

The Method to Transform a Suffering Life into Happiness (Including Enlightenment)

At the beginning of each day, after you open your eyes, until enlightenment is achieved and until death, and especially today, so that all the activities of your body, speech, and mind—hearing, thinking, and meditating, as well as walking, sitting, sleeping, doing your job, and so on—do not become causes of suffering and instead become causes of happiness, and especially that they become causes to achieve buddhahood, (that is, that you transform them into a method for accomplishing benefit and happiness for all sentient beings), here is a method for transforming the mind into holy Dharma and especially into bodhichitta.

A Direct Meditation on the Graduated Path Containing All the Important Meanings

By Dorje Chang Lozang Jinpa

Essence encompassing all the buddhas,
Originator of all the holy Dharma of scripture and realization,
Principal of all the aryas intending virtue:¹
In the glorious holy gurus, I take refuge.

Please, gurus, bless my mind to become Dharma,
Dharma to become the path,
And the path to be without obstacles.²

Until I achieve buddhahood, please bless me
To be like Youthful Norsang and Bodhisattva Always Crying
In correctly following the virtuous friend with pure thought
and action,
Seeing whatever is done as pure,
And accomplishing whatever is said and advised.

This is how to correctly follow the virtuous friend, [the root of the path to full enlightenment].

Please bless me to see that this greatly meaningful body
with freedoms and riches
Is difficult to find and easily perishes,
That action and result are so profound,
And that the sufferings of the evil-gone transmigratory beings
are so difficult to bear.
Therefore, please bless me to take refuge from the depths
of my heart in the Three Rare Sublime Ones,³
To abandon negative karma, and to accomplish virtue
according to Dharma.

This is the graduated path of the lower capable being.

In dependence upon that, even if I achieve the mere higher
rebirth of a deva or human,
I will still have to experience suffering endlessly in samsara
Because of not having abandoned, and being under
the control of, the disturbing thought obscurations.
Therefore, please bless me to reflect well upon the way of
circling in samsara
And to continuously follow, day and night,
The path of the three types of precious trainings—
The principal method for becoming free from samsara.

This is the graduated path of the middle capable being.

In dependence upon that, even if I achieve mere liberation,
Since there is no sentient being of the six types who has not been
my father and mother,
Please bless me to think, “I must fulfill their purpose,”
And turn away from the lower happiness of nirvana.
Then, please bless me to generate precious bodhichitta
By equalizing and exchanging myself with others,
And to follow the conduct of the conquerors’ sons,
the six paramitas and so forth.

This is the common graduated path of the great capable being.

Having trained my mind in the common path in that way,
I will not be upset even if I have to experience the sufferings
of samsara for a long time.
However, please bless me to look at sentient beings
with extraordinary unbearable compassion,
And to enter the quick path of the Vajrayana teachings.
Then, please bless me to protect my vows and samayas
more than my life,
And to quickly accomplish the unified Vajradhara state
In one brief lifetime of this degenerate time.

*This is the graduated path of the secret mantra vajra vehicle of
the greatest capable being.*

❖ Recite the following verses and meditate on the guru entering your heart.

May I not give rise to heresy for even a second
In regard to the actions of the glorious guru.
May I see whatever actions are done as pure.
With this devotion, may I receive the guru's blessings in my heart.

Magnificent and precious root guru,
Please abide on the lotus seat at my heart,
Guide me with your great kindness,
And grant me the realizations of your holy body, speech,
and mind.

❖ Recite the following verses on how to live your life for sentient beings.

From Kadampa Geshe Langri Thangpa's Eight Verses of Thought Transformation

Determined to obtain the greatest possible benefit
From all sentient beings,
Who are more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel,
I shall hold them most dear at all times.

From Aryasura's Prayer in Seventy Stanzas⁴

May I become like a wish-granting jewel
Fulfilling all the wishes,
And like a wish-granting tree,
Fulfilling all the hopes of transmigratory beings.

From the Conquerors' Son Shantideva's A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life

The following translation of verses 11–22 from chapter 3 and verse 55 from chapter 10 of Shantideva's text contains additional clarifying words in italics from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, who has also added the comments that appear between the verses.

11. For the sake of accomplishing the two purposes of all sentient beings,⁵
Without any sense of loss *or concern*
I give away my body and likewise my enjoyments, *such as food and clothing,*
And even all my virtues *accumulated over* the three times.

“By abandoning attachment and giving everything away, I will attain the state beyond sorrow. Since sentient beings are the supreme field of generosity, I will give everything to them.”

12. By *abandoning attachment and* giving everything away,
I will pass beyond sorrow,
And my mind will achieve the *nonabiding* sorrowless state,
the state of omniscience.
Since I will have to give up everything all at once when I die,
It's best for me to give it away to sentient beings, *because*
buddhahood is attained in that way.
13. As I have already given this body, *an impure aggregate,*
To all beings⁶ to use for their pleasure,
Even if they always kill me, criticize me, beat me,
and so forth,
I will let them do whatever they like.

"I will allow them to do whatever makes them happy and give up being attached to my body and getting angry at others."

14. From now on, whether they play *games* with my body
Or make it an object of *laughter* by ridiculing and making
fun of it *to hurt me*,
Since I have already given this body of mine to sentient
beings,
Why would I resist *by protecting it and so forth*?

15a. I will also use it to do any *virtuous* action
That doesn't harm *and benefits others*.

Praying for virtues to become causes that do not go to waste includes: praying for yourself to become a cause of only benefit for others (v. 15b), praying for others' attitudes to become causes that do not go to waste (v. 16), and praying for others' actions to become causes that do not go to waste (v. 17).

15b. Whenever any sentient being encounters me,
May it never be meaningless for them and always be
meaningful.

16. Whenever someone has an angry or devotional thought arise
Just by looking at me,
May that *attitude* alone become a cause that always
Accomplishes all the *temporary and ultimate* purposes
of that *being*.

17. Whenever others criticize me *with their speech*,
Harm me *with their bodies*,
Or likewise insult me *behind my back*,
May all of them have the fortune *to achieve great*
enlightenment.

18. May I be a savior for those who lack a savior,
A guide for all *the beings* who enter a road,
A boat, a ship, and a bridge
For those who want to cross *the water*.

19. May I be an island for those who seek *the safe shore*
of an island,
A light for those who want a light,⁷
Bedding for those who wish for bedding,⁸
And for all beings who desire a servant,
May I become a servant of them all.

20. May I be a wish-granting jewel and a wish-fulfilling vase
giving rise to whatever is desired, such as food
and clothing;
Powerful mantra *accomplishing the actions of*
pacification, increase, and so forth; great medicine
curing every sickness;
A wish-fulfilling tree *satisfying every need*;
And a wish-granting cow for all beings.

21. Like the *four* great elements, the earth and so forth,
And like the sky, may I always be
A means of living in every way
For the innumerable sentient beings.

22. Likewise, may I be a means of living,
At all times and in all ways, for the realms of
Sentient beings equaling the extent of space,
Until they all *attain* the sorrowless state.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama often recites these words of the conquerors' son Shantideva after taking the bodhisattva vows.

55. As long as space remains,
As long as transmigratory beings remain,
Until then may I too remain
To dispel the suffering of transmigratory beings.

Gampopa, Milarepa's heart disciple, said: "After waking from sleep and before you get out of bed, think: 'Today I am going to use my body, speech, and mind in virtue [for sentient beings].' It is so important to generate this precious thought of bodhichitta, the ultimate good heart. Whatever you do that day is then done with bodhichitta, so everything then becomes virtue and the cause of enlightenment. If your motivation is wrong, everything then becomes negative karma and a cause of the evil-gone realms.

"When you then go to sleep at night, dedicate all your actions of body, speech, and mind for sentient beings. This is extremely important.

"It is said that, without difficulties, this becomes the path to the dharmakaya."