



THE
WORDS

of

Patrul Rinpoche

MY PERFECT
TEACHER

FOREWORDS BY THE DALAI LAMA AND
DILGO KHYENTSE RINPOCHE

TRANSLATED BY THE
PADMAKARA TRANSLATION GROUP

REVISED EDITION

ses.” There, all the good qualities of the āra, determination to free oneself from concentration and absorption—arise naturally like that.

s where the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas ere is nothing to make you busy, no lds to be worked, no childish friends. nions; spring water and leaves provide rally clear and concentration develops ut friends, you can be free from the Such places have every advantage. In sūtras, Lord Buddha says that simply places and taking seven steps in their ng offerings to all the Buddhas in the there are grains of sand in the Ganges. go to live in such places. It is also said:

deep in the mountains,

ent efforts to practice, in such places rmination to be free from it, love, llent qualities of the path will arise hole way of life can only become d all the negative emotions that you s bustling with activity will diminish re now in solitude. It will be easy to

s for concentration, and are of vital ed with.

oncentration practised by ordinary scerns and the excellent concentra-

ary beings. When you are attached l absence of thought in meditation practice is coloured by any affinity ncentration practised by ordinary

hen you are free from any attach-

ment to meditative experiences and are no longer fascinated by concentration, but still cling to emptiness as an antidote, that is called clearly discerning concentration.

The excellent concentration of the Tathāgatas. When you no longer have any concept of emptiness as an antidote, but remain in a concept-free concentration on the nature of reality, that is called the excellent concentration of the Tathāgatas.

Whenever you practise concentration, it is important to sit in the “seven point posture of Vairocana”¹⁶¹ with your eyes maintaining the appropriate gaze. It is said:

When the body is straight, the channels are straight;
When the channels are straight the energies are straight;
When the energies are straight the mind is straight.¹⁶²

Do not lie down or lean against anything, but sit straight upright, your mind free from any thought, and rest in equanimity in a state where there is no grasping to anything. That is the essence of transcendent concentration.

2.6 TRANSCENDENT WISDOM

Transcendent wisdom has three aspects: wisdom that comes through hearing, wisdom that comes through reflection and wisdom that comes through meditation.

2.6.1 Wisdom through hearing

This means listening to all the words and meaning of the Dharma spoken by a spiritual teacher, and understanding the meaning of those words as they are spoken.

2.6.2 Wisdom through reflection

This means not only listening to what the teacher has taught and understanding it, but subsequently reviewing it in your mind and clearly establishing the meaning through reflection, examination and analysis, and asking questions about what you do not understand. It is not enough just to suppose that you know or understand some particular subject. You should make absolutely sure that when the time comes to practise in solitude you will be able to manage on your own, without needing to ask anyone to clarify certain points.

2.6.3 Wisdom through meditation

Through meditation, as you gain practical experience of what you have understood intellectually, the true realization of the natural state develops in you without any mistake. Certainty is born from within. Liberated from confining doubts and hesitations, you see the very face of the natural state.

Having first eliminated all your doubts through hearing and reflection, you come to the practical experience of meditation, and see everything as empty forms without any substantiality, as in the eight similes of illusion:

As in a dream, all the external objects perceived with the five senses are not there, but appear through delusion.

As in a magic show, things are made to appear by a temporary conjunction of causes, circumstances and connections.

As in a visual aberration, things appear to be there, yet there is nothing.

As in a mirage, things appear but are not real.

As in an echo, things can be perceived but there is nothing there, either outside or inside.

As in a city of gandharvas, there is neither a dwelling nor anyone to dwell.

As in a reflection, things appear but have no reality of their own.

As in a city created by magic, there are all sorts of appearances but they are not really there.

Seeing all the objects of your perception in this way, you come to understand that all these appearances are false by their very nature. When you look into the nature of the subject that perceives them—the mind—those objects that appear to it do not stop appearing, but the concepts that take them as having any true existence subside. To leave the mind in the realization of the nature of reality, empty yet clear like the sky, is transcendent wisdom.

To explain the six transcendent perfections in detail, each one is divided into three, making a total of eighteen sections. The category of material generosity has three sections of its own, making twenty sections altogether. If we add transcendent means, that makes twenty-one; transcendent strength, twenty-two; transcendent aspiration, twenty-three and transcendent primal wisdom, twenty-four.¹⁶³

Going into even more detail, each of the six transcendent perfections can be divided into six, making thirty-six sections. We can see how this works by examining the section on the giving of Dharma in transcendent generosity.

When the teacher who teaches, the Dharma to be taught and the

disciple to whom the teaching is to be explained, the teacher who explains the teaching is transcendent and does not seek gain or honour for teaching the Dharma. He does not know what he is doing either with self-aggrandizement or in the position of others, or any other negative quality. He is *discipline*. That he repeats the meaning of the teaching and ignores all difficulty and fatigue is *transcendent generosity*. That he does so at the appointed time without giving way is *transcendent diligence*. That he explains the teaching and his mind get distracted from the words and he corrects his own errors and without adding or omitting anything is *transcendent concentration*. That while teaching he is free of all concepts of subject, object and action and that all the transcendent perfections are there is *transcendent wisdom*.

Now look at material giving—offering alms. For example. When the gift, the giver and the receiver are together and the action is actually accomplished, that is from what you would eat or drink you give to someone who has spoiled food, is *discipline*. Never getting tired and over again for alms, is *patience*. Giving alms even if how tiring or difficult it is, is *diligence*. Giving alms without by other thoughts is *concentration*. For the giver, the subject, object and action have no intention and the result is that all the six transcendent perfections are there. This can be defined for discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, generosity and wisdom.

Summing up the essence of the transcendent perfections says:

Perfectly give up belief in any true self.
There is no other generosity than giving Dharma.
Perfectly give up guile and deceit.
There is no other discipline.
Perfectly transcend all fear of the natural state.
There is no other patience.
Perfectly remain inseparable from the natural state.
There is no other diligence.
Perfectly stay in the natural flow.
There is no other concentration.
Perfectly realize the natural state.
There is no other wisdom.
Perfectly practise Dharma in every situation.

meditation

As you gain practical experience of what you have naturally, the true realization of the natural state develops naturally. Certainty is born from within. Liberated from all doubts, you see the very face of the natural state. Dissipated all your doubts through hearing and reflection, and see everything as it is, without any substantiality, as in the eight similes of illusion: the external objects perceived with the five senses are through delusion.

Now, things are made to appear by a temporary circumstances and connections.

When things appear to be there, yet there is nothing. Things appear but are not real.

Things can be perceived but there is nothing there, either

as in the case of the gharvas, there is neither a dwelling nor anyone to

Things appear but have no reality of their own.

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of transcendent means, that makes twenty-one; tran-

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In the final part, each of the six transcendent perfections

is further divided into thirty-six sections. We can see how this

is done in the section on the giving of Dharma in transcendent

teaches, the Dharma to be taught and the

disciple to whom the teaching is to be transmitted come together, explaining the teaching is transcendent *generosity*. That the teacher does not seek gain or honour for teaching the Dharma, and does not contaminate what he is doing either with self-aggrandizement, resentment of the position of others, or any other negative emotion, is transcendent *discipline*. That he repeats the meaning of a phrase over and over again and ignores all difficulty and fatigue is transcendent *patience*. That he teaches at the appointed time without giving way to laziness and procrastination is transcendent *diligence*. That he explains his subject without letting his mind get distracted from the words and their meaning, without making any errors and without adding or omitting anything is transcendent *concentration*. That while teaching he remains imbued with wisdom free of all concepts of subject, object and action is transcendent *wisdom*. All of the transcendent perfections are therefore present.

Now look at material giving—offering food or drink to a beggar, for example. When the gift, the giver and the recipient are all brought together and the action is actually accomplished, that is *generosity*. Giving from what you would eat or drink yourself, rather than giving bad or spoiled food, is *discipline*. Never getting irritated, even when asked over and over again for alms, is *patience*. Giving readily, without ever thinking how tiring or difficult it is, is *diligence*. Not letting yourself be distracted by other thoughts is *concentration*. Knowing that the three elements of subject, object and action have no intrinsic reality is *wisdom*. Here again all the six transcendent perfections are included. The same subdivisions can be defined for discipline, patience, and so on.

Summing up the essence of the transcendent perfections, Jetsun Mila says:

- Perfectly give up belief in any true existence,
- There is no other generosity than this.
- Perfectly give up guile and deceit,
- There is no other discipline.
- Perfectly transcend all fear of the true meaning,
- There is no other patience.
- Perfectly remain inseparable from the practice,
- There is no other diligence.
- Perfectly stay in the natural flow,
- There is no other concentration.
- Perfectly realize the natural state,
- There is no other wisdom.
- Perfectly practise Dharma in everything you do,

There are no other means.
 Perfectly conquer the four demons,
 There is no other strength.
 Perfectly accomplish the twofold goal,
 There is no further aspiration.
 Recognize the very source of negative emotions,
 There is no other primal wisdom.

When Khu, Ngok and Drom* once asked him what were the best of all the elements of the path, Atīśa replied:

The best scholar is one who has realized the meaning of the absence of any true existence.
 The best monk is one who has tamed his own mind.
 The best quality is a great desire to benefit others.
 The best instruction is always to watch the mind.
 The best remedy is to know that nothing has any inherent reality.
 The best way of life is one that does not fit with worldly ways.
 The best accomplishment is a steady lessening of negative emotions.
 The best sign of practice is a steady decrease of desires.
 The best generosity is non-attachment.
 The best discipline is to pacify the mind.
 The best patience is to keep a humble position.
 The best diligence is to give up activities.
 The best concentration is not to alter the mind.¹⁶⁴
 The best wisdom is not to take anything at all as truly existing.

And Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa says:

Transcendent generosity is found in contentment;
 Its essence is simply letting go.
 Discipline is not to displease the Three Jewels.¹⁶⁵
 The best patience is unflinching mindfulness and awareness.
 Diligence is needed to sustain all the other perfections.
 Concentration is to experience as deities all the appearances to which one clings.¹⁶⁶
 Wisdom is the self-liberation of grasping and clinging;
 In it there is neither thinking nor a thinker.
 It is not ordinary. It is free from fixed convictions.¹⁶⁷
 It is beyond suffering. It is supreme peace.

* Atīśa's three main disciples (see glossary).

Do not tell this to everyone—
 Keep it sacred within your own mind.

To put in a nutshell the whole vast path of the including the six transcendent perfections, it could entirely as "emptiness of which compassion is the says in his *Dohās*:

Without compassion, the view of emptiness
 Will never lead you to the sublime path.
 Yet meditating solely on compassion, you
 Within saṃsāra; so how could you be free?
 But he who comes to possess both of these
 Will neither in saṃsāra nor in nirvāna dwell.

To dwell neither in saṃsāra nor in nirvāna is the of the level of total Buddhahood. As Lord Nāgārjuna

Emptiness of which compassion is the very
 Is only for those who want enlightenment.

Drom Tönpa once asked Atīśa what was the ultimate. "Of all teachings, the ultimate is emptiness of the very essence," replied the Master. "It is like a universal panacea which can cure every disease in the world. A powerful medicine, realization of the truth of emptiness, is the remedy for all the different negative emotions. True realization of emptiness, therefore, is the key to the path." "Why is it, then," Drom Tönpa went on, "that those who claim to have realized emptiness have no less attachment than those who do not? Because their realization is only words. A person who really grasped the true meaning of emptiness, his actions would be as soft as stepping on cotton wool or with butter. The Master Āryadeva said that even if not all things were empty by nature would not be empty. True realization of emptiness, therefore, is the key to the path."

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"How can every element of the path be included in emptiness?" Drom Tönpa asked.

"All the elements of the path are contained in emptiness. Now, if you truly realize emptiness, you are free from attachment. As you feel no craving, grasping or clinging, you are free from attachment. If you do not truly realize emptiness, or without, you always have transcendent attachment. If you do not truly realize emptiness, grasping and attachment, you are never detached.

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Do not tell this to everyone—
 Keep it sacred within your own mind.

To put in a nutshell the whole vast path of the Bodhisattva teachings,
 including the six transcendent perfections, it could be summarized in its
 entirety as “emptiness of which compassion is the very essence.” Saraha
 says in his *Dohās*:

Without compassion, the view of emptiness
 Will never lead you to the sublime path.
 Yet meditating solely on compassion, you remain
 Within saṃsāra; so how could you be free?
 But he who comes to possess both of these
 Will neither in saṃsāra nor in nirvāṇa dwell.

To dwell neither in saṃsāra nor in nirvāṇa is the “non-dwelling nirvāṇa”
 of the level of total Buddhahood. As Lord Nāgārjuna says:

Emptiness of which compassion is the very essence
 Is only for those who want enlightenment.

Drom Tönpa once asked Atīśa what was the ultimate of all teachings.

“Of all teachings, the ultimate is emptiness of which compassion is the
 very essence,” replied the Master. “It is like a very powerful medicine, a
 panacea which can cure every disease in the world. And just like that very
 powerful medicine, realization of the truth of emptiness, the nature of
 reality, is the remedy for all the different negative emotions.”

“Why is it, then,” Drom Tönpa went on, “that so many people who
 claim to have realized emptiness have no less attachment and hatred?”

“Because their realization is only words,” Atīśa replied. “Had they
 really grasped the true meaning of emptiness, their thoughts, words and
 deeds would be as soft as stepping on cotton wool or as *tsampa* soup laced
 with butter. The Master Āryadeva said that even to wonder whether or
 not all things were empty by nature would make saṃsāra fall apart.¹⁶⁸
 True realization of emptiness, therefore, is the ultimate panacea which
 includes all the elements of the path.”

“How can every element of the path be included within the realization
 of emptiness?” Drom Tönpa asked.

“All the elements of the path are contained in the six transcendent
 perfections. Now, if you truly realize emptiness, you become free from
 attachment. As you feel no craving, grasping or desire for anything within
 or without, you always have transcendent generosity. Being free from
 grasping and attachment, you are never defiled by negative actions, so

you always have transcendent discipline. Without any concepts of 'I' and 'mine' you have no anger, so you always have transcendent patience. Your mind made truly joyful by the realization of emptiness, you always have transcendent diligence. Being free from distraction, which comes from grasping at things as solid, you always have transcendent concentration. As you do not conceptualize anything whatsoever in terms of subject, object and action, you always have transcendent wisdom."

"Do those who have realized the truth become Buddhas simply through the view of emptiness and meditation?" Drom Tönpa asked.

"Of all that we perceive as forms and sounds there is nothing that does not arise from the mind. To realize that the mind is awareness indivisible from emptiness is the *view*. Keeping this realization in mind at all times, and never being distracted from it, is *meditation*. To practise the two accumulations as a magical illusion from within that state is *action*. If you make a living experience of this practice, it will continue in your dreams. If it comes in the dream state, it will come at the moment of death. And if it comes at the moment of death it will come in the intermediate state. If it is present in the intermediate state you may be certain of attaining supreme accomplishment."

The eighty-four thousand doors to the Dharma that the Conqueror taught are thus all skilful means to cause the bodhicitta—emptiness of which compassion is the very essence—to arise in us.

Without bodhicitta, teachings on the view and meditation, however profound they may seem, will be no use at all for attaining perfect Buddhahood. Tantric practices like the generation phase, the perfection phase and so on, practised within the context of bodhicitta, lead to complete Buddhahood in one lifetime. But without bodhicitta they are no different from the methods of the *tīrthikas*. *Tīrthikas* also have many practices involving meditating on deities, reciting mantras and working with the channels and energies; they too behave in accordance with the principle of cause and effect. But it is solely because they do not take refuge or arouse bodhicitta that they are unable to achieve liberation from the realms of *samsāra*. This is why Geshe Kharak Gomchung said:

It is no use taking all the vows, from those of refuge up to the tantric *samayās*, unless you turn your mind away from the things of this world.

It is no use constantly preaching the Dharma to others unless you can pacify your own pride.

It is no use making progress if you relegate the refuge precepts to the last place.

It is no use practising day and night on bodhicitta.

Unless you first create the proper foundation of bodhicitta, however intensively you might seem to be meditating, it will all be no more use than walking on a frozen lake in winter, and painting pictures on a wall. Ultimately it makes no sense at all.

Never undervalue the refuge and bodhicitta. They are inferior or just for beginners only within the framework of preparation, main practice and final path. It is most important for everyone to concentrate their sincerest efforts on these.

In the particular case of lamas and monks who are faithful, who receive funds on behalf of the dead to guide the dead, it is absolutely indispensable to have bodhicitta. Without it, none of their efforts will have the slightest use to either the living or the dead. They appear to be helping, but deep down they are acting out of selfish motives. For themselves, they will consume the offerings, and will engender endless karma in the lower realms in their next life.

Even someone who can fly like a bird, who can walk on mouse feet on rocks, someone who has unlimited powers and can do all kinds of miracles—if such a person is not a *tīrthika* or possessed by some powerful deity, but is some naive innocents who will be impeded in the long run he will only bring ruin upon himself. On the other hand, a person who possesses true bodhicitta, and other quality, will benefit whoever comes in contact with him.

You never know where there might be a Bodhisattva, many Bodhisattvas, using their skilful means to help among slaughterers of animals and prostitutes. You never know someone has bodhicitta or not. The Buddha said:

Apart from myself and those like me, there is no other person.

So just consider anyone who arouses devotion to the Buddha, whether a deity, teacher, spirit, or friend. Whenever you feel that you have a connection with someone, consider that person as a Bodhisattva.

It is no use practising day and night unless you combine this with bodhicitta.

Unless you first create the proper foundation with the refuge and bodhicitta, however intensively you might seem to be studying, reflecting and meditating, it will all be no more use than building a nine-storey mansion on a frozen lake in winter, and painting frescoes on its plastered walls. Ultimately it makes no sense at all.

Never undervalue the refuge and bodhicitta practices, assuming that they are inferior or just for beginners. Complete them in full, within the framework of preparation, main practice and conclusion that applies to any path. It is most important for everyone, good or bad, high or low, to concentrate their sincerest efforts on these practices.

In the particular case of lamas and monks who take donations from the faithful, who receive funds on behalf of the dead, or who do ceremonies to guide the dead, it is absolutely indispensable that they have sincere bodhicitta. Without it, none of their rituals and purifications will be of the slightest use to either the living or the dead. For others, they might appear to be helping, but deep down that help will always be mixed with selfish motives. For themselves, they will be defiled by accepting those offerings, and will engender endless faults that can only lead them to lower realms in their next life.

Even someone who can fly like a bird, travel under the earth like a mouse, pass through rocks unimpeded, leave imprints of his hands and feet on rocks, someone who has unlimited clairvoyance and can perform all kinds of miracles—if such a person has no bodhicitta, he can only be a tirthika or possessed by some powerful demon. He might, at first, attract some naive innocents who will be impressed and bring offerings. But in the long run he will only bring ruin upon himself and others. On the other hand, a person who possesses true bodhicitta, even without having any other quality, will benefit whoever comes into contact with him or her.

You never know where there might be a Bodhisattva. It is said that many Bodhisattvas, using their skilful methods, are to be found even among slaughterers of animals and prostitutes. It is difficult to tell whether someone has bodhicitta or not. The Buddha said:

Apart from myself and those like me, no one can judge another person.

So just consider anyone who arouses bodhicitta in you as being a real Buddha, whether a deity, teacher, spiritual companion or anyone else.

Whenever you feel that you have acquired certain qualities as signs of

progress on the path, whatever they may be—realization of the natural state, clairvoyance, concentration, visions of the yidam and so on—you can be certain that they really are true qualities if, as a result, the love and compassion of bodhicitta steadily continue to increase. However, if the effect of such experiences is only to decrease the love and compassion of bodhicitta, you can be equally sure that what looks like a sign of success on the path is in fact either a demonic obstacle, or an indication that you are following the wrong path.

In particular, the authentic realization of the natural state cannot but be accompanied by extraordinary faith and pure perception toward those spiritually more mature than yourself, and extraordinary love and compassion for those who are less so.

The peerless Dagpo Rinpoche once asked Jetsun Mila, “When will I be ready to guide others?”

“One day,” the Jetsun replied, “you will have an extraordinarily clear vision of the nature of your mind, quite different from the one you have now, and free from any kind of doubt. At that time, in a way that is not at all ordinary, you will perceive me, your old father, as a real Buddha, and you will inevitably feel natural love and compassion for all beings. That is when you should start to teach.”

Study, reflect and meditate on the Dharma, therefore, without dissociating one from the other, on the firm basis of the love and compassion of bodhicitta. Without first eliminating doubts through study, you will never be able to practise. It is said:

To meditate without having studied
Is like climbing a rock when you have no arms.

Eliminating doubts through study does not mean that you have to know all the vast and innumerable subjects that there are to be known. In this degenerate era, that would never be possible within a short lifetime. What it does mean is that whatever teachings you are going to put into practice, you should know exactly how to do so from beginning to end without a single mistake. Any hesitations you might have, you should clear away by reflecting on those teachings.

When Atīśa was at Nyethang, Nachung Tönpa of Shang, Kyung Tönpa, and Lhangtsang Tönpa asked him to teach them about the different systems of logic.

Atīśa replied, “The non-Buddhist tīrthikas and the Buddhists themselves have many systems, but they are all just chains of discursive thought. There is no need for all those innumerable ideas: life is too short to go

through them all. Now is the time to reduce these.”
“How does one reduce them to their essence?”
Shang asked.

“By training in bodhicitta with love and compassion for all creatures throughout space. By making strong accumulations for the benefit of all those beings, and by creating sources of future good thus created to the profit of all beings and every being. And, finally, by recognizing the nature of the mind as empty by nature, like dreams or magical illusions.”

If you do not know how to reduce any practice to its essence of information, knowledge and intellectual understanding, it will be of no use to you at all.

When Atīśa came to Tibet, he was invited to teach by Rinchen Zangpo. He questioned the translator about what he knew, naming a long list, one after another. He found none that Rinchen Zangpo did not know. Atīśa

“Wonderful!” he said. “The fact that someone who has already lived in Tibet means my visit is quite useful. You combine all these teachings when you sit down to practise.”

“I practise each one as it is explained in its own way,” Rinchen Zangpo.

“Rotten translator!” cried Atīśa in disappointment. “The trip to Tibet was necessary after all!”

“But what should I do instead?” asked the translator.

“You should find the essential point common to all and practise that way,” Atīśa told him.

It is indispensable to seek the vital point of a teaching from the teacher’s pith instructions. Once you know the point, you must put it into practice, or it will be utterly useless.

The hungry are not satisfied by hearing about food; they have to eat. In the same way, just to know about the Dharma has to be practised.

The purpose of practice is to be an antidote to the afflictions of ego-clinging. Jetsun Mila again:

It is said that you can tell whether someone is sincere by whether he has red his face is. Similarly, you can tell whether someone is practising the Dharma by whether it will reduce his negative emotions and ego-clinging.

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“How does one reduce them to their essence?” Nachung Tönpa of Shang asked.

“By training in bodhicitta with love and compassion for all living creatures throughout space. By making strenuous efforts in the two accumulations for the benefit of all those beings. By dedicating all the sources of future good thus created to the perfect enlightenment of each and every being. And, finally, by recognizing that all these things are empty by nature, like dreams or magical illusions.”

If you do not know how to reduce any practice to its essence, no amount of information, knowledge and intellectual understanding will be of any use to you at all.

When Atīśa came to Tibet, he was invited to visit the great translator Rinchen Zangpo. He questioned the translator about which teachings he knew, naming a long list, one after another. It turned out that there were none that Rinchen Zangpo did not know. Atīśa was extremely pleased.

“Wonderful!” he said. “The fact that someone as learned as yourself already lives in Tibet means my visit is quite superfluous. And how do you combine all these teachings when you sit down to practise?”

“I practise each one as it is explained in its own text,” said Rinchen Zangpo.

“Rotten translator!” cried Atīśa in disappointment. “Then my coming to Tibet was necessary after all!”

“But what should I do instead?” asked the translator.

“You should find the essential point common to all the teachings and practise that way,” Atīśa told him.

It is indispensable to seek the vital point of the practice, based on the teacher’s pith instructions. Once you know the essential point, you must put it into practice, or it will be utterly useless. Jetsun Mila said:

The hungry are not satisfied by hearing about food; what they need is to eat. In the same way, just to know about Dharma is useless; it has to be practised.

The purpose of practice is to be an antidote for negative emotions and ego-clinging. Jetsun Mila again:

It is said that you can tell whether someone has just eaten by how red his face is. Similarly, you can tell whether people know and practise the Dharma by whether it works as a remedy for their negative emotions and ego-clinging.

Potowa asked Geshe Tönpa what was the dividing line between Dharma and non-Dharma. The geshe answered:

If it counteracts negative emotions it is Dharma. If it doesn't, it is non-Dharma.

If it doesn't fit with worldly ways it is Dharma. If it fits, it is non-Dharma.

If it fits with the scriptures and your instructions it is Dharma.

If it doesn't fit, it is non-Dharma.

If it leaves a positive imprint it is Dharma. If it leaves a negative imprint it is non-Dharma.

Master Chegom says:

To believe in the effects of actions is the right view for those of ordinary faculties. To realize all inner and outer phenomena as the union both of appearance and emptiness, and of awareness and emptiness, is the right view for those of higher faculties. To realize that the view, the one who holds it and realization itself are indivisible¹⁶⁹ is the right view for those of the highest faculties.

To keep the mind totally concentrated on its object is the correct meditation for those of ordinary faculties. To rest concentrated on the four unions¹⁷⁰ is the right meditation for those of higher faculties.

A state of non-conceptualization in which there is no object of meditation, no meditator and no meditative experience is the right meditation for those of the highest faculties.

To be as wary about the effects of actions as one is careful to protect one's eyes is the right action for those of ordinary faculties. To act while experiencing everything as a dream and an illusion is the right action for those of higher faculties. Total non-action¹⁷¹ is the right action for those of the highest faculties.

The progressive diminution of ego-clinging, negative emotions and thoughts is the sign of "warmth"* for all practitioners, be they of ordinary, higher or the highest faculties.

Similar words are to be found in *The Precious Supreme Path* by the peerless Dagpo.

When studying Dharma, therefore, you should know how to get at the essence of it. The great Longchenpa says:

* *drod* (see glossary).

Knowledge is as infinite as the stars in the sky.
There is no end to all the subjects and objects of the mind.
It is better to grasp straight away than to grasp gradually.
The unchanging fortress of the dharma is the mind.

Then, as you reflect on Dharma, you should reflect on the Dharma.
Padampa Sangye says:

Seek the teacher's instructions like a deer seeks the forest for its prey.

Listen to the teachings like a deer listens to the forest.

Meditate on them like a dumb person meditates on the forest.

Contemplate them like a northern man contemplates the forest.

Reach their result, like the sun comes to the forest.

Hearing the Dharma, reflecting on it and practicing it are like the three hands, hand in hand. The peerless Dagpo says:

To churn together study, reflection and meditation is an infallible essential point.

The result of study, reflection and meditation is an increase in the love and compassion of bodhicitta and a real diminution of ego-clinging and attachment.

This instruction on how to arouse bodhicitta is the essence of the Dharma teachings and the essential element of the path. It is a precious and indispensable teaching, to have which is definitely the cause of enlightenment, which is sure to render everything else futile. Put it into practice with hearing and understanding it. Put it into practice from the bottom of your heart!

I claim to be arousing bodhicitta, but I have trained in the path of the six perfections, not in the path of selfishness.

Bless me and small-minded beings like me, that we may train in the sublime path of the Dharma.

Potowa asked Geshe Tönpa what was the dividing line between Dharma and non-Dharma. The geshe answered:

If it counteracts negative emotions it is Dharma. If it doesn't, it is non-Dharma.

If it doesn't fit with worldly ways it is Dharma. If it fits, it is non-Dharma.

If it fits with the scriptures and your instructions it is Dharma. If it doesn't fit, it is non-Dharma.

If it leaves a positive imprint it is Dharma. If it leaves a negative imprint it is non-Dharma.

Master Chegom says:

To believe in the effects of actions is the right view for those of ordinary faculties. To realize all inner and outer phenomena in the union both of appearance and emptiness, and of awareness and emptiness, is the right view for those of higher faculties. To realize that the view, the one who holds it and realization itself are indivisible¹⁶⁹ is the right view for those of the highest faculties.

To keep the mind totally concentrated on its object is the correct meditation for those of ordinary faculties. To rest concentrated on the four unions¹⁷⁰ is the right meditation for those of higher faculties.

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The progressive diminution of ego-clinging, negative emotions and thoughts is the sign of "warmth"* for all practitioners, be they of ordinary, higher or the highest faculties.

Similar words are to be found in *The Precious Supreme Path* by the peerless Dagpo.

When studying Dharma, therefore, you should know how to get at the essence of it. The great Longchenpa says:

and (see glossary).

Knowledge is as infinite as the stars in the sky;
There is no end to all the subjects one could study.
It is better to grasp straight away their very essence—
The unchanging fortress of the dharmakāya.

Then, as you reflect on Dharma, you should rid yourself of any doubts. Padampa Sangye says:

Seek the teacher's instructions like a mother falcon seeking her prey.
Listen to the teachings like a deer listening to music;
Meditate on them like a dumb person savouring food;
Contemplate them like a northern nomad shearing sheep;
Reach their result, like the sun coming out from behind the clouds.

Hearing the Dharma, reflecting on it and meditating upon it should go hand in hand. The peerless Dagpo says:

To churn together study, reflection and meditation on the Dharma is an infallible essential point.

The result of study, reflection and meditation should be a steady and real increase in the love and compassion of bodhicitta, together with a steady and real diminution of ego-clinging and negative emotions.

This instruction on how to arouse bodhicitta is the quintessence of all Dharma teachings and the essential element of all paths. It is the indispensable teaching, to have which is definitely enough by itself but to lack which is sure to render everything else futile. Do not to be content just with hearing and understanding it. Put it into practice from the very depth of your heart!

*I claim to be arousing bodhicitta, but still it has not arisen in me.
I have trained in the path of the six perfections, but have remained selfish.*

*Bless me and small-minded beings like me,
That we may train in the sublime bodhicitta.*