



Freedom From the Four Attachments

The author of this root text was Sachen Kunga Nyingpo ས་ཚེན་གུན་དགའ་སྡིང་པོ།, who lived 1092-1158AD. He was one of the five patriarchs of the Sakya ས་སྐུ tradition. Manjushri gave this teaching to Sachen Kunga Nyingpo when he was twelve years old. The whole Mahayana Buddhist path is explained in these four lines. Many extraordinary commentaries were written about this root text in the Sakya tradition, by Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, Jetsun Drakpa Gyeltsen, Sakya Pandita, and many others.

Translation by Geshe Michael Roach:

ཤེན་པ་ཤི་དྲེ།

SHEN-PA SHI DREL

བུ།

BU

1: ཚེན་དུ་ལ་ཤེན་ན་ཚོས་པ་མིན།

TSEN DI LA SHEN NA CHÖ-PA MIN

2: ཁམས་གསུམ་ལ་ཤེན་ན་ངེས་འབྱུང་མིན།

KAM SUM SHEN NA NGEN-JUNG MIN

3: བདག་དོན་ལ་ཤེན་ན་བྱང་སེམས་མིན།

DAK DÖN LA SHEN NA JANG-SEM MIN

4: འཛིན་པ་བྱུང་ན་ལྟ་བ་མིན།

DZIN-PA JUNG NA TA-WA MIN

Freedom from the Four Attachments

Noble son,

A person who is still attached to this life is no Dharma practitioner.

A person who is still attached to the three worlds has no renunciation.

A person who is still attached to getting what he or she wants is no bodhisattva.

A person who still grasps to things has no worldview.

The Title and the Start of the Verse

ཞེན་པ་ SHEN PA means *attachment, craving*. ཞེན་ SHEN is *to grasp at, to desire*. བཞི་ SHI is *number four*.
བྲེལ་ DREL is *free from, freedom, separated from*.

The verse starts with བུ་ BU, this is *son*. In this specific case, it was the *holy Manjushri* that addressed the young Sachen Kunga Nyingpo at the retreat. To note, བུ་མོ་ BU-MO means *daughter*.

First Line

ཚེ་ TSE means in this case *life, or lifespan*. འདི་ DI means *this*, to this combined is *this life*.

ལ་ LA is a very important particle, a so-called Oblique (indirect) particle. Its function as a particle is to indicate 'to what', 'for the benefit of what', or 'in consideration of what'. Think of it as a particle that indicates for what or for whom something takes place, this is the most common usage. The common first translations of this particle is *to, for, with regards*. Remember that the particle glues together something on the left and right sides of the actual particle. In this case, ལ་ is best translated as *to*.

ཞེན་ SHEN means *to grasp, to be attached to*. ལྟ་ NA is a Locative particle, it means *when, a point of time or place*. ཚོས་པ་ CHÖ-PA is *dharma practitioner*, from the root ཚོས་ CHÖ, *dharma, or religion*. In this case, it points at Buddha's teachings.

མིན་ MIN means *not*, it's actually a combination of མ་ཡིན་ MA YIN, *is not*. མ་ as a negation is used in past and imperative statements (this one is an imperative statement), and with verbal nouns. When we have present and future negations, and verbal adjectives, we use མི. Another negation word is མེད་ ME, this means *not exist*.

Exercise: Do a rough translation of the first line.

Second Line

ཁམས་ KAM is *realm* in this case. This is a very flexible word, it could mean *element, nature, property, nature, region, world, space, kingdom*, even eastern Tibet is called ཁམས་ ! This is a good example where it's good to see the context where this word is used. The next word gives more clues, this is བཞུམ་ SUM, *number three*. So this statement has to do with the so-called *three realms*, these are the desire, form, and formless realms. The samsaric existence is divided into these three realms of existence that sentient beings are forced to experience based on past karmic activities. In other words, this defines the world samsaric beings live in.

ལ LA is again the oblique (indirect) particle, in this case translated as *to*. ཞེན་ན SHEN NA is *when attached*. དེས་འགྱུར NGEN-JUNG is *renunciation*. དེས means *to understand*, and འགྱུར is *the elements, what emerges*. མིན་ MIN again means *is not*.

Exercise: Do a rough translation of the second line.

Third Line

བདག་ DAK means *me*. དོན་ DÖN is *purpose, benefit, welfare*. ལ LA is the oblique (indirect) particle. ཞེན་ན SHEN NA is *when attached*. བྱང་སེམས་ JANG-SEM is the word for *bodhisattva*, someone who works solely for the welfare of others, as the main and only motivation for existence. This is also the word for *bodhichitta*, *the Wish for Enlightenment*. This means that you work to become fully enlightened for the sake of all sentient beings. The full word is actually བྱང་ཚུབ་གྱི་སེམས་. JANG-CHUB KYI SEM. སེམས་ is *mind*, and བྱང་ཚུབ་ is *enlightenment*, but it's important to notice that this is not the 'mind of enlightenment', rather the wish to become fully enlightened for others, the mind that is focused on this goal. It is actually a primary mind, but that's a long story (see Maitreya's teachings in Ornament of Realization for more details). མིན་ MIN means *is not*.

Exercise: Do a rough translation of the third line.

Fourth Line

འཛིན་པ་ DZIN-PA means *to hold to, grasp, to cling to*. བྱུང་ is a very common word, means *what appears, what is produced, what comes to being*. ན་ NA is *when*.

སྒྲོལ་ TA-WA means *world-view*, the way we look at the reality, our philosophical outlook that defines how we engage in our reality. སྒྲོལ་ TA means *to consider, look at, view*. མིན་ MIN means *is not*.

Exercise: Do a rough translation of the fourth line.

sarva mangalam

