

Tokmé Zongpo's
Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva

*Reflections
on Silver River*

KEN MCLEOD



VERSE 3

Don't engage disturbances and emotional reactions
gradually fade away;
Don't engage distractions and spiritual practice
naturally grows;
Keep awareness clear and vivid and confidence in the
way arises.
Rely on silence—this is the practice of a bodhisattva.

HOW MANY WORLDS DO YOU GO TO EVERY DAY? EVERY disturbance, every emotional reaction, projects a different world. Like a flea on a hot stove, you jump from one world to another. Never mind jet lag, you are a different person in each world. Alice had an easier time in Wonderland.

How do you find your path?
In silence.

How do you practice silence?
You listen.

Arrange your life to reduce choice and unnecessary decisions. Refrain from taking on too many projects at one time. When you are involved in a lot of different activities, the demands from one create problems for another. In other words, create the conditions so that you do not have to be reacting to a steady stream of disturbances.

When you practice, rest in the experience of thoughts, sensations and feelings, using the breath or awareness itself as a place to rest. Whenever you are carried away, return and rest. During practice sessions regard thoughts, sensations and feelings as leaves swirling in the wind as you walk under the clear blue sky of an

autumn day. When you do not engage them, you become aware of a silence—a silence that is always there, even in your darkest moments, a silence that includes everything and cannot be fathomed, a silence that allows you to listen to your heart, your body and your mind in a way you did not know was possible.

In that silence awareness is clear and vivid. You just know, and a quiet confidence is born.

How do you find your way? In silence.

Human knowledge increases, while human irrationality stays the same.

—John Gray, *The Silence of Animals*

In a world dominated by massive political, financial and technological systems, peace, understanding and compassion seem ever more elusive. Despite extraordinary progress in science, medicine and technology, human beings still find themselves struggling in their lives. We are not so different from those who lived in earlier times. Their problems are our problems and our problems were their problems. Their wisdom and understanding is as relevant to us today as it was in their world.

སྤྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་སྤྱོད་ཚོགས་མི་ལམ་བུ་གི་ལྟར།
འབྲུལ་སྤྱང་བདེན་པར་བརྟུང་བས་ཨ་ཐང་ཆད།
དེ་ཕྱིར་མི་མཐུན་རྐྱེན་དང་འཕྲད་པའི་ཚེ།
འབྲུལ་བར་ལྟ་བ་རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་ལག་ལེན་ཡིན།

Whether wanted or unwanted, pleasant or unpleasant, anticipated or unanticipated, everything you experience is your life, just as everything you experience in a dream is the dream.

—Commentary on verse 24



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