

Tibetan Texts

**Taken from the “Rosary of Precious Stones” by the Guru Gampopa
(of the Kadjupa Order in the Spiritual line of Milarepa)**

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Having obtained a free and gifted human body—which is difficult—it would be a cause for regret to fritter away this life to no purpose.

Having obtained this human body which is pure, free, gifted, and difficult to obtain, it would be a cause for regret to die like a profane man, engulfed by the cares of this world.

This life in the *Kali Yuga* being so short and uncertain, it would be a cause for regret to spend it in the pursuit of worldly ends and endeavors.

One’s own spirit being of the nature of the non-manifested *Dharma Kaya*, it would be a cause for regret to let it sink into the slough of the world’s illusions.

The holy Guru being the guide on the Path, it would be a cause for regret to be separated from him before attaining illumination.

Since confidence in the way and the vows made constitute the means which leads to realization, it would be a cause for regret if they were broken by the uncontrolled force of the passions.

Perfect Wisdom having been found in oneself through the grace of the Guru, it would be a cause for regret to dissipate it in the jungle of worldliness.

Seek out friends whose ideas and practices are similar to thine and in whom thou canst place thy confidence.

Avoid a Guru whose heart is set on the acquisition of worldly glory and possessions.

Avoid friends or followers who are harmful to thy peace of mind and thy spiritual progression.

Avoid useless actions.

That which comes of its own accord, being a Divine gift, should not be avoided.

Reason, being the best friend in every action, should not be avoided.

Such devotional exercises of the body and the mind as one is capable of performing, should not be avoided.

One must understand that the after-effect of past actions, whence comes all sorrow, cannot be avoided.

One must understand that grief, being a means of convincing oneself of the necessity of a spiritual life, is a Guru.

One must understand that attachment to the things of the world, which brings about material prosperity, is the enemy of spiritual progress.

Having chosen a Guru, abandon thy self-love and scrupulously follow his teachings.

Having had a spiritual experience, one must persevere in meditation and mental concentration.

In reflecting on the difficulty of obtaining a gifted and free human body, may you be moved to adopt a spiritual life.

In reflecting on the irrevocable nature of the results which inevitably arise from actions, may you be moved to avoid impiety and transgression.

In reflecting on the predominance of bad tendencies in the *Kali Yuga*, may you be moved to seek out their antidote (in the Doctrine).

In reflecting on the uselessness of the aimless frittering away of your life, may you be moved to be diligent (in advancing on the Path).

Meditation without a sufficient preparation in the hearing and study of the Doctrine may lead to the error of losing oneself in the darkness of the unconscious.

The cessation of the process of thought may be wrongly taken for the quiescence of the infinite Spirit which is the true goal.

A mere glimpse of Reality may be wrongly taken for a complete realization.

Charlatans may be wrongly taken for sages.

In venerating one's spiritual master one is not deceived.

In carefully studying the Doctrine, listening to commentaries on it, reflecting and meditating thereon, one is not deceived.

If, being a human being, one pays no attention to the Holy Doctrine, one is like a man who returns with empty hands from a land rich in precious stones, and that is a lamentable failure.

If, having passed the threshold of the Holy Order, one returns to worldly life, one is like a butterfly plunging into the flame of the lamp, and this is a lamentable failure.

To live close to a sage and remain in ignorance is like a man dying of thirst on the edge of a lake, and this is a lamentable failure.

One who, having had a glimpse of Reality, does not persevere in the *sādhana* until the dawn of complete illumination, displays weakness.

The initiate who enters upon the path, then shows himself incapable of following it, displays weakness.

From the beginning (of a spiritual life), it is indispensably necessary to have the most profound aversion for the endless series of repeated deaths and rebirths.

An art of living which will permit the utilization of every activity (of thought, body and speech) as an aid on the Path, is indispensable.

Special instructions (by a wise Guru), which will allow one to avoid erroneous ways, temptation, pitfalls and dangers, are indispensable.

An indomitable faith and a supreme serenity of spirit are indispensable at the moment of death.

To have little pride and no envy is the mark of the superior man.

To have few desires and to be satisfied with simple things is the mark of the superior man.

To be free from hypocrisy and deceit is the mark of the superior man.

To regulate one's conduct to the law of cause and effect, as carefully as one guards the sight of one's eyes, is the mark of the superior man.

To be faithful to one's engagements and obligations is the mark of the superior man.

To be capable of keeping friendships, while regarding all beings with impartiality, is the mark of the superior man.

To permit others to triumph while accepting defeat for oneself is the mark of a superior man.

To differ from the multitude in every thought and action is the mark of the superior man.

Considering that when we die, we must follow our path alone and without either parents or friends, it is useless to have devoted time (which had been better employed in obtaining illumination) in humoring or serving them, or in showering them with affection

Considering that our descendants are themselves subject to death and that whatever worldly goods one may leave them, these goods will be lost to them, it is useless to make a gift of the things of this world.

Considering that when death comes one must leave even one's own dwelling, it is useless to devote one's life to the acquisition of the things of this world.

Considering that the non-observance of the vows of the Order will lead to wretched states of existence, it is useless to enter the Order if one does not live a holy life.

To have heard the Doctrine and given it thought without acquiring spiritual powers to stand by one at the hour of death, is useless.

It is useless to have lived even for a long time in the company of a spiritual master if, lacking humility and devotion, one is incapable of spiritual growth.

To live a bad life and know nothing of the Doctrine is to cause an injury to oneself as a madman does when he jumps from a precipice.

To transgress the precepts of the Buddha or of a holy Guru through pride and self-satisfaction, is to cause an injury to oneself as a king does when he follows a bad policy.

To waste one's time sauntering through towns and villages instead of devoting oneself to meditation, is to cause an injury to oneself as a stag does when he descends into the valley instead of remaining in the security of the mountains.

One does something beneficial to oneself by freeing oneself from desire for the transient pleasures of this life and devoting oneself to the realization of the permanent happiness of Nirvana.

For an initiated devotee to apply himself to the vain sciences of the world rather than seeking the secret teaching chosen by the great Sages, is a grave error.

For an initiated devotee to pass his life amidst the hopes and fears of the world instead of gaining the understanding of Reality, is a grave error.

For an initiated devotee to attempt to reform others instead of reforming himself, is a grave error.

One should understand that, as with a man dangerously wounded by an arrow, not a moment of passing time must be wasted.

One should have confidence in "That which is" (as being the sole refuge), just as a crow, exhausted and far from the shore, has confidence in the ship's mast on which he rests.

A free and gifted human existence is more precious than myriads of non-human existences in any one of the six states of existence.

One esoteric truth is more precious than innumerable exoteric doctrines.

One momentary glimpse of the Divine Wisdom, born in meditation, is more precious than any amount of knowledge obtained simply by listening to or thinking about traditional teachings.

For the man who is sincerely devoted to the spiritual life, it is a matter of indifference whether he abstains from the activities of the world or not.

For the man who is free from attachment to mundane things, it is a matter of indifference whether he practices asceticism or not.

For the man who has attained self-mastery, it is a matter of indifference whether he participates in the pleasures of the world or not.

For the man whose submission and faith with regard to the Guru are unshakeable, it is a matter of indifference whether he resides with his Guru or not.

For the man who has attained to Sublime Wisdom, it is a matter of indifference whether or not he is able to perform miracles.

The fact that there exist—produced by the benevolence which embraces all things—Boddhisattvas and protective spiritual influences which render possible the deliverance of men and all beings, demonstrates the virtue of the Holy Dharma.

The fact that men, whose heavy and evil Karma would have condemned them to endless suffering after death, have turned to the spiritual life and attained Nirvana, demonstrates the virtue of the Holy Dharma.

Since there is neither a “means of crossing” nor “anyone who crosses” the Path, the expression “Path” is purely symbolic.

Since there is neither “view” nor “viewer” of the True State, the expression “True State” is purely symbolic.

Since there is neither “observance of vows” nor “anyone who observes the vows”, these expressions are purely symbolic.

Since there is neither “renunciation” nor “renouncer” (of the existence of the world), the expression “existence of the world” is purely symbolic.

It is a great joy to realize that in the infinite Knowledge of Reality, beyond all thought, all the differentiations of *samsāra* are inexistent.

It is a great joy to realize that in the Divine *Nirmāna Kāya*, emanated from itself, there exists no consciousness of duality.

It is a great joy to realize that the Path of Deliverance which all the Buddhas have travelled, is always existent, always unchanging and always open to those who are ready to enter upon it.