

The Foundation for Good Qualities

This is the printer-friendly version of: http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/sutra/level2/lamrim/overview/specific_texts/foundation_good_qualities_tsongkhapa/foundation_good_qualities.html

(*Yon-tan gzhi-gyur-ma*)
by Tsongkhapa (*Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang grags-pa*)
translated by Alexander Berzin, 1982,
revised 2003

(1) (Healthy) reliance on a kind spiritual master,
The foundation for all good qualities, is the root of the path.
Seeing this well, I request inspiration to rely
With great appreciation, through many endeavors.

(2) This excellent working basis with its respites,
found but once,
Is difficult to obtain. Having realized its great importance,
I request inspiration to develop without disruption
An attitude to take its essence in all ways, day and night.

(3) At death, my body and life-force will perish quickly
Like bubbles on a moving stream. Remembering this
And having found stable certainty that after death,
The fruits of my glowing and murky actions
will follow behind,

(4) Like a shadow to a body,
I request inspiration always to take care
To rid myself of even the slightest, most minor action
That would build up a network of faults and to accomplish
Every possible deed that will build up a network
of constructive force.

(5) The splendors of compulsive existence,
even when indulged in, never suffice;
The gateway of all problems,
they are unfit to make my mind secure.
Aware of these pitfalls, I request inspiration
To develop a great avid interest in liberation's bliss.

(6) I request inspiration to take to heart,
with mindfulness, alertness,
And great care, induced by this pure motivating thought,
The practices for individual liberation,
The root of the teachings.

(7) Just as I have fallen into the ocean of compulsive existence,
So, too, have all wandering beings -

they have been my mothers.
Seeing this, I request inspiration
to grow to a supreme bodhichitta aim
To take responsibility to free these wandering beings.

(8) Even if I have developed merely this resolve,
if I lack the habit
Of the three types of ethical discipline,
I will be unable to attain
A (supreme) purified state. Seeing this well,
I request inspiration
To train with strong efforts in the bodhisattva vows.

(9) I request inspiration quickly to develop
on my mind-stream a path
That combines the pair: a stilled, settled mind
and an exceptionally perceptive mind,
By stilling mental wandering toward objects of distortion
And properly discerning the correct meaning (of voidness).

(10) When I have trained myself through the common paths
And become a vessel, I request inspiration easily to board
The Diamond-strong Vehicle, the supreme of all vehicles,
The sacred fording passage for those of good fortune.

(11) Then, when I have found uncontrived certainty
in what has been said,
That the foundation for realizing the two types
of actual attainments
Is the closely bonding practices and vow restraints
kept totally pure,
I request inspiration to uphold them even at the cost of my life.

(12) Then, understanding correctly the essential points
of the two stages
That are the essence of the tantra classes,
I request inspiration
To actualize them in accord with
the Holy One's enlightening speech,
Never straying from the conduct of four (daily) sessions of yoga.

(13) I request inspiration for the feet
of the spiritual mentors
Who indicate the excellent path like this
And of friends for proper practice to remain firm,
And for the masses of outer and inner interference to be stilled.

(14) May I never be parted for all my lives
from perfect gurus;
May I put to good use the all-around perfect Dharma;
And by achieving in full all good qualities

of the stages and paths,
May I quickly attain a Vajradhara supreme state.