

Twenty-Seven Verses On Mind Training

Composed by Lama Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419)



THIS TRANSLATION IS FROM THE BOOK: MOTHER OF ALL BUDDHAS BY LEX HIXON

- 1) With body, speech, and mind fully aligned, I prostrate fervently before those rare beings, who are victorious over all notions of limitation, and before their spiritual daughters and sons. May a cosmic celebration of pure poetry, perfectly expressing the most subtle teaching of these victorious sages and the inheritors of their wisdom, now burst forth like an infinite garden in perpetual spring.

- 2) Gaze calmly with the clear eye of Prajnaparamita (Perfect Wisdom) upon universal manifestation, this beginningless tapestry woven from vibrant karmic threads of conscious beings, and listen to the harmonious symphony of interdependence. Purify entirely from the slightest shadow of negativity this boundless expanse of apparent struggle and conflict. With diamond-clear intention, instill faith everywhere. With mirrorlike wisdom, stabilize all chaotic minds.

- 3) If shadows of negativity are not dispelled immediately, these strange insubstantial absences of light gain immense potency with every new action, until even those who understand the dangers of negation will not have enough power to choose the way of Clear Light. Even those who study philosophy and speak eloquently are unable to release themselves from illusory darkness.

4) The full spectrum of struggling and aspiring humanity, from immature persons to advanced contemplatives, suffers the painful delusion of clinging to these empty shadows as they become filled with affective power by self-centered action and intention.

5) This apparent bondage, this clinging to shadows, is constituted by reactions of pleasure and pain, obviously or subtly rooted in self-serving motivation. By those rare beings who have gone beyond, who throughout all time abide in bliss as Buddhas, the true nature of reactions and their results is clearly known to be insubstantial. But the boundless expanse of self-oriented beings, who bind themselves inexorably to selfish motivation, therefore cannot liberate or even distance themselves slightly from egocentricity.

6) We should meditate carefully and thoroughly upon the inevitably binding nature of negativity, learning to discriminate sensitively and unerringly between the actions which negate the preciousness of others and actions which affirm and judiciously care for others. From this clear viewpoint, renounce all negation and strive with the total commitment of your being to become entirely affirmative of all life everywhere.

7) The seeds of action are positive and negative intentions. Any intention consciously rooted in selfless motivation, desiring only sheer goodness for all conscious life, will establish the stable ground of goodness and will universally generate rich results of goodness. Any intention even slightly weakened by selfish motivation undermines both the ground of our life and its fruits. Intention is the sole creative force of existence.

8) To cling to the intention of triumphing over another, the desire to prosper at the expense of any being or to indulge in the slightest bias against any being because of personal feelings of attraction or repulsion, these alone are the causes for whatever suffering exists in personal lives and in the universe as a whole. We should meditate ceaselessly on this revolutionary truth, remaining conscious of it during every moment of existence.

9) Those who attempt to deceive with words of advice that in any way exalt selfishness and depreciate selflessness become hopelessly lost in narrow-mindedness, obsessed with their own selfish interests. Such persons create the only error in the universe: diverting our precious care and concern for others to ourselves. This deception not only expresses hatred for Buddha's wisdom but is the absurd attempt to destroy universal Buddha nature.

10) To avoid decisively this disastrous way of hatred, bring to birth within your stream of awareness the maternal mind of totally positive intentions toward all beings as toward cherished children. This mind of kindness, supremely skillful in lov-

ing care, unveils the infinite value of every single life, demonstrating compassion as the meaning of existence. But the clumsy negative mind, operating blindly without concern for the preciousness of others, drains the nectar of meaning from human life. Cultivate diligently the selfless love that transforms every thought and action into tangible help for conscious beings.

11) The method taught by awakened sages to develop this skillful mind of kindness is to cut the root of all selfish projections by repeatedly and intensively studying Perfect Wisdom, meditating single pointedly on its essence in a state of contemplative stillness and stability. With the clarity and honesty of such concentration, projected worlds of self-serving desire will melt in the sunlight of meditation, like structures of ice, revealing the magnificent secret of our existence, its total significance and absolute justification, which is active compassion for all conscious life.

12) Such meditative practice brings to light the mind which envisions only the well-being of others, which is constantly grateful to all beloved beings for the immeasurable kindness they have poured forth through beginningless time as mothers, fathers, children, friends, benefactors, and teachers. This mind of goodness knows only the ceaseless longing to benefit all these blessed beings without exception in whatever manner and on whatever level imaginable.

13) To remember vividly during every moment the kindness that has been expressed by all beings, and to cultivate an intense and constant longing to return even a small portion of this kindness, unveils the true significance of life in all worlds. The person who fails to respond wholeheartedly to this call for universal kindness and concern is on a lower plane of development than animals, who are capable of experiencing immense gratitude.

14) Those who unhesitatingly embrace and tenderly serve all suffering creatures during this degenerate age, just as a loving mother painstakingly cares for even the most wayward of her children, they alone are the teachers of the holy life who authentically walk the Buddha Way.

15) The mind that faithfully and tirelessly serves and elevates conscious beings is sheer goodness, constantly giving the gift of itself, its faith in ever-expanding goodness, to all other minds thereby benefiting them in the most direct way. Of all possible forms of benefit on any level, the highest is to teach this practice of love, this indomitable faith in universal goodness, by the direct transmission of selfless awareness flowing transparently from mind to mind in accordance with the need and capacity of each mind. This is true teaching, tangibly transmitting the living energy of universal goodness, which becomes perpetually active in the recipient, even during the most pressing times of crisis, never evaporating into mere words or concepts.

16) During this blissful practice, continually cultivating the wonderful, ever-expanding mind of goodness, even the slightest lack of sympathetic joy disappears and awareness becomes more concentrated and selfless, while the selfish emotions and conceptual projections which compose this narrow conventional world are gradually effaced, and we are completely liberated. The brilliant sun of Great Compassion shines unobstructed. The spirit of wholehearted love in every thought and action constitutes the spontaneously radiating sunlight, effortlessly melting the mist of self-centeredness, vastly strengthening our constant efforts for all beings.

17) Beings benefit each other, consciously or unconsciously. Even enemies become profound benefactors in subtle ways. Those who clearly perceive this radical principle find no isolated object for hostile thought. They can discover and encounter only friends, benefactors, and inseparably related beings. This insight avoids aggressive thinking and allows the mind to expand endlessly into wholesomeness, generosity, and sympathy.

18) Never offering the slightest encouragement to hostility, never hesitating to embrace the concerns of others, pay complete attention to every altruistic impulse that arises in the stream of pure awareness. Contemplate the teaching of selfless compassion, calming and clarifying the turbulent flood of egocentric mind with the sweetest meditation. Renounce the meaninglessness of selfish life. Become devoted to the true meaning of existence: the spontaneous, active compassion for all living beings. If one does not refute self-centered motivation, the subtle tendencies of the mind can never be free from the gross or subtle disposition to negation.

19) Transform the intense activity of daily life into the harmonious expression and teaching of truth by affectionately reminding and being reminded that the bitter dark fruits of negating others are poisonous, to be most carefully avoided, while the sweet bright fruits of affirming others are life-giving, to be thoroughly enjoyed. Authentic delight exists only in serving others, and suffering springs only from harming others or insensitively ignoring the needs of living beings, all of whom are as intimately related to us as our own precious mother and father.

20) So sensitive an ecology is the interdependence of all, that the slightest attention and assistance to others creates moral elevation for ourselves and humanity, while the slightest indifference or neglect toward others creates moral harm for ourselves and our civilization. The faintest spark of ill will toward other beings can burst forth into a terrible forest fire, consuming vast expanses of sympathetic joy. Even the faintest negative reaction or malicious wish opens wide channels throughout our entire being for life-destroying poisons of negation and life-obscuring shadows of self-cherishing.

21) Cast far away from all precious humanity these lethal doses, these ominous shadows, by cultivating instinctive admiration and love for those who practice the

way of selflessness. Adore such bodhisattvas for their irreversible vow to remain intimate with the struggle of living beings as beacons of love and as the light of panoramic vision.

22) Once identified with this luminous way of life, you will experience every moment as soaked in bliss, tasting the delight of compassionate responses to even the most negative actions of other beings. I have composed this poem of rapturous affection further to strengthen the diamond-sharp conviction of those already faithful to the path of wisdom.

23) Gazing back over these exuberant verses, I perceive an abundant banquet of poetry, easy to assimilate and to understand clearly. Entirely in accord with the teaching of the sutras and with the deep realization of awakened sages, these words are full of subtle nourishment. To contemplate their various levels of meaning is not only to taste the nectar of wisdom but is to walk the sublime path of compassion.

24) This surprising poem condenses into a few verses the profound and extensive teachings of my lineage. I have composed these melodic lines, like heavenly wish-fulfilling gems, to benefit the minds of all beloved beings. Those with strong capacity for meditation in action will deepen their insight into the nature of Reality by following these words into the heart of Buddha.

25) Some authors tie complex knots of philosophical terms, while others rave incoherently like mad persons. In the most beautiful hermitage, the snow mountains of Tibet, this poet, known as Ever-Expanding Mind of Goodness, has attempted to write with richness and lucidity.

26) May the bliss of the mystical fusion of transcendent wisdom with tender compassion fall like sweet summer rain from dark blue clouds, the motivation of goodness, skillfully and gracefully opened by lightening flashes of selfless awareness. May conscious beings in every realm and condition enjoy their glorious existence as the dynamic play of Lord Buddha's four modes of manifestation: transparent, universal, heavenly, and earthly.

27) Having become, through the medium of this poem, the powerful and eloquent speech of Divine Manjushri, speaking directly with the harmonious and melodious voice of the transcendent Wisdom Deity, may I and all my relations and companions, from small insects to tenth-level bodhisattvas, attain the blessings of primordial Buddha nature: infinite bliss, infinite fulfillment, infinite perfection, and universal conscious enlightenment.

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