



# THE THREE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF THE PATH

BY JE TSONGKHAPA



Homage to the venerable and holy teachers!

- 1 I shall explain as well as I can  
The essence of the Victorious Ones' teachings,  
The path praised by their excellent children,  
The gateway for the fortunate seeking liberation.
- 2 Unattached to the joys of worldly existence,  
Striving to use well their freedom and riches  
Trusting the path that pleases the Victors —  
Fortunate ones, listen with a pure mind.
- 3 Without the wish for freedom there is no way to calm  
The pursuit of pleasant effects in the sea of worldly existence.  
Since those with bodies are fettered by their thirst for being,  
First seek the wish to leave cyclic existence.
- 4 Freedom and riches are hard to find; life is fleeting —  
Familiarity with this stops clinging to this life's pleasures.  
Repeatedly considering actions, their unfailing effects  
As well as the suffering of cyclic existence  
Stops clinging to future pleasures.
- 5 When through such familiarity not even a moment's longing  
Arises for the marvels of cyclic existence,  
And if day and night you constantly aspire to freedom,  
You have developed the wish to leave cyclic existence.
- 6 Since this wish for freedom, if unaccompanied  
By the altruistic intention, will not act as a cause  
For the perfect happiness of unsurpassable enlightenment,  
The wise arouse the supreme intention to become enlightened.
- 7 Swept away by the strong currents of four great rivers,  
Bound by the tight bonds of action which are hard to escape,  
Ensnared in the iron meshes of conceptions of a self  
Beings are shrouded in thick darkness of ignorance.
- 8 Endlessly born in worldly existence, and in those births  
Incessantly tormented by three kinds of suffering —  
Reflecting on the condition of your mothers  
In such a predicament, arouse the supreme intention.
- 9 Though familiar with the wish to leave cyclic existence  
And with the altruistic intention, you cannot cut the root  
Of worldly existence without wisdom understanding reality.  
So make effort in the means to comprehend dependent arising.
- 10 Whoever sees that the causes and effects of all phenomena  
In cyclic existence and beyond are unfailing  
And thoroughly destroys the mainstay of misconceptions,  
Walks on the path that pleases the Buddhas.
- 11 So long as the understanding of appearances  
As unfailing dependent arising and of emptiness  
Free from all assertions seems disparate,  
You still do not comprehend the Subduer's thought.
- 12 When the two do not alternate but are simultaneous,  
And merely seeing dependent arising as unfailing  
Destroys through certainty how the object is perceived,  
Analysis with regard to the view is complete.
- 13 Further, when you know how appearances preclude the extreme  
Of existence and emptiness precludes the extreme of annihilation  
And how emptiness appears as cause and effect,  
You will never be enthralled by wrong views.
- 14 When you have correctly understood  
The essentials of these three principal paths,  
Child, seek seclusion and strengthen your effort  
To swiftly accomplish your future well-being.

This was taught to Tsako Wompo Ngawang Drakpa by the learned  
and fully ordained monk, the glorious Losang Drakpa.