



The Twenty-One Supreme Aspects of the Path

by *Atiśa Dīpaṅkara*

The three masters Khu, Ngok, and Drom asked Atiśa: "What are the most essential aspects of the path?"

Atiśa responded:

1. The best knowledge is the realization of selflessness.
2. The best virtue is a tamed mind.
3. The best quality is to have great altruistic intention.
4. The best instruction is always to observe one's mind.
5. The best antidote is the knowledge that nothing truly exists.
6. The best conduct is to avoid following worldly concerns.
7. The best blessing is a lessening of negative emotions.
8. The best sign of accomplishment is a reduction of desire.
9. The best form of generosity is non-attachment.
10. The best discipline is pacifying one's mind.
11. The best form of patience is humility.
12. The best diligence is the giving up of action.
13. The best meditation is an uncontrived mind.
14. The best wisdom is freedom from ego-clinging.
15. The best teacher is one who attacks your hidden faults.
16. The best instructions are the ones that target those faults.
17. The best friends are mindfulness and awareness.
18. The best encouragements are enemies, obstacles, illnesses, and suffering.
19. The best method is not to alter or fabricate anything.
20. The best help you can give is introducing someone to the Dharma.
21. The best help to receive is the turning of one's mind toward the Dharma.