



Mirror to Reflect the Most Essential: The Final Instruction on the Ultimate Meaning

by Longchen Rabjam

*Single embodiment of the compassion, power, and activities
Of the infinite maṇḍalas of the victorious buddhas,
Glorious guru, supreme lord of a hundred families,
Forever I pay homage at your feet.*

Ema! Listen here, you fortunate yogīns and yoginīs.

At present, we have achieved a perfect human body with freedoms and advantages, we have met the precious teachings of the Mahāyāna, and we have the freedom to practice the sacred Dharma authentically. So, let us not waste our lives in meaningless pursuits, but work toward the genuine, lasting goal.

The categories of teachings are infinite, the entrance doors to the vehicles are countless, and the words to be explained are extensive. Even if you succeed in memorizing millions of volumes of the Dharma, unless you are able to practice the essential meaning, you can never be sure that they will benefit you at the moment of death.

Even if your knowledge from study and reflection is boundless, unless you succeed in being in harmony with the Dharma, you will not tame your enemy, the destructive emotions.

Unless we limit our desires from within by adopting an attitude of not needing anything at all, then even if we succeed in being the master of a three-thousandfold universe, it will bring no real satisfaction.

Unless we prepare ourselves with the attitude that our death could happen at any time, we cannot achieve the great aim that will be surely needed at the time of death.

If we don't overcome our own faults and cultivate impartial pure perception, then a biased attitude will prevent us from entering the ranks of the Mahāyāna.

Unless we make pure aspirations with unceasing compassion and bodhicitta, as all the sentient beings among the six classes in the three realms have been our own parents, we cannot open the treasury of altruism.

Unless we have such devotion for our kind teachers that we consider them as greater than the Buddha, we will not receive even a single portion of their blessings.

Unless we genuinely receive the blessings, the seedlings of experience and realization will not sprout.

Unless realization dawns from within, dry explanations and theoretical understanding will not help us achieve the fruit of enlightenment.

To put it simply, unless we mingle our mind with the Dharma, it is pointless merely to adopt the guise of a practitioner.

Restricting ourselves to only basic sustenance and shelter, let us regard everything else as unnecessary.

Practice guru yoga and supplicate one-pointedly—directing all virtuous actions to the benefit of all beings, your own parents.

Whatever you encounter—be it happiness or sorrow, good or bad—train in seeing it as the kindness of your guru.

In the expanse in which self-knowing rigpa arises spontaneously, free of all grasping, rest and relax, without contrivance or fabrication. Whatever thoughts arise, recognizing their essence, allow them to be liberated as the display of your own intrinsic nature.

Although you practice in such a way that there is not even as much as a hair tip of a concrete reference point to cultivate by meditating, don't allow yourself to drift even for a single instant into ordinary confusion. Instead, remain aware and undistracted during all activities—and train to recognize all sights,

sounds, and sensory experiences as the play of illusion. In so doing, you will gain experience for the bardo.

In short, at all times and in all situations, let whatever you do accord with the sacred Dharma and dedicate all virtue toward enlightenment. If you do so, you will fulfill your guru's wishes and be of service to the Buddhadharma. You will repay the kindness of your parents—and spontaneously accomplish the benefit of yourself and others. Please keep this in your heart.

Even if we were to meet in person, I would have no greater instruction to give you than this. So apply it at all times and in every situation.

Lord of the victorious ones, Longchen Rabjam Zangpo, wrote this on the slopes of Gangri Tökar. May virtue abound!