

The Three Principal
Aspects of the Path
by
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Translated by
Alexander Berzin, 1983
revised 2003

I prostrate to my ennobling, impeccable lamas.

(1) I shall try to explain, to the best of my ability,
The essential meaning of all the scriptural pronouncements of the Triumphant Ones,
The path praised by the Triumphants' holy offspring,
The fording passage for the fortunate desiring liberation.

(2) Listen with a clear (mind), O fortunate one,
Whose mind would rely on the path pleasing to the Triumphant
Through being unattached to the pleasures of compulsive existence
And eager to make meaningful your life of respites and enriching factors.

(3) Since taking keen interest in the pleasurable fruits of the ocean of compulsive
existence, without pure renunciation
Is no method for (achieving) the peace (of liberation) -
In fact, by craving what is found in compulsive situations, limited beings are completely
bound -
First, strive for renunciation.

(4) By accustoming your mind that there is no time to waste
When a life of respites and enrichments is so difficult to find,
Turn from your obsession with the appearances of this life.
By thinking over and again about the problems of recurring rebirth
And that (the laws of) behavioral cause and effect are never fallacious,
Turn from your obsession with the appearances of future (lives).

(5) When, by accustoming yourself in this way, you never generate, for even an instant,
A mind that aspires for the splendors of recurring samsara,
And you develop the attitude that day and night always is interested keenly in
liberation,
At that time, you have generated renunciation.

(6) But since even this renunciation, if not held with the development
Of a pure bodhichitta aim, will not become a cause
For the splendors and bliss of a peerless purified state
(of enlightenment),
Those with sense generate a supreme bodhichitta aim.

(7) Carried by the currents of the four violent rivers,
Tied by the tight fetters of karma, hard to reverse,
Thrown into an iron-mesh pit of grasping for true identities,
Completely enshrouded in the heavy gloom of the darkness of unawareness,

(8) Unrelentingly tormented by the three types of suffering,
Life after life in limitless compulsive existence –
Having thought about the condition of your mothers
Who have found themselves in situations like these,
Develop a supreme bodhichitta aim.

(9) Even if you have built up as habits renunciation and a bodhichitta aim,
Still, if you lack the discriminating awareness of realizing the abiding nature of reality,
You will be unable to sever the root of your compulsive existence.
Therefore, make effort in the methods for realizing dependent arising.

(10) Anyone who has seen that (the laws of) behavioral cause and effect
Regarding all phenomena of samsara and nirvana are never fallacious,
And who has had fall apart the sustaining supports of his or her (cognitions) aimed
(at inherent existence), whatever they might have been,
Has entered the path pleasing to the Buddhas.

(11) Appearances are nonfallacious dependent arisings
And voidness is parted from any assertions (of impossible ways of existing).
So long as you have these two understandings appearing to you separately,
You still have not realized the Able Ones' intention.

(12) But when, not in alternation, but all together at once,
Your certitude from the mere sight of nonfallacious dependent arising
Causes all your ways of taking objects (as inherently existent) to fall apart,
You have completed discerning the correct view.

(13) Further, when you know how appearance eliminates the extreme of existence
And voidness eliminates the extreme of nonexistence,
And how voidness dawns as cause and effect,
You will never be stolen away by views that grasp for extremes.

(14) When you have understood the points of these three
Principal aspects of the path, as they are,
Rely on solitude and, by generating the power of joyful perseverance,
Quickly realize, my son, your immemorial goal.