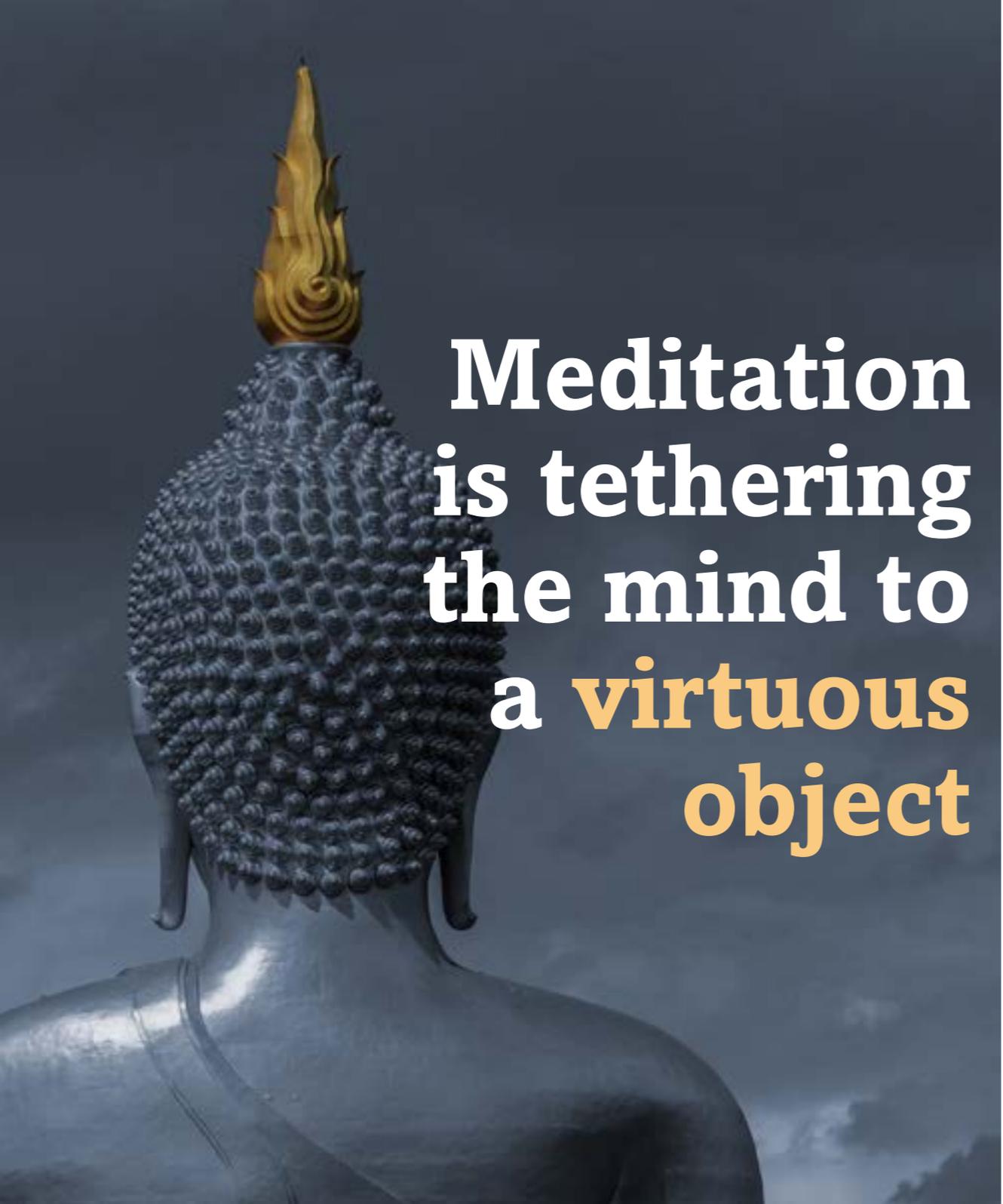


# Clearing Obstacles



SCRIPTURAL SOURCES ► DEEPEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING



**Meditation  
is tethering  
the mind to  
a virtuous  
object**

**JE TSONGKAPA (1357-1419)**

*Lamrim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*

That which is known as “meditation” is the act of sustaining an object of meditation and specific subjective aspects [concepts associated with the object] by repeatedly focusing your mind upon a virtuous object of meditation.<sup>1</sup>

**DHARMAMITRA (9TH CENTURY)**

*Clear Words, A Commentary on Maitreya’s Ornament of Realizations*

Meditating is making the mind take on the state or condition of the object of meditation.<sup>2</sup>

# To start, use an image of an Enlightened Being in your meditation



## **THE BUDDHA (563-483 BCE)**

*The Pratyutpanna Samadhi Sutra, The Meditation in Which the Buddhas of the Present All Stand Before One*

The bodhisattva Bhadrakala asked the Buddha: “What kind of meditation ought bodhisattvas to practice so that the wisdom they attain is like the ocean...?”

The Buddha said to the bodhisattva Bhadrakala: “There is one Dharma practice which you should always rehearse and preserve, which you should always cultivate without following any other dharmas; which is most exalted and foremost among all meritorious qualities. What is that foremost Dharma practice? It is this meditation called The Meditation in Which the Buddhas of the Present All Stand Before One.”<sup>3</sup>



## JE TSONGKAPA

*Lamrim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*

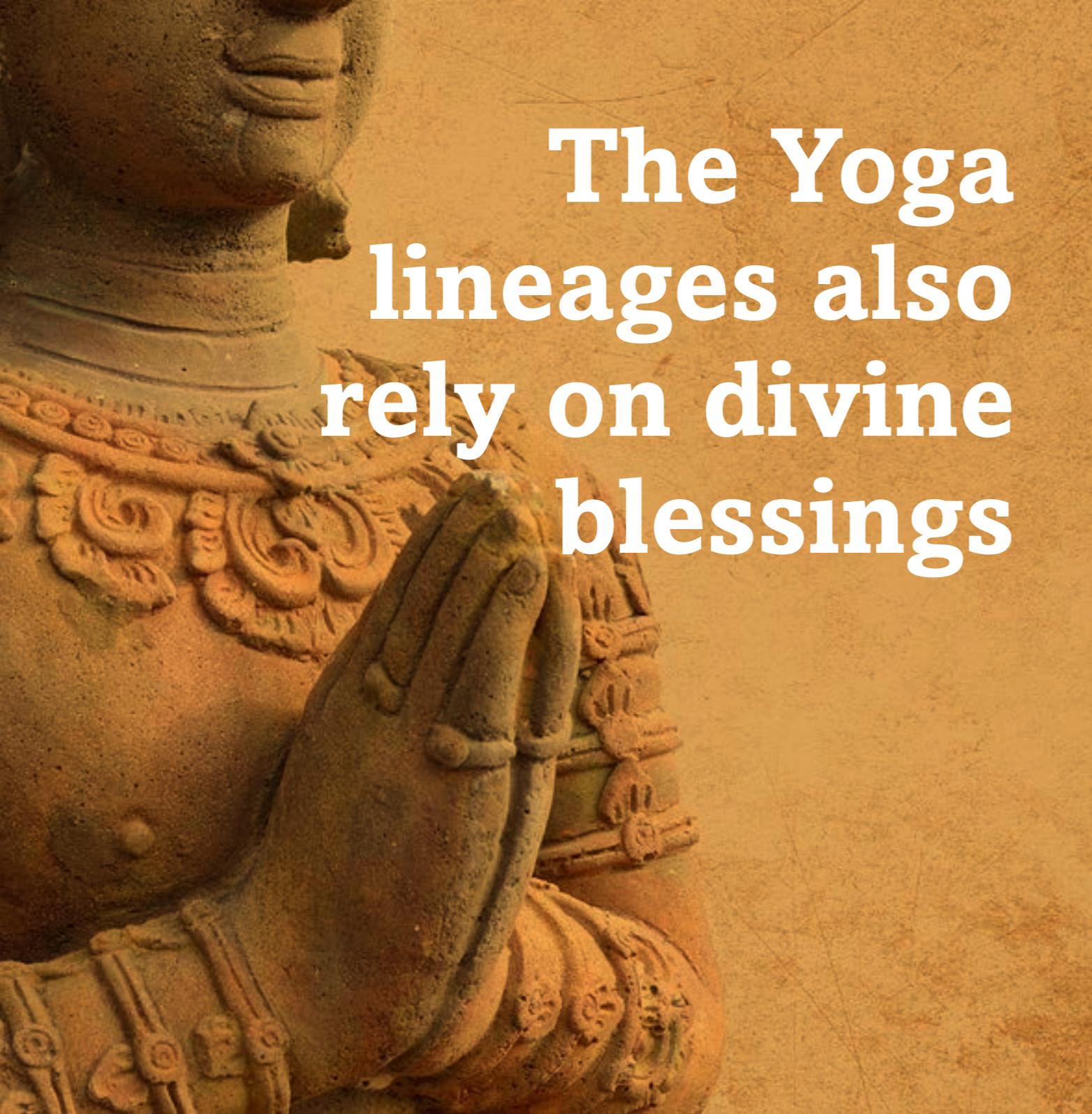
To keep your attention on the physical form of the Buddha is to recall the Buddha, so it gives rise to limitless merit.... Consequently, it is skill in means when you seek an object of meditation by which you achieve concentration and also fulfill, along the way, some other special purpose.<sup>4</sup>

**Note:** *You can visualize an enlightened being in any form that suits you. The purpose is that they represent qualities you wish to achieve.*

## THE FIRST PANCHEN LAMA, LOBSANG CHUKYI GYELTSSEN (1570-1662)

*De Lam: The Path to Bliss*

Now as for the actual session, a great many meditation objects for developing stillness are described in the teachings. For the most part though the practice of bringing to mind the Buddha is the highest. It also has many other purposes, such as helping you become a worthy vessel for the Yoga of the Angel in the secret way. As such, it is best to focus your meditation upon the holy form of a divine being.<sup>5</sup>



# The Yoga lineages also rely on divine blessings

**MASTER PATANJALI (APPROX. 200AD)**

*The Yoga Sutra*

ईश्वरप्रणिधानाद्वा ॥ २३ ॥

*Ishvara pranidhanad va*

I.23 Or [Samadhi is attained] by devotion with total dedication to Ishvara.<sup>6</sup>

ततः प्रत्यक्कृते नाधिगमाडे प्यन्तरायाभावश्च ॥ २९ ॥

*Tatah pratyak chetana-adhigamo pyantaraya-abhavash cha*

I.29 With this you will gain the ability to focus the mind within, and to avoid all obstacles.<sup>7</sup>

*Note: Ishvara is God, supreme conscious, or supreme wisdom*

# How to Visualize the Buddha



## THE FIRST PANCHEN LAMA, LOBSANG CHUKYI GYELTSSEN (1570-1662)

*De Lam, The Path to Bliss*

Upon this cushion sits a holy being; in essence this is my root Lama, the one who has shown me such kindness. Their outer appearance is that of the victorious Buddha, the Able One of the Shakya Clan, with a body that shines like pure gold. The Buddha has a topknot, a single head, and two arms. With his right hand, he presses the earth; his left hand is in the gesture of meditation, holding a sage's bowl filled with the nectar of immortality.<sup>8</sup>

# Make your meditation experience as real as possible

## **KAMALASHILA, (8TH CENTURY)**

*Bhavanakrama, Stages of Meditation (third text)*

The bodily form of the Tathagata is a golden color like that of refined gold... and effects the aims of living beings through various means. By continuously directing their minds toward it, yogis develop a wish for its good qualities and quell laxity, excitement, and so forth. They should continue meditative stabilization for as long as they can see it clearly, as though the Buddha was sitting in front of them.<sup>9</sup>

## **JE TSONGKAPA**

*Lam Rim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*

Furthermore, do not let the object of meditation have the aspect of a painting or sculpture; rather, learn to have it appear in your mind with the aspect of an actual buddha.

Some set an image before them and immediately meditate on it while staring at it. The master Ye-shay-day's rejection of this practice is excellent. He says that concentration is not achieved in the sensory consciousnesses, but in the mental consciousness; thus, the actual object of meditation of a concentration is the actual object of a mental consciousness. Therefore... you have to focus your mind on the appearance of the actual concept, or mental image, of the object of meditation.<sup>10</sup>

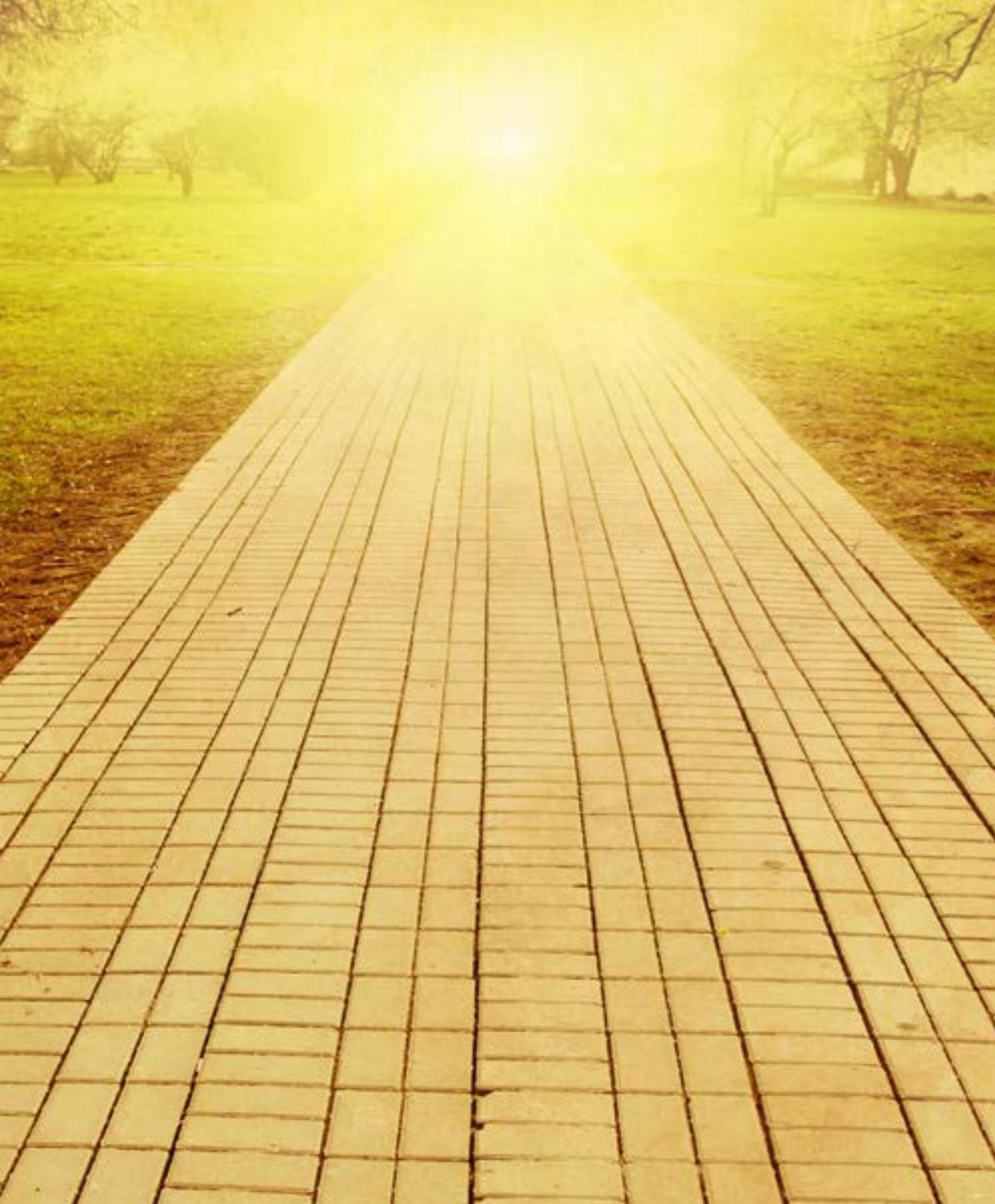


# The Importance of the Three Principal Paths: Renunciation, The Wish for Enlightenment, and Correct View

**PABONGKA RINPOCHE**  
**(1878-1941)**

*A Key that Unlocks the Door to  
the Noble Path*

The Three Principal Paths are like the main beam that supports all the rest of the roof; your mind must be filled with these three thoughts if you hope to practice any dharma at all, whether it be the open or the secret teachings of the Buddha. A mind caught up in renunciation leads you to freedom, and a mind filled with hopes of becoming a Buddha



for the sake of every living being brings you to the state of omniscience. A mind imbued with correct view, finally, serves as the antidote for the cycle of life.<sup>11</sup>

There's no way to turn your mind to spiritual practice unless you have renunciation from the very first. And there's no way for this practice to serve as a path of the Greater Way unless you have the desire to become a Buddha for the sake of every living being. And there's no way to rid yourself totally of the two obstacles unless you have correct view. This is why these three attitudes were spoken to be the "Three Principal Paths."

Once you have gained some facility in the Three Principal Paths, everything you do becomes a spiritual practice. If your mind is not filled with these three thoughts, then everything you try leads you nowhere further than the same old circle of births.<sup>12</sup>

# To travel the path: accumulate virtue and clear obstacles

## GESHE DULPA (11TH CENTURY)

*Potowa's Method of Explaining*

Along the way, accumulate the collections [of merit and wisdom] and purify obscurations... If you do these, though you may think that knowledge will not arise in even one hundred years, it will arise anyway because nothing composite [the mind, in this context,] remains as it is.<sup>13</sup>

## JE TSONGKAPA

*Lam Rim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*

... think with anticipation, “When will I practice these teachings by actually doing what should be done and turning away from what should not be done?” Work at the causes for such practice—accumulating the collections [of merit and wisdom], clearing away obscurations, and making aspirational prayers. Before long your mental power will become greater and greater, and you will be able to practice all of the teachings that you were previously unable to practice.<sup>14</sup>

## **THE FIRST PANCHEN LAMA, LOBSANG CHUKYI GYELTSEN**

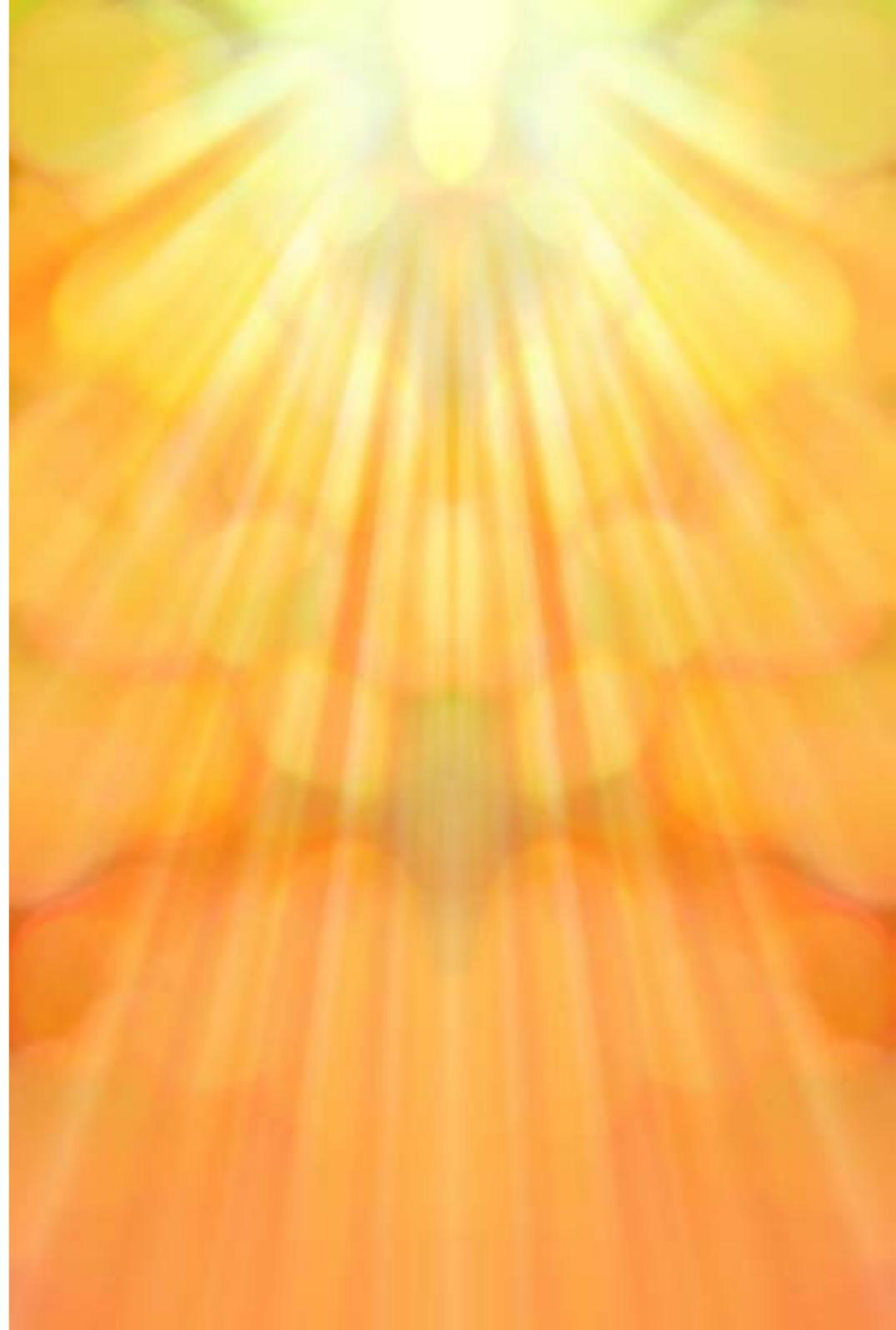
*De Lam, The Path to Bliss*

Think then that, because of your supplication, a stream of nectar descends from the physical part of the Lama atop your head... The nectar cleans away all the bad deeds and obstacles that we have collected within ourselves from time with no beginning.<sup>15</sup>

## **THE 14TH DALAI LAMA, TENZIN GYATSO (1935 - )**

*The Gelug-Kagyü Tradition of Mahamudra*

In order to make a more vivid impression on our mind... we visualize or imagine the objects of refuge, or sources of safe direction, before us when we wish to reaffirm our taking of direction from them... Focusing on this visualization, we take safe direction and purify ourselves of negative forces and mental obstacles. This is the preliminary practice of taking safe direction that leads us forward.<sup>16</sup>





# Rejoice to increase merit

## **THE BUDDHA**

*Rajavavadaka-Sutra, Advices to the King Sutra*

... Rejoice, using the highest method of rejoicing. Rejoice in every seed of virtue which the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, listeners and self awakened, every ordinary being, and yourself have collected in the past, are collecting at present, and will collect in the future—combined together.<sup>17</sup>

## **JE TSONGKAPA**

*A Brief Account of My Spiritual Life*

For collecting extensive merit with little effort  
Rejoicing at virtue is said to be supreme.<sup>18</sup>

## **PABONGKA RINPOCHE**

*Liberation in Our Hands*

... when rejoicing is done well, nothing can surpass it for accumulating merit.<sup>19</sup>

# Dedicate your virtue toward enlightenment

## THE BUDDHA

*Sutra of Questions Posed by Sagaramati*

Just as a drop of water fallen into the great ocean  
Does not disappear as long as the ocean does not dry up  
So also virtue dedicated to enlightenment  
Is not exhausted until Buddhahood is achieved.<sup>20</sup>

## PABONGKA RINPOCHE

*Liberation in Our Hands*

... a dedication prayer will determine whether a virtuous act yields a sublime or an inferior result.<sup>21</sup>

There are three major ways of dedicating virtue: (1) to pray that the Buddha's teachings should develop in our own minds and the minds of others; (2) to pray that we should be watched over by a spiritual teacher in all our future lives; (3) to pray that we should attain perfect enlightenment. [When dedicating] we should use one of them.<sup>22</sup>



# Scriptural study between meditation sessions helps

**JE TSONGKAPA**

*Lamrim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on  
the Steps on the Path*

After you have made an effort to meditate in the actual session and are at the point of ending the session, you might not continue to rely on mindfulness and vigilance, and might instead completely let go of what should be sustained—the object of meditation and its aspects. If you do so, your progress will be extremely small. Therefore, even in between sessions, look at teachings that reveal the meaning of your object of meditation, and recollect it again and again.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dharmamitra (9th century), *Clear Words, A Commentary on Maitreya's Ornament of Realizations*. See Je Tsongkapa (1357–1419), *Lamrim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*, Vol. I. Translated by The Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee, Joshua W.C. Cutler, Editor-in-Chief. Snow Lion Publications, 2000, p. 111

<sup>3</sup> The Buddha, *The Pratyutpanna Samadhi Sutra, The Meditation in Which the Buddhas of the Present All Stand Before One*. Translated from the Chinese (Taisho Volume 13, Number 418) by Paul Harrison. Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1998, p. 14

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<sup>5</sup> Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen, (1570-1662), the First Panchen Lama. *De Lam: The Path to Bliss* (ACIP digital text 5944). See also Diamond Mountain Advanced Series Course III, Part III, Reading Five: *A Perfect Beginner's Meditation*, p. 91

<sup>6</sup> Master Patanjali (approx. 200AD), *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Translation by Sri Swami Satchidananda. Integral Yoga Publications 1978, p. 37

<sup>7</sup> Master Patanjali (approx. 200AD), *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Translation Geshe Michael Roach. The Yoga Studies Institute, Course I, Reading six, p. 34

<sup>8</sup> Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen, (1570-1662), the First Panchen Lama. *De Lam: The Path to Bliss* (ACIP digital text 5944). See also Diamond Mountain Advanced Series Course I, Reading Two: *The Buddha Before Me*, pp. 34-36

<sup>9</sup> Kamalashila, *Bhavanakrama, Stages of Meditation* (third text), Tucci 1971: 4.12-14; See *Lam Rim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*, Vol. III, p. 43

<sup>10</sup> Je Tsongkapa (1357–1419), *Lam Rim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*, Vol. III. Translated by The Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee, Joshua W.C. Cutler, Editor-in-Chief. Snow Lion Publications 2002, p. 44

<sup>11</sup> Pabongka Rinpoche (1878-1941), *A Key that Unlocks the Door to the Noble Path*, a commentary to Je Tsongkapa's *Three Principal Paths*. Translated by Geshe Lobsang Tharchin with Geshe Michael Roach. Classics of Middle Asia, Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press, p. 33

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp. 36-37

<sup>13</sup> Geshe Dulpa (11th Century), *Potowa's Method of Explaining*. Je Tsongkapa (1357–1419), *Lam Rim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*, Vol. I. Translated by The Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee, Joshua W.C. Cutler, Editor-in-Chief. Snow Lion Publications, 2000, p. 159

<sup>14</sup> Je Tsongkapa (1357–1419), *Lam Rim Chenmo, The Great Treatise on the Steps on the Path*, Vol. I. Translated by The Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee, Joshua W.C. Cutler, Editor-in-Chief. Snow Lion Publications, 2000, p. 49

<sup>15</sup> Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen, (1570-1662), the First Panchen Lama, *De Lam: The Path to Bliss*. Tibetan in ACIP digital version S5944. Translated by Geshe Michael Roach. Asian Classics Institute Advanced Series Course II, Reading 1: *You Have to Want to Get Out*, page 33

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<sup>17</sup> The Buddha, *Rajavavada-Sutra, Advices to the King Sutra*. See Master Kamalashila (fl. 740-795), *Bhavana Krama, Steps of Meditation* (first text), ACIP database, TD3915, folios 24A-25A. Translated by Lama Christie McNally. See also Bok Jinpa, *Setting Fire to Your Meditation*, Course I, Reading 4, *A King's Wish*, p. 3

<sup>18</sup> Je Tsongkapa, *A Brief Account of My Spiritual Life in Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 302. See also Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, Volume I. Translated by Sermey Khensur Lobsang Tharchin and Artemis B. Engle. Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press, 1990, note 40, p. 221

<sup>19</sup> Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, Volume I. Translated by Sermey Khensur Lobsang Tharchin and Artemis B. Engle. Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press, 1990, p. 221

<sup>20</sup> The Buddha, *Sutra of Questions Posed by Sagaramati*. See Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, Volume I. Translated by Sermey Khensur Lobsang Tharchin and Artemis B. Engle. Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press, 1990, pp. 218-219

<sup>21</sup> Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, Volume I. Translated by Sermey Khensur Lobsang Tharchin and Artemis B. Engle. Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press, 1990, p. 217

<sup>22</sup> Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, Volume I. Translated by Sermey Khensur Lobsang Tharchin and Artemis B. Engle. Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press, 1990, p. 220

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