of all of these
Is not taking your own mind to be paramount.

If you are able to make use of your mind
Then you don't need to search for some other place of retreat;
When concepts are absent, that is your retreat.

You don't need to search outside for the guru;
The nature of mind is the enlightened guru.

You don't need to worry about other spiritual practices to be done,
Being without distraction is the heart of spiritual practice.
You don't need to deliberately abandon distractions,
If your mindfulness is firm, things are spontaneously liberated.

You don't need to fear that afflictions will occur,
If you recognize their nature it is primordial wisdom.

Except for this momentary mind of yours,
Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are not established as anything else.
Please always watch over the mind!

Unless mind is tamed within,
Outer enemies will be inexhaustible.
If you tame the anger within,
All enemies on earth will be pacified.

If contentment does not arise within your mind
Even if you have everything you could ever want, you'll be like a beggar.
Those who are content and rid of clinging
Are always rich even without possessions.

When you accomplish wholesome worldly activities
As well as dharma and virtues,
Habitual tendencies arouse mental joy;
This causes you to take birth in the higher realms.

That is also impermanent, it is saṃsāra.
When looking at the essence of joyful feelings,
You see they are empty
And this is a cause for the path of liberation.

Suffering arises from unwholesome
Spiritual and worldly activities.

If you follow after thoughts and afflictions
Such as hatred, anger, and desire,
It will cause you to take birth in the three lower realms.
To be born in any of them brings about unimaginable torment.

Whatever afflictions or sufferings occur,
By looking at their essence they vanish into emptiness.
There is no way for wisdom to revert from that state.

To not separate your mind from this
And always guard your mind is critical.
The entirety of the dharma is encapsulated in guarding your mind.
The bodhisattva Shantideva spoke of how to guard the mind:

“For those who wish to guard their minds,
This is brought about by mindfulness and introspection.
As is said, 'All should diligently guard their minds!'
I fold my hands in reverence to such persons.”

To practice in accordance with what is said here is critical.
That being so, the six collections of consciousness and all appearing objects,
Are simply the magical display of mind's nature.
Thus, it is a mistake to think there is some agent who practices adoption and rejection.

Even though taking things onto the path
As an equal taste is supreme,
For the beginner, let your view be high
And your practice precise.

As it is said, “The human form with its freedoms and advantages is hard to find.”
Thinking over and over about death and impermanence,
Give rise to certainty about the infallibility of karma and its effects.

When you see or hear of another’s death
Know it to be a warning for you.
When you notice the changes from summer to winter
Recall that everything is impermanent

When you catch sight of bees with their honey
Know that possessions are unnecessary.
When you see a house or town that is empty
Consider it as your own home or dwelling.

When you see others have parted ways with their friends
Recall your own close relations.
When things suddenly happen to others against their will
Remember that such things could happen to you as well.

Self and other—everything—is as a dream;
There isn’t even the slightest thing which is truly established.

When you maintain the natural state as it is
Without spoiling or fabricating your mind,
The emptiness of all inner and outer phenomena
Is realized to be the sky-like union of clarity and emptiness.

That is ultimate bodhicitta.
Migrating beings who do not realize this
Wander in saṃsāra under the influence of dualistic apprehension.

Limitless and unfabricated compassion
Naturally arises for those who undergo such torment.
This is relative bodhicitta.

Without grasping at compassion, realize its emptiness.
Compassion, the spontaneous energy of emptiness, will emerge.
Union is the essence of the teachings of sūtra and mantra.
You should engage in this profound practice.

The method for having such things arise in your mindstream
Is to accumulate a wealth of merit, take all of it into your own hands.
Pray to the Three Jewels.
Take devotion to the guru as the vital point.

Encourage yourself and others to avoid wrongdoing
And, however you can, engage in virtue.
Do not separate yourself from the bodhicitta of the Great Vehicle
Nor from pure dedication of your merit.

The spiritual practitioner known as Lodrö Thayé,
An old yogin who does nothing but eat, sleep, and defecate,
Composed this to clear up some things for Devendra,
A virtuous-minded person whose magnificent qualities are like the waxing moon.

May you have long life and master dharma practice
And may the two-fold benefit be spontaneously accomplished!

Sarva siddhirastu maṅgalam!

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