

Essence of the Mahayana Teachings

Lord Jigten Sumgon's Root Text

Homage and prostrations to the lama and supreme deity!

PART ONE: The Introductory Section

sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' thams cad la phyag 'tshal lo
Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

PART TWO: The Main Body of the Teaching

1.0 The Four Dharma

1.1 Finding The Lama

yang dag lam ston tshad ldan bla ma bstal

Look for a qualified lama who can show you the authentic spiritual path.

1.2 How to Rely on the Lama

skyo med gus pas ston pa'i bka' bzhin bsgrub

With devotion that never grows weary, practice in accordance with the instructions of the Buddha, the Teacher.

1.3 How to Please the Lama

zang zing rdzas dang srid zhu sgrubs pas mchod

Venerate [the lama] with material offerings, service of body and speech, and practice.

1.4 How to Practice the Path

zab don rnyed nas gcig pur dben pa bsten

Having found the teachings of the profound truth, practice in a solitary hermitage.

yon tan phun tshogs gnas der brtson 'grus brtsam

Generate diligence in such a place where all the perfect qualities are present.

drang por skyil krung dran pa mngon gzhas nas

Sit straight and cross-legged, and give rise to mindful awareness.

2.0 Abandoning the Faults of the Vessel

2.1 Meditation on Death and Impermanence

tshe 'di'i g.nyen por mi rtag 'chi ba bsam

As an antidote to getting roped into this present life's dramas, think about impermanence and death.

2.2 Contemplating the Precious Human Birth

da lta'i lus ni bsod rnams mthu las rnyed

The body I have now was obtained through the power of my [previous] merit.

phyi nas dal 'byor 'di 'dra rnyed dka' ste

It is unlikely that I will find these freedoms and endowments in future rebirths.

2.3 Karma, Cause and Effect

rang dgar mi 'jug las kyi dbang du 'gro

Things do not happen arbitrarily. Everything follows the force of karma.

dkar nag rgyu 'bras bde sdug so sor smin

Positive and negative actions ripen into happiness and suffering respectively.

This is the law of cause and effect.

2.4 Contemplating the Defects of Samsara

dmyal ba yi dwags de bzhin dud 'gro dang

The hells, hungry-ghost realm, and likewise, the animal realm,

mi dang lha min lha rnam gar skyes kyang

and the realms of humans, jealous gods, and gods—wherever we are born,

tsha rang bkres skom blun rmongs skye 'chi sogs

we must experience intense burning or freezing, hunger, thirst, stupidity and

inability to communicate, as well as birth, death, and so forth.

'thab rtsod 'chi 'pho sdug bsngal dag gis gzir

Beings are stricken by the sufferings of warring and fighting, of death and

transmigration.

3.0 The Four Training

3.1 Refuge

'gro skyabs bla med bstan rtsa dkon mchog gsum

Beings' source of refuge, the root of the unsurpassable teachings, is the

Triple Gem.

rtag pa'i skyabs gnas skyob mdzad rin chen gter

The everlasting refuge, precious jewel treasure, granter of protection

theg pa gsum bstan bsgrub bya sdom pa'i mchog

Three yantras are revealed within the authentic vows.

bslab bya'i snying po phan yon gtong thob bstan

The essence of the [refuge] precepts, the benefits, how they get broken, and how to obtain them is shown.

3.1.1 Precepts of What to Abandon

3.1.2 Precepts of What to Adopt

3.2 Pratimoksha Vows

spong sems gnyen pos sdom pa ris bdun gang

With a mindset of abandoning [the poisons], and using antidotes, there are seven vows [of individual liberation].

3.2.1 How to Take the Vows

rnam dag zhing la nges 'byung bsam pa yis

From a pure refuge field, [receive the vows] with a motivation of renunciation.

3.2.2 Benefits of Holding the Vows

bslab las mi 'da' yon tan kun gyi rten

If you keep the [refuge] precepts without transgression, you become a vessel for all pure qualities.

3.2.3 Repairing Broken Vows

nyams na phyir bcos gtong thob dus shes bya

If you impair [your vows], restore them. Know how long the vows remain with you, and the time they are obtained.

3.3 Bodhisattva Vows

mtho ris nyan rang mi 'dod rdzogs sangs rgyas

Not desiring higher rebirth in samsara or the state of shravaka or pratyekabuddha, instead one desires total awakening as a buddha.

med na mi 'byung sa bon byang chub sems

For this, one needs the indispensable seed: bodhichitta.

3.3.1 How to Awaken Bodhicitta

bdag gis sems can bdag tu 'dzin pa las

From cultivating a sense of all beings as being “me”

byas shes drin mthong byams dang snying rje skyes

Recognizing that all beings have been our mothers, and appreciating their kindness, love and compassion arise.

de las dri med rin chen byang chub sems

From these [two], arises the stainless, precious bodhichitta-mind.

3.3.2 The Causes of Bodhicitta

gnas dang bskyed pa'i rgyu las 'byung ba ste

It arises from causes: being innately present, and being further cultivated.

3.3.2.1 Accumulation of Merit

3.3.2.2 Extraordinary Refuge

3.3.2.3 Cultivation the Four Immeasurables

3.3.2.4 Seeing the Lama as Buddha

3.3.3 The essence of Bodhicitta Mind

snying rjes kun bslangs gzhan don rdzogs sangs rgyas

With the motivation of compassion, for the sake of others, striving for perfect awakening.

'thob 'dod bsam 'phel 'jug sems dge ba'i rgyu

With the desire to attain awakening, increasing your intention, give rise to engaging bodhichitta, the cause of virtue.

3.3.4 To Categorize Bodhicitta

sa sogs yon tan lam dang smon 'jug sdom

Understand the division of the grounds (bhumis) and so forth, and the qualities, paths, and vows of aspiring and engaging [bodhichitta].

3.3.4.1 Twenty one Analogies

3.3.4.2 According to the Five Paths

3.3.4.3 According to the Essence

3.3.5 How to Take the Vows

sangs rgyas nas brgyud bla ma mkhas la blang

Take [the vows] from a knowledgeable lama who holds a transmission lineage from the Buddha.

3.3.6 The Benefits of Bodhicitta

de yi phan yon nam mkha'i mtha' mnyam zhing

The benefits of this are as vast as infinite space.

tshogs rdzogs theg chen rnal 'byor sgrib gsum 'joms

The accumulations will be perfected, we will enter the yoga of the Great Vehicle, and the three obscurations will be vanquished.

rgya chen sangs rgyas sras nyid byang sems kyis

Vast [becomes your virtue, and you become a] child of the Buddha because of bodhicitta.

mtshams 'byor bde bar 'pho zhing rgyal bar 'gyur

This will carry you onward, where you will move to happier states and become victorious.

3.4 Bodhisattva Practices

de phyir tshogs bsag rjes dran spel zhing sbyang

Therefore, gather accumulations, keep remembering [the sources of refuge], and exert yourself to increase [merit and wisdom] and purify [obscurations].

3.4.1 Aspiring Bodhicitta: Remembering, Increasing, Purifying

sems can mi spang chos bzhi spang dang blang

Never forsake any sentient being; abandon the four wrong-doings and adopt the four practices.

3.4.2 Engaging Bodhicitta: Ethical Discipline

sdom pa'i tshul khrims sems can don byed dang

Authentically practice the [threefold] ethical discipline: (1) restraining from wrong-doing, (2) working for the benefit of sentient beings,

dge ba chos sdud tshul khrims yang dag gzung

and (3) gathering virtuous Dharma.

3.4.2.1 Abandoning All Non-Virtue

nyon mongs drag po'i dbang gyur rtsa ba ste

At the root, becoming overpowered by a strong negative emotion...

zag pa 'bring gis yan lag nyes byas 'gyur

Through middling downfalls, one incurs corruption of the branch [precepts].

3.4.2.2 Accomplish the Benefit of Beings

sems can tha mal lam zhugs phyi rol gyi

[Bodhisattvas need to help all beings, regardless of whether they are] ordinary beings, beings who have entered the path, or non-Buddhists

don sgrub dus brjod de nyams phyir bcos bya

Accomplish [all beings'] benefit. From the time of the [final] repetition [of the vows, you have received the vows. From then onward, uphold them], if you transgress them, correct your transgressions.

rnyed bkur la zhen 'dod yon chags pa spang

Abandon clinging to material gain and honor; abandon attachment to sensory

pleasures.

lus ngag yid gsum rnam dag dben pa brten

Stay in a solitary retreat hermitage, keeping body, speech, and mind pure.

bdag gis khyad du mi gsod brtson 'grus brtsam

Do not underestimate yourself. Don't feel discouraged, but give rise to diligence.

3.4.2.3 Gather Virtuous Dharma

lam bcu pha rol phyin drug bsdu dngos bzhi

The ten paths, the six perfections, and the four ways of gathering disciples

3.4.2.3.1 Perfect Abandoning and Practicing

rnam bcu spang zhing lam bcu rdzogs par spyad

Abandon the ten [non-virtues] and practice the ten paths [of virtues] to perfection

3.4.2.3.2 The Six Perfections

sbyin dang tshul khrims de bzhin bzod pa dang

Generosity, ethical discipline, and patience,

brtson 'grus bsam gtan shes rab pha rol phyin

Diligence, meditative stability, and wisdom—the perfections.

bde 'gror longs spyod gzugs bzang gzi brjid che

One will go to the higher realms, and have enjoyments (wealth), attractive physical form, and great magnetism.

zhi dang rnam grol de 'bras yon tan rdzogs

One will find peace, be liberated, and attain the fruition in which all awakened qualities are perfected.

3.4.2.3.3 The Four Ways of Gathering Disciples

don sbyin snyan smra don spyod mthun pa des

Generosity with purpose, speaking kindly, engaging in the benefit of sentient beings, and keeping conduct in tune [with the teachings].

snod 'gyur dad dang don 'grub 'bras bu thob

They become fit vessels [for the Dharma] and [gain] faith. Benefit [for beings] is accomplished, and the result is attained.

3.4.2.3.4 Dedication

kun mkhyen thob byas bskul dang yi rang dang

For the attainment of omniscient buddhahood, [dedicate virtue accrued through] your own actions, and [virtue gained by] encouraging others, and by rejoicing.

'khor 'das dus gsum bsags dang yod pa'i dge

All the virtue ever accrued throughout the three times encompassed in samsara and nirvana

yongs bsngos de 'grub ma bsngos 'dzad 'gyur zhing

If [virtue is] completely dedicated, accomplishment ensues.

If [virtue is] not dedicated, it will dissipate.

log pas de 'gyur bsngos pas thams cad mkhyen

Wrongly dedicated virtue will ripen in accord with the intention. Therefore,
Dedicate it to omniscient buddhahood.

3.4.2.3.5 Progression Along the Paths and Bhumis

de ltar 'jig rten 'das dang dag pa'i sa

Like that, transcending worldly samsara and reaching the pure bhumis

bcu bgrod rnam dpyod grangs med gsum 'bras thob

Penetrating the ten [bhumis], one attains the result of three countless [eons].

4.0 Vajrayana

brtson gang myur skyob bde chen theg mchog 'dir

In this supreme vehicle of great bliss, where anyone who has the diligence will
swiftly be rescued and protected,

4.1 Ripening Empowerment

rgyud ldan rten la zab don nus pa bzhag

[the master should be] imbued with the tantras, and imbued with the potency
and power of the profound truth...

4.1.1 Qualities of the Master (no root text)

4.1.2 Conduct of Disciples (no root text)

4.1.3 Empowerment

bkrus dang blugs brjod dbang bzhi'i rim pa rdzogs

The word abhisheka means both cleansing and pouring in. In total there are

four stages of the empowerment.

dgos 'dod kun 'byung de min dngos grub med

Without receiving the empowerment, which fulfills all wishes and desires, there will be no siddhis.

de thob rnam gsum mi 'da' dam pa'i tshig

Receiving empowerment, we swear words of sacred oath never to transgress the three samayas

4.1.4 Samaya

thun mong rtsa ba yan lag sogs srung gang

The general root samayas, the branch samayas, and the rest [should be upheld]

phan bde kun 'byung de nyams ngan 'gror ltung

[Through] keeping samaya, all benefit and happiness ensue. Through impairing samaya, one will fall to the lower realms.

de phyir srog bzhin srung dang dus shes pas

Therefore, by guarding your samayas with your life, and knowing when [samaya is received and when it is broken].

4.2 Instruction on the Fivefold Path

rnam grol don mang bstan pa'i snying po sgom

Meditate on the essence of the teachings through the many points of liberation.

thabs mchog rnam dag bdag nyid chen po'i sku

The supreme skillful means, the embodiment of the pure [bodhichitta] being

yid bzhin nor bu mtha' bral nam mkha'i dbus

wish-fulfilling jewel within limitless sky,

gnyis med chu rgyun mi zad rin chen gter

is the ongoing river of non-duality, [where virtue is] the inexhaustible precious treasury.

4.2.1 Bodhicitta

byams chen brtser ldan mkha' mnyam rin chen sems

The precious [bodhichitta] mind of love and kindness is as vast as infinite space

de las gang byung der 'gyur der bsngos 'grub

Whatever comes from this will become this; whatever is dedicated to this will be accomplished.

4.2.2 Yidam Deity Meditation

gdod nas lhan skyes 'dus sogs rgyud rnams don

The true essence of the tantras, such as Guhyasamaja, has always been innately present from the very beginning.

byang chub las byung brtan gnas gsal zhing dag

Coming from bodhichitta, abiding with stability, clarity, and purity.

4.2.2.1 Deity arise from Bodhicitta (no root text)

4.2.2.2 Deity Pride (no root text)

4.2.2.3 Clear Visualization (no root text)

4.2.2.4 Recalling the Purity

gsang dang thugs bskul sngags dang de nyid 'grub

Keep the practice secret and invoke the awakened mind with the mantra recitation.

Then you will accomplish the essential nature.

de med dngos min de las de 'bras thob

Without it [Secret Mantra], there can be no siddhis. From it, the result [of buddhahood] is attained.

4.2.3 Guru Yoga

dngos grub rtsa ba dbang gi rgyal po ste

The [lama is the] root of the siddhis, king of the empowerments

sangs rgyas nyid mthong sku gsum rgyal ba'i gter

See the lama as an actual buddha, the treasury of the three kayas.

rab gus dbyer med gnas gsum brtan par bzhugs

Have sublime devotion to the lama, inseparable, abiding firmly in the three places.

mig med mig ldan rnam grol sangs rgyas 'gyur

Like a blind person gaining sight, you will be liberated and will awaken to buddhahood.

4.2.4 Mahamudra

gdod nas ma skyes mkha' ltar 'dus ma byas

Primordially unborn, like the sky, unconditioned

khyab dang rdo rje mi 'gyur thams cad gnas

All-pervasive and like a vajra, unchanging and always present.

rnam dag zung 'jug phyag rgya chen po'i don

Innately pure, indivisible, the essence of mahamudra

rtogs pas rnam grol 'dzin pas srid par 'ching

Realization brings you freedom; grasping keeps you stuck in samsara.

dug ni bdud rtsi nyon monggs ye shes te

Poison is nectar; the kleshas are wisdoms.

4.2.5 Dedication

mi mthun skyon dag dgos 'dod nam mkha'i mdzod

Unfavorable conditions of faults will be purified. This [dedication] is a treasury of space that fulfills all wishes and needs.

4.2.6 The Ultimate Result

drug dang bzhi sogs byang chub chos rnams rdzogs

The six [perfections] and the four [means of gathering disciples], and all the Dharmas of enlightenment will be perfected.

sa dang lam bgrod mi gnas mya ngan 'das

Traversing the bhumis and the paths, [one reaches] the nirvana that does not abide[in either of the two extremes].

byang chub ces brjod bde gshegs sangs rgyas bstan

What we call “bodhisattvas” are shown to be sūgatas, buddhas.

bden mthong brtson min bar dor gsal bzhag spangs

Those who have seen the truth but are not diligent will still be free of anything to reject and anything to adopt when in the bardo

sgrib gsum dri bral dbyer med chos sku thob

One will attain inseparable dharmakaya, free of the stains of the three obscurations.

don dam zhi khyab rtog bral nam mkha' bzhin

Ultimate truth, all-pervasive peace, free of concepts, like space.

chos dang long spyod sna tshogs 'dod dgur sprul

Dharmakaya and sambhogakaya, and myriad emanation bodies, appear in response to beings' wishes.

mi rtog yid bzhin nor ltar mdzad pa'i rgyun

Without concept, like a wish-fulfilling jewel, ongoing is the stream of enlightened activity.

mtha' bral kun mkhyen zag med ye shes gzigs

Beyond extremes, all-knowing, unconditioned and undefiled wisdom seeing,

stobs bcu mi 'jigs ma 'dres yon tan rdzogs

With enlightened qualities in perfect bloom, such as the ten powers, [four types of] fearlessness, and [eighteen types of] distinctive qualities,

mtshan dang dpe byad kyis rgyan chu zla bzhin

Adorned with the marks and signs of a fully awakened buddha, like the reflection of the moon in water,

phrin las lhun grub rgyun chad med par 'byung

Spontaneous enlightened activities occur uninterruptedly.

PART THREE: Concluding Section

bka' lung mdo rgyud bstan bcos man ngag don

Thus is the essence, the meaning of all the Buddha's teachings, all the Buddhist scriptures, sutras, tantras, shastras, and oral instructions.

zab mo'i bcud bsdus gzhi lam 'bras bur bcas

Thus having synthesized the nectar essence of the profound truth, encompassing the ground, path, and fruit,

'dir brjod dge bas mkha' mnyam 'gro ba rnams

By the virtue of articulating this, may all beings as infinite as space

dag pa gnyis ldan thams cad mkhyen thob shog

attain omniscient buddhahood—the twofold purity.

** This root text is extracted from Essence of the Mahayana Teachings, A commentary on Jigten Sumgon's Lam Rim Text by Khenpo Samdup Rinpoche. May all benefits.*